



NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES – DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

EXPLORING SILENCES AMONG CHILD VICTIMS OF RAPE IN *THE SUN WILL RISE AGAIN* AND *THE KITE RUNNER*.

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**THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ENGLISH AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS AT THE NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY (NUST)**

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NOVEMBER 2021

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores silences among child victims of rape in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and *The Kite Runner* (2003) basing on the trauma and resilience theoretical framework. The research explores rape as a source of trauma and silence as heightening the trauma while speaking up is established as a resilience strategy. The aim of the research was to establish the different kinds of silences associated with child rape victims, the factors perpetuating these silences, how male and female child victims of rape respond to the rape experiences and how these experiences endured in silence influences the future of the child victims. Applying trauma theory to the analysis of the two texts enabled the researcher to establish the effects of rape and silence on the child victims as males and as females since the selected texts under study each looked on one specific gender. This also allowed for an objective review of the gendered nature of rape and rape trauma. The study was a desktop qualitative research guided by constructivist perspectives of research, following a phenomenological research paradigm. The research focused on the lived experiences of child rape victims in the two texts and thematic analysis of the two main themes of rape and silence was thoroughly conducted. The research found that while rape has the same damaging effects on boys and girls, it is experienced differently, and the degree of damage differs from person to person. Boys and girls respond to rape differently and the factors perpetuating silence among child rape victims differ as well. However, despite the differences, speaking up about rape has the same healing effects, affords justice and forgiveness though these may be attained at different rates. The texts studied are from different continents, one Asian and the other African thus showing that rape phenomenon cuts across race, space and time. Recommendations from the research included that this research be pursued further from an interdisciplinary perspective incorporating literary and sociology and anthropology to further cement the relationship between literature and society. Another recommendation was the need for an increase in the amount of trauma literature in Africa especially centered on male child victims of rape and also told using the child narrative voice.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the many silent voices, listened to but not heard. The many faceless beings looked at but not seen. To many children robbed of their childhood and innocents. To the resilient and the none.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the background to the study, outlines the statement of the problem as well as the research objectives. Significance of the research, limitations and delimitations are also laid out and key terms are highlighted in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

1.1.1 The global context on child rape and silence

Generally, children are believed to possess a natural curiosity of growing minds regarding all subjects and as such they often ask questions about or report on anything and everything. Even when specifically instructed not to tell, children often go ahead and tell. Research conducted on children and secret-keeping, findings demonstrated that children eventually disclose secrets when questioned about them repeatedly because secret keeping is a tremendous challenge for them as it requires keeping multiple pieces of information in mind at one time and ensuring one behaves in accordance with these rules (Gordon, Lyon & Lee, 2014). This, however, is not the case with child rape victims who, no matter how repeatedly they may be asked, would keep silent the secret of their experience. Studies have shown that rape experiences are popularly either under reported, not reported or not disclosed completely. When it comes to rape, child victims for one reason or the other “betray (them)self into small silences” (Lorde, 1997, p. 41) which often torment the soul, for some into and throughout adulthood while for others even unto death.

A lot has been said and written concerning silences among people. Silence has been considered a form of or equal to speaking with some scholars viewing silence as positive. For example, English poet Thomas Carlyle in his book *Sartor Resartus* (1831) translated the phrase "Silence is Golden" from German and in the 6th century, a Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu claimed that "Silence is a source of great strength." (Shearer, 2020). Philosophers like Kierkegaard (1813-1855) concurred that “silence marks the individual's withdrawal from society and the crowd: withdrawal which is necessary for inward reflection and self-development” (Hay, 1998, p. 115). However, Kierkegaard goes further to acknowledge the paradox of the divine and the demonic of which silence is both. Thus, the implication may be that silence resulting from negative experiences is demonic silence of which Kierkegaard postulates that “the «demonic» aspect of silence describes an entanglement in the process of self-development: an entanglement from which there

is no escape: the self continues to close inward on itself and cannot regain attachment to the world, to God, or to others” (Hay, 1998, p. 116). Lorde (1997) argues that it is the weight of silence which chokes and immobilizes the individual and in the face of such views on silence one is bound to query the views of silence as a force to reckon as a source of great strength.

The topic of rape itself is not a new one and particularly the issue of rape of women is almost as old as the hills. On the other hand, child sexual abuse has also existed since time immemorial as Mintz (2012) points out that Elite households in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe sometimes treated young children as sexual playthings. However, it only became mainstreamed in Europe after the passing of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act by Congress in 1974. Unfortunately, many societies including American societies have slowly and unevenly come to recognize the simple fact that sexual abuse of minors is wrong and inflicts lasting trauma. The fact that up to today, human rights and child protection organisations are still fighting with societies across the globe to bring an end to child marriages shows how much it is so true that societies are slow to grasp the harsh reality and consequences of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). Some societies in the past did not even have the word rape in their vocabularies either for men or women because women have always been considered objects of men’s sexual satisfaction regardless of age which made it alright for any man to sleep with a woman whenever he deems it necessary for him. Due to women objectification, the subject of a woman’s rape only raises concern if the woman sexually abused belongs to another man of which it will not even be considered as a violation of the woman in question but rather a violation of the man whose property is considered to have been invaded. On the other hand, rape could not or would not be used in relation to man because in most societies man simply cannot be raped.

A meta-analysis of 217 articles by Stoltenborgh et al. (2011) cited in (Sivagurunathana et al., 2018) on child rape prevalence rate notes that globally about 180 in 1000 girls and 76 in 1000 boys have been sexually abused as children. Globally, more than 250,000 rape cases are recorded annually (Alao,2018; Kozłowska et al., 2015) thus, highlighting rape as a public health concern for many countries due to its devastating immediate and long-term health consequences on its survivors (Gbahabo and Duma 2020). Male rape and sexual abuse are a largely hidden crisis. Jones (2020) contends that it is known that most female survivors never report their experiences and among men, the under-reporting and non-disclosure is even higher which suggests that the global statistics available on rape are highly not a true reflection of the reality about rape.

The greatest challenge which this researcher observed from literature and other social discussions about rape is that it is considered a consequence of war. This assumption is not only problematic but also rather tragic. In zones ravaged by political wars and economic meltdowns which disrupt peaceful social existence, rape is often spoken of in relation to these wars. Rape is spoken about within the curtains of these wars, as though perpetrators are understood and victims well sympathised with but blame being put on the existing unstable environments. What everyone seems not acknowledged is that rape is a kind of war in its own merit. It is a kind of war that exists within and without various other wars. The rape warfare is rampant in countries seemingly at peace as much as in countries clearly at war, in families and among strangers, in businesses as well as in churches. Rape battles are fought where relations are good and closely knit as much as where disgruntlement is rife. Every place is a battleground for this warfare and every person is potential victim or villain regardless of race, gender, or age. The impact of rape warfare is similar to those of any kind of war. Villains and victims lose, lives are lost, displacement occurs, there is despair, fear and anxiety, identities are destroyed, questioned and constructed. Children are not spared just as is with any war. Rape is not just a weapon in political, ideological or other kinds of wars, but it is a war in itself and the battlefield is littered with children as much as adults. It is from this understanding that the researcher chose texts from differing social backgrounds, one from Afghanistan, a war zone and another from Zimbabwe, a country which is not a warzone.

Due to the pervasiveness and swelling of cases of sexual violence perpetrated against women, both young and adult; against men and boys as well, several movements, organisations and institutions have been birthed providing support services to victims and concerned with bringing perpetrators. Examples include the formation of the victim friendly unit of the police department in many countries' police force, movements such as America's #MeToo Movement, Non-Governmental Organisations such as Rape Crisis South Africa, to mention but a few. However, the success of these movements and organisations lies in victims, both direct and indirect coming forward about the rape experiences. Their goal as well is to help victims of rape by affording them opportunities to articulate their experience and seeking justice on their behalf. It is impossible to seek justice for something one does not know, and it is hard to know something that has not been put in the open, mostly by speaking it out.

Though there is rising recognition of rape as cutting across all sexes and genders, most of the service providers to rape victims, however, deal mainly with women and children. And by children, much emphasis is on the girl child and not the boy child. Men are barely visible as victims of rape. They are not recognised as such either by societies, legal systems or even in literary circles. For instance, the Sexual

Violence Research Institute (SVRI) which is considered the world's largest network on research on violence has its central focus on violence against women and children. Only in the recent past have several organisations emerged primarily targeting male victims of rape, such as Peaceful Hearts Foundation; MaleSurvivor; 1in6; Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN); The Bristlecone Project and Project Unbreakable. Clearly demonstrated on the (SVRI) website is that their focus is women who are generally considered the victims while leaving out men considered perpetrators. What has not dawned on many societies, movements and organisations is that sexual violence cuts across all boards and if not dealt with irrespective of gender the numerous efforts to end abuse of women will not yield intended results.

Of importance to this research is also the point that a majority of the above-mentioned organisations providing support services to male rape victims are not even available in the countries from which the texts under study are drawn. This serves to highlight the gaping hole in the treatment of rape with the two countries only being representative of many like them. The implication is that in these countries rape remains an ineffable experience. There remain an unspeakability about rape, particularly about male rape. There still exists silence among child rape victims, those who do not tell a living soul about their ordeal, and they endure it in silence. Some cases in child rape victims would only be discovered after the child falls ill, shows signs of pregnancy or other. In boys, cases of rape maybe discovered only after an illness, for instance, from STIs or STDs or else the secret would die with the victim and the perpetrator. Sawrikar and Katz (2017); Collings, Griffiths, and Kumalo (2005, cited in Lam, 2014) argue that disclosure tends to be the exception rather than the norm, with estimates of nondisclosure varying from 33–92% for girls and from 42–100% for boys.

Gartner (2018) says “when I began speaking in public about the sexual victimisation of men and boys in the early 1990s, I frequently met with blank stares from both lay people and colleagues. The subject was rarely mentioned in either the literature or the media, and many doubted such behaviour ever happened” (p. 2). Up to today, in many parts of the world especially Africa and parts of Asia, the subject is only whispered in muffled silences and often, men would not come forward to report or share with any living soul about being raped or witnessing rape of another male. This is not only an issue with men but even with minor children, because they too are victims who suffer in silence.

In literary studies, the unspeakability of rape is demonstrated in the number of works written on the subject. A Wikipedia page accessed by the researcher had only 19 novels on child sexual abuse. Firstly, the list was clearly limited to the west, yet rape is a global phenomenon, and more so it was too short to be representative of the reality about rape even in the west alone which is suggestive of the silence on

rape in the west and also globally. De Leon (2018) published an article on *Novels That Tackle Sexual Assault* and the list had only 14 books with one novel dating as back as 1958. Such limited records of novels dwelling on the subject shows how societies and victims are silent about rape in general. These lists referred to here also reflected the gendered nature of rape as most of these texts are based on female victims. In Africa, rape novels are few at most and some countries do not have a single text based on male rape victims. Whether the silence is to be blamed on victims or society or writers is not certain but what is noticeable is the solid vacuum in the place where rape narratives ought to be.

Trauma, no matter the kind one may be experiencing, shapes the life of an individual in a certain way. The influence is not always negative, but in most cases, the impact is rarely positive. Rape as a source of trauma therefore affects lives of the victims and worse if experienced as a minor; it alters a child's perception of reality and the world. It is thus important to understand how and why when a child's reality has been dismantled through rape, they would remain silent in that dimness or void created by the ordeal. It is from this background of acknowledgement by societies, though slow, and the growing awareness about rape that the research seeks to understand the silences among child rape victims, establish factors behind the silences and the effects thereof as well as to explore how male and female child victims respond to rape and its unspeakability in two selected texts. The study will also examine how speaking up has been used as a coping mechanism by the child rape victims in the two texts under study. Looking at the selected two texts, *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and *The kite runner* (2003), the researcher shall explore the war of child rape, its implications to and survival strategies for the child victims.

1.1.2 Child rape, silence and the Afghanistan context

Sexual abuse of children (in Afghanistan) remains a pervasive problem, with girls being most frequently abused in their families or communities (European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 2020). According to the *Country Policy and Information Note Afghanistan: Unaccompanied Children* (2021) the EASO, December 2017 report noted that, "child abuse is endemic in Afghan society, and sexual abuse of children remains a pervasive problem, with girls being most frequently abused in their families or communities, and boys being subjected to abuse by men external to their families" (p. 39). The *Country Policy and Information Note Afghanistan: Unaccompanied Children* (2021) report also stated that between 1 January and 31 December 2020, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) verified 10 cases of rape and sexual violence perpetrated against nine boys and five girls: three cases by the Afghan National Police, two by the Taliban, one by Afghan Local Police, one by Afghan National Army, one by Afghan National Army-Territorial Force, one by civilians, and one by a pro-government armed group. What is quite

disturbing in Afghanistan child rape statistics is that child rape crime is committed especially by those whose mandate to protect children. In warzones, there is no one policing the police.

The most recent reports on Children and Armed Conflict show that in 2019 alone, there were 749 confirmed cases of sexual violence against children. Knowing from literature that rape is under and not reported, these cases do not necessarily represent the magnitude of the matter and the fact that many cases may not or have not been reported makes the issue one of grave concern. Of the 749 cases confirmed, 98% were committed against girls, and the cases attributed to state forces almost doubled from 2018 (*Save the Children International, 2021*). Furthermore, the *Save the Children International report* further states that;

On average, only two cases of sexual violence against children living in conflict areas were reported every day in 2019. But we know that rape and other forms of abuse have been increasingly used against children in conflict—which is why these two cases a day only represent the tip of the iceberg. There are many more child victims of sexual violence we've never heard of, but who also urgently need support. Any form of sexual violence against a child is horrendous and must stop immediately (n.p).

While boys only made up 2% of United Nations (UN) reported cases of sexual violence in 2019, they have been strategically targeted during the last years in conflicts. In Afghanistan, most cases reported in 2019 related to boys, where they're often exploited and enslaved by men in positions of power. The *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* (2018) agreed that it was still uncommon for sexual assaults to be reported to the authorities; many incidents, especially involving children, were not reported to the authorities due to issues of shame. In terms of literary novels, fiction or non-fiction, there are few which the researcher could find online, much of the existing literature works on rape in Afghanistan is based on the text chosen by the researcher which further emphasizes the extent to which rape silences not only direct victims but even societies who become victims of narrative trauma.

1.1.3 Child rape, silence and the Zimbabwe context.

The *Zimbabwe Gender Commission* as cited in the *International Commission of Jurists* (IJR, 2020) reported that 22 women are raped daily, one every 75 minutes. On average, 646 women are sexually abused monthly, with one in three girls raped or sexually assaulted before they reach the age of 18. The vast majority of sexual offences are committed by men against women, children and other men. In the case of Zimbabwe, the researcher could not even find a single text on male child rape victims which does not necessarily mean that the rape does not occur but implies that the discourse on rape of men has not yet

been grasped by the society in general and in literary circles. Various practices of the Zimbabwean community shows that the whole rape concept is rather being taken quite slowly.

Traditionally, like in most African societies, Zimbabwean culture does not acknowledge men's rape by women because even by the time a boy turns marriage age, he is expected to demonstrate sexual prowess and the only way to master this is through practice. There is no clear-cut demarcation between getting practice and getting practiced on or rather being sexually abused while one thinks that is acquiring sexual experience. Sexual prowess is characteristic of being macho. For young boys, having sex with an adult female is a conquest to reckon with and not having an idea about sex would be an embarrassment. Girls thus become objects on which boys and men perfect their sexual skills. Various other tendencies still lead to girls being victims of rape prior to marriage or leading to marriage. For instance, it is common practice that parents do not give their male children curfew at home and yet girls who delay coming home are chased away forcing them to automatically go to the boy they were with, and this always ends with the girl being wife to the particular boy or man who may have delayed her.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The main problem is that despite much talk about sexual abuse in societies, there still remains a kind of silence which has enabled the continuance of this heinous act. Rape has in the recent past become one of the most popularly spoken about traumatic experiences that many people undergo irrespective of one's gender or age. Many rape cases go unreported, particularly if and when the victim is male, and it is often quite bewildering why someone would experience such and remain quiet about it, especially as a child. Rape is not a horrendous act experienced only by women; boys and men are victims to it as well yet there are no movements or platforms or street demonstrations pushing for a stop to male sexual abuse. Whenever the subject of rape is raised, the obvious assumption is that it is a woman or girl child who has been raped and almost in all cases, the assumption is that a man has been the perpetrator. Angelina Jolie, Special Envoy to the (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) UNHCR on Sexual violence in conflict, said even though societies including international communities have known about these crimes for decades, they still continue, and in many cases, they only get worse, (Save the Children, 2021).

In the past, violence against women, particularly sexual abuse, was largely ignored, excused, at times justified and often normalised; yet today large amounts of literature including fiction and non-fiction exist with varying degrees of emphasis on female rape narratives. Of late, gender activists have taken to street demonstrations, and are seen on various platforms in mainstream and social media lobbying for a stop to

the violation of women and requesting for governments to do something tangible about the matter. In contrast, just to get fictional or non-fictional books centred on male rape victims is a mountainous struggle because there are very few and, in some societies, there are none on the subject. However, the reality is that sexual violence against boys and men is equally real and is on the increase, even though it is not spoken of, and whenever the subject is raised, it is never with the same vehemence as a call for a stop to sexual violence against women.

The rape of men and male children is often murmured in muffled silences; it is treated as an obscenity. This tangible and excruciating silence among the rape victims, particularly the male victims which leads to the assumption that rape of males is either non-existent or very limited is quite shattering. With all the innocence that is associated with children, it is important to understand why then one would be victimised and live with such a secret; how this silence and the trauma shapes such a child's development and identity. Unless these kinds of silences are established, their reasons of existence are addressed, chances of ever curbing cases of rape will forever increase as unreported cases allow perpetrators to go uncharged and also create monsters out of the victims as they identify with their abusers as a way to assert their own strength and identity. It is therefore the aim of this research to explore the nature of silences among child rape victims, establish why they opt for silence rather than report the perpetrators and to establish how these children are shaped by the rape experience as they live with the secret. While much has been studied about victim disclosure, less is understood about those who stay silent (Carson et al, 2019).

1.3 Research objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the different kinds of silences associated with child victims of rape in *The Kite Runner* (2003) and *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999).

Other subsidiary objectives of this research are:

- i. To establish factors perpetuating silences among the child victims of rape in the two texts.
- ii. Examine male and female child victims' responses to the rape experience in the two texts.
- iii. To explore how rape trauma shapes identities of the child victims in the two texts under study.
- iv. To outline the importance of speaking up about rape experience as a resilience strategy.

1.4 The significance of the research

While the issue of rape has been dealt with at large, scholars exploring the whys, when, how, etc. about rape, not much has been explored about the silences associated with child rape victims. This study will add to the limited body of literature on child rape victims particularly in Africa. It is the hope of the researcher that through this research, especially in Southern Africa where the writer struggled to acquire a single text on male victims of rape, both fictional and non-fictional writers will be encouraged to develop more literature exploring more on the topic of male rape victims. The texts under study fall under the category of trauma literature and by expounding on the effects of rape trauma endured in silence by characters in the texts, readers of this study will also value the importance of communicating and opening up about rape experiences for the healing and recovery of the self and the community at large.

The researcher purposively selected two texts, one centred on male child victims and another on female child victims of rape and by so doing acknowledges rape as a gendered experience and therefore encourages societies, readers and writers to treat it as such. Furthermore, this research expands the scope of rape victims to include witnesses to the rape act in an attempt to accommodate those often-ignored victims who suffer in silence without being given help or a platform for recovery because they are ordinarily not expected to suffer from something that did not happen to them. The research would be of great assistance to direct and indirect victims of child sexual abuse as rape in most parts has become a culture; a way of life in the sense that we live with it, and everyone is affected by it in one way or the other.

1.5 The limitation of the research

The major limitation to this research was the availability and accessibility of literary works centred on child rape victims, especially with male child rape victims from Southern Africa. The Region was the researcher's main interest but due to unavailability of books, researcher opted for world literature and made use of two texts; one from Zimbabwe, *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) by George Mujajati and the other from Afghanistan, *The Kite Runner* (2003) by Khaled Hosseini.

1.6 Delimitations of the research

Research was confined to the field of literature and literary theories with focus mainly on child rape victims. Researcher only examined child rape from two selected texts, *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and *The Kite Runner* (2003). The focus of the analysis was only characters in the selected texts who experienced rape either directly or indirectly while between the ages of 0-17. The research followed through the life experiences of these characters from before to after the rape. Furthermore, the study

was guided by the trauma and resilience theory. It is important to note that while this was a literary study, rape phenomenon is a highly social and psychological issue and as such a lot of material especially used in the literature review was borrowed from non-literary studies such as secondary texts, newspapers, journals and many other online articles on rape. These were however, examined from a literary perspective. The research used materials at the disposal of the researcher and that which was not accessible remained unconsidered. Findings of this research would not be generalised to other novels and their characters which may be highlighting similar themes because the circumstances of these particular characters maybe different.

1.7 Definition of technical terms

Rape: Rape is forced vaginal, anal, or oral sex, of either male or female with either a person or an object.

Child victim: Refers to minors who experience rape either directly or indirectly by witnessing

Trauma: A wound that is inflicted on a person either physically or emotionally leaving a scar on one's mind

Resilience: A victim's ability to cope with and lead a fulfilling life despite the experienced trauma

Silence: The act of keeping secret a heinous experience, not reporting either to adults or authorities.

1.8 Research layout

The report comprises of five chapters. Chapter one provides the background information to the research, outlines the statement of the problem, the research objectives and the significance of the research as well as the delimitation and limitations of the study. Key terms are also defined in this part of the presentation. Chapter two of the presentation examines literature related to the research and outlines the theoretical framework guiding the research. Chapter three provides the research methods and procedures, that is the research design, research paradigm, research method, text selection criteria, data analysis and the ethical considerations adopted in the study. The fourth chapter of the study deals with analysis of major findings and discussions. Conclusions and recommendations are made in the fifth chapter which is the last section of this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The section examines and reviews literature related to the topic of silence in child rape victims. The related works reviewed here are essential to this research as they provide the springboard from which the argument of this research is developed, and recommendations are established. The section has been subdivided into several subsections organised in line with the themes related to the research objectives. The themes thus reviewed include rape, silence, male and female victims' responses to rape and speaking up as resilience strategy. These themes are discussed separately to simplify one's understanding, but they are all a part of one whole aimed towards exploring silences in child rape victims.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Rape

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is an umbrella term which covers a wide range of abuse types of which rape is just one among them. CSA includes sexual activity with a minor which may not necessarily need to include physical contact between a perpetrator and a child. Other forms of child sexual abuse include: exhibitionism or exposing oneself to a minor; fondling, intercourse or masturbation in the presence of a minor, coaxing or coercing a minor to masturbate; making obscene phone calls to or in the presence of a minor, sharing obscene text messages with a minor, or digital interaction such as producing, owning, or sharing pornographic images or movies of sex or sex of any kind with a minor, including vaginal, oral, or anal, sex trafficking, any other sexual conduct that is harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare (RAINN, 2021; Canadian Centre for Child Protection, 2018; Cassar, 2020). CSA is a global social and public health problem reportedly with a very high reported incidence in Africa than on other continents (Cassar, 2020).

All forms of CSA are grievous; damaging to the child victim and ought to be condemned with extreme heaviness of the law. It is quite unfair to say one form is more grave in its effects than others because it is not that easy to measure the impact of damage since it varies from person to person depending on an array of factors. However, it can be agreed that rape is by far the worst injurious form of sexual abuse because whether forced or 'consented', it affects all aspects of humanness. It is a heinous phenomenon that cuts across all humans irrespective of gender, race, status or religious or political affiliation. The worst

part is that sexual abuse [of children] while it is indeed a global problem it remains one of the most under reported forms of crimes (Bartol & Bartol, 2018).

Clifford (2008, p. 4) gives an all-encompassing definition of “rape (as) forced vaginal, anal, or oral sex, of either male or female with either a person or an object, including the force used by a person to rape or sexually violate another person of the same or opposite sex”. It presents rape as an experience which cuts across sexes and the element of the unwantedness of the act on the part of the victim. Gqibitole (2020, p. 87) says this horrendous act of rape “dehumanises and leaves deep scars on the survivors (and) frequently though, survivors suffer in silence instead of reporting their experiences”. Furthermore, “rape is not only intrusive but also a serious violation of an individual’s human dignity and person (of which) its degradation is total and final, as such cannot be inverted no matter what intervention is contemplated” Gqibitole (2020, p. 87). Thus, rape unlike other forms of CSAs has grave implications particularly for child victims who are at critical stages of all forms of development.

One can justifiably say unlike all other forms of CSA or just sexual abuse, rape is lethal and when a perpetrator engages with a child this way, they are committing a crime that can have effects on the victim lasting a lifetime (RAINN, online). Gqola, (2015) describes rape as “a highly painful experience, a highly traumatic experience (which) like other serious traumas, has negative effects on those who survive it” (p. 144) and Bartol & Bartol (2014) contends that the sexual victimisation of a child can start an intergenerational cycle of violence and abuse. Max in Minnie and Steyn (2018) says, “the case I’m working – involving grown men abusing underage boys – touches a deeply painful and still raw nerve for me. It’s not something I talk about, but I think about it a lot. It haunts me” (p. 58). In this case, Max is only but an indirect victim to child rape by seeing and listening to stories of the child victims. The trauma of being sexually assaulted, in the view of Sanmuhathan (2021), is an experience filled with violence, it transforms a person’s sense of safety, their worldview and their relationships with others. Hence the conclusion that of all the forms of child sexual abuse, rape is the worst. Clearly, rape is lethal, and it is not just an act which is committed, and the chapter closes but it lives on with the victim, tormenting him or her.

“CSA is substantially problematic with noteworthy short and long-term consequences” (Bougard & Hesselink, 2019, p.1). In Walbert’s *His Favorites* (2018) 15 years old Jo is cajoled and groomed by a skilled predator, and his actions were imprinted on the rest of her life (Gilbert, 2018). Dating as back as 2002, *The World Report on Violence and Health* (2002) identified child rape as an important public health problem (Runyam, Wattam, Ikeda, Hassan, & Ramiro, 2002) and yet over two decades later it remains a

relentless epidemic. Higgins (2020, p. 31) says the innocent girl child rape victim is “physically robbed of her virginity, narratively robbed of her voice, and vocally robbed of her humanity.” Rape in the view of Higgins (2020) is an act of physical degradation, it is not a just sexual act, it is an act of violence which uses sex as a weapon. Rape is in some if not most cases motivated by aggression and by the desire to exert power and humiliate causing severe physical, psychological pain and suffering as well as reproductive consequences for the victims, which includes unwanted pregnancies for women and other health complications like the threat of HIV/AIDS (Azeez, 2020; Clifford, 2008). To persuade Igor’s brother to talk, Max in Minnie and Steyn’s *The Lost Boys of Bird Island* (2018) had to pull the five-card trick in which he brings up the threat of HIV and the unavailability of treatment. This emphasises the extent to which rape robs its victims of voice, regardless of being direct or indirect child victims.

Apart from the destruction of natural sexual development of the child, there is the damage done to mental and emotional development. Moon (2019) points out that when it comes to rape it is an interruption to the development of the brain of a child and their education, a major rewiring of the brain that can often leave people in a perpetual state of alarm, a heightened sense of who is around me, what is happening and constant vigilance. Craig Hughes-Cashmore, chief executive of Survivors and Mates Survivors Network says he was depressed and suicidal for years because the world was not safe; he felt everyone had an ulterior motive and he had no idea who to trust. Rape in the words of Aydin (2017) particularly that experienced in childhood causes psychological trauma which is basically a type of damage that violates the familiar ideas and expectations about the world of an individual or society, plunging them into a state of extreme confusion and uncertainty.

Ellis (2007, p.233) notes that “indeed, rape and sexual violence certainly constitute infliction of serious bodily and mental harm on the victims and are even the worst ways of inflicting harm on the victim as he or she suffers both bodily and mental harm.... (Rape is) an integral part of the process of destruction”. Whenever one perpetrates rape on another person, the aim is to effect profound harm that destroys the person in ways often irreparable. Rape thus falls under sources of trauma or is considered a traumatic experience as it inflicts a wound on the mind. It is an overwhelming life experience that the brain cannot process. It is typical of traumatic events, since they are often unusual experiences such as forced or violent rape which comes without warning, that they surpass a person’s capacity to deal with them, disrupting his/her frame of mind and psychological stability. Even if no coercion or force is used Gartner (2005) argues that a child’s sexual development is traumatised by rape. Sexual trauma, because it involves sexual acts, it inflicts deep injuries on a child’s sexuality.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) Statute (cited in Ellis, 2007, p. 240) identify "unwavering" elements of rape as:

- i. The perpetrator invaded the body of a person by conduct resulting in penetration, however slight, of any part of the body of the victim or of the perpetrator with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital opening of the victim with any object or any other part of the body.
- ii. The invasion was committed by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression, or abuse of power, against such person or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or the invasion was committed against a person incapable of giving genuine consent

Often children, being innocent and sometimes naïve fall victim to rape not always by force but by other means as stated in the second element. Meanwhile force may often be used, in other times, perpetrators resort to other means which make the victim and witnesses question the innocence of the victim to the crime. According to the ICC Statute, a victim may be incapable of giving genuine consent which means that even though one may have seemingly consented, there is need to judge the genuineness of the consent.

“Child rape is not a fringe activity of a small number of psychologically disturbed men or paedophiles” (Mager, 1999, p. 184), its very scale suggests that there are vital facets of society that least provide space for it. Mager (1999) maintains that influences on child rape include key aspects of the social context within which it occurs, such as cultural norms surrounding gender roles, parent–child relationships, the nature of the social welfare system, and the nature and extent of social protection and responsiveness of the criminal justice system. Gartner (1997) observed that professionals he met on his research on male rape victims “had simply not been trained to inquire about male sexual victimization and they were generally not trained to inquire about childhood sexual abuse at all” (p.2). A notable feature of literature on child sexual abuse is its failure to consider the gendered nature of the violation and to discuss vulnerability to child sexual abuse through the lens of gendered power relations.

According to *Save the Children News* (2021):

Sexual violence is often used as a weapon of war against children and other civilians to terrorise them, spread fear and intimidation for political and military gain, to ethnically cleanse or humiliate an ethnic group, or to punish civilians for suspected support of opposing forces. The trauma this inflicts can have long-lasting physical, psychological, social, and economic effects. The brutality of the physical act itself can be especially damaging for children whose bodies are not fully developed.... Both girls and boys risk urinary and anal damage, and exposure to sexually transmitted (with) long-term harm and even death (n.p).

Max, after his rape ordeal, describes how he is aroused from his unconsciousness by the “resurgence of searing pain.... My neck aches like hell, but that’s nothing in comparison to the feeling in my lower torso. I’m burning up, as if red-hot flames are licking away at my exposed skin” (Minnie & Steyn, 2018, p. 63).

Gqola (2015) narrates the rape of nine-month-old Tsepang by her mother's boyfriend Potse, "Tsepang was so damaged that she needed emergency surgery" (p. 126). From the above, rape has serious physical effects on children as well as psychological and emotional ones. Yvette Abrahams says, "physical pain aside, the enduring trauma of rape is that like slavery, it makes a person a thing. It denies human subjectivity" (Gqola, 2015, n.p). Rape corrupts and diminishes a child's humanness; it is the enemy of full humane development in a child.

2.1.2 Rape myths

The greatest rape myth develops from the differing definitions of rape from country to country and from one society to another. While there may be globally accepted definitions, countries have their own constitutions and their own premised definitions as well and these often pose great challenges when it comes to addressing rape culture. Section 65(1) Of the Zimbabwe's constitution defines rape as a crime where a male person has vaginal or anal intercourse with a female person without her consent. This definition as noted by the *International Commission of Jurists* (ICJ, 2020) is problematic and particularly raises conspicuous discrepancies such as that "rape is defined in strict gendered terms, as a crime perpetrated solely by men and exclusively against women" (p. 7). Offences of sexual assault, including rape, may be perpetrated by and against anyone, regardless of their gender. Women, as well as men, may be perpetrators, survivors or victims of rape. "The failure of many national laws to be gender neutral, for example, by failing to cater for the eventuality that men and boys may be victims of sexual offences, is a discriminatory practice" (ICJ, 2020, p. 7). They also argue that "Zimbabwe's criminal law binary approach to rape (i.e., penile penetration of the vagina or anus of a female by a male perpetrator) violates other survivors' rights to protection against rape, which, in turn, violates their sexual autonomy and human dignity" (ICJ, p. 8). It is essential that societies acknowledge the reality that rape can occur to anyone and can be perpetrated by anyone.

Other similarly problematic definitions include one in Feltoe (1985) where "Rape is defined as unlawful, intentional sexual intercourse by a man with a woman without her consent". This definition does not curter for rape in situations where victims consent out of fear, especially in the case of an adult and a minor, or a stronger person against a vulnerable victim, in cases of coercion where victims often give consent. Consent maybe given out of a variety of factors especially where the victim feels pressured or without alternative. For instance, the case of Melanie in Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), who gave in to her professor's advances because she felt compelled as the professor was in a position of power. Therefore,

to say a person has not been raped simply because he or she consented would be great misjudgement and cruelty to the victim.

Panicker (2021) argues that while problems faced by the girl child have been discussed, the abuse of the male child has been overlooked and unrecognised. There are articles and books about female victims of sexual abuse and incest, though not many if one is to consider them against the global rape statistics. Very limited literature acknowledges the existence of male victims or include the discussion about rape of males; leaving the reader to believe either that boys and men are rarely abused or that the impact on them is “different than on female victims of which neither, as it turns out, is true” (Gartner, 2017, p. 2). The India National Crime Records Bureau statistics for 2018 recorded 21,605 child rapes, of which 204 were of boys suggesting that the issue is grossly under-reported not that it does not happen. Lowe and Balfour (2015), agree that historically, sexual crimes against males were considered impossible or at best rare hence service provision for male survivors being considered unnecessary. Truth of the matter is boys and men are also victims of rape. Sodomy is a practice as old as the hills which means penetration is not a female thing.

Another gross myth is that stereotypes suggest that boys, particularly if they are victimised by women, suffer less harm than do girls (Moon, 2020). This kind of stereotype is a form of gaslighting often employed by perpetrators and even society in general and it leaves male victims especially those raped by females questioning their sanity or justification as victims. Any activity which scars the psyche, or the spirit is greatly harmful. Being forced, manipulated, or cheated into doing something that leaves you questioning yourself and your conscience is wrong. Moore (2018) points out that myths are the most formidable obstacles to survivors confronting their traumas, especially male survivors, faced with such myths as that “real men” don’t get raped, that survivors of rape must be gay, that rape is about sex rather than power and control, or that the abused are likely themselves to become perpetrators. Rape myths do not only hinder survival and recovery, but they also pave way for revictimization and the creation of negative identities.

In addition, another rape myth in the case of child sexual abuse is that home is safe. This is a dominant ideology in society that the family is a safe place, and that childhood is at the core of social life (Ajzenstadt and Cavaglion, 2005). Most child rape perpetrators are family members, close and distant relatives, family friends, house help, neighbours, all people known to the child. Playmates for the child can also be perpetrators. Thus, not checking on children because they are left alone with family, not believing children when they accuse family of rape would be a great error of judgement. Zhizha in Vera’s *Under the Tongue*

is a rape victim in the hands of her own father, Celie in Walker's *Colour Purple* is raped by her stepfather. Not dismissing the role of strangers in the rape of children, much of the rape is often perpetrated by people known to children in the safety of their own homes.

2.1.3 Child rape victim?

Nurse (2020) argues that the seemingly simple term, *childhood* has been a reason for numerous debates. Some argue that it should only include people under the age of sixteen, others think a cut off of seventeen is appropriate, and some argue for eighteen as the upper limit. For the purposes of this research, much of the literature reviewed place child victims of rape as minors between the age of 0 – 17 (Evans & Ward, 2019). The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children ("NCMEC") reports that 76 percent of known victims of sexually abusive images of children are prepubescent and 10 percent are infants and toddlers (Leary, 2020). In line with the new Child Protection Act of Afghanistan, boys and girls under the age of 18 are considered children and marrying someone below this age would be considered crime in the conservative country (Saif, 2019).

There have been somewhat challenges and confusion in the case of Zimbabwe where under the country's law the age of consent for sexual intercourse is 16 which makes anyone below that age a child. However, a 2016 ruling by Zimbabwe's constitutional court ordering the government to raise the legal age of marriage to 18, has contributed to the confusion around the age of consent (Camordy, 2019, n.p). In the case of Afghanistan, with the legal age of majority clearly stated even though there is no stated legal age of sexual consent it is easy to qualify who a child is and who a child rape victim is since sex outside marriage is unacceptable.

The impact of violence extends well beyond the child who is physically victimized to other larger groups of children such as those who witness these events, those who have come to be known as the silent or invisible victims. Pynoos and Eth (1985) argue that uninjured children who witnessed a violent act such as homicide, rape, and suicide behaviour exhibit characteristics patterns of PTSD in various forms like reliving the traumatic event and nightmares. They may exhibit subdued or mute behaviour or adopt an unemotional or third-person detachment from the event as well as may be especially susceptible to sleep disturbances. Research has also shown that there is unique and robust association between witnessing a traumatic event and developing not only traumatic stress disorders, but also depression, anxiety, memory and concentration deficits, poor academic performance, and antisocial behaviour and myriad social problems (Atwoli et al., 2015; Eitle & Turner, 2002; Pingley, 2017; Knapp, 1998).

2.1.4 Child Rape perpetrator

Many people assume strangers are more likely to perpetrate sexual violence against children but as indicated earlier on, in most cases of child rape the perpetrator is a friend or family member of the victim often targeting marginalized victims who possess some kind of vulnerability (Haseman, 2018). Dube et al. (2005) note that for both boys and girls rape risk is correlated with family-related factors such as divorce and domestic violence and having members who abuse substances or who are emotionally unavailable. It takes a familiar person to know such vulnerabilities of a target person such as an unloved or neglected child.

Substantial proportion of child rape is known to be perpetrated by other children. Unfortunately, the general public and policymakers often do not treat juvenile perpetrated CSA as abuse which is quite problematic given the prevalence of CSA perpetrated by minors. This erroneous assumption often exposes vulnerable children to age-mate perpetrators. Victims of juvenile rape experience similar, or more negative, outcomes as survivors of adult rape (Gruenfelder, 2021). Finn and Czech (2015) says that about 20–50%, which is a significant portion of child sexual abuse perpetrated by adolescents and not necessarily adults. Panicker (2021) concurs that in unsupervised situations such as play areas, in the case of street children or children in slums or schools, the perpetrators are often other children who maybe older or physically stronger. Max in *The Lost Boys of Bird Island* (2018) is gang raped by his best friend's twin brothers who are older than him by five years. In the Shona culture of Zimbabwe, children also play 'house', (*mahumbwe* in Shona) where they imitate adult roles of father, mother, and children (Mutema, 2013) and during such games, rape could happen especially if older children are involved and neither parents nor victim would really know what has happened.

While it is true that many children are molested by adults, there are strong signs that children are even more likely to be sexually abused or sexually assaulted by other children. Brown (2021) says in one study of 13,000 children aged 17 and younger, three-quarters of the boys who reported being sexually victimised said the person who violated them was another child. In a little more than half those assaults, the violator was a girl. Most boys who had been assaulted had never told an adult because of shame especially if violated by a woman. The overwhelming majority of male rape victims say that the person who violated them was another male, but some male victims of other kinds of sexual violence say they were violated by a female.

2.1.5 Silence

Scholars in psychoanalysis agree that there is a kind of silence about trauma. Ringel (2011) explores the struggle which the victim of trauma suffers between telling and not telling their ordeal. Silence “can happen when one’s voice is intentionally suppressed, when one is not “allowed” to speak, as a result, of overpowering normative discourses which render alternative voices marginal or literally crippled” (Spyrou 2016, p.4; Baurain, 2011: 91). Rape is centred around the notions of hate and power with the perpetrator being the powerful and the victim the weak one, as such the issues of silencing become very common. Pond (2017) says, the most negative role of silence is that it does undeniably oppress those without power (the rape victims) and preserve harmful hierarchies of authority (the perpetrators) and when rape is suffered in silence, Panicker (2021) concludes that it is that silence that emboldens the perpetrator. Silence and silencing both work to the advantage of the perpetrator while destroying the victim.

According to Crist, (2018) silence refers to the issues, subjects and topics which are not talked about. It also refers to that negotiated, regulated and policed communicative space between people which does not accommodate certain subjects, issues or topics. Child rape is one such typical topic around which there is vast silence and silencing. According to Tatman, (2018) silence is always associated with absence, with nothingness (and this is not a happy, productive nothingness). The kinds of silences associated with rape victims are dangerous silences to which Tatman (2018) contends that “if we remain solely within our silences for too long, we lose our sanity” (p. 69). The kind of silences linked to rape experience are traumatic silences with highly negative impact on the bearer.

Otake (2019, p. 172) asserts that “silence or speechlessness is one of the main and most pervasive effects of violence, interrupt(ing) the process of reception, transformation and production of meanings shared by others, and thus fundamentally threatens humanity... destroys trust and solidarity and increases isolation amongst victims”. Otake (2019) goes on to say while in some cases silence is rewarded as it enables members of communities and whole societies to maintain a certain outlook, it is important to note that “silence has more complex associations with both suffering and healing. For instance, victims of sexual violence are often unable to talk about their experience due to shame and stigma, but also prefer to be silent as a way of protecting themselves” (p. 172). What is clear here is that silence in relation to rape trauma is rather perilous and the societal reasons for silencing victims do not often consider the individual pain of the victim.

Specific reasons for victims not disclosing incidents of sexual violence include the fear of stigmatisation and related social consequences. In defining the silence of women, Hooks (1981, p. 1) refers to it as “the

silence of the oppressed – that profound silence engendered by resignation and acceptance of one’s lot.” Through the processes of socialisation, notions of girls as weak and victims are inculcated while boys are strong and aggressive and such views of masculinity and femininity are the reason why girls cower in silence of the oppressed and boys in silence of the shamed emasculated whenever rape occurs.

Pond (2017) examining the silence of Bronte’s Lucy in *Villette* (1853) explains the complexity and versatility of silence where she says, “silence is of different kinds, and breathes different meanings” (p. 347). For instance, silence is evidence that she (Lucy) has been “dispossessed ... of her own identity and power,” (p. 772) and it is also read as a cry for help, to be noticed. Silence is not always the absence of words but in some cases is used just as voice, to communicate. Mazzei (2003) argues that silence is not an omission or an absence of empirical material, rather it is both meaningful and purposeful. Silence is not, in other words, lack of voice (Baurain 2011, pp.89-90), it is “something more than the opposite of sound” (Poland and Pederson 1998, p. 294). Nairn et al. (2005, p. 224) argues that the body language, the laughter, or the silence exhibited are all “indications of the affective relations of power.” It is in this sense that silence becomes performative (MacLure et al., 2010, p. 498; Mazzei, 2007, p. 638). However, the danger with performative silence is often that someone with a keen eye should recognise the performative silence of a child victim of rape and should be able to figure out ways to help the child deal with the trauma experienced. In the absence of an eagle’s eye observation and wisdom to provide support, child rape victim silence would be dangerous.

Historian Diarmaid MacCulloch (2013) discussing the history of Christian silence posits that, “every silence is different and distinctive.... Silence is always contextual” (Johnson, 2019, p. 199). Johnson concurs that “there are a number of “varieties of silence,” each corresponding to a different stage in life” (Johnson, 2019, p. 200) or different experience. Mazzei (2003) identifies five different types of silence which may be encountered when dealing with trauma victims namely: polite silences, privileged silences, veiled silences, intentional silences, and unintelligible silences. Of keen interest to this research are the intentional silences which happen when one intentionally chooses not to speak because they do not wish to reveal something about themselves or because they are unsure about the reactions it may create as well as the unintelligible silences which although purposeful are neither discernible nor knowable, the silences that remain incomprehensible.

According to Allen (1996) silence represents the unspoken agreement between victims and other members of society to not disclose or address their experiences. This silence is manifested in three ways that is; the child victim’s inability or unwillingness to report about the rape, or victim being denied the

opportunity to report to legal authorities. Silence is not just a problem for women alone but for men resulting from the inability to access difficult emotions such as being a rape victim making it difficult to openly discuss or disclose about rape. Caprioli and Crenshaw (2017) argue that silence is not only in the failure to openly discuss child sexual abuse and exploitation; it is also in the failure to report it. Not reporting and/or not disclosing about rape allows for increased victimization and also for hiding rape more easily.

Silence after a traumatic experience such as rape is constructed either by the victimised individual or by systems around the victim. Caprioli and Crenshaw (2017), describes the insidious impact of the cultural silencing of child victims of sexual abuse such as being forced to experience and respond to their victimisation in silence. Nurse (2020) says that “many abused children, possibly up to two out of three, never tell anyone, and disclosure does not guarantee that a report will be filed” (p. 58). “Those children able to break their silence in the form of disclosure are often thrust into a parallel process of silencing perpetuated in the United States by the current design of the criminal justice and court systems” (Caprioli & Crenshaw, 2017, p. 190). Furthermore, Caprioli & Crenshaw (2017, p. 190) point out that “child witnesses within these systems are silenced in both subtle and overt ways throughout the judicial process and are expected to function under conditions of extremely high stress and anxiety” which creates a severely antagonistic environment, often seriously overwhelming children and shutting down their knack for effective communication. This leads to possible chances of “repeated experiences of silencing that can ultimately have devastating long-term consequences” (Caprioli & Crenshaw, 2017, p. 190). Silence thus, even referring to the absence of sounds or other kinds affects child victims of rape in critical ways.

Johnson (2019) discusses the positives of silences in his exploration of the works of Kierkegaard who describes silence in many places as the basis of selfhood and the foundation of thought, action, conscience, and self-understanding and that “a person has power to act only as long as he is silent and only the person who can remain essentially silent can speak essentially, can act essentially” (p. 201). This kind of silence being described here differs essentially from the kind of silence enveloping rape victims, particularly child rape victims. The silence in the wake of grave and traumatic experiences such as rape has life-shattering and life-halting consequences and such silence is considered immoral in Kierkegaard’s ethical stage since it is the kind which “poisons human relations and destroys moral community,” (Johnson, 2019, p. 200). Despite the advantages which may be found about silence; in the case of rape victims, containing the experience within, seeking no closure in the form of perpetrator arrests usually destroys survivors.

In addition, silence, whether good or bad plays an integral role in the resultant kind of person one turns out to be. Johnson (2019) notes that:

Kierkegaard compares the relationship between silence and the self to the implicit fundamental tone that lies beneath a melody, sustains it, roots it, and gives it power: Silence is like the tone, the fundamental tone, which is not given prominence and is called the fundamental tone precisely because it lies at the base (p. 201).

The implication is that silence resulting from negative experience, creates an individual, the person that one becomes, how they relate with the world without and even with the self is but an echo of the underlying fundamental tone resulting from the experience one had. Silence whether forced or self-initiated influences the melody and by melody here one is pointing to the individual's life pattern, that is, behaviour, attitudes, interactions among other essential aspects making up one's life.

Often people talk about the power of silence, silence as speaking but while that may be true; one wonders if it should be the acceptable case with child rape victims. Can the idea postulated in Kierkegaard's arguments be true to this kind of silence born out of the ripping apart of a child's innocence and utter shredding of one's sense of self? There are silences which can be acceptable, the silences such as those which people voluntarily escape into to rid the selves of the madding crowd, the voluntary silences people resort to when they want to take in the tranquillity of environments around them or to enjoy certain luxuries as reading a book or just to enjoy their thoughts. The kind of silence, of blissful solitude implied in Wordsworth's poem *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* (1815). These kinds of pleasurable silences are far from the silences associated with rape and/or trauma victims, particularly child rape victims whose hopes and aspirations have been thwarted and laid bare, rendered a wasteland.

2.1.6 Silence as under / non-reporting

Alao (2018, p.10) submits that, "rape (whether of boys or girls) is severely under-reported in many parts of the world. It is rarely reported, due to the extreme social stigma, cast on those who have been raped or the fear of being disowned by their families, or subjected to violence. Sometimes the change in these conditions may break the silence and allow memories to be expressed, while at other times "silence can last for so long and under such conditions that it may contribute to the effacing of memory and induce oblivion" (Passerini, 2003, p. 238). Inger Ashing, CEO of Save the Children International, says: "Sexual violence is underreported at the best of times, but even more in conflicts areas—especially among children." (Save the Children International, 2021, n.p). The implication with under-reporting is that when a child is raped, he/she tells someone, probably a parent or friend or another adult but the issue of their abuse is not pursued. *New Era* (2017) published an article titled '*Mother 'disowns' daughter for accusing*

stepdad of rape' and this is one typical example of silence in terms of reporting child rape to legal authorities.

Silence is when the victim's story fails to be narrated and resultantly, no action is taken to assist the victim or to bring justice to the perpetrator because the victim's voice has been rendered irrelevant, unimportant, or inaudible by several factors such as social status, cultural values and beliefs, economic stamina, crooked justice system, among others. These factors work as heavy stones on the tongue of the victim, making him or her unable to either report or put their experiences into words. Gordon, Lyon & Lee (2014) contend that it is the case that children are more often subjected to offenses committed by adults they know and trust than by strangers (and) children are less likely to disclose abuse committed by parents than abuse committed by strangers, which is then less likely to be reported to police (Murray, Nguyen & Cohen, 2014; Finn & Czech, 2015). They further argue that, during this period of non-disclosure, children keep the abuse secret from others as well and these secrets have serious consequences such as undermining the integrity of an investigation resulting from failure to provide details of abuse as well as placing the child and others at risk of continued abuse. Silence has been seen from olden times of Foucault (1978) as a result of prohibition and policing. Understood in this way, it suffices to say silence is suppressed discourse thus demonstrating the notion and effect of power. Dominant discourses permit and legitimate certain vocabularies and values while marginalising or silencing others. Mostly, silence after and about rape has facilitated underreporting, particularly of male rape, not only to the police, but also to the wider society and voluntary services that may help meet victims' needs (Abdullah-Khan 2008).

Not reporting does not only mean to the police but even to traditional authorities in the case of rural or village setups where the village head, the chief, religious leaders or parents are the figures of authority. Existing mechanisms, in and outside war zones, such as victim support groups, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), victim friendly units of the police departments, guidance and counselling departments in schools among others play a crucial role in verifying cases and bringing to the fore violence yet despite that attention and rhetoric child rape has not been adequately addressed and eradicated. Sexual violence remains difficult to document even in peaceful contexts, it is estimated that approximately 80% of rapes and sexual assaults go unreported (Sapiezynska, 2020). In most cases issues of child rape are not taken to authorities due to a number of factors some of which are discussed below.

2.1.7 Factors perpetuating under-reporting

Sawrikar and Katz (2017) provide a detailed list of factors leading to under or not reporting cases of rape of children. Many factors contribute to rape victims not reporting about their victimisation to authorities such as police, and these include poor treatment of victims by police officers, personal factors such as failure to recognize rape as a crime, distrust of the justice system and negativity towards the conviction process (Mgolozeli & Duma, 2020). There are universal (or noncultural) factors such as pay-outs by perpetrator to family of the victim; cultural influences relating to preserving the family name, the overt lower social power of children and the belief that parents are always right, they have the best interests at heart et cetera. Parents may deliberately not pursue cases of rape of their own children if the victim is a relative or a prominent person usually one who is a benefactor. Social norms regarding emotional suppression, fatalistic and/or religious beliefs, fear of reprisal (most especially social exclusion and sometimes also death) also perpetuate silence about rape. Societies which do not believe in the existence of rape either of man or women will not report when it happens (Sawrikar and Katz, 2017). This is most common in societies which practice child marriages, the rape of a girl thus becomes a reason to send her over to the man who raped her to be his wife. Such is a common practice in Zimbabwe especially if the girl falls pregnant from the rape. Families are particularly not keen about the village gossip as such, reporting cases of child rape to the police will draw a lot of whispering in the village or community.

Both boys and girls endure rape in silence which often is occasioned by parents who want to avoid embarrassment and protect family honour. This importance of obedience to adults (Alaggia & Kirshenbaum, 2005; Somer & Szwarcberg, 2001) is one major reason for the perpetuation of child rape victims particularly in situations where the perpetrator is a relative or a benefactor of the family. Parents are also usually the first confidants of child victims of rape, particularly the mothers in cases where the child victim is a girl. It is these very same confidants who exacerbate the predicament of victims by either keeping silent or silencing the survivors. It is important for the confidant to encourage the victim to speak out or even for the confidant to report on behalf of the victim but often, those confided in would choose to distance themselves from the experience, from the victim and in some cases even go further to encourage victims to let go of the matter and 'move on'. The above-mentioned factors as noted in Sawrikar and Katz (2017) are quite prevalent in the contexts of the texts in this research because Zimbabwe and Afghanistan are developing countries whose social and cultural settings are largely similar to those of the ethnic minority communities of Australia which the said researchers investigated. "The devastating trauma of child sexual abuse and exploitation exists in a world replete with social messages endorsing sexual objectification of children" (Leary 2016). Several social forces obfuscate the occurrence

or the severity of child sexual abuse and exploitation beyond the silence and these include social messages, financial influences, and characteristics of perpetrators.

To add to the views of Sawrikar and Katz (2017), Faller (2020) concurs by positing that child sexual abuse typically leaves no physical evidence and where evidence might be present, it is fleeting, and usually the only persons with first-hand knowledge of this violation are the victim and the perpetrator. Determining the likelihood of sexual abuse comes down to the words of a child, which may be delayed, halting, and lacking in detail. There is also the irony that when a victim finally summons the courage to speak, many times their credibility is called into question because they didn't report it right away (Moore, 2018). Furthermore, in most cases, there is always the issue of power differential between the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator, victim being the powerless and perpetrator being powerful. In the case of the raping of nine-month-old baby Tshepang, Potse denied the rape and under cross examination he testified that "he would like to know how his semen came to be in the baby's rectum, on her diaper... and on her blankets and towels on the bed" (Gqola, 2018). Virtually every disclosure of child sexual abuse generates a counterclaim, that the child is fantasizing, mentally ill, misinterpreting innocent events, or lying. In cases where there is no DNA evidence unlike in the case of baby Tshepang, people become fretful about reporting to avoid the back and forth between child and perpetrator (Faller, 2020; Alaggia & Wang, 2020).

According to the *Afghanistan Country Policy and Information Note* (2021) regarding under-reporting, UNAMA notes that:

There is a 'culture of silence' and stigmatization in which shame is placed on the victims rather than the perpetrators. Victims feel unable to share reports of the harm they suffered due to feelings of guilt and humiliation; many are themselves blamed for being sexually abused or raped and are often shunned by their communities – or even threatened – if the allegations come to light (p. 173).

Such occurrences as in the case of Afghanistan are commonplace and quite detrimental to the livelihoods of victims. In Nigeria, Chiazor et al. (2016) says parents of the raped often find it difficult to come out publicly to report such cases resulting in a culture of silence surrounding rape. Research conducted at two universities in Nigeria, EKSU & FUYOYE showed that, 80% of the girls under study experienced rape but could not seek for proper justice due to intimidation, social stigmatisation, circumstances, reputation, threat & parental influence, hence remain silent (Azeez, 2020).

Another huge obstacle to reporting child rape especially in war zones is the fact that much of the rape is done by law enforcement forces, political leaders, and parents; the very people sworn to protect the children are at the forefront of violating them. Particularly in war zones, much of the perpetration of rape on children is carried out by the very forces which should be responsible for their protection and to whom

victims of rape ought to report. The *Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2020* produced in (2021) shows that:

Between 1 January and 31 December 2020, UNAMA verified 10 cases of rape and sexual violence perpetrated against nine boys and five girls: three cases by the Afghan National Police, two by the Taliban, one by Afghan Local Police, one by Afghan National Army, one by Afghan National Army-Territorial Force, one by civilians, and one by a pro-government armed group (p. 35).

The *2020 Trafficking in Persons (TiP)* report states that “some boys who reported sexual abuse and sex trafficking to police reported police officers then raped them” (n.p). The blurb on Minnie and Steyn (2018) reads as follows; “it is late 1980s. serious allegations surface against three prominent National Party cabinet ministers, one of them the second-most powerful man in the land. They are, it is said, regularly abusing young boy” (n.p). In such a situation, where offices of law enforcement and vehicles for child protection are filled with predators, vulnerable children and their vulnerable families have nowhere to report to hence the silence.

Higgins (2020) on the rape of Tamar by her brother Amnon in *2 Samuel 13: 1–22* notes that after the rape, Tamar reports the matter to her brother Absalom, Absalom tells her to stop crying or talking about the issue and to think of the issue no more, Tamar is denied her ability to speak and even to think. The rape and the forced silence render her a ruin, she is desolate both in the interior and exterior. It is difficult to really get to know and understand Tamar as a unique individual as the rape has left her with “no words to express it and no authority to speak. She has been made desolate (*šômēmâ*) and mute (**dômēmâ*), trapped within herself and appalled at her own ruin” (p. 34). This is how rape affects its victim by forcing them into silence either by the shock of the experience or by external forces of power. Rape mutes both male and female child victims of rape. What may differ are the forces perpetuating the muting but central to rape is the idea of muting victims. Absalom did not confront his half-brother in that instant. Though they are all the king’s children, the matter is not brought to the king or to any court present at the time. The reader is not made aware of Absalom’s plans at the time he is informed of the rape nor is the victim of the rape so they may find consolation. All that Tamar is instructed is to be quiet and speak of it no more. This is the reality of many rape victims who attempt to speak out soon after the rape hence no reporting and silence.

Describing the experience of Tamar in *2 Samuel 13vs 1ff*, Tikva Frymer-Kensky (in Higgins, 2020) notes that “Before the rape, she (Tamar) had argued eloquently (but after) she cannot speak a grammatical sentence” (p. 31). Higgins further concurs that “this fragmented expression mirrors Tamar’s inner life... First, she spoke in verse... now she speaks in gibberish. The drastic change in dramatic mimesis reflects

the breadth of her victimization. Tamar's words have gone from something like poetry to something like prose to something inarticulate" (p. 31). Hancock (CEO of Survivors Manchester) had not processed his own trauma and when he eventually opened up about it, he could not speak about it in the first person, he used expressions in the second person like "you feel guilty, you feel ashamed" "instead of I feel guilty, I feel ashamed" (Jones, 2020). Comprehension of rape especially for a child is very difficult, the argument by Caruth (1996) about trauma as an absence is clearly demonstrated in rape victim silence.

Under/non reporting of child rape is also a result of not being heard by the supposed support systems. Not hearing occurs after someone has tried to complain or speak up, but members either dismiss, trivialize, or invalidate the concerns of the victim, or they gaslight him/her by manipulating the child into questioning the reality of their experiences or the fact of being a victim. By not hearing, authorities, support systems and/or members of communities and networks communicate to others that the concerns raised are not worthy of attention or response. As such child rape continues unreported and perpetrator impunity remains very high.

2.1.8 Silence as non-disclosure and factors perpetuating non-disclosure

Rape is a grave evil that mutes the victim. The pressure and the shock one experience after being raped incapacitates one's speech. The victim fails to place the experience in time or is overwhelmed by the whirlwind of emotions and so the ordeal is often unsaid because its memory has been repressed. As opposed to non/under reporting, with non-disclosure, the victim does not tell anyone about the rape experience, not even friends or family. Carson et al. (2019) established in an investigation that reasons for non-disclosure fell into four themes, "shame or embarrassment, minimization of the experience, fear of consequences, and privacy" (p. 271), all of which mirrored the reasons why victims choose not to officially report an incident to authorities or open up to friends and/or family

2.1.8.1 Social factors

Key barriers to disclosure include embarrassment, guilt, fear of not being believed, lack of awareness regarding rights, lack of willingness to confront the criminal justice system, and difficulty understanding the criminal justice system and these work to create "intense shame leading to secrecy" (Kenny & McEachern, 2000, p. 907; Rossetti, 2017) and resultantly significant under-reporting (Sawrikar and Katz 2017). Chan et al. (2011, p. 163) link non-disclosure to aspects of "filial piety of the Confucius teachings (in China which) ... stresses authority over children and expects unquestioning obedience from them"

(Fontes, 1993). Survivor disclosures have been typically met with victim blaming and shaming, minimisation, and disbelief.

While there is an unspeakability about trauma, there are several factors which further the silences about rape among child victims even where and when chances to speak are available. Both male and female victims of rape suffer almost similarly in the hands of society. Butler (cited in Kastner, 2016) says “the question for both Zhizha and Mazvita is “not what it is I will be able to say, but what will constitute the domain of the sayable within which I begin to speak at all” (p. 221). The ideologies which govern the society such as patriarchy and colonialism determine what can be said by members of the society and as such, these ideologies through socialisation processes are inculcated in children from very young ages. For instance, patriarchy trivialises the rape of females by making women objects of sexual satisfaction for men and on the other hand completely denying the victimisation of males especially through rape or the discourse about it. Thus, patriarchy plays a pivotal role in silencing rape or rape narratives for both boys and girls or men and women.

Sawrikar & Katz (2017) posit that collectivist values for the family name as another reason for silence about CSA. Families tend to overlook the sufferings of the victim to preserve family dignity and honour. Tamar requests Amnon to go and request the king that she may be given to him as a wife instead of raping her, but Amnon goes on to rape his sister and even after he does so, she still would want to stay with him as his wife to avoid disgrace of both herself and her family. A woman who is raped is considered the shameful one. “A woman (in many groups) who has lost her virginity prior to marriage is viewed as a disgrace to herself and her family. Thus (she) may choose not to disclose the abuse” (Kenny & McEachern, 2000, p. 910). In Zimbabwe, “a girl who has had sexual intercourse, whether consensual or not, has less chance of contracting a marriage that will contribute lobola (bride price) to the family. Thus, the sexual abuse of a girl has grave economic consequences for the family” (Armstrong, 1998, p. 144, cited in Lalor, 2004, p. 447)

A male community worker explained that “children who have been sexually molested are treated like people with leprosy. They suffer stigma. They are isolated in the community as if they are guilty” (Jewkes, 2005, p.1817). The stigmatisation is also associated with being classed as “rape victims.” This classification comes with pity from community which is rather suffocating and crippling for the victim. Instead of accepting being a victim and then gaining strength from various support systems to recover, the pity which community might attach to being classed as victims stifles any recovery for the victim. Binder (2020, p. 24) points out that “the necessity of acknowledging the rape survivor as a victim is opposed to the danger

of fixing her/him, almost as a cipher, in victim status and of perpetuating stereotypes of invisibility, passivity, subordination and inferiority". Binder (2020) citing historian Svenja Goltermann says that "the category of "victim" is by no means a stable one. Who is defined as a victim in the first place, and who is not, depends on power structures, as well as the victim's personal perception" (p. 24). The victim often ends up feeling like something damaged and unusable though society cannot just throw away. This stigmatisation constitutes part of the negative consequences of disclosure about rape and as a result victims opt for not speaking up (Onega, 2020; Crisma et al., 2004; Collin-Vezina et al., 2015; Goodman-Brown et al., 2003; Hunter, 2011; Jackson et al., 2015; Kogan, 2004; Schaeffer et al., 2011). To avoid that stigmatisation, rape victims opt for non-disclosure so that they can lead somewhat 'normal' lives.

Cultural values and belief systems play a major role in perpetuating silences among child rape victims. Particularly for men, the issue of masculine hegemony plays a pivotal role in perpetration of the rape itself and in silencing victims as well. Men may blame themselves for struggling with the effects of rape and for not stopping the rape in the first place because as men, they should be able to cope (Lowe and Balfour, 2015) and men cannot be raped by other men (Connell, 2005), let alone a man being raped by a woman. The notion of not achieving hegemonic masculinity in terms of being tough, powerful, strong, unemotional, and insensitive, assertive, strong, heterosexual, and sexually dominant, being able to always protect oneself from violence and threats of violence make men who have been raped reluctant to get help because of fear of blame and ridicule (Javaid, 2016; Connell 2005).

Patriarchal society has clearcut definitions and characteristics governing masculinity and femininity. These set boundaries, particularly on masculinity, are severely detrimental to possibilities of rape victims coming out about their rape ordeals. Kimmel (1996) says that masculinity is largely an act, and the need to publicly display it is more intense: "to be considered a real man, one had better make sure to always be walking around and acting 'real masculine'" (p. 100). These gendered expectations of men reduce how the impact and severity of rape on male victims is viewed and acknowledged but rather serves to shove blame on victims for sexual attacks perpetrated on them. The impact is not only denying them (males) as victims of rape (Abdullah-Khan 2008, Easton et al., 2014), but also increasing the suicide rate as a response to rape among these victims (Walker et al. 2005). Walklate (2007b) argues that men as victims are constrained by the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which draws attention to the uneasy relationship that exists between being male and being a victim. In making sense of the tensions in this relationship, men who experience victimisation clearly engage in different kinds of coping to keep their sense of themselves as men whole.

Society-induced silence has far-reaching consequences such as homicide or social isolation. The German philosopher, Noelle-Neumann, refers to this as the spiral of silence in which the weight of public opinion overwhelms the survivors. Fear of stigmatisation and physical harm often compel survivors to die with the pain than inviting the ire of the society (Gqibitole, 2020). "Silence can also happen in the nonresponses, the evasions, the denials, the pauses, the breaths, the sighs, the deflections, and reframings which might often be ignored as non-consequential" (Mazzei, 2003 as cited in Spyrou, 2018, p. 99). Sometimes adults can denote a change and / or an awkwardness in a child's behaviour after a rape incident and make efforts to find out what is wrong with the child and the child would either not respond, evade questions or make various excuses for their behaviour and this qualifies as silence in rape analysis influenced by a variety of factors such as fear, lack of understanding or shock and others mentioned above.

Caprioli and Crenshaw (2015) note that offenders with direct access to victims or their caregivers often can groom their victims, especially minor victims, not only to revictimize them, but also to keep their silence after an abusive event or during an ongoing period of victimization. Mary in Manning's *Nobody will Believe You: A Young Girl Abused by Her Stepfather. A True Story of Unbreakable Courage* (2015) narrates how her stepfather sexually abused her and repeatedly for 20 years since the age of 12, even had four kids by him and how he constantly warned her that he would kill her if she told anyone about the abuse. Out of that fear, Mary endures 20 years of abuse without disclosing. The stepfather made sure she was completely isolated. However, it is not always those in power who initiate silence; victims can take on silence in "a self-decided attitude" (Christensen, 2018, p.244). Humiliated silence is an example of that; it is characteristic that this form of self-imposed silence is widespread but unacknowledged by those participating in it and Connerton (2008) says this kind of silence "may be an attempt to bury things beyond expression and the reach of memory" (67) because the "things" experienced are considered shameful.

The social stigma associated with rape across the globe forces female victims to conceal rape assaults so as to save themselves from shame and public embarrassment and Otake (2019) submits that silence is not only a cause of suffering but also victims opt for it as a coping strategy widely preferred by victims to protect themselves from the impact of traumatic experiences and to alleviate their suffering. In most cases, rape is associated with such silence which is a pathological product of repression, a response to an experience of trauma, and the means to achieving a cohesive self, whereby the victim is using silence as a tool for self-protection (Christensen, 2018). Harnisch & Montgomery (2017) refer to such kind of self-imposed or voluntary or intentional silence as 'avoidant coping' common among former forcibly recruited

people in northern Uganda, who prefer not to talk about their experience of rape, torture, and exposure to death but 'keep on going' to survive war-related impacts and to reintegrate themselves into the local community. This kind of avoidant coping is adopted by Lucy in Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) who does not report, refuses to talk about what happened and eventually marries the man related to the people who had raped her as a way for her to integrate back into the community.

Gender norms compound the trauma for men who are victims of rape and sexual abuse. "Society drills strict gender norms into boys' skulls from a very early age: a sense of being "strong" and "tough", of not displaying weakness or vulnerability" (Jones, 2020, p. 2). This is expressed by Hancock in Jones (2020) as he narrates the impact of his rape ordeal that "'I'd always worn a mask, I always wanted to put on a brave face and be there for others. Showing my vulnerability, my weakness, wasn't within my character'" (Jones, 2020, p. 2). Feis-Bryce in Jones (2020, p. 3) says, "a lot of men feel completely emasculated after being raped and that's what silences them for so long.... The fact that men are taught that talking about feelings and emotional struggles is somehow unmanly" it is not surprising that many male rape survivors are driven to self-destructive habits such as "damaging self-medications, alcohol or drug abuse, or, like Hancock, they end up incarcerated" (Jones, 2020, p. 3). It is for this reason that male survivors of rape are suffering, in silence not because they do not want to articulate their experience, but society has to face the great challenge of building platforms that frees them to do so (Jones, 2020).

2.1.8.2 Guilty

Many survivors feel as though what happened to them was their fault (Alaggia, 2004; Collin-Vezina et al., 2015.). Moon (2019) attributes internalised self-blame, hurtful reactions and dehumanising labels from professionals as factors prolonging silence about rape. "We as a society kind of teach people how not to get raped as if it's their responsibility ... we want to rationalize why this violence happens, and teach people to be careful," (Haseman, 2018, n.p). Girls are often taught behaviour which is appropriate to avoid being raped hence the self-apportioned or society ascribed guilty. Women who find themselves fallen prey to rape often feel that they somehow caused or invited it while the men feel they allowed the attack upon themselves (Moore, 2018). Victim-blaming which is so common in society perpetuates this feeling; it is a part of a culture of rape which reinforces the ideas such as that a woman is solely responsible for her own safety (Sanmuhathan, 2021). Owing to their own sense of shame, many survivors expect judgment from society (Moon, 2019) and in order to escape that entrapping condemnation, victims remain silent about their ordeal.

For instance, Engel speaking to ABC News in Forde (2018) says "victims are often too ashamed to come forward. Sexual assault is a very humiliating and dehumanizing act against someone. The person really feels invaded and defiled, and there is a lot of shame attached to that (and) attached to that shame is a lot of self-blame" (n.p). Furthermore, "victims of sexual assault almost always blame themselves... because in our culture, we tend to blame victims in general. We say things like, 'She shouldn't have been wearing that kind of outfit, she shouldn't have drank so much, why did she go to that party?' We find some reason to blame the victim (Forde, 2018, n.p). Max says "I blamed myself for the attack, believing that what I was doing with Gina provoked the twins into teaching me a lesson. I've lived with this secret for a long, long time" (Minnie and Steyn, 2018, p. 64). Clearly, victims find circumstances in which they somehow justify what was done to them by shouldering guilt and because of that they opt for silence.

"In order to disclose rape, a child victim must make public an event that likely involves some combination of personal shame, fear, or anticipation of negative consequences (e.g., disbelief, stigmatisation, blame)" (Latif, 2008, p. 5) and has to also deal with these or the possibility of their occurrence. According to Morell (2003):

Normalising discourses ensured that certain types of discrimination and abuse could not be named and hence were not recognised Where such discourses operate, victims believe that they are themselves responsible for their misfortune. In cases of rape, for example, women may feel that they provoked the assault by wearing provocative clothes, (or by being in isolated places with a man or in the dark) They therefore elect not to talk about their experience (p. 44).

As a result of such thoughts which the society instil in women and victims of rape in general, they suffer in silence. Jones (2020) points out that gender norms compound the trauma of men who are victims of rape and sexual abuse" (n.p). Male rape survivors often suffer in silence because "gender norms collide with trauma (and resultantly) many survivors feel guilt or shame, torturing themselves with questions such as why they did not somehow fight off their attackers, or wondering if there was some hidden vulnerability that had caused them to be targeted" Jones (2020, n.p). Silence is not in some cases necessarily the choice of the victims, it is not because they do not want to talk but society does not free them to do so.

2.1.8.3 Fear of and (Re)victimisation

"Fear of the consequences of disclosure is one source of (non-disclosure), delays, denials, and recantations of sexual abuse reports" (Faller 2020, p. 2). Uroko & Enobong (2021, p. 5) say that in Nigeria, "silence by victims of rape stems from fear: whether paralysing fear that prevents her from taking any action or deliberate fear – the fear that physical or vocal resistance will cause the rapist to resort to

physical violence or even kill the victim". Hate "generates fear and silence" and rape as a form of hate crime "erodes the individual's (rape victim) need for intersubjectivity leading to a deep sense of isolation and being silent" (Markovic, 2018, p. 122). This means survivors may not be comfortable with coming forward or may be scared of the consequences if they do. "They may fear retaliation from not just the perpetrator, but anyone related to the perpetrator," Haseman, (2018, p. n.p). Max did not tell anyone after the basement rape "fearing that if (he did his) step-father will knock the hell out of him for allowing this to happen" (Minnie & Steyn, 2018, p. 63). Victims mostly fear revictimization even from the supposed support systems.

Secondary wounding is often inflicted because of the insensitivity of institutional practices to both developmental and trauma-sensitive treatment of these vulnerable children (Caprioli and Crenshaw, 2015). To not be believed, or to be blamed for what happened to them, is to be victimised again — which is why rape victims stay silent. The stigma of rape is a powerful deterrent and victims are reluctant to be defined by what might be the worst thing that ever happened to them. Max says, "...I kept quiet. I was terrified of being tagged a moffie. Kids are cruel. That stigma would not wash off easily" (Minnie and Steyn, 2018, p. 63). Some fear retaliations if they tell, and others might feel that it isn't worth it to go through the ordeal of a trial after the trauma of rape – especially if the perpetrator is in a position of authority (Moore, 2018, n.p). The perpetrators are not condemned, instead the victims are. For instance, a Nigerian mother beats her 2-year-old daughter and called her '*ashawo*' which means 'prostitute', after the child was raped (Ikeji 2020 in Uroko & Enobong, 2021).

Vera's *Under the Tongue* (1996) is an intriguing narrative of how "the individual seeks solace from silence to remain relevant to a society that side-lines him/her through a cloud of secrecy which somehow burdens his or her psyche" (The Herald, 2018, n.p). The rape victim opts for silence because he/she does know how the society would respond to his/her plight. The narrator Zhizha, in a dream-like consciousness, draws the reader into the travails of her existence, reveals how her father brutalises and ravages her innocence, physically, emotionally and psychologically breaking her. She wonders if she would lose all her friends once they knew the truth about the rape. Zhizha admits that she was terrified about people finding out about the rape, she began to doubt herself, to believe that no one would be interested, and that someone might use the knowledge of her rape against her somehow. As if the pain of being brutally violated is not enough to endure, the added fear and confusion about sexual preference adds to the silence of victims. Vera through the text expresses her disdain of the silences such as that of Zhizha. Such

silences, which if allowed to seethe for long, are dangerous particularly for the individual containing them as they result in the creation of internal volcanoes that may erupt devastatingly.

2.1.8.4 Ignorance of or failure to process and/or understand what has happened

Survivors' silence may be a sign of an existential crisis from which they cannot redeem themselves. The majority of sexual assault victims do not acknowledge the reality of the ordeal right after it happened. If ever they do acknowledge, fear of stigma is part of what causes their silence but also, the body's automatic response to trauma accounts for some of the silences (Ro, 2018). Being a child, only 12 years old, Max "was too young to understand the legal implications of what (he) had experienced" (p. 64) and so is the case of all the other boys being used by Uncle Dave and his group of paedophiles in *The Lost Boys of Bird Island* (2018). Zhizha is also unable to comprehend her violation in the hands of her own father Muroyiwa (Vera, 1996) and similarly, 14 years old Celie in Walker's *The Color Purple* (1985) is abused by Mr _ and does not say anything to anyone until years later when she learns to write letters to God. Even as she writes, the language she uses to describe what Mr _ did to/with her shows she did not understand what it was and what it meant. While it hurts her physically, she still lacks the full understanding of the grave wrong being done to her. Alison Turcos in Forde (2018) says that at the time of her abuse, she did not have the language around rape and consent, nor did she have the knowledge around anything like that; because she did not know, she remained silent about it. It is hard to tell that which one does not know or understand because you do not have the words with which to tell it, so it gets buried in silence.

Faller (2020) contends that there are also children who do not know that they should tell when rape happens. A child may know that what was done was wrong but not knowing that it should be reported to an adult or a figure of authority. These victims are usually young children who lack sexual knowledge and/or knowledge about sexual abuse. Sexually naïve children may experience sexual abuse as a strange encounter, but do not understand its meaning or that such acts between a child and an adult are taboo and criminal. The language used to speak about rape may sometimes be confusing for young children to really understand that when such things happen to them it is tantamount to violation. For example, in Zimbabwe, talking about sex is prohibited, it is vulgar to say it out that kids were having sex while playing so children use words such as *zvigan'i* which translates to being naughty. Being naughty is not something a child to whom it is being done would come and report in some cases. Some children have been informed about 'how babies are made' and they are made to understand that if someone older tries to do that one should come and report. While that may not be utterly wrong, the danger is that children would not relate this knowledge to rape which is non-vaginal penetration such as oral or anal penetration and fondling of

the private parts as these do not result in making babies. Ironically, as these victims become more knowledgeable, they often fail to report because the strange encounter, that they subsequently discover was a terrible thing, may imply that they too are terrible (Faller, 2016).

Another factor which causes silence among rape victims is the concept of Tonic Immobility (TI) which according to (Kozłowska et al., 2015) is one of the immediate consequences of rape experienced by most survivors of rape. TI has been described as a behavioural response, "...to an inescapable threat, or a strategy of last resort, when active defence responses have failed" (Gbahabo & Duma, 2020, p. 1). They go further to expound that:

It is experienced physically and psychologically as a reversible catatonic-like state, accompanied by an inability to vocalise, or consciously control one's muscles and movement. An experience of any one of the following during a rape is suggestive of TI: feelings of detachment from self, relative unresponsiveness to external stimuli, feelings of shame, self-blame, inescapability, hopelessness, fear, coldness, numbness, uncontrollable tremors, dying or death, and intermittent eye closure (Gbahabo & Duma, 2020, p.1).

After begging his attackers to stop but to no avail, Max describes how, "the twins took it upon themselves to switch positions, holding my limp carcass in the air.... I call out to God again to help me. Thankfully, he answered my prayers. I slip into a world of darkness. No more fear. No more pain. Complete nothingness. I am not sure how long this all lasts" (Minnie & Steyn, 2018, p. 63). Max tried all the active responses he could, he cried and begged but nothing worked as his attackers were tenaciously relentless and he got into a catatonic-like state in which he felt nothing. The choice of words referring to his body as, 'my limp carcass'; slipping into 'a world of darkness', 'complete nothingness' shows the extent to which he resigned to this deathly state.

"Grooming tactics used by offenders were seen to potentially make boys feel like they were somehow responsible for the abuse, making it difficult for them to recognise or acknowledge abuse" (Esposito and Field, 2016, p. 20). The experience takes away one's voice forcing the victim into silence. Igor is used by Uncle Dave, at first doing simple oral intercourse on the client for which he is paid small money to cover his debts of marijuana but "soon he graduates from mutual masturbation to full-blown sex" (Minnie & Steyn, 2018, pp. 45-46). of which the payment also increases such that in one incident when a boy's "anus was raptured...." "...He claims the payment afterwards, double the usual amount, made up for it" (Minnie & Steyn, 2018, p. 47). Max, the narrator says Igor explained this piece of detail with such "nonchalance, the matter-of-fact way he tells me this part of the story. He sounds numb as he recounts it on the tape" (Minnie & Steyn, 2018, p. 47). This shows how perpetrators groom victims until such a time when they do not even realise, they are actually being violated. The only reason Igor came forward was because his

younger brother had been extremely wounded, otherwise for him, all was well even though he was being raped almost daily.

2.1.9 Male and female responses to rape

According to Esposito and Field (2016, p. 20) “studies show that childhood sexual abuse is a ‘gendered’ issue. Gender influences the risk and likelihood of being abused, the identity of the offender, the nature and circumstances of the abuse, decisions to disclose or not disclose, the likelihood of victims asking for and receiving support, preferred type of support and the responses that children receive”. They also posit that there is some evidence that the sexual abuse of boys may involve more violence and physical harm as compared to that of girls. CSA of boys may involve multiple offenders and more repeated penetrative acts, oral intercourse, masturbation, and anal-genital contact than girls. Also, rape in boys is linked with the presence of violence and more invasive acts with more adverse outcomes. Igor’s young brother had some object inserted in his anus which resulted in him having a ruptured rectum causing haemorrhaging. In hospital he cannot even sit properly, and the doctors say he has lost a lot of blood (Minnie & Steyn, 2018).

The way society brackets the sexual abuse of children as though it is the same is problematic since rape is a gendered experience. While rape maybe the same heinous act upon the girl child and the boy child, how they respond to it differs because its implications differ for each gender. There is no right way for anyone to behave in response to trauma (Moore, 2018) and this goes either for adult victims or child victims of trauma. Examples of prescribed responses to rape include a child crying or reporting to law enforcement officer or just telling someone or shutting out. There is no universal or standard reaction to rape especially during or immediately after the rape. Holst (2019) argues that the assumption that a victim gives consent because she/he has not physically resisted, screamed, or done anything is deeply problematic, given that “involuntary paralysis” or “freezing” has been recognised by experts as a very common physiological and psychological response to sexual assault. There is really no link between how quickly someone reports an assault and how genuine the allegation is as there are a number of social and psychological factors which contribute to survivors not being able to process their experiences immediately (Ro, 2018). Ro (2018) further argues that it is common for victims to need time to acknowledge what has happened to them. Rape is such a traumatic experience that oftentimes its victims are utterly overwhelmed by the impact on themselves, and survivors struggle to even process the experience enough to figure out how to come to terms and respond to it, let alone come forward (Janie, 2021).

Lowe and Balfour (2015) note that male responses are often different from those of females. For example, boys are less likely to disclose at the time sexual abuse occurs than girls. Moon (2020) concurs that there is evidence alluding that girls are more likely to report abuse than boys because the latter fear being ridiculed or, if the offender was male, being perceived as gay. A 2014 paper by Sydney Law School found that males are much less likely than females to disclose child sexual abuse at the time it occurs; they take longer to disclose and make fewer and more selective disclosures. Men typically disclose being sexually abused in childhood 10 years later than women – on average 22 years after the assault. Men are one-and-a-half times less likely than women to report adult sexual assault to the police (O’Leary & Barber, 2008; O’Leary & Gould, 2009; Pino & Meier, 1999) and men make fewer and more selective disclosures than women (Hunter, 2011).

While both boys and girls victims of rape may suffer fear, shock, anger, and sleeping difficulties, for males, there are additional traumas such as identity crisis, sexuality confusion, and questioning of one’s masculinity (Allen 2002). This leads to low psychological well-being and negative interpersonal relations (Carpenter 2009). Groth and Burgess (1980) note that male rape victims may even go on to commit rape against other men as a means of retaliation. The notion of hegemonic masculinity disallows men from becoming victims of crime (Connell 2005), particularly of rape that is expected to only occur to women (Stanko 1990). Gartner, (2018) identifies three themes on how to understand male rape victimisation and how it differs from the rape of females. He explains male sexual victimisation in terms of “masculine gender socialization, feelings and worries about homosexuality and fears of becoming predators themselves. Masculine gender socialisation informs how boys and men think of masculinity and therefore how they measure up as men” (p. 7). He further posits that for many male victims, the above notions mean believing that: “‘real’ men are in charge of themselves and therefore cannot be victimised . . . masculine men don’t express emotions, are “independent” rather than “needy,” are competitive and resilient, and welcome sexuality whenever it is offered, particularly from women (Gartner, 1999, pp. 67–68 as cited in Gartner, 2018, p. 7). As a result of these differences, boys are bent to respond differently to rape from their female counterparts.

Briere and Elliott (2003) say that “psychological sequelae of rape include low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, anger and aggression, post-traumatic stress, dissociation, substance abuse, sexual difficulties, somatic preoccupation and disorder, self-injurious or self-destructive behaviour... (p.1207). A witness in Ellis (2007, p.225) confessed that when the rapes began, “they lost all hope. ... everybody lost hope, everybody in the camp, men and women. There was such fear....” Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), a

psychoanalyst, in his studies argued that female patients who experienced sexual harassment demonstrated unusual behaviour such as hysteria or mutism. In his early work, he posits that traumatic hysteria cultivates from an inhibited, prior experience of sexual assault (Mambrol, 2018). Thus, rape affects women and men differently and unless the trauma is addressed, the consequences of rape are largely unavoidable.

2.1.10 The effects of silence about rape and its contribution to identity shaping

Otake (2019), even though she spoke with reference to silence and suffering in the context of war and political repression, the views about silence and its impact on victims shared in her article can be applied to rape victims as rape is considered by this researcher as an endless war in its own capacity. Child rape is a vicious war against children, against innocence and the survival and future of every society. In her discussion, Otake (2019) notes that unspeakability; which refers to the existing contexts that prevents victims from speaking freely about their experience, including discussion of those who raped and those who were raped, worsens suffering. Furthermore, “unspeakability exacerbates suffering since victims are obstructed from applying ready narratives or constructing their own narratives which could ordinarily help them to process mourning and reconciliation and to make sense of their loss” (Otake, 2019, p. 171). Victims also selectively use silence as coping and protection mechanism; avoiding speaking about the past as a way to maintain everyday life. However, at the same time, these unprocessed emotions of betrayal, hurt, pain, anger remain a serious problem, resulting in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSDs). There is a close link between rape silence, trauma and identity shaping and negative silence may likely lead to unlikable identity construction such as individuals seeing themselves as weak, as victims, as unworthy or becoming perpetrators just to feel powerful or have a sense of being at the same level with their abuser who is seen as being in a position of power.

There is gross similarity between colonisation and rape. Fanon (1963) in his discussion concerning violence says “the ‘thing’ which has been colonised becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself” (pp. 36-37). That which is born of violence has the desire of an identity similar to the creator hence the violence gives the native an identity. While this is in reference to the processes of colonisation and decolonisation, rape is a similar process; by penetrating another person, violently or non-violently, the perpetrator invades the victim. The wound that the experience leaves take over the person’s life in the same manner the colonialist does the colonised. For the rape victim to recover, there is need for decolonisation of some sort and for some, the same process by which they were displaced will be their way for redemption and redefinition. Both processes of rape and colonisation are violent and result in the

identity crisis and existentialism; victims share similar experiences of displacement, shame, humiliation, fear, and trauma among others. While the native always dreams of muscular prowess, of action and aggression as this gives him a sense of no longer being a victim but a victor (Fanon, 1963), the rape victim often has similar desires to avoid revictimisation and to exist above the limitations of their horrendous experience. The colonized struggles with the “aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones” (p.53) and so does the rape victim. For Max, “memories of that incident in the Harpers’ basement often churned in my mind.... It intensified my hatred of him (his stepfather), and my wish that he was dead” (Minnie & Steyn, 2018, p.64).

As indicated earlier, rape affects every facet of human life, that is, social, emotional, physical, spiritual psychological etc and yet aptitude in all these areas is crucial if one is to function in a wholesome, meaningful, and productive way which is also morally acceptable within society. Stogsdill (2019) points out that “abuse in any form against a child will impact the way the child learns morality (and) childhood is a unique and important time for the brain to absorb and form new ideas” (p. 2) as well as develop a sense of identity. Without a safe environment for children to grow and learn, this moral and identity development may be impossible. When children experience different types of abuse, either directly experiencing rape and even witnessing it, this can greatly impact the way a child develops morals as their idea of morals and differentiation of right from wrong becomes polluted (Stogsdill, 2019). As a result, most perpetrators of violence or people who turn out to be substance abusers, are those whose moral development was disrupted during childhood and worse, when then having endured in silence without any proper guidance away from what they have experienced or witnessed.

The issue of self-identity in the wake of rape is a very complex one. As Aydin (2017, p.129) points out, “what makes a traumatic event so distressing, and damaging is its violation of primordial assumptions that people have about themselves and the world”. Traumatized individuals struggle to reconcile the “harsh and difficult-to-frame reality of extreme adversity with assumptions about oneself, other people, and the world” (Aydin, 2017, p. 129). In addition, “individuals depend on values, goals, and ideals that are provided by a tradition and culture to give their lives a desired meaning and direction and to enable them to form a coherent, healthy, and strong individual identity(ies)” (Aydin, 2017, p. 129). If a society therefore seemingly condones grievous acts as rape, child victims of such acts then have nothing from which to build their identity. In the absence of strong structures which provide support and protection child victims of rape suffering in poisonous silence about rape experience become dormant yet seething volcanoes which

may in the foreseeable future erupt and disrupt the existence of the very individuals and/or whole communities.

Rape, as established earlier, essentially challenges and threatens men's hegemonic masculinity, and this argument highlights the differences between men's and women's experiences of rape as women do not subject themselves to a "masculinity crisis" nor do they question their sexual orientation (Clark 2014). While rape creates an identity for women it creates an even scarier one for men. Adolescent males tend to externalise the trauma they have suffered through risk-taking and aggressive behaviour. Being subjected to violence escalates the risk of re-victimisation or becoming an offender themselves later in life. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) committee emphasised that rape has to be understood in the context of the violation of a woman's right to 'personal security and bodily integrity' which in turn affects women disproportionately and has a disparate impact upon the lives of women. While it is true that men are also victims of rape, they do not face similar consequences as women such as the possibility of pregnancy or being pressured by police or magistrates or even family to forgive or even worse to marry the perpetrator (ICJ, 2020).

According to Johnson (2019, p. 202), "in silence something inexpressible thrusts itself forward from the innermost being, something unspeakable". Memory plays a vital role in the existence of the individual's sense of the self. Having had a traumatic experience concealed within the self, the individual gets eaten away at the core until something sinister emerges from within. Searle (2004, p.198) says "my sense that I am the same person over time (who I am), from my first-person point of view, is in a large part a matter of my ability to produce conscious memories of earlier conscious events in my life". One's earlier lived experiences contribute to the construction and/or development of a sense of self and having this tainted often implies a tainted sense of self. Hood (2012) also concurs that the idea of the self is one that is constructed through the system of thought. The danger with trauma is that it is a negative thought that refuses to be erased but rather stays active in both the foreground and background of one's consciousness thereby affecting the conscious as well as the subconscious of the victim and in turn the construction of the idea of self.

The plight of the rape-victim is not only with establishing an identity for the self but also struggles with a society which forces one's identity to conform with prescribed social categories, or else become invisible as other and outsider. As Balaev (2008) annotates, "trauma creates a speechless fright (silence) that divides or destroys identity" (p. 149). Pond (2017) examining the silence of Lucy in Bronte's *Villette* says that silence controls knowledge and the construction of identity and "the fact that one's identity depends

in part on being recognized and addressed by the other means that the social norms governing scenes of recognition involve an 'operation of power' because only "by virtue of certain kinds of anthropocentric dispositions and cultural frames will a given face seem to be a human face" (p. 775). Thus, it is without doubt that silence and rape distort the elements of both singularity and sociality and destroys the power of self-identity given the association of silence with subjugation and discrimination.

The self as Hood (2012) ascertains is a result of the brain's attempts to "organize, interpret and fill in missing information based on past experience" (pp. 293-294). Basten & Touyz (2020) posit that:

Sense of self is that continuous experience of being a complete and authentic person who feels in control of their own activities. It is a part of normal development of the self and, when weakened by trauma or developmental neglect, is a vulnerability for developing many different disorders, including depression and dissociative, personality, and eating disorders (, p. 159).

While childhood rape has an impact on the sense of self, it also has a lot of connotations in as far as how the world views the rape victim. Society creates an identity for the individual based on that rape experience and attributes of character are sometimes ascribed to victims according to the eye with which society views them; part of which is constituted by the perpetrators and those who may sympathise with them. Silence endured by the victim of rape enables the cultivation and nurturing of certain identities ascribed to them because without the power of the victim's liberating narrative, there is nothing to say the views of society to something they have not witnessed (Pond 2017). This secretive nature, therefore, becomes a compounding cause of imprecise labelling (Leary 2016)

Furthermore, on shaping of the self, Hood (2012) posits that the self is shaped by context, by culture and by the reflected opinion of those around us through social interaction. Pond (2017) also argues that for one to be able to answer the question "Who am I?" requires that the individual understands where he/she is located in relation to norms of society because to know who one is is a species of knowing where one stands. In his essay *The Politics of Recognition*, Taylor (1994 as cited in Pond, 2017) focuses on the problem that emerges from the link between a dialogic identity and recognition and notes that "nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (p. 775). The self is defined by its orientation to other selves and practices, and Taylor (1994) refers to this as "webs of interlocutions and social frameworks, without which personhood is not possible" (Pond, 2017, p. 775). Rape is dialogical, it is not just an act without meaning and whenever rape occurs the perpetrator is saying something, most importantly to and about the victim. Thus, rape brings about the ideas of either nonrecognition or misrecognition of the victim by the self, the

society and especially the perpetrator thereby inflicting grave harm on one's state of being as well as sense of self.

To add on, rape as speech creates a double identity whereby the victim is often experiencing intrapersonal conflict between what he/she believes to be the truth about the self or the world around them while at the same time also aware of other voices in the background that are always there, voices of the perpetrator and the judging or disbelieving society; aware of existing other ways of looking at the self, at who and what one is and that nagging awareness preventing one from being too sure of anything. Gilbert (2018) in a review on *His Favorites* (2018) says the novel "is not a simple narrative of trauma and survival, it is a reckoning with the pernicious ways rape can shape and inform everything, even the stories you tell yourself" (n.p). Rape gives one the feeling of always being on two sides of everything at the same time, particularly for boys who often find themselves debating their masculinity. In societies that associate penetration with femininity, being penetrated anywhere for a man means you have been 'womanised' thus creating a troubled interpretation and understanding of the self for a boy victim of rape (Wegerif, 2018).

Rape and silence make the worst combination as they often lead to the invention of monsters (Panicker, 2021). The film *Anatomy of Violence* (2016), an adaptation of Raine's book *The Anatomy of Violence: The Biological Roots of Crime* (2013) is a sensitive portrayal of "brutalisation suffered by the rapists during their formative years, so much so that they, according to recorded testimonies, seemed immune to the sufferings of their victims" (Panicker, 2021, n.p). Panicker (2021) further points out that, "the male child who has suffered sexual abuse may end up with psychological problems, trauma, depression, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, and a tendency towards violence" (n.p). these issues about male child rape which are rarely spoken about have a bearing on the increasing male violence against women especially in terms of rape. Some of the boys and men who survive sexual violence can experience serious psychological and emotional fallouts mainly due to the fact that they are forced to endure their trauma in silence. Brown (2021) highlights that some of the effects of rape and silence include, symptoms of depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress, thoughts of suicide, abuse of dangerous substances abuse as well as sexual dysfunction.

2.1.11 Speaking up as resilience strategy

Understanding the relationship between rape and silence and the consequence of the silence makes it apparent that victims need a voice for resilience. While there are various strategies which maybe

applicable to different rape scenarios, what is apparent and essential to recovery is the fact that the victim should be able to witness their ordeal by way of narrating it. "Voice does, indeed, reflect truth; it is through one's voice, in other words, that we learn about a person's experiences and essence" (Mazzei & Jackson 2012, p. 745; MacLure, Holmes, Jones & MacRae, 2010). It is not just a matter of who speaks, or what and how they speak that matters but also of great importance is who hears the voice, what and how they hear it (Wertsch, 1991). Conditions which are conducive should be provided which would allow children, as boys and/or as girls, to speak more and share more about their experiences. "Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims" (Herman, 1997 cited in Chun, 2014, p. 966). Kristine Holst, a journalist and rape survivor says, "together with several other rape survivors we began to tell our stories publicly: first on Facebook and then more widely" (Holst, 2019, n.p). For the campaigns against rape, that Holst and other victims carried out, to be effective, they realised it was absolutely necessary that the wall of silence that surrounds the issue of rape is broken.

One victim in Moon (2019) says that speaking out for him was about justice, forgiveness, helping and healing and also because he believed communication is key to all forms of trauma. The bible character Tamar names the rape by his brother Amnon "debasement, vile thing," and calls her being sent away a "great wrong" and in the viewpoint of Claassens (in Higgins, 2020) Tamar's attempts to name what had been done to her are "the first signs of recovery: an attempt to find words to narrate the traumatic occurrence and to engage in an act of interpretation that offers a moral judgment on the deed of sexual violation" (p. 34). Furthermore, Higgins (2020) notes that for Tamar in *2 Samuel 13 vs 1-22*, the first chance towards her recovery was the opportunity to speak about her victimisation to her brother Absalom though unfortunately her brother silences her, and she becomes "locked in the 'wordless nothing' of a trauma sufferer" (p. 35). Being locked up in this nothingness, robbed of the power of voice does not only consume the direct victim of the rape Tamar but also his brother Absalom who witnessed the rape by listening as Tamar narrated to him her ordeal. Absalom is gravely traumatised that he murders his brother. Probably if Tamar and/or Absalom had spoken out to the king, Absalom would not have had his brother's blood in his hands.

Without speaking, which allows opening up spaces of trauma locked within, the rape victim may never recover. The disclosure of child sexual abuse is thus a breakthrough for survivors because by sharing their experiences they are making the listener a witness to their experience. Anderson (2012) says the role of trauma literature is so that the writer may transmit the trauma of the character to the reader so that it

becomes shared as the proverbial saying goes that ‘a problem shared is a problem solved’. Anthony D. Rodriguez, Founder of the Men’s Center cited in Easton (2019) argues that it is important to bear witness and empathise with victims and help them find the voice with which to articulate what happened to them. Easton, (2019) also postulates that “disclosure often serves as an antidote to the silence, secrecy, and seclusion upon which perpetrators rely. It may act as a therapeutic mechanism to help alleviate suffering, isolation, and helplessness that many survivors” (n.p) but this is also dependent on whether the victim’s voice has been heard, recognized for what it is and then safely and sensitively responded to (Easton, 2019). However, much research continues to demonstrate that disclosure is essential to recovery from traumatic experiences especially from rape trauma.

According to Eichhorn (2019), forgetting past experiences, particularly the most embarrassing and painful ones, may be necessary in order to “move on and live a full and productive life in the present” (p. 17). However, other “critiques have argued that traumatic events are highly memorable and seldom, if ever, forgotten” (McNally, 2005 in Aydin, 2017, p. 130). The question one would ask is whether it is possible to forget a past experience without addressed first by speaking it, whether one can move on without addressing that which keeps them in a particular epoch? Rape victims are more likely to see the trauma in their mind, to see the contextual layout, and to consider it a significant part of their life story (Ravitz & Azad, 2018; Millon, Chang & Shors, 2018). “If there is a failure of language, resulting in silence or mutism, then no working through, no catharsis, is possible” (Hartman, 2003, p. 258). Hartman (2003) points to literary verbalization as “a basis for making the wound perceivable and the silence audible” (258), thus emphasising the importance of putting one suffering into words in order to gain the ability to live with one’s trauma.

Coping is a dynamic, complex process and although everyone copes differently, and talk therapy is not everyone’s cup of tea, opening up to a trusted friend or therapist is typically an important step towards recovery. Moore (2018) says that getting out what one has buried under the tongue or in the subconscious is a big part of healing. Better coping can be fostered along the lines of Joseph’s (2012) THRIVE model of which the second and third stages of this model involve talking about the rape with someone who is supportive or talking with / to someone who has encountered a similar event and all these lead to the development of a sense of hope, positive reinterpretation and growth, practising optimism, self-understanding, viewing survival and life accomplishments in a positive manner (O’Leary & Gould, 2010; Joseph, 2012; Kia-Keating et al., 2010; O’Leary, 2009).

Carson, et al. (2019) suggest that disclosing an attack - not necessarily to law enforcement but even to trusted allies - has been found to ameliorate Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which many experience after such a trauma as rape. In *His Favorites* (2018), Jo, 19 years after her rape at 15 years explains where “the story bends (and how) there is never not a day without Master’s shadow across my life—a solid bar, a locked turnstile that brings me up short, trapped on the other side of where I thought I was going, the place I once imagined I would be (p. 44). In the event of a child who did not know at the time of rape that they were actually raped, the moment knowing begins, once realisation kicks in, it is important to speak up about it because it also becomes a ghost in the shadows of everyday existence. Rape does not just go away, the wound or the scar cannot be merely willed into recovery or wished away from the conscious or the subconscious; it has to and needs to be tended, well-dressed into healing.

Kastner (2016) notes that “*Under the Tongue* (1996) seems to endorse the therapeutic goal of overcoming silence through speech after sexual violence which this is made possible by foregrounding the social, historical, and linguistic construction of silence, and by appropriating silence as a space of feminist possibilities” (p. 221). If the trauma is not sufficiently dealt with, the gap between what happened and assumptions about self, others, and the world becomes unbridgeable. Trauma disorganizes beliefs, values, expectations, and ideals that are part of one’s identity, yet these are critical to the construction of a meaningful, coherent existence. As a result of rape and silence, these essential qualities “get radically shaken, challenged, and disrupted in such a manner that inability to reconcile and resolve that dark episode of one’s history can (lead to one’s) identity (being) severely disturbed and even completely obstructed (Aydin 2017, p. 129). Therefore, it is of paramount importance that child rape victims are able to articulate their experience, especially sooner, while still young, so that they get enough space as they grow to heal and redefine themselves by creating new narratives outside of the traumatic experience.

2.1.12 Research gap

Alamour (2015) explores the issue of middle ground in *The Kite Runner* through the examination of various universal themes in the text. This research by Alamour, (2015) was significant to this research as it highlighted an important part of this research, that is, the definition of rape victim. “The crux of the novel (*The kite runner* (2003)) occurs when Amir’s childish naivety about how to win his father’s affection in addition to the reality of divisive class and ethnic lines causes him to remain silent when he witnesses Hassan being raped by three neighbourhood boys” (Alamour, 2015, p. 2). Malik (2013) conducted two research on *The kite runner* (2003) in which he concentrated on how linguistic devices are used in *The kite runner* (2003) to represent ethnicity and the levels of power relationships. Neither does Alamour nor

Malik, in all their research on *The kite runner (2003)*, explore the issue of silences among the rape victims. The focus in Malik's research is on framing of characters and their representation. The article only mentions Hassan's rape, but the researchers do not focus on the silences of any of the child victims of the rape in the text.

The work of Chun (2014) on an *Exploration of Trauma Narrative in The Kite Runner* was quite informative to this research whose theoretical framework was trauma and resilience. The researcher looked at the text as trauma fiction then explored the trauma of Amir as an individual and the trauma of Afghan as a nation. While this work proved quite indispensable, it did not really look at the aspect of silence with specific attention to child rape victims. It did not look at the direct child rape victims at all, that is Hassan Sohrab or Kamal, it only focused on Amir who is only a victim by witnessing. Hence there is a gap in research in that aspect.

Mishra (2011) examines in a very insightful way "the "Eternal Loop" of Guilt and the Attempt to Atonement in *The Kite Runner*" (p. 65). While there is mention of Hassan's rape and Amir's silence concerning Hassan's rape, it is only done in passing as it is not the focus of the researcher's attention. Dayekh (2020) examines the concept of war literature in the paper titled *War Literature: The Kite Runner and What History Cannot Inform*. The paper does not dwell on this current researcher's topic at all though some ideas were drawn from Dayekh's paper on the nature of war literature and link was drawn between the war, rape and silence cultures.

Neupane (2018) explores Amir's ethical anxiety. In this research, Neupane sights various incidents where Amir is affected by his betrayal of Hassan. The article may reflect the impact of trauma on Amir, but it does not look at Amir as a victim of the rape incident that occurred to his friend but only as a victim of his guilty conscience over his cowardice. The paper as reflected in its title *Amir's Ethical Fretfulness in Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner* only focuses on Amir and not Hassan. Jefferess (2009) critically examined Khaled Hosseini's *The kite runner (2003)* focusing on the novel's ethical demand, "there is a way to be good again (p.2)", in relation to contemporary conceptions of humanitarianism.

Eshan and Khalil, (2016) conduct a comparative analysis between Khaled Hosseini's novel *The kite runner (2003)* and a TV movie in which they explored the phenomenon of male rape in Pak-Afghan cultures looking at how the international community recognizes sexual violence against men in order to demonstrate how men are included and excluded as dupes of sexual vehemence in disputes. Basing on Finkelhor's *Precondition Child Sexual Abuse Model (1984)*'s pillars of motivation to sexually abuse,

overcoming internal inhibitors, overcoming external inhibitors and overcoming the resistance of the child, the research touches on some of the issues of rape but does not centre on the issue of silence among the rape victims, it does not dwell on factors leading to the silence and how these silences affect the livelihoods of the child victims in the text.

Nare (2015) probes into the representation of female characteristics in George Mujajati's novel *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and the dissertation looks at the ideological forces perpetuating the suppression of women from an African feminist point of view but does not specifically investigate the issue of silence among rape victims in the texts. Rubaya and Gonye (2011) in their paper *The third sex: A paradox of patriarchal oppression of the weaker man* do not necessarily examine the text under study by George Mujajati, *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999), but they only mention in passing how Joseph Takundwa falls under the third sex of men who are considered weak in patriarchy. Their discussion has nothing to do with this researcher's topic besides that simple reference to the text and mentioning of that one character.

This researcher saw a gap in existing literature as none of the articles on the two texts under study examines the issue of silence among child rape victims in the texts. The research thus, seeks to fill this existing void in literature by exploring silences among child rape victims in order to understand the different kinds of silence which exists among child victims of rape and why the silences exist. The research also seeks to expound reasons why even when presented with several opportunities to tell, the child victims in the two texts would remain quiet. Another gap to be fulfilled by the research is outlining the impact of rape trauma suffered in silence and the plausibility of speaking up as a resilience strategy.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Trauma

Trauma according to *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration* (SAMHSA, 2014, n.p) is a "widespread, harmful and costly public health problem occurring as a result of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war and other emotionally harmful experiences and it occurs to people irrespective of age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, geography or sexual orientation". Societies and often individual members of communities experience different kinds of traumas at different times with varying degrees of effect. Traumas shake societies and livelihoods to the roots and if not addressed or when victims are not properly handled or assisted, trauma has psychological and physical repercussions that can be beyond repair and sometimes even fatal. The effects of traumatic events place a heavy burden on individuals, families and communities and create challenges for public institutions and service systems

(SAMHSA, 2014). The concept of trauma is generally understood as a severely disruptive experience that profoundly impacts the self's emotional organisation and perception of the external world. While different people and different societies may share similar traumatic experiences, how they respond to those traumas differ from person to person and society to society as a result it is very essential to understand various ways in which societies and individuals respond to trauma, hence the thrust of trauma studies, "to explore the impact of trauma in literature and society..." (Mambrol, 2018, p. 1). It is the purpose of this research to look at trauma and resilience as a literary theory, the origins and development and its place in literature.

Trauma is reserved for experiences that are very bad, painful, upsetting; experiences that bring deep suffering over time and it is sometimes used to indicate experiences that push us to and even beyond the limit of what we can bear (as in the commission of an atrocity), that are, so to speak, world destroying. The differentiation can have to do with both matters of degree and kind. Speaking broadly, trauma refers to effects rather than causes. An event or experience is traumatic to the extent that it breaks down or even destroys our physical, personal, and communal world (Edgerton, 2017).

Scholars defined trauma as the force of astounding experiences which overwhelmingly affect a person's life and influences an individual's behaviours and destiny quite significantly (Eyerman, 2020). It refers to experiences which "leaves an indelible mark and causes otherwise inexplicable behavior" (Eyerman, 2020, p. 146). The inner catastrophes one experiences leave wounds and memory scars that cannot easily be erased, and which manipulate later behaviour in ways which are unexpected and unpredictable. Onega (2012, p.83) endorses the definition of trauma by Freud and Breuer (1983) as, "a malfunction of the conscious memory triggered off by the subject's incapacity to react adequately to a shocking event." Malik (2013) citing the opening sentences of *The kite runner* (2003) notes that "the sentences make the reader think that the narrator has experienced a life-changing event as a child. The narrator has suffered from something that has changed his life in many ways" (p. 166) hence "ultimately causing him to return to Afghanistan seeking "a way to be good again" (Alamour, 2015. p. 2). The implication here is that the narrator's experiences caused him to do bad hence qualifying under the definition of trauma.

Farrell (1998) says that any kind of trauma, be it personal or collective, recent or remote trauma is a type of history that interprets the past and like other histories it attempts to square the present with its origins. Trauma is not an experience only for the victim but witnesses to a traumatic event are equally affected by it. Friedberg and Malefakis (2018) define trauma as a disturbing emotional stress that leads to mental impairment or dysfunction such as sexual assault, warfare, or threats on one's life. Aydin (2017) notes

that most experts agree that the key to understanding traumatic events or experiences is that they completely overwhelm the ability of victims to grasp and cope with what happened; that is, to integrate the ideas and emotions that are instigated by that experience in a conceivable and acceptable narrative. Herman (1992, p. 33) says “traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.” Reflections of trauma include disturbing flashbacks, avoidance or numbing of memories of the disturbing event, hysteria, dissociation, nightmares among other.

The word trauma according to Leys (2000) is of Greek origin meaning wound and Caruth (1996) concurs that, “the term trauma is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind – a wound inflicted by an emotional shock so powerful that it breaches the mind’s experiences of time, self and the world and eventually manifests itself in dreams and flashback” (pp. 3-4). Trauma involves looking at how forces from without such as physical violence distress the mind, and the individual’s acuties of the ego and the world around them. Trauma is an event that is excessively disruptive, “that the person loses his or her normal mediating capacity” (Friedberg and Malefakis, 2018, p. 90). Balaev (2020) describes trauma as a person’s emotive response to an overwhelming event that disrupts ideas previously held by an individual on notions of the self and the standards by which the individual ascribes value to social order.

Trauma “produces a double paradox in consciousness and language—the contradictory wish to know the meaning of the past but the inability to comprehend it, as well as the contradictory crises in the traumatic narrative between the threat of death and survival” (Caruth, 1996, p.7). Caruth (1996) goes on to postulate that “the notion of trauma’s unspeakability indicates a causal view of trauma and dissociation, as well as a view of memory as a storehouse of experience wherein traumatic memory is stored differently and is unavailable for normal narrative recall since it remains dissociated from consciousness” (p. 160, 163). For Caruth (1996), trauma is “a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind’s experience of time” (p. 61). Thus, the victims of trauma are somewhat unable to put into words that which they have experienced until a later time for some, and never for others. Victims of trauma develop comprehension of their experience differently and as such respond differently to even the same experience.

“The impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time” (Caruth 1996, p. 9). This proposition here is that a hurtful past event can keep affecting the victim in the present which explains certain behaviours displayed by victims such as fear, anxiety, hysteria, mood swings, and anger among

others in their everyday life. There is a repetitiveness about trauma, an exact and unremitting repetitiveness occurring “through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will” (Caruth, 1996, p. 2). Balaev (2020, p. 151) agrees to this observation saying that “traumatic experience is repetitious, timeless, unspeakable, yet, it is also a literal, contagious, and mummified event.” In other words, trauma, even a one-time event that happens when one is but a child, has the power to give a person a whole new identity, whether unable to or able to deal with it but as the individual learn to live with the acknowledgement of the experience, their being conscious to it shapes their lives and how they see the world around them.

There are different kinds of traumata and one of the most prominent is psychological trauma which is, “anything that has overwhelmed an individual’s ability to process and integrate psychologically something that has happened to them; (having the capacity to) create a speechless fright that divides and destroys identity” (Balaev, 2020, p. 149). From the place of trauma, Roth (2012) notes how one’s whole view of the self and the world is affected by trauma saying:

Trauma like utopia designates phenomena that cannot be properly represented, but one characterised by radical intensity. Trauma has become the dystopia of the spirit, showing us much about our own preoccupations with catastrophe, memory and the grave difficulties we seem to have in negotiating between the internal and external worlds (pp.90 – 91).

Roth (2012) equates trauma to dystopia of the spirit which signifies a state of destruction and extreme chaos within the individual.

For Mambrol (2018) the defining and central concerns of trauma studies lie within the confines of and the interrelatedness of psychological trauma, its representation in language, and the role of memory in shaping individual and cultural identities. This is so because, as Anderson, (2012) notes, victims of trauma often struggle between silence and voicing their experiences, societies too which may be direct or indirect victims of trauma also struggle between silence and voicing the experiences of their members. The conflict resulting from the unspeakability of trauma is echoed by Herman (as cited in Ringel, 2011, p.3) that “the conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma”. This struggle between speaking out and being silent for the trauma victims is also central in literary trauma fiction. Characters throughout modernist fiction overtly struggle against the defences they have created to protect themselves for their trauma and the desire to heal through speaking about it.

Trauma fictions quite often portray the manifestation of trauma as madness (Ringel, 2011) and literary theorists and psychologists agree that “the most fundamental effect of trauma is dissociation...” hence

the definition of trauma as events that cause dissociation (Howell, 2011). This is not the only response to devastating loss or violence but as Kirmayer (2012) noted, “different traumas produce different responses such as dissociative amnesia, intrusive recall, which are a result of the social valuation of the traumatic experience” (p.5). Therefore, trauma can manifest in the form of suicidal habits, anger, insomnia, unusual unbecoming tendencies, violence, drug and alcohol abuse among other forms of manifestation.

2.2.2 Resilience

Friedberg and Malefakis (2018, p.83) define resilience as, “the ability of a system to cope with change”. It could be one’s thought system, a group or a whole community. It could be the physical body system which could have been made upset by a wound to the mind. Psychological resilience on one hand, refers to the individual’s ability to adapt to stress and deal with adversity affecting the mental system. The mind operates in sync with the body therefore physical stress such as resulting from physical violence do stress the mind and resilience has to do with the ability to process physical and non-physical stressors and emerge above them or around them. According to Mardner (2006, p. 2) reading Caruth (1996), “the extent that trauma opens a breach in experience and understanding, it also opens up new possibilities for experience and new modes of understanding”. Surviving trauma entails discovering new ways of relating and being related to others and that is resilience. The very structure of repetition inherent to traumatic belatedness compels the traumatized person to survive the trauma by finding ways of bearing witness to it – both belatedly and in relation to others.

McCleary and Figley (2017) define resilience as both a result and a course and Friedberg and Malefakis (2018, p. 83) concurs that “resilience is found within each of us and can be developed. It is best considered a process rather than a trait – a progression of psychological and physiological adjustments that can be made to better enable us to cope with trauma.” Resilience is not a once off phenomenon, but it involves several stages in progression leading to a desired outcome, the desired kind of person who is able to live meaningfully even with the knowledge of the traumatic event they experienced. Resilience does not mean erasure of a traumatic event from one’s memory because unless by natural or induced or accidental amnesia, the fact that one was violated sexually or physical would always be there in the memory. What matters is how one lives with that memory, and this is the core of resilience.

Meadows (2015) refers to resilience as the ability of an individual to ‘bounce back’ after experiencing stress. In *The Road to Resilience Initiative* launched in 2002, American Psychological Association (APA), define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even

significant sources of stress. APA (2002) agrees with Meadows's (2015) definition of resilience as the power demonstrated by the individual to bounce back. It means resilience is the ability to have one's scar poked without flinching though the knowledge of the scar is alive. Other scholars posit that resilience is an internal drive to self-actualize, to achieve one's best self despite a traumatic setback, a zeal to defy the odds and the limits forced on the self by the existence of a psychological wound. Resilience is, "a dynamic process with multiple determinants" Friedberg and Malefakis (2018, p.82). They also argue that, when a victim of trauma is resilient, it does not necessarily mean one does not have negative thoughts and emotions, often the results of acts of violation, or that the person is always optimistic. Rather, resilient individuals develop coping techniques and strategies allowing them to deal with their nightmarish pasts, adversities and crisis while being able to look at life, the self and the world with clear vision and not from goggles blurred and blinkered by the negative experience.

Scholars in trauma studies have come up with various ways for resilience. Freud and Breuer (1983) posit that, "putting the traumatic event or experience into words offers a healing alternative" (Onega, 2012, p. 83). As established earlier, there is an unspeakability about trauma and various other effects mentioned above; as such, giving voice to a traumatic experience is often a starting point to cope for both victim and community. Encouraging expression of one's thoughts and feelings about the traumatic event soon after it happens will bring about relief and resolution of symptoms (Seery, Silver, Holman, Ence & Chu, 2008 in Ringel, 2011). According to Herman cited in Ringel, (2011 p.5) there is a "connection between trauma and the healing power of language" and "when the barrier between silence and freedom to speak about mental pain is lifted, then progress occurs." Speaking up as a resilience strategy is demonstrated by various scholars as key to coping with any kind of trauma.

APA (2002) posits that resilience is a summation of and when individuals and / or societies make efforts to rebuild their lives. Being resilient does not mean that a person does not experience difficulty. Resilience involves behaviours, thoughts, and actions that can be developed in anyone who finds him/herself traumatised; it is not an innate ability. Most importantly is the point raised by APA (2002) that an approach to building resilience that works for one person might not work for another even when dealing with similar traumatic experience. There is therefore need for varying strategies designed to suit different people from different backgrounds, aptitudes and personal states and depths of trauma, among other aspects to consider. Some variations in resilience strategies reflect cultural differences and culture have significant impact on how one communicates feelings and deals with adversity. Societies with clear-cut distinctions

between sexes and responsibilities and behaviour patterns of those sexes would obviously impact greatly on how individuals of different sexes respond to the same trauma.

2.2.3 History and models of trauma and resilience

The relationship between trauma and mental illness was first investigated by the neurologist Jean Martin Charcot, a French physician who was working with traumatized women in the Salpêtrière hospital during the late 19th century. He noted that traumatic events could induce a hypnotic state in his patients, and he was the first to “describe both the problems of suggestibility in these patients, and the fact that hysterical attacks are dissociative problems—the results of having endured unbearable experiences” (van der Kolk, Weisaeth, & van der Hart, 1996, p. 50). The term “trauma” therefore has its origins in medical discourse and over the years has widely developed to other fields, particularly literature.

In the 1880s, Freud and Breuer as well as Janet furthered this viewpoint initiated by Charcot. Freud argued that the reason behind the hysteria of his female patients who displayed unusual behaviour such as mutism, feelings of being choked and seizures was psychological trauma. Of importance to this research from Sigmund’s postulation is that his patients who displayed these qualities were victims of sexual trauma. In 1896, Freud suggested that “a precocious experience of sexual relations . . . resulting from sexual abuse committed by another person . . . is the specific cause of hysteria . . . not merely an agent provocateur” (1896/1962, p. 195, cited in van der Kolk, Weisaeth, et al., 1996, p. 54). In Freud’s early work he argued that traumatic hysteria develops from a repressed, earlier experience of sexual assault (Mambrol, 2018)

Trauma studies, “developed in the 1990s in connection with the ethical turn that emerged in the previous decade and relied on Freudian theory to develop a model of trauma that imagines an extreme experience which challenges the limits of language and even ruptures meaning altogether” (Mambrol, 2018, n.p; Nadal & Calvo, 2014). Trauma studies has to do with the examining the influence of trauma in literature and society, analysing its psychological, rhetorical, and cultural significance. According to Azmi (2018, p. 58), “the field of trauma studies in literary criticism gained significant attention in 1996 with the publication of Cathy Caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* and Kali Tal’s *Worlds of hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*.”

Various models of resilience have been introduced in trauma studies by scholars to deal with different kinds of traumata ranging from physical violence, the holocaust, imprisonment, sexual abuse, betrayal and rejection among others. Some examples of such models include Carol Christ’s (1986) four stage model

to track the journey toward self-identity and wholeness. Joy Erlichman Miller (2000) identifies the problem-focused coping and emotion focused coping for female survivors of imprisonment.

Of particular interest to this research is the three stages approach by Judith Lewis Herman (1992) which was designed to influence healing in victims of sexual abuse. Herman identifies three essential stages in which stage one had to do with the establishment of safety in one's life. The second stage dealt with remembering and mourning. In this stage, the victim, in a clinical environment, provides as much detail as they can remember about the experience and by so doing, "transforms the traumatic memory, so that it can be integrated into the survivor's life story" (Herman, 1992, p.175). The third stage is of recollection to everyday life.

The first model of trauma was developed along the lines of the Freudian theory and the model imagines trauma as an extreme experience which challenges the limits of language and even raptures meaning altogether. This model offered a productive metaphor for the way literature represents reality. After this traditional model of trauma came the more pluralistic models of trauma which posits the previously "assumed unspeakability of trauma (as) one among many responses to an extreme event rather than its defining feature" (Mambrol, 2018). Mambrol, (2018) further posits that "the concepts of latency, pathology, dissociation, and infection are central to the first or traditional Freudian trauma model suggesting trauma as an unrepresentable event that fundamentally fragments the psyche". It is during this initial wave of criticism that trauma as an unrepresentable event first became popular revealing the intrinsic conflicts within and between language and what has been experienced (Mambrol, 2018).

Trauma is viewed as an event fragmenting consciousness and preventing direct linguistic representation. In Caruth's (1996) model, interest is drawn towards the intense anguish of trauma through presenting trauma as an experience which causes permanent injury to a person's psyche. Trauma is presented as an event shattering one's identity and yet remaining without such that normal memory and narrative representation are not possible for victims. A traumatic experience and the ensuing fundamental detachment impede "the application of determinate value to that experience because the level of fright destroys the mind's ability to comprehend it and linguistically code it" (Mambrol, 2018, n.p). This model lays emphasis on the suffering resulting from external sources yet making internal changes to the mind, changes which are irreversible to one's identity.

Kurtz, (2013) exploring developments in trauma studies observes that, "the concept of trauma has evolved. What originated as a term for dramatic physical and psychic wound to an individual is now used

to denote a broad cultural condition – a universal rather than an exceptional experience” (p. 426) Luckhurst (2008) talks about, “traumatised subjects in a condition of constant trauma, living in a ‘wounded culture’...” (p. 209). He further claims that “...trauma has been shaped by medical and legal discourses of the industrial and post-industrial periods ... (but this definition has been) broken down, replaced by an urbanised and industrialised set of social relations” (p. 209). A pluralistic model of trauma which includes such viewpoints as that traumatic memory does not necessarily cause pathological symptoms have been developed thus shifting focus to the outward, paying special attention to cultural factors that influence the meaning of a traumatic event because the recollection process is significantly influenced by the cultural and historical contexts (Mambrol, 2018).

Developments in trauma theory have paved way for writers to think of new ways through the relationship between trauma and fiction. Trauma in contemporary literature analyses narrative texts in English in the light of trauma theory. Contemporary trauma fiction according to critics, “has its foundation in the intention of transmitting the trauma of its characters to readers...” (Ringel, 2011, p. 8). Ringel (2011) also note that modernist trauma fictions portray the manifestation of trauma the same way as Freud did, as madness. The novel, in many respects is battle between the two forces of telling and not telling trauma. However, of importance is that literature has become a vital tool for victims of trauma to find a way to confront and communicate their experiences and also for victims and writers to lobby for social change through sharing the victim’s experience

2.2.4 Problems of trauma and resilience theory.

Anderson (2012) notes that the works of Brown and Herman in the early 1990s “addressed the disparity in clinical and psychological trauma studies between attention on traumata affecting men and those affecting women” (p. 6). Early definitions of trauma were exclusive and male centred. APA (1987, p. 250) gave a limiting definition of trauma which contended that, “the person has experienced an event that is outside the range of human experience.” Brown contends that trauma may develop in certain people, in particular life conditions, from situations seemingly innocuous to others, and we must be sceptical of definitions of trauma that seeks to limit experience to those situations deemed to be normal. Male representations of trauma differ noticeably from those of women, revealing social restrictions on both groups and offering an opportunity to explore the conditions under which the characters both suffered and retold it (Ringel 2011, p.3).

The issue of cultural resistance to trauma, either due to ignorance or sheer unwillingness to acknowledge it is very real and therefore it becomes difficult to address certain traumatic experiences and enable the process of healing to occur for either individuals or communities. Visser (2014, p. 270) “engages with fundamental issues, such as those deriving from trauma theory’s foundation in Freudian psychoanalysis; its Eurocentric orientation...” and interrogates the extent to which trauma can be postcolonialised. The relationship between trauma and postcolonial theories is quite a complex one due to the ‘opposing’ orientations of both theories. “Postcolonial critics who, ... have engaged with postcolonial literature from the perspective of trauma theory have also noted the limits of (the) theory” as such, “the definition of trauma would need to be formulated more comprehensively to account more astutely for the aftermath of colonialism’s systematic oppression, with its characteristics of prolonged, repeated and cumulative stressor events” (Visser, 2014, pp. 276-278). Therefore, it is of paramount importance to come up with models of reading trauma literatures or dealing with traumatic experiences which are unique to different societies and tailor made for their unique cultural values and belief systems.

Falquina (2015) identifies another problem of the trauma theory as its being “Eurocentric”. In her argument, which is also queried by other critics of trauma theory, Falquina (2015) note that, “the theory lacks interest in the traumas experienced by members of non-western cultures” (p. 835) and also that “the domineering Eurocentric trauma models obstruct entry to meanings fundamental to vital cultural non-western practices and beliefs” (Visser, 2011, p. 279). Trauma and resilience have their roots in the west and therefore a lot has to be done to come up with, definitions, models and strategies that may be universally applied in this global village. Trauma and resilience models should be tailor made for different individuals and individual societies because what works for one society might not work for the other due to a variety of backgrounds place victims on unique paths.

The three stages approach by Judith Lewis Herman (1992) was designed to influence healing in victims of sexual abuse. Three essential stages have been identified in which stage one deals with the establishment of safety in one’s life. Stage two concerns with remembering and mourning and the final stage is of recollection to everyday life, it is the stage where the victim, provides as much detail as they can remember about their experience and in so doing, “transforms the traumatic memory, so that it can be integrated into the survivor’s life story” (Herman, 1992, p. 175). Victims in the two texts under study use either the three stages approach or the thrive model in one way or the other. Both models of resilience are applicable to child victims of rape who are of the age where they are able to communicate their experiences. Adolescent child victims are in better positions to use these approaches to recovery while

other child victims only begin to deal with the trauma once they start to develop a comprehension of what they experienced.

2.3 CONCLUSION

Rape is a global problem and in most cases with children. Two basic silences associated with child victims of rape are non-reporting and non-disclosure. Factors perpetuating these silences include cultural and non-cultural factors such as fear, ignorance and guilty. Boys and girls respond to silence differently because of various factors linked to the perpetuation of rape and the implications based on cultural and other factors. Rape suffered in silence impacts on the identity construction of child victims. Based on the trauma and resilience theory, speaking up about rape is key to recovery. At the centre of trauma theory is unspeakability and therefore there is need to find words for what has happened to the person. Strategies for resilience available to victims are gendered as there is a lot of gendered stereotypes as far as rape is concerned. As a result, it is important to deal with rape from a cultural and gendered vantage point.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The previous chapter reviewed literature related to this study and laid out the theoretical framework which guided this research. The current chapter three outlines the research methodology adopted for this research. The chapter is divided into subtopics which include the following: research paradigm, research design, research method, selection criteria, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research paradigm

Research paradigm refers to the set of beliefs that guide action and they vary depending on the set of beliefs they bring to the research (Creswell, 2007, p.19). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) research paradigm encompasses the investigator's assumptions on how the investigation should be accomplished. Makombe (2017) highlights two broad categories of research paradigms, namely, empirical and normative paradigms where under empirical paradigm is positivism and under normative category are the qualitative paradigms of interpretivism as well as the mixed methods pragmatism paradigm. Constructivists believe that reality is constructed and is a product of power relations. The constructivist ontological and epistemological assumption of research is that the identities of individuals in any given community are constructed by their experiences and the power relations within the societies in which they exist. As the individual interacts with the environment through experience so is their knowledge developed.

Constructivists argue that knowledge changes its value and sense of value depending on context. What people know about themselves and the world around them is constructed, is fluid and contextual. According to Theys (2017) the basics of constructivism include that the world and what we can know about the world is socially constructed. Also central to constructivists is the notion that agency and structure are mutually constituted; one influences the other. Identities and interests are socially constructed through interaction with others. Furthermore, standard appropriate behaviours are socially governed, and norms are associated with specific identities. Though there may be considerable divergencies within constructivism, what remains central to this worldview is that human beings are meaning makers, reality and truth are not merely pre-existing and waiting to be discovered but rather made as one interacts with the world through experience and vice versa. "Actions, interactions and perceptions shape reality" (Theys, 2017, p. 41). Thus, for this research, constructivism worldview was adopted to explore silences in child victims of rape in the given texts, to understand the different silences

existing in child victims of rape and how rape experience endured in silence shapes the identity of the child survivor.

3.2 Research design

Research design sets the procedure for the required data, the methods to be applied to collect and analyse this data, and how all of this is going to answer the research questions (Grey, 2014). Research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design which one chooses greatly relies on the purpose and nature of the research because each design has a unique purpose and works to achieve a different end. Some of the research designs available to qualitative researchers include descriptive, explanatory studies, grounded theory, narrative research, phenomenological research, ethnography and case study designs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Welman and Kruger (1999 in Groenewald, 2004) argues that “the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved” (p. 44). Applying phenomenology implies that the researcher is preoccupied with the lived experiences of the people involved with the phenomena under study. This research, therefore, adopted the phenomenological research design focusing on the rape phenomena and silence associated with it from the vantage point of child rape victims. (Giorgi, 2009) states that phenomenology "respects the essential characteristics of humanness throughout the research process". Looking closely at children who experienced rape in the texts, this researcher examined silences among child rape victims, identified factors perpetuating the silences, assessed the impact of the rape experience endured in silence on the livelihoods of the children in terms of identity construction and/or shaping by the.

3.3 Research method

The research method is highly influenced by the research paradigm and research design. This research is an in-depth qualitative desk research and qualitative research is interpretative research which means the researcher is involved in identifying and explaining social phenomena. The inquirer (researcher) is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants (Creswell, 2014) of which in the case of this research the participants are the texts under study. According to Kandemiri (2018) the researcher is the main data gathering instrument whose function is to investigate the issues under study and then communicate the data in descriptive form of words. The researcher thus conducted an inductive analysis

of data extracting information from a variety of sources, including peer-reviewed works, published articles, secondary sources and primary texts; analysed the data and drew conclusions.

Using phenomenological research methods in this literary study, the researcher focused on the experiences and perceptions of individual child characters in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and *The Kite Runner* (2003) who were victims of rape. According to Lester (1999, p.1) “phenomenological methods are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people’s motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom” and van Manen (1997) cited in Wilson (2015, p.38) concurs that “the objective of phenomenology is to understand human experience.” This research sought to understand the child rape victims’ experiences of rape and silence.

Phenomenological methods allow for the study of the rape experience from the perspective of the individual rape victim or survivor. The appropriateness of phenomenological research method in this case lies in that this research aims to explore the rape phenomena as experienced by the child victims in the two texts and how they have been shaped by this experience. By focusing on the lived experiences of the characters in the text, the reader / researcher gains understanding of the rape phenomena and the silence associated with it. Also, the aim of the trauma literature writers is to transmit the trauma of the characters onto the readers thereby sharing the experiences and phenomenological research methods enables this to be achieved.

3.4 Text selection criteria

Purposive selection was used to select the texts for this research. The researcher identified the themes of interest and sought for texts which could be exploited in the exploration of the themes of interest. The selected texts were found to be suitable to the topic and context of the intended study, to the topic as well as to the theoretical framework. Texts were also selected on the basis of availability to the researcher. Thematic concerns of the study made the texts relevant. Both texts had the themes of child rape and silence and could be explored from the trauma and resilience theoretical framework. All the victims experienced rape while they were still children between the ages of 0-17 which was part of the research boundary. Most importantly, the rape narratives were all provided in the texts from a child’s eye which suited the aims of the researcher.

Rape as a literary universal theme also made it possible to select texts from different backgrounds. The researcher considered the texts from different cultural backgrounds ideal from a world literature

perspective. According to Gqibitole (2020, p. 86), rape “neither recognises class and race, nor respects geographic boundaries”. As a result, the text selection from Zimbabwe and Afghanistan was purposive to bring out rape as a universal phenomenon, an epidemic. The difference in gender of victims in the two texts also made them more appropriate for this research whose objectives included looking at male and female responses to rape and silence. One text has female victims of rape while the other has male child victims. This allowed for an analysis of trends in the presentation of rape phenomena and also for comparison which was part of the objectives of the research.

3.5 Data analysis

Creswell (2007 p.148) claims that “data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion”. Data analysis method is influenced by the whole scope of the research, that is, the research paradigm, research design, procedure etc. Qualitative approaches share a similar goal in that they seek to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it. Gill (2020) stipulates that all types of phenomenological methods of research apply some form thematic analysis to unravel the experiences under study and phenomenologists believe that thematic analysis necessitates creativity and imagination.

Thematic analysis (TA) according to Braun and Clarke (2012, p. 2), “is a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset, allowing the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences and to integrate and analyse them” which is central to qualitative research. Thematic analysis is “a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about, and of making sense of those commonalities” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 2). In this respect, the researcher examined common aspects and differences in the rape experiences of child characters in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and *The Kite Runner* (2003) establishing the commonalities in terms of factors perpetuating silence, effects of the rape experience endured in silence and how speaking up as a resilience strategy works for child victims.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Edwards and Mauthner (2002, p. 14) postulate that ethics refer to “the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process”. The researcher took heed of the research ethics through full acknowledgement of information borrowed from other sources and

avoiding plagiarism at all costs through in-text citation and end-text referencing of all sources consulted, as well as strictly following the APA 7th (ed.) referencing guidelines as stipulated by Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). The researcher also agreed to abide by the ethical considerations through completing and signing the ethical clearance application obtained from NUST. The work therefore presented is entirely the original work of the researcher which has not been published or submitted elsewhere as part of her studies.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter clearly laid out the research methodology adopted by the researcher showing that the study was qualitative guided by the constructivist views of reality and truth, the phenomenological research design and thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The choice of data analysis method was chosen on the basis of its compatibility with phenomenological studies. The research was a desktop literary research which means no statistical data collection was done. The primary sources of data were the two texts *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and *The Kite Runner* (2003). The chapter also laid out the ethical considerations observed through the conduct of this research by the researcher. The next chapter will be a discussion of major findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a detailed outline of the major findings of the study and presents an analysis of those findings from the two selected texts, *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and *The kite runner* (2003). The analysis conducted here was based on the literature reviewed and the trauma and resilience theoretical framework as detailed in the second chapter of this report. The sub-headings used in this section also derive from the literature review as well as the objectives of this research and this was done to enable a more focused presentation of data. Also, since this research made use of thematic analysis, the data is presented in themes of rape and silence, factors perpetuating silence, its effects and speaking out as a resilience strategy. The chapter is divided into two main segments, the first looking at the said themes as they are unveiled in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999), then as they are brought out in *The kite runner* (2003). For each text the overview is provided at the beginning of each segment before the detailed analysis of the themes. The research findings and analysis aimed to fulfil the following four objectives:

- To establish factors perpetuating silences among the child victims of rape in the two texts.
- Examine male and female child victims' responses to the rape experience in the two texts.
- To explore how rape trauma shapes identities of the child victims in the two texts under study.
- To outline the importance of speaking up about rape experience as a resilience strategy.

4.1 *The Sun Will Rise Again* – Summary

George Mujajati's *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) is a gripping and captivating story about trauma and survival told from the five different voices of Fatima, Sofia, Takundwa, Nyati and Jeremiah. According to the blurb of the book it is a story about misplaced trust, greed, revenge and tragedy while at the same time also expressing hope about the future. It is within this context that we find the female victims of rape of which the story is centred on two of the women, Fatima and Sofia, "the subjugated mother and Child" who undergo innumerable vicious experiences of childhood "rape and plunder", "hope and decay", "pain and silence" in the hands of the men in their lives. The relationship between the characters in the text is quite close which makes the whole story disturbingly true to life. Fatima is mother to Sofia, Lovemore and Tabitha while Joseph Takundwa is the husband to Fatima and father to her three children. At the time of

telling the story, only one child remains alive and is in jail on murder charges while Lovemore and Tabitha have been murdered. At the heart of these gruesome murders and rape is the cunning and evil Nyati, Takundwa's acquaintance whom Sofia is forced to marry.

4.1.1 Rape and child rape victims in *The Sun Will Rise Again*

The first rape victim the reader is introduced to in *The Sun Will Rise Again* is Fatima, a village girl robbed of educational opportunities and later condemned to marriage to the man who violently sexually abused her. Fatima and Joseph reunite three years after their grade seven. Joseph who is supposed to be going to form three but has dropped out of school because he thought that school was a waste of time. This means Fatima herself is also supposed to be in form three as well since these two were in the same class when they completed grade seven though Fatima could not proceed to secondary because her father thought it was a waste of resources. This, therefore, means that Fatima at the time of her being raped by Joseph was around 15 years of age thus falling within the category of child rape victims in this research as defined by Evans and Ward (2019).

Rape, whether of minors or adults, is always associated with force (Clifford, 2008). Most girls in romantic relationships often fall victims to forced intimacy and sexual intercourse with the people they are in relationships with. "Within a few days' time (of Fatima and Joseph's unexpected reunion), a fully blossomed romance had been established" (p. 18). Joseph visits Fatima the night before his return to Salisbury and as Fatima accompanies her boyfriend, bidding him farewell, Joseph "immediately grabbed (Fatima) firmly by the arm" (p. 19) "his vice-like grip tightening on (her) arm" (p. 20) and demanded that Fatima prove to him that she loved him by having sexual intercourse. Fatima clearly refuses Joseph's demand and pleads with him to let her go and threatens to scream but Joseph, "immediately placed his hand firmly on (Fatima's) mouth. Using his right leg as a pivot, he immediately lifted (her) off the ground and carried (her) to a nearby bush" (p. 20). And thus, Fatima gets raped by someone she thought loved her and she too loved.

Sofia is the second rape victim whose experience is explored in the text *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999). She is a child victim because her rape occurs after "she has just finished her form four" and while "she (was) waiting for her results" (p. 31) and as Takundwa tells Nyati, "Sofia is about sixteen years now" (p. 92). Unlike her mother, Sofia was not in a relationship with Richard Nyati, the perpetrator and she did not want him or lust over him or admire him in any way. She had no romantic interests in him. She was aware

and resented the fact that “this old man” (p. 92), old enough to be her grandfather was definitely after her, and she swore to herself that no such thing would ever happen.

Nyati is a cold, calculating murderer and also a very selfish human predator. Unfortunately, Sofia fell victim to Nyati’s lusts who made efforts to corner his prey through bringing small gifts with each visit, sometimes “he would bring an expensive bar of chocolate; sometimes it would be a little bottle of expensive perfume” (p. 38). When all these did not work, Nyati went further to offer Sofia a job just so as to bring her closer, within his reach. Sofia could hardly believe her ears. She had not even thought of looking for a job, yet she was “being offered a nine thousand dollars a month job just like that!” (p. 40). In a country where unemployment rate has reached and breached the ceiling, this offer was too good to refuse yet the innocent Sofia is hesitant to accept. Nyati’s personality is similar to that of a vulture, a wanton but patient bird as he takes his time to horn in his prey.

Sofia’s rape does not have the same level of physical violence as her mother’s. In her case, she believes she was “naïve and blind”, “failed to see through the vain generosity” (p. 50). She considers hers a case of “foolish blindness” (p. 50) similar to that of “a rat that died after eating poisoned sugar” (p. 50). Sofia is treated to expensive lunches like the special dinner for two at the famous Sheraton Hotel. Another trap set for her is the job as a ‘personal secretary’ which “really meant spending the whole day sitting in an office, polishing fingernails... accompanying Mr Nyati to his business lunches every afternoon...” (p. 45) and a hefty salary at the end of the month which did not include other luxuries as “the wardrobe allowance” (p. 44). The perpetrator does not just directly pounce on the prey but establishes a relationship and trust. When the time comes, Nyati spikes Sofia’s coke and when she mentions that her drink does not taste like coke at all, he plays on the already established trust, convinces her that there is nothing wrong, explains that it “must be the ice blocks that (he) added to the drink” (p. 49) and encourages her to finish the glass and have another.

However, soon after the drink, Sofia begins to feel “a strange dizziness, (her) head suddenly felt too heavy for (her) shoulders” (p. 49) and she feels her head rolling, everything rolling and turning upside down. This experience echoes what the rest of her life becomes after this incident. As she can no longer walk, unable to make sense of what is going on with her, Nyati pretends to be her knight in shining armour and by the time Sofia comes to, the deed (rape) is done. Sofia has no recollection of the rest of the afternoon except when she wakes up beside Nyati in his bed in his suite. The only evidence that she has been violated, the only proof giving her an idea to what possibly transpired at the inn is the blood on her skirt. Probably one can say that the blood associated nearly with every rape incident symbolises loss of life in some way.

While for girls it indicates the breaking of the hymen, in men it is there too which probably simply implies the loss of a part of the selfhood.

Tabitha is a six-year-old little girl “born on the 18th of April 1980” (p. 91). At the time of her rape, she is “about six years old” (p. 91). Unlike all the other rape victims in the text, Tabitha is killed. Unlike her mother who was raped by her boyfriend and her sister raped by her employer and father’s friend, Tabitha is raped by her own father. Rape perpetrators are concerned with silencing their victims and this is shown in Joseph’s desire to silence Tabitha by killing her before he rapes her. He asks Nyati, “would it not be better if we killed her first?” (p. 95). He is not worried about killing his own daughter, let alone is he bothered by raping her, only that he desires to silence her before doing so. What is bewildering about rape culture as represented by Takundwa is how perpetrators live with themselves after the incident. Takundwa would be alright and even sleep better probably if he would just rape the corpse of his six years old daughter. Nyati refuses to let Takundwa silence the victim before traumatising her but offers an alternative which was to silence the victim after the rape and mutilation. The aspect of silencing remains central to Tabitha’s rape. This kind of silencing of rape victims after the violation is a trait among most rape perpetrators and they will go to any lengths to ensure the silence.

Mujajati (1999) presents to the reader with a wide range of rape perpetrators showing that the girl child is potential game for sexual abuse to any man despite the man’s age or relation. The author demystifies one of the rape myths that rape perpetrators are stranger adult males. Fatima’s rape perpetrator is her agetate while Sofia’s perpetrator is old enough to be her grandfather. In terms of relations, Fatima is raped by someone she loved; someone close to her romantically while Sofia is preyed upon by her father’s friend and Tabitha by her own father. At one point Jeremiah reads a heading in a newspaper article that said, “FATHER RAPES SIX MONTHS OLD DAUGHTER” (p. 102). This shows that perpetrators of rape on young girls are not necessarily strangers who pass through a particular place but those people the children know and have come to trust. It is easy for these predators to pounce on their prey and ensure the silence.

4.1.2 Female responses to rape in *The Sun Will Rise Again*

There is some kind of similarity in the way Mujajati’s female victims respond to rape soon after it happens. While circumstances differ, the bottom line is the girls tell their mothers. There is a difference in the telling in the sense that others confide but others are forced to speak out. When daughters confide in or report to their mothers about rape, usually the father is absent from the scene. After Fatima is raped, she returns home and arrives at midnight. At first, Fatima is quiet, she does not tell straight away what has happened

to her. The mother asks her several times where she had been all night and why she was so late to come home and still Fatima does not respond. The mother then resorts to beating her, which is quite typical of parents, especially mothers in this patriarchal society. It is at this moment that Fatima responds to her mother's interrogation. After being re/victimised by her mother, she narrates how she, "stood there feeling torn and tattered, tears pouring" (p. 20) while the mother continued hurling insults and curses to her, calling her a 'bitch'.

Immediately after the realisation that she has been sexually violated, Sofia is in a state of shock. She is so torn and confused and exasperated that she, "walked all the way from Sheraton Hotel to Mufakose Township.... Rudely turned down a number of male motorists who 'generously' offered (her) a lift" (p. 50). She does not even wake Nyati up who slept in the bed with her to ask what had happened. She is not even in the right frame of mind to think of going to Nyati's car to take her purse so that she can have transport money to get home. All that preoccupies her is the resolution to get to her mother, to inform her what has happened and then "report the matter to the police" (p. 51). She is aware of the wrong that has happened to her, she is convicted in her heart and resolute in her mind that she wants Nyati punished for what he has done to her. "I was going to report the matter to the police. I had to inform my mother first, and then go on to report to the police" (p. 50). Most child victims trust their mothers and in the event of anything happening in their lives, they run to the mother. That is why when most African children cry, they call the mother in their cry and hardly the father. The mother is trusted to respond with urgency and to console the child.

Unlike Sofia, Fatima has no thoughts to report Joseph to the police for the sexual abuse. This may probably owe to the times in which she lives and when she experiences the rape. Though the whole concept of rape as a crime was there and she is aware of the violation of her body and person that has occurred, yet it never emerges to Fatima to go to the police. The writer does not give the reader a child victim who is at any point resolute about her justice. Just like Fatima, when Sofia gets home and she is asked by her mother what has happened, she either does not speak or rather cannot speak. What Sofia just wants is momentary silence and the emotional love and support afforded by her mother's embrace. Sofia "did not answer" but rather "kept on clinging tightly to her mother" (p. 50). The two "clutched onto each other so tightly, each trying to escape through the other" (p. 50). Because of this comforting space created by the mother, it takes no vicious interrogation like in the case of Fatima for the child to confide in the mother about what has happened to her. In the case of Fatima, the confession comes after series of insults and beating and many other sorts of harassment, the confession is drawn out of her forcefully.

Another response to the rape trauma shown by Sofia is that she “stopped eating, she lost appetite and she stopped leaving her room” (p. 54). She started developing suicidal thoughts and on one occasion she warns her mother that “I am going to kill myself! Yes, I am going to kill myself today” (p. 54). It is often common in female rape victims especially when they find themselves in wrong places and ended up raped that they develop suicidal tendencies resulting from guilty. Sometimes the suicidal thoughts are not immediate but may take a little while and are perpetuated either by criticism or possibilities of pregnancy but especially the latter. Young girls who know what rape is when it occurs to them, and the possible implications of the experience like Sofia and Fatima tend to demonstrate higher suicidal tendencies than those who get sexually victimised before they understand like Tabitha.

There is tangible silence that sometimes occur when a person is being raped and after a person has been raped. This unspeakability of trauma is evident as the traumatic event is in the process of happening, when the victim gets shocked that something is really being done to them and they sort of lock out. The magnitude of unspeakability is even echoed by the environment in which the rape occurs. Describing the circumstances around the rape of Tabitha, Joseph says, “trees stand watch in silence. Bits of grass bend and look away. Angels of God descend to soothe the pain!” (p. 95). The rape of Tabitha and the innocence of the child and childhood resonates with biblical sacrifices. Tabitha is like the lamb led to the slaughter, it does not fight back or make a sound. “Tabitha lies supine, like the biblical Isaac. Her mouth and jaws are tightly gagged” (p. 95) that she does not make a sound. Her silence is that of a sacrifice. Many children are sacrifices in wars they did not wage and wars that have no end such as rape. Her “intense pain”, symbolic of the pain of every child victim who is raped and forced into silence by various circumstances was “floating in the wind...” (p. 95). Tabitha’s response to her rape matches what Holst (2019) describes as involuntary paralysis. A paralysis also indicating resignation to her fate since rape seals a victim to a certain fate.

Mujajati (1999) presents two generations of women, one is the mother and two are daughters and all have fallen victim to rape by men in their lives. The circumstances surrounding their rape differ, the perpetrators who rape them and how they relate to them differs in many ways except that they are men. However, two of them demonstrate a common reaction, that of returning home and reporting to the mother. The other one, Tabitha is denied the opportunity to go back to her mother and report as she is brutally murdered by the perpetrators. Because of the commonality of women’s existence irrespective of generation gap, it is easy for the girl child to tell the mother her ordeal. As Achebe (1958) aptly state that the child belongs to the fatherland when things are good and when things are bad he or she finds refuge

in the motherland. Furthermore, because of the hierarchical nurture of the patriarchal African Shona society the responsibility of rearing and disciplining the child lies on the mother which explains why Fatima's mother is the one who deals with her when she comes back late and vandalised. The father only gets involved when there are some fines to be paid, when there is a complication of grave magnitude or when the mother just feels like informing him but not necessarily for him to take action as much as for him just to know. Mother as an embodiment or nature is nurturing hence the daughters report their experiences to their mothers despite the circumstances surrounding the telling.

4.1.3 Factors perpetuating silence about rape in *The Sun Will Rise Again*

It is true that there are silences associated with female child rape victims. Silence as discussed in the literature review can either mean non-disclosure or non-reporting to authorities. In the text under study, female child rape victims' silence is in the form of under / non-reporting because whenever the rape incidences occur, the victims tell their mothers who then tell their fathers. The power to report the case to the police is however taken away from the victim and is placed in the hands of the adults, mostly the father who has no connection in most cases with the child he is required to represent. The father hardly shares any emotional bond with the child to be able to understand her trauma. Children, the age of 17 and under are considered minors and cannot open legal dockets on their own in the absence of legal guardians or parents. The implication here therefore is that, if the parents refuse to accompany the child, she would be stuck. The obedience to parents syndrome accounts for many cases of under/non-reporting of cases of girl child victims (Alaggia & Kirshenbaum, 2005; Somer & Szwarcberg, 2001). The girl child is often associated with bringing shame to the family more than the boy child who is always acclaimed for bringing honour. Even though it is often the boy child who is accused of rape, it is the girl child who gets dishonoured by the act while the boy lives his life normally.

To add on, in this society of *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999), reporting to the police is clearly a secondary option with the first one being to force the rape perpetrator to marry the victim. Fatima's mother orders her to pack her bags because she is taking him to her husband's home, and she declares that the man "either he agrees to marry you today or I will report the matter to the police" (p. 21). Reporting rape to the police is not really considered a way of solving the case or punishing the perpetrator. In a society guided by the ideology that a girl child's worth lies in her being married, forcing a man who has violated a girl to marry that girl is considered the befitting punishment for the man. Also, in a society where a daughter's worth is only seen in her bringing in wealth through marriage, the raping of the girl child thus becomes an even quicker way to bring in that wealth since on top of the ordinary lobola (bride price), the

man has to pay certain fines for damaging the girl. Fatima's father is surprised that she has already finished grade 7 and this realisation is much welcomed because it means he is closer to getting money from her bride price. "Hu-u, so you are already in grade seven. I thought you were still in grade five. You have grown up.... Very soon I will be receiving a lot of cattle from a rich husband" (p. 11-12). This is all the girl child amounts to – bride price. Even though she can get education and eventually a job and still bring money, the identity of a girl child is intricately tied to the bride price tag.

Another factor perpetuating silence among female victims of rape is the issue of believability. The fact that Fatima had been in a relationship with Joseph, she had accompanied him at night makes the issue of her rape questionable. When she confesses to her mother the name of the one who victimised her, she is faced with the question, "is this Joseph not the same boyfriend of yours whom I have warned you about several times?" (p. 20). The insinuation from this line of questioning is that Fatima brought the rape upon herself if at all it did happen or else, she consensually slept with her boyfriend and only started crying when she arrived home late to see her mother waiting for her.

Sofia does not tell Jeremiah the truth when she writes him a letter to end their relationship because she wondered if he would believe her (p. 55). Jeremiah himself confesses that even though he believed Sofia's rape story, he still had questions as to, "why an educated girl like Sofia would get raped and then fail to report the matter to the police" (p. 101). It does not matter how educated a girl might be; the parental support is needed for any child victim of rape. Sofia knew what she wanted, that she wanted the matter reported to the police and Nyati made to pay for what he did but the issue of parental interference and in Sofia's case, mostly parental threats of disownership compel her into silence. Parents especially fathers or close relatives in some cases often feel that they do not want the family name dragged into mud as the rape case gains popularity in the community. As a result, in order to rid the community of gossip into the night, fathers mostly and mothers in some cases marry off their child victim to the man who violated her.

As if not being believed in not enough, the child victim is also forced into silence by fear. In some cases of child rape, the victim is threatened either by the perpetrator or others around them into silence. Sofia cannot report her rape perpetrator to the police because her own father threatens her by saying, "you are about to make the biggest mistake that you have ever made. If you want me to die today, right now, then go ahead and report to the police. I will hang myself today if that is what you want to happen" (p. 51). Joseph even accuses mother and daughter of wanting him to die so that they can remain and enjoy his estate. "If you want me to die today so that you and your daughter can remain behind and enjoy my money, you can go ahead and make the report" (p. 52). As mother keeps insisting that they to the police,

Joseph makes the final threat which silences both mother and child. He says, “if you are going to the police then remember to take everything of yours together with you. Never come back here. Never enter my house again both of you!” (p. 52). As a result, the child is forced into silence and there is nothing she can do about it. Her hopes of finding healing through justice are thwarted by fear of her own father’s threatens and not even of the perpetrator.

In addition, in this particular traditional society, the girl child does not necessarily have to have practiced prostitution to be branded as such. Simple habits such as kneeling when offering food to males, either young or old, or how someone walks or talks and natural characteristics such as one’s complexion or body structure can earn one a denigratory label such as prostitute or witch. Fatima’s father shouts to Fatima’s mother after Fatima serves her brothers food while standing saying, “does she not know how to kneel down? This is why your children grow up to become prostitutes. I can bet you this one will become yet another prostitute just like her elder sister!” (p. 8). Fatima is already condemned to the prostitute label even as a child simply because she does not kneel while serving her brothers food. Later on, when something happens in which she can be made to shoulder some blame for her predicament such as accompanying her boyfriend, it becomes self-fulfilling prophecy. Since she was already a prostitute, she is guilty of her raping and hence no point in reporting to the police.

Several other factors come into play when it comes to reporting of rape for girls in a traditional African Shona society. The most common being the ‘good girls’ code of conduct by which girls are required to live on. Adherence to this code of conduct is ‘supposed’ to protect them from such experiences as rape. The implication therefore is that being raped means one would have stepped out of the boundaries of this code of conduct and thus bears the blame for the experience encountered. Typical line of questioning whenever a girl falls pregnant is echoed in Jeremiah’s words as he wonders, “how could my Sofia let someone else do such things to her?” (p.25). In Jeremiah’s opinion, Sofia treasured her virginity at one point chose to just give it away the next. Sofia even says, “I had always taken pride in my virginity and strength, yet here I was, unmarried and pregnant” (p. 55). The question that Jeremiah asks, “where had that treasured virginity gone to all of a sudden? (p. 25) insinuates that Sofia’s loss of her virginity as a result of rape was her own choice, it was as something she had a say over, something she could just request at will and have it to happen or would just willingly give consent to.

The “good girls” code of conduct is taught from a very young age. Fatima says, “the first thing I and the other little girls were taught was the art of good womanhood” (p.7). Among many other characteristics of good womanhood, “good girls had to cook for, wash for and serve properly and promptly, every male

being that hung around them. The question of age did not matter (p. 7). Furthermore, “good girls should not look into the eyes of whoever they are speaking to, especially if it is a man. That kind of boldness is believed would lead to witchcraft. Good girls only speak when spoken to” (p. 7). Girls are thus taught from such a young age to be weak since boldness will lead to witchcraft. Such a code of conduct forces girls and women to be perpetual victims to any man around them. Being weak is considered equal to being respectful in this particular society. Saying that good girls only speak when spoken to thus mutes the woman, robbing her the power of self-expression when she has been victimised, hence the silence. The fact that these are life lessons inculcated at very young ages explains why female child victims would suffer in silence.

The whole purpose of the girl code of conduct is so that victims are cornered into self-blame for whatever befalls them. Fatima tries to tell her mother that Joseph forced her, but the mother has no interest in believing what her daughter has to say as she calls her, “liar, forced you to do what?” (p. 20). The mother brings up the point that Fatima had left the house without force implying then that she cannot claim to have been raped as she voluntarily went out with her boyfriend to do their “sinful things” (p. 20). Female child victims of rape suffer in silence because those who try to tell their ordeal are not believed. While Sofia’s mother does not indicate any signs of not believing her daughter, the father however says he does not believe her. When Joseph is told that Sofia has been raped by Nyati and she wants to go to the police, he says, “raped? I can’t believe this!” (p. 51). When the people to whom the victim confides in are the first ones to doubt the truthfulness of the experience, it often silences victims out of fear that it will be worse with strangers such as the police. The people to whom victims initially confide about rape are naturally expected by victims to be support structures yet in the text, this is not the case.

Added to the alienating and degrading social discourse, fear of and re/victimisation are also common factors perpetuating the silence of child rape victims in the text. Fatima returns home “already past midnight” (p. 20) and as her mother asks her where she has been, she does not really get a chance to respond. The mother’s questioning is more threatening than inquiring. She orders Fatima to tell her where she has been and her threatening interrogation, “tell me now before I kill you!” (p.20) does not really provide the child with an easy platform to articulate her ordeal but rather out of fear, the child remains quiet. Fatima describes how without getting any opportunity to respond, mother “lashed out and caught me with a fierce slap across the face! I staggered backwards; fresh blood began to trickle from my nostrils” (p. 20). Mother, hurls curses at Fatima calling her, “you bitch!” she hissed. ‘You prostitute!’” (p. 20). Fatima has been victimised physically and sexually by Joseph and upon arriving home, a place where she

should find refuge and comfort, she is re/victimised physically and emotionally as her mother “immediately seized her and threw her into the hut” then brands her a ‘bitch’ and a ‘prostitute’.

Caprioli and Crenshaw (2015) note that secondary wounding is often inflicted because of ignorance and in most cases insensitivity of institutional practices to trauma-sensitive treatment of victims. Fatima’s mother typifies the ignorant and insensitive institutional practices as she demonstrates lack of reasoning and sensitivity. It is clear to the mother that something has been done to her child and she has not done it to herself and whatever it is has been violent. She even keeps asking her daughter, “who did this to you?” If you don’t tell me who tore your dress, and where all that blood on your skirt came from...” (p. 20) which shows she is aware that Fatima did not do this to herself but someone else did it. Whatever happened to Fatima was violent resulting in her dress being torn and with blood all over her skirt, yet the mother keeps victimising her child and not even giving an ear to her plight. She threatens to kill Fatima with her own bare hands because she has been victimised. Such levels of insensitivity, particularly from supposed support systems build on to already existing trauma.

There is a difference between the treatment Fatima gets from her mother when she is raped and the treatment that she gives her daughter when the latter is raped. The change probably owes to the fact that Fatima learnt from her own experience how she would have wanted to be treated. However, one thing that remains unchanged about the experiences of female rape victims across generations is the role of patriarchy in influencing their destiny. When Sofia gets home, she “immediately threw herself into her mother’s arms” (p. 50) and the mother sensitively makes effort to find out from her daughter what has happened whereas Fatima’s mother re-victimised her daughter because society compelled her to do so. Fatima’s mother did not report the perpetrator to the police but acted as society expected of her at the time. Fatima also does not report her daughter’s victimiser to the police as the daughter wants but instead, she tells Sofia that, “if that’s what you want, then let us talk to your father first” (p. 51). A woman cannot act without the approval of a man, let alone act against a man’s wishes. In this case both mother and daughter cannot act outside the knowledge and will of the father hence the silence among female child rape victims owing to patriarchal ideological views governing society.

In most African patriarchal societies, emotional support for children is a mother’s responsibility but the supposed overall protector of the family is the father who unfortunately in this case is the main reason why children fall victims to different kinds of abuse. Takundwa is perpetrator of rape to all three victims examined in the text. On two occasions he is the direct perpetrator. He is the one actually carrying out the rape of Tabitha - and facilitating the rape of the other. He is also the reason for the silencing of Sofia’s

rape. Sofia is sure on the day of her rape to “make sure that (Nyati) rotted in jail. Nothing would stop me. I was so sure then” (p. 50) but upon arrival at home, nothing happens as she hopes, and she is forced into silence. Dube et al. (2005) notes that for both boys and girls rape risk is correlated with family-related factors such as divorce and domestic violence and having members who abuse substances or who are emotionally unavailable. Joseph is violent towards his wife but mostly he is an alcoholic and his love for money is the reason he facilitated the rape of Sofia and Tabitha. The father is emotionally unavailable for all his children rendering them vulnerable to all kinds of abuse especially rape.

Aleksiejuk (2016) explores the significance of experiencing parental love and support and says it is key to childhood development. “The quality of experiences gathered as a result of interaction in child-raising constitutes the basis of knowledge about the external world, about oneself and prototypically forms an individual’s relation with the external world” (Aleksiejuk, 2016p. 160). The quality of experiences Sofia has growing up with his father formulate for her a very twisted and sickening view of the world. Joseph does not have morals from childhood, in primary he is known as *Mabhesikitsi* because he was caught stealing from his teacher’s handbag. It is not surprising that such an abusive man, with a broken moral compass would wound his daughter’s knowledge and beliefs of the world around her. The threats that come from Sofia’s father as he puts her in the path of danger greatly influences the child’s ability to speak when she eventually gets into trouble. Joseph threatens Sofia that, “if you don’t take up that job, then you should never expect anything from me ever again from today onwards” (p. 43). Such treatment from one’s own parent which puts her in the den of a lion definitely affects how she feels and views herself and especially in relation to others around her. She feels betrayed, gravely wronged and becomes wary and sad.

Ideally, parents do not or should not, especially deliberately, present to their children an image of the world that is hostile and threatening, but rather instil in them trust, and make the external environment accessible and possible to learn and function in. It is this picture that Sofia has as she accepts Nyati’s job offer because her father has told her this is an opportunity that comes once. The trust that she has when she justifies Nyati as one who is only being kind to his friend’s daughter. Sofia even confesses that, “the deep seated mistrust that I once had for him (Nyati) was being replaced by a fatherly respect” (p. 47). Unfortunately, experience shows her otherwise and as such disrupts the image of the external world presented to her by her father as a place that is non-hostile and because it is her father who makes her an accessible prey to a vicious predator, it is not easy to run to him following the incident of her victimisation. Without the father’s support both financially and morally, running against such a man as influential as Nyati would have been a futile effort hence the rape is not reported to the police.

Nyati takes time to web his trap for his victims in such a way that silence is ensured after victimisation. By befriending Sofia's father and capitalising on his greatest weakness, which is his love for money, Nyati ensures that Joseph would hand over both his children all by himself. His cunning skills are so excellent that he manages to twist Sofia's incessant inquisition about why he is always so good to her, to the extent that she concludes to herself that, "maybe I have been wrong about him. Maybe he is a very close friend to my father - so maybe he is just trying to help his friend's daughter..." (p. 41). Sofia's innocence and naiveté costs her everything. Nyati sets the final trap for Sofia by offering her a job which was "too tempting to ignore, ... getting a job so easily, a highly paying one for that matter" (p. 41). Joseph firstly uses his own child as bait and then throws Sofia into the trap rendering her mute and powerless by denying her any kind of support. First, he appeals to his daughter's logic saying, "you just don't know how lucky you are to find a job so easily, my little girl" (p. 43) then when Sofia's luck turns into a nightmare, he turns and calls her names such as 'bitch' and 'prostitute'.

Self-blame is another major factor perpetuating silence among child rape victims. Because they lack profound understanding of the world of preys and predators, often children believe whatever happens to them is their fault somehow. Especially in cases where coaxing has been used instead coercion, it is very easy for the victim to self-blame. As Sofia struggles to walk, Nyati continues to prey on her like a vulture, pretends to give her support by holding her waist as he leads her to his room. He promises her that "everything will be ok" (p.49) and partly because of her alcohol-instilled lucidity and the already existing trust, she follows. Later Sofia says, "as I reflect on the painful memories of that fateful day, I just cannot understand how I could have been so naïve and blind? How could I have failed to see through vain generosity? In my foolish blindness, I had been ensared like the rat that died after eating poisoned sugar" (p. 50). Sofia feels she has no one to blame but herself, she blames her innocence and trust in the people who had the mandate to protect her such as her father. While this is grossly wrong, it is sadly the misfortune of many child victims of rape, mostly females.

4.1.4 Rape, silence and effects on child victims

As Sofia makes a severe introspection of her life while in the jail cell, she admits that "the little things that can happen to us are as many as the grains of sand in the soil" (p. 30) and these can shape one's life in unexpected ways. She further points out how these "events weave into each other like the many strands of the spider's web. No event stands on its own in our lives. This event will trigger off the next, whose outcome is equally unpredictable..." (p. 30). Just as Fatima's fate is signed and sealed the day Joseph rapes her; Sofia says "Nyati played a pivotal role in pinning me down to my fate" (p.30) the day he rapes

her too. She also says, “the events of that particular day marked the beginning of a new chapter in my life” (p. 50). After Sofia’s rape and the subsequent forced silence, she is grossly traumatised, and this is captured in her recollection of the day.

I will never forget the nightmare I had that night. I saw myself dead and buried under a mass of rotten sewage. The decaying sinews of my body were being torn to shreds by gigantic worms.... The worms were now beginning to dig deep into my dead heart with their giant canines that looked like bayonets. The giant worms opened their mouths and snarled at me. Their teeth were dripping with fresh human blood (p. 52).

From this day, Sofia begins to have nightmares, she becomes afraid. She screams as she sleeps, and she wakes up at night pleading with her mother never to leave her alone. Sofia becomes a trauma victim as she suffers from non-physical wounds but emotional and psychological ones (Caruth, 1996). Her mother whispers into her ears and “her tender voice dressing my incurable wounds” (p. 53) caused by her father and his friend soothe her to sleep.

As a result of rape, the girl survivor / victim is further abused as a weapon to punish the perpetrator. How the victim is affected by the experience is not an issue this society concerns itself with. Fatima’s mother decides that “I am going to teach that boyfriend of yours a lesson he will never forget” (p. 21) and her only way of achieving this is by shoving Fatima into Joseph’s life as a wife. The girl is nothing but an object first for the man’s satisfaction in whatever form though mainly sexual and second to dispense the mother’s wrath. Fatima considers “the events that took place on that dreadful day (of her rape as), the day my fate was signed and sealed” (P. 18). Everything else that Fatima experiences from that day, she feels has a bearing on that very incident. Later she even justifies the brutal death of her first child as being influenced by the brutal circumstances of his conception. As she reminisces later in her life, she says, “up to now I am still convinced that my first born son, Lovemore, was conceived on that fateful night. No wonder his death was just as violent as his conception” (p. 21). Her fate as one unbecoming happiness was signed and sealed the day Joseph raped her and she became his wife.

Delaying getting home in an African society comes with the capital punishment of banishment to the boy’s house who would have delayed you and thus one becomes the wife to whoever you get banished to. The situation is worse if it is known that the girl even had sexual intercourse with the male in question. Rape whether, consensual, coerced or coaxed, if known to parents or public has the same result- marriage. In the case of the sexual act resulting in pregnancy, the girl’s marriage coffin becomes ‘sealed by cement’. The hurtful part is how the female is not considered as a human being in all this but rather an object. After Sofia’s rape by Nyati, she “was forced into a loveless marriage, an empty marriage that produced nothing else but hatred and death” (p. 21); all in the name of punishing the man who violated her. Nyati already

has seven wives, he is an egocentric polygamist with a fleet of young girls whom he makes it a mandate to adorn himself with as though they are flowers. How being made/forced to marry Sofia is supposed to be a way of punishing him defies any logic. Rather, it only increases his ego because his target has always been to beat the record of his other colleague who constantly boasts about his ten wives and numerous concubines.

Kierkegaard (cited in Hay, 1998) argues that negative experiences give birth to demonic silence and this kind of silence manifests in Sofia such that Fatima “sometimes wonders at the strange power of human emotions. Where do they get the power to turn an angel like... Sofia into a cold blooded killer?” (p. 21). Sofia’s rape changes her from a person “who could not even stand the sight of a fowl being killed” (p.21) to one who could find “such raw hatred to carry out such a heinous crime” (p. 21) as murder. She describes the silence that fell over her and her mother after the rape as falling “like showers of rain. A kind of silence that forever buries secrets like the coffin and the grave, a silence that binds wounds together like a tight umbilical cord” (p. 53). She describes her silence as “the cement that lies between torture and pain” (p. 53). There is nothing positive about the kind of silence which Sofia describes and it prohibits productive and safe venting out. It is rather that type of silence that provides a moist and fertile ground for thoughts of revenge, of hatred and cruelty among other negative emotions. According to the blurb on Alice Walker’s novel *The Color Purple* (1985), the human mind is not independent but is influenced by outside forces much bigger than it. As the mind is renewed by the negative forces at play, so is the person transformed to the renewing of the mind. Thus, rape endured in silence is a force renewing the mind to new realities about love, the self and society at large, this renewal of the mind then reflects in a person’s behaviour such as advancing towards another person menacingly with a knife in hand (p. 29).

In identity creation, scholars agree that rape is a way of communicating in which the perpetrator says something to the victim. Sofia always felt that Nyati looked at her, “the way a dog looks at a piece of roasted meat. (His eyes) were the eyes of a puff adder that is about to strike” (. 31). As Aydin (2017) points out, rape violates the individual’s primordial assumptions of the self and the world. If Sofia saw Nyati as the dog and herself as the piece of meat the dog wanted, the rape thus cemented this identity, the sense of powerlessness and defencelessness the meat has transfers to Sofia. She is forced to give up everything about her life to be Nyati’s wife number eight because she is a woman and helpless against patriarchy, against a loveless and inconsiderate father. The act of drugging and raping Sofia communicates a message that he (the perpetrator) can do as he wants with her; she is his to conquer which implies that Sofia is weak. Eventually Sofia’s retaliation leading to Nyati’s fall and eventual death is her trying to show him also

that she is her own human being. Sofia's "moving towards (her) husband threateningly holding a knife" (p. 29) and her victimiser retreating fearfully indicates sudden yet desired powershift from and it is Sofia's (the victim) way of breaking free and re-imagining herself as stronger than her victimiser.

Rape experience changes the individual's perspective of the world and of those around him/her. On the day of Sofia's rape, she develops deep seated mistrust and vows, "never again would I ever trust any of these vultures" (p. 50). In her view from that incident, all men are vultures, they are predators. The extent to which Sofia has been affected by her rape and the forced silence is demonstrated on the day she "learnt from mother about father's death. He had hung himself with piece of barbed wire" (p. 115), Sofia does not mourn or cry over his death, "not a single tear-drop did I shed for my father" (p. 115). Sofia loathes her father, and this is a very unhealthy relationship to ever exist. It is better to be a leader hated leader than a despised one and Joseph as the leader of his household is despised. He is despised by his wife and by his only living child after he has killed all the others. In this intensely conflicted family, one cannot talk about family relations but just how human relations have not only been thwarted but have been shredded to very tiny pieces by the actions, mainly rape perpetrated by the father and his friend.

Another major consequence of female rape is pregnancy which worsens the circumstances of the female child victim beyond just the rape. Not implying that the rape of men is any better but besides the ghost of the experience which the victim has to live with, there is also the possibility of a child, a living reminder of one's victimisation. Sofia stops going to Nyati's offices, tries to distance herself from the man who violated her yet, "three weeks later (she) started to feel strange things. Sometimes, without warning, (she) would be seized by sudden sickness..." (p. 53). Later she learns she is pregnant just like her mother who also fell pregnant after being raped by Takundwa. Finding out that she is pregnant comes with a great deal of shock and uncertainty for Sofia who begins to wonder what the future would hold for her. As a child, she has to deal with the conundrums of the type of child she will bear, she wonders what people would think of her among many other questions to which she fears she will have no answers to.

The rape of a girl child who has reached a stage of puberty has unique challenges as this age itself without the complications of rape is already a tough stage for any child. In this society, it is unbecoming of a woman to be pregnant and unmarried, it does not matter the consequences surrounding the pregnancy. Delaying letting the supposed father know about the pregnancy could worsen the situation for the girl too. Therefore, Sofia has to go back to the man who violated her to tell him the result of his cruelty just in case he may "otherwise disown the pregnancy and refuse to marry her" (p. 54). Such level of secondary victimisation is another unique consequence of rape for the girl child. When her father is told about Sofia's

pregnancy, he curses her as though he did not know of her victimisation. He refers to her as “the little bitch! Pregnant, at such an early age!” (p. 57). He instructs the mother that she should tell Sofia to “start packing right away. I don’t want to see her in my house again! She must go to... whoever it is that made her pregnant. She must go right now” (p. 57). Sofia faces the same predicament as her mother as a result of being raped. In his every utterance, Joseph keeps referring to Sofia as ‘the little bitch’. Even after being reminded that his friend, Nyati is responsible for Sofia’s pregnancy and he (Joseph) has refused them to go to the police to report Nyati, Joseph still refers to Sofia as ‘the pregnant prostitute’ whom he “will not tolerate prostitutes in his house (p. 59). The girl child victim is forced to deal with multiple traumas on top of being a developing child in a stage of life which is rife with its own traumas.

Moreover, rape and silence have had severe consequences on Sofia’s life; from being pregnant to being forced into marriage to the very person who violated her. The worst is the identity her own father has taken to associate with her. He starts calling her names the day he finds out she is pregnant and after four years of marriage to Nyati, her father still grabs any slight opportunity he can get to call her “the little prostitute” (p. 63). Simply because she is demanding her husband to have an HIV test because he is genuinely a womaniser, her father uses that opportunity to refer to her as “the bloody little bitch” (p. 63). A woman is a prostitute if she decides to defend herself, a woman is considered a prostitute if she proves to be independent and content with herself. Her father does not fight for her because doing so will block his money channel, her husband does not fight for her because he never loved her to that extent, her mother is helpless because she is a woman in a patriarchal society. Sofia has no one else but herself for defence and yet doing so earns her the prostitute label. If Joseph had not thrown his daughter into the lion’s den and/or locked the gate behind him by forcing her into marriage, Sofia would probably not have had to deal with the prostitute label.

Rape endured in silence comes with negative labelling not only from society in general but even those closest to the victim. Upon receiving Sofia’s letter ending their relationship, Jeremiah writes a verse in which he refers to Sofia as “...the cheat / Riding on the back of a cheater / ...the sucker / carrying a sack... full of sand (thinking) its full of gold!” (p. 26). Even though he has not sought or gained full understanding of what transpired, Jeremiah labels Sofia so negatively and Sofia suffers silently because in some cases she cannot defend herself. Maybe if he knew, he would not have labelled her as such but because he does not know, he makes his own assumptions. The unspeakability of rape trauma furthers the unfair treatment of girl child victims through such derogatory labelling resulting from ignorance of those surrounding them. It is very easy for people to judge especially when they lack knowledge about

something. They often make judgements based on unenlightened assumptions such as is the case with Jeremiah. He assumes Sofia left him to marry the old rich man.

Rape especially of women is intertwined with the concept of thingification. Through the rape experience and the forced silence, one can see how the young girl victims are reduced to objects not only of male satisfaction but for other purposes as well. The choice of words which perpetrators use to refer to the victims further emphasise this point. Nyati refers to the victim of his planned rape and murder as an 'it'. He says his *n'anga* (witchdoctor) told him that, "(his) amount of power and wealth would treble if the victim is raped before *it's* killed" (p. 93). If one does not pay close attention, one may think that the victim being referred to, that has to be sacrificed, is an animal, yet Nyati is referring to a human being. It is from such degradation of women and girls in most patriarchal societies that perpetuates their silence when victimised because they are often made to feel that they are not worthy of consideration and value. One can even then argue that the silence of Tabitha as she is raped, mutilated and then killed is typical of a sheep which matches the description used for her by Nyati as an 'it' and not a human.

The silence about rape by the rape victims has contributed to the high rates of impunity which in turn creates societies with very high levels of moral decay in terms of child rape. In a society where the atmosphere reeks of odours of moral decadence, young victims of rape have nowhere to turn to and so they remain silent. Jeremiah says a "breeze of odours sails into the room through the wide crevice that has formed on the decaying wooden door. No matter how hard I try to brush the persistent odours aside, they still maintain their relentless attack on consciousness" (pp. 101-102). The increase in the number of cases of child sexual violation by close relatives and family members is like the persistent odour that keeps creeping into society. Jeremiah mourns how "the amount of decay floating in the air is frighteningly disturbing and people have become worse than dogs..." (p. 102). Dogs like every other animal have not been given the power to rationalise as has been humans and yet in Jeremiah's view and from the behaviour of Nyati and his cohorts, humans are far worse than dogs because "dogs do not cut off the private parts of their own begotten in order to sell them at a market place" (p. 40). Even pigs which are believed to be the dirtiest animals on earth do not breed among themselves. Pigs are known to never practice incest, yet humans' are becoming infamous for such with fathers being so bold as to get away with raping their own children irrespective of age.

In war-torn countries and even in those at peace, it is so easy for people to get so accustomed to "the presence of odours of decay" (p. 105) in their lives. You can know that society is paralysed beyond any hope when its members begin to justify their co-existence with such odours of moral decadence on the

basis that “it is better to have some air to breathe no matter the quality of air than to have no air to breathe at all” (p. 105). The moment members of society start to punctuate expressions of egregiousness with phrases like ‘at least...’; or ‘better this than nothing’ then one knows the situation is extremely bad. For example, justifying statements like ‘at least Nyati did not refuse the pregnancy’ or ‘better she was wife number eight with a car and a house’. Once such levels of normalcy are reached and decay stops giving off its wretched smell, then society has reached full blown moral decay paralysis. Trauma endured in silence allows perpetrators to go unscathed while victims are burned all over and then the abnormal becomes the norm. When “the winds of decay encroach (society’s) consciousness” (p. 105) it is mostly the child victims who suffer as their sense of world and individualism is disrupted and they are left without any hope. The kind of wind blowing in war-torn zones such as Afghanistan has a stench that paralysis one’s consciousness “eroding dreams, hope, the future...” (p. 105) of innocence and innocent children.

4.1.5 Speaking out as a resilience strategy in *The Sun Will Rise Again*

According to Moon (2019), speaking out is, among other things, about justice therefore it is critical to trauma. Sofia pleads with the those who can hear her for an opportunity to tell the truth, to tell the story of her life so that she may be freed from the trauma. In court, her opening statement is a plea to the judges of mankind, “I therefore plead to you judges of mankind to at least afford me the chance to tell my story....” (p. 116). Sofia wants to recover something or to recover from something she has been robbed of since she was sixteen years old. She wants an opportunity to tell “a story of tears and blood/ ... The story of the pain of silence/ ... Of rape and plunder/ ... of subjugation of mother and child” (p. 116). Without telling this story, hopes and aspirations are thwarted for Sofia. Sofia’s speaking out is not only for herself and her own recovery, but she speaks for those who have been in similar situations as hers, raped and robbed of the power and opportunity to articulate their ordeal. She speaks for her “own little sister (who) was raped, murdered and mutilated in silence” (p. 116) as she “too was raped, and tortured, in silence” (p. 116). Speaking out is an essential need for victims who “have been buried in silence’s coffin for too long / have been silence’s beast of burden for too long” (p. 116). It is from this need that Sofia rejects the efforts of Jeremiah and the lawyer to speak on her behalf or to change ‘her truth’ as this is tantamount to grabbing away from her again the power she desperately yearns for and is in arms reach for her.

Speaking out is a form of rebellion against the forces that confines one to the ordeal they experienced. Speaking out is equivalent to raising up the sun and the power to chase away the shadows that haunt the darkness of such experiences as rape. The lawyer that Jeremiah gets for Sofia tries to convince her to change the statement that she gave to the police about advancing towards Nyati threateningly with a

knife because he feels the statement will incriminate Sofia, but she is adamant on speaking out and speaking the truth. Sofia has taken “this stubborn stance about this so called ‘truth’” (p. 97) and she is convinced that with her trial, “the moment of truth has finally arrived (and) the truth is the holy chariot abode which I will ride to freedom” (p. 116). All that Sofia wants “is the chance to tell the truth, then the world is free to judge after that” (p. 97). This shows how important and liberating speaking out can be. Accepting Jeremiah’s hired lawyer meant taking away the power to articulate her own story once more. Having her experiences articulated on her behalf has been happening since the day of her rape; first, her mother articulating all her experiences to her father, then her father articulating her story to the world especially to Nyati. It is of paramount importance for once that Sofia tells her own story from her vantage point.

The fact that Sofia is given a favourable judgment after speaking out the truth emphasises the argument by Mazzei & Jackson (2012, p. 745) that “voice does, indeed, reflect truth; it is through one’s voice, in other words, that we learn about a person’s experiences and essence.” The judge acknowledges that, “taking due cognisance of the other grave matters that are linked to this case, the court hereby sentences the accused Sofia Takundwa to a two year wholly suspended sentence. She is therefore free to go...” (p. 117). After Sofia and Jeremiah’s testimonies to the court, Jeremiah even writes that, “the dark clouds of silence are fading away / A warm wind is drifting in from the horizon / I look at Sofia and she smiles” (p. 117). There is great and positive change resulting from speaking out such as Sofia’s freedom in every sense, that is legally, socially, psychologically, spiritually and emotionally.

Speaking about the truth has healed Sofia from a very dark place as someone who had begun to see every man as a vulture, who had developed deep-seated mistrust, who could not even shed a tear at the news of her father’s sudden suicide. The first time that Jeremiah meets with Sofia he observes that “there was something about (Sofia’s) eyes that (he) had never seen before. The innocence and laughter was no longer there.... In its place was a new intensity covered by a thin blanket of sadness. The sparkle that was once in those eyes was now dead and gone” (p. 98). Jeremiah further observed that, “even the voice too had changed. Her voice was now flat and mechanical” (p. 119). Sofia’s experiences had nurtured her into “a very unhappy woman” (p. 100) from the girl Jeremiah knew who was “a girl full of laughter, whose eyes sparkled with happiness and innocence” (p. 99); a girl whose eyes were comparable “to the sparkling stars of the cloudless night” (p. 98). This portrayal of a sad and hopeless girl whose innocence has been stripped off of her is rectified after she tells the truth of her experience, what she calls ‘her truth’. After trial, Jeremiah sees again, “the sparkle of love burning intensely in her eye” (p. 117). Hope is restored for Sofia

and she regains her sparkle only after telling her story, the story of her rape, the rape of her little sister and the pain and rape of her mother.

The power in speaking out as a resilience strategy is undeniable as it opens flood gates to important opportunities. Firstly, it enables victims to re-write their stories from their own vantage points, to lay out transpirations as they occurred, dishing out narratives which have not been in the open. Speaking up about rape changes people's opinion of the victim, influences people's judgements, that is, how they judge the victim, why they judge the victim and / or where they judge the victim. Sofia's identity in the eyes of the people changes from being an alleged murderer to being seen by all as "a harmless young woman who would not pose any danger to the society at all" (p. 117). For the whole time Sofia sits in the jail cell, she is known as 'the murderer' by some and 'the accused' by those referring to her in legal terms and not as Sofia. After speaking out her truth, her name begins to reverberate around her because the forgotten name is known again. The Judge in pronouncing her judgment calls out Sofia's name after the earned title "...the accused Sofia Takundwa..." (p. 117) which signifies the positive change from being the accused to being herself once more, a person with an identity, a person who is known.

4.2 *The Kite Runner* – Summary

The Kite Runner (2003) is a skilfully woven narration by Khaled Hosseini combining both fiction and reality in a way that leaves the reader mesmerised. It is a rather immensely involving story of two young boys whose lives take a turn for the worst one winter day in 1975. After receiving a call from his long-lost godfather, Amir is told to return to Kabul, Afghanistan because there was a way for him to be good again, to rectify the incident of 1975 and all the other happenings that ensued that dark day. *The Kite Runner* (2003) centres on the life experiences of Amir and Hassan, of which the latter is the kite runner. Its rising action begins on the day of the kite tournament, the day when day turns into night after Hassan is raped in the alley. From there, the story takes many twists and turns as Amir tries to deal with the trauma of Hassan's rape given his own circumstances as a twelve-year old bent on winning his father's recognition and approval. The father who has pitted best friends and 'half-brothers' against each other because the officially recognised child lacks the qualities he approves, and the unacceptable low caste is everything he ever wants in a son.

In narrating his experiences, hopes and aspirations, the guilt-ridden Amir also wanders off, intertwining his story with short narratives about others who are also involved in the happenings in his life. Of

importance is the narrative of Hassan, Sohrab and Kamal who are critical to this discussion though there are others too who contribute to the story.

4.2.1 Rape and child rape victims in *The kite runner* (2003)

Rape is quite commonplace in Afghanistan especially the rape of young boys as shown by four young boys in the text who are victims of rape. Hassan, a young boy aged eleven years is the first to be raped by Assef, a young boy himself too aged seventeen. Amir, “a thin boy, a little scrawny, and a tad short for his twelve years” (p. 53) is an indirect victim of Assef’s rape of Hassan. Amir is a victim by witnessing helplessly as his best and only friend is raped and is forced by circumstances even more traumatising to live with the secret of the incident. Sohrab, Hassan’s son is also subjected to rape and other forms of abuse by the now adult Assef. The protection system in this country shows that very little consideration is given to the issue of rape either of males or females, young or old and “by ignoring or overlooking an issue it gets off the message that the matter is not important as well as the victim is not imperative” (Ehsan & Khalil, 2016, p. 35).

As Baba aptly explains, “there is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft” (p. 17). Rape is a variation of theft in which the perpetrator robs the victim of his/her dignity, identity, freedom, sense of self and a lot more. Also, agreeably, “there is no act more wretched than stealing” (p. 18) especially where one steals the sense of well-being from an innocent child like Hassan, Amir, Sohrab and Kamal. A man who rapes “takes what is not his to take” (p. 18) that is, the innocence of a child, the right to view the world in a certain way; the power to create one’s own peaceful meanings and opinions about life, the self and the world and the power to dream positively.

Hassan and Amir’s rape occur on the day of the Kite competition after the two won and Hassan, the kite runner, goes after the final kite to be cut which was to be Amir’s trophy. It is then that his perpetrators follow him into the alley where Assef knocks him to the ground, throws his pants “on a hip of eroded bricks” (p. 71) and forces Hassan to lie “with his chest pinned to the ground. Kamal and Wali each gripped an arm, twisted and bent at the elbow so that Hassan’s hands were pressed to his back” (p. 70). There is use of force in the violation of Hassan as he is forcefully pinned down with his face to the ground by two older boys while the third one rapes him.

Rape is often an issue of power especially when it is done forcefully or physically violently. The whole idea is for the perpetrator to show the victim that they have power over the latter. Taylor (1994) presents rape as dialogical where one says something by doing something. Assef considers raping Hassan as “teaching a

lesson to a disrespectful donkey” (p. 71) and in his opinion “there is nothing sinful about teaching a lesson to a disrespectful donkey” (p. 71). Assef even goes further to say, “it’s just a Hazara” (p. 71) implying that it does not matter, that Hazaras are not really considered as people capable of worthy feelings. By action and by speaking it, Assef is communicating a grave message that impacts not only the physical but the emotional as well as psychological state of the victim. Assef communicates a message about Hassan’s identity as he refers to him as a donkey and a ‘nothing’ but ‘just a Hazara’.

As highlighted previously and in the literature review, rape takes various forms, it can be coerced or forced. The rape cases in Hosseini’s text are physically coerced and violent. Evidence of the violence in the rape of Hassan is shown in the description of his pants and the way he walked after the rape. “There was a dark stain in the seat of his pants and tiny drops that fell from between his legs and stained the snow black” (p. 74). Kamal suffers double rape victimisation, first having had participated in the rape of Hassan as he held and pinned Hassan down then as a direct victim of rape himself in the hands of four men. Kamal warns Assef that his father had told him that it is sinful to rape especially a man (sodomising) and Assef promises him that his father would not know which most probably means that Kamal does not have to tell his father about the incident and indicating that he too has been burdened by the secret for all his life just like Amir. Kamal also most likely participated in the rape out of fear of Assef just as Amir does not take any action out of fear of Assef rendering both Kamal and Amir indirect victims to the rape of Hassan by witnessing even though the other directly participates in it.

According to Haseman (2018) child rape perpetrators often target marginalised victims who possess some form of vulnerability. Hassan’s and Sohrab have several vulnerabilities, the first and major being that they belong to the lower caste as they are Hazaras and secondly for Hassan is his loyalty to Amir while for Sohrab is his orphanhood. Assef hates Hassan first for being a Hazara, a tribe he considered as dirtying Kabul and he also hates him for his absolute devotion to Amir. He sees these vulnerabilities and resorts to first raping him for his loyalty and later killing him for his being a Hazara. He abuses Sohrab both sexually and physically first for being a Hazara and for being Hassan’s son. Furthermore, Assef makes that deliberate decision to let Hassan keep the kite so that “it will always remind (Hassan) of what (was done to him)” (p. 69). Clearly it is never really about the kite but about power. Assef is constantly offended and infuriated by Hassan’s confrontations each time he tries to bully Hassan and Amir hence the rape was an opportunity to teach Hassan a lesson once and for all and show him who had power. Rape is thus an issue of power though it stems from a twisted psychological state of viewing the world.

To add on, rape is not only an issue of power, but it is also an indicator of moral decay. While it is true as revealed in the literature review that it is a phenomenon that is as old as the hills, the implication is also that the human society has been rotting slowly but surely since time immemorial. The level of moral decay is even worse in war-torn countries or war zones where the rape of children is often beyond the charts. A young boy who escaped from his kidnappers is arrested by the police and “the local commander took him as a sexual doll and exploited him occasionally. The commander behaved with him as if he were his own property” (Ehsan& Khalil, 2016, p. 35). The soldier at the roadblock on the way to Peshawar from Jalalabad demands that he wants “half hour with the lady in the back of the truck” as tax to let them pass (p. 107). Baba requests the driver to ask the soldier where his shame was, and the soldier argues that “this is war. There is no shame in war” (p. 107). The very systems put in place and mandated to protect the ordinary masses are the ones at the forefront of abusing the people especially innocent young children.

Unlike the other victims whose rape experiences are a once off thing, Sohrab’s abuse happens over time until Amir comes to rescue him. Like the boys in Minnie and Steyn’s *The Lost Boys of Bird Island* (2018), Sohrab is used at the pleasure of one considered a commander. Unlike the other victims also discussed above, Sohrab is not only victim to rape as in annal penetration but also to different kinds of sexual abuse which included being dressed like a girl, being touched inappropriately and being forced to dance to entertain the rebels. When Amir sees Sohrab for the first time, “his head is shaved, his eyes darkened with mascara and his cheeks highlighted to give an unnatural red glow” (p. 257). Assef then “brings Sohrab between his thighs and wrapped his arms around the boy. His hands slid down the child’s back, then up, felt under his armpits” (pp. 257-258). All these suggestive moves, inappropriate touches show how the Talib allows himself to sexually violate this small child. Assef goes further to “lock his arms around Sohrab’s belly, his hand slid up and down the boy’s belly. Up and down, slowly, gently” (p. 258). All the moves he makes on Sohrab’s body are sexually suggestive. Assef does not just rape Sohrab, but he takes his time toying with him the way a predator would do with its prey when it is not too hungry but ending up eating it anyway.

The trauma that Sohrab endures in the hands of Assef and the guards is excruciating and unbearable especially for the physical and psychological wellbeing of a minor like him. Assef makes several other sexual gestures on Sohrab like brushing his lips against Sohrab’s ear, plucking a grape and “putting it, lovingly, in Sohrab’s mouth” (p. 258). He goes further to “kissed the side of Sohrab’s neck” (p. 259) and Sohrab demonstrates his discomfort at all this harassment by flinching and closing his eyes again. The fact that when all this is being done to him, Sohrab’s eyes are shut shows how much he wants to shut it all

out, to peel out of his skin and not experience it. Like his father, Sohrab's silence is that of resignation as a result of helplessness. There is really nothing he can do to this big man, older than his own late father, and his company of clown guards.

4.2.2 Male responses to rape in *The kite runner* (2003)

As the three boys, Assef, Wali and Kamal, zero in on Hassan, and Amir watches from a short distance away, he gets involuntarily paralysed. He "realised (he) still hadn't breathed out. (He) exhaled, slowly, quietly. (He) felt paralyzed" (p. 67). This response is typical of many rape victims of which Amir is one even if it is only by witnessing. It is a quite common experience for many people to freeze in the face of danger especially young children and when faced with the danger of the bully and his peers, Amir freezes. While fear creeps in Hassan's eyes though he remains adamant and as Assef "unbuttoned his winter coat, took it off, folded it slowly and deliberately (and) placed it against the wall.... (Amir) opened (his) mouth, almost said something. Almost. But (he) didn't. (he) just watched. Paralysed" (p. 69). Amir's response to this ordeal can be explained as tonic immobility (TI); that state of involuntary paralysis which is both physical and psychological in which individuals cannot move or even speak, a reversible catatonic-like state accompanied by an inability to vocalise or consciously control one's muscles and movement (Russo, 2017; Gbahabo & Duma, 2020). TI is quite common among rape victims hence the consideration of Amir as a rape victim.

As Hassan is knocked to the ground by the rape perpetrators, Amir "bit on his fist and shuts his eyes" (p. 69). Tonic immobility as a response to rape is also shown as "Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper" (p. 71). In a way, Hassan paralysis is suggestive of resignation to fate. When "Hassan moved his head slightly (Amir) caught a glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it. It was a look (he) had seen before. It was the look of the lamb" (p. 71). The reference to the Eid-e-Qorban ceremony (pp. 71-72) serves to draw up the similarities between the sheep that is sacrificed and the look on Hassan's face, "that look of acceptance in the animal's eyes" (p. 72) as though the animal understands its place as the victim and justifies the victimisation as deserved.

Amir stops watching Hassan being raped and he realises he has been weeping and he has hurt himself. He is so afraid, and he responds to Hassan's rape by running away. As Hassan surrenders in momentary paralysis, Amir is first paralysed then he runs because he is "afraid of Assef and what he would do to (him). So afraid of getting hurt" (p. 72). After the rape as Hassan leaves the alley, he "dragged a sleeve across his face, wiped snot and tears. (Amir) waited for him to say something, but (they) just stood there in silence..."

(p. 73). According to Balaev (2008), trauma creates speechless fright which is demonstrated when Amir remains silent as he watches Hassan being raped. The incident is never spoken about between the two friends because soon after it occurs, "(Hassan) began to say something and his voice cracked. He closed his mouth, opened it and closed it again. Took a step back. Wiped his face. And that was as close as Hassan and I ever came to discussing what happened in the alley" (p. 74). This is how these two responds to the rape. Amir cries silently as the rape occurs and so does Hassan and they never discuss the events that just transpired in the alley ever.

In patriarchy, men are taught from a young age to be aggressive and strong. Crying is left for girls and is often considered a sign of weakness. Thus, after the rape encounter, first Amir only realises he has been crying when the tears roll down his hand but otherwise he never really cried because crying is considered womanly. Amir thought Hassan "might burst into tears, but... he didn't" (p. 74). Yes, there was a crack in his voice as he spoke which signalled the presence of emotions, but Hassan does not cry, he 'manned up' about it. Though there are consequences to manning up about trauma, Hassan still to man up. The issue of masculinity is not one to just talk about but requires one to act it and the need to publicly display it is so intense in patriarchal societies. "To be considered a real man, one had better make sure to always be walking around and acting 'real masculine'" (Kimmel, 1996, p. 100). Hassan has to keep it real masculine and therefore does not cry because crying is feminine.

Just as Amir goes home and shuts up about the events in the alley, Hassan, the direct victim of the rape also shrinks away and never utters a word about it even to his father. Ali wonders what has happened to his son that he asks Amir what had happened after that kite tournament because his son "came home a little bloodied and his shirt torn" (p. 76). He also confesses that he has "asked (Hassan) what had happened, and he said it was nothing" (p. 76). Hassan tells his father that "he'd gotten into a little scuffle with some kids over the kite" (p. 76). Rather than telling his father the truth about the rape so he may get justice, Hassan lies to his father and tells him something that was not entirely true.

4.2.3 Silence as non-disclosure and factors perpetuating non-disclosure in *The Kite Runner*

The major factor perpetuating silence in *The Kite Runner* (2003) differ from character to character. Neglect or lovelessness are the reasons for silence for the major character in the text Amir. Smith (2012) notes that "a huge part of child development involves touch, through this connection children experience acceptance, love and tenderness" (p. 11). This explains why Amir is bothered each time Baba, "close(s) the door, leave(s) me to wonder why it was always grown-ups time with him" (p. 5). Baba has no time for

Amir, has no space for him in his heart and schedule. As the only parent Amir has, Baba owes it to his child to have a relationship on which the child can develop an identity for himself and for the world around him. Unfortunately, Baba's doors are always closed to Amir, either physical doors or emotional ones. Amir's description of the picture on the wall is a very sad one in which he says, "I'm a baby in that photograph and baba is holding me, looking tired and grim. I'm in his arms, but it's Rahim Khan's pinky my fingers are curled around" (p 5). Amir's father neglected him since he was a baby to the extent that before Amir could hardly make any real interpretations about life, he felt connected to his father's friend who stood next to them in the picture while nothing existed with his father who carried him.

Such levels of neglect have grave consequences on a child's ability to establish confident relations with those the child does not feel any connection to. Confessing of sins or positioning another person as one's confidante takes a lot of love, trust and warmth to exist between both parties so that the conviction of secrecy exists or the confidence that one will not judge the other negatively based on their confessions. In the absence of a relationship of love and mutual understanding or one simply being a professional or hired listener, there is no way someone especially a child will just blurt out something so grave especially if they partly feel at fault for what happened. As a result, confessing to Baba about Hassan's rape is impossible for Amir because he fears that will only enlarge the rift that has been in existence between them ever since he was born. It is enough that Amir feels that Baba hates him and to even justify it because "I had killed his beloved wife, his beautiful princess" (p. 18) as she gave birth to him. Now, telling baba that he has also let Hassan get raped would only worsen the hatred since Baba clearly loves Hassan more than he loves Amir. Because of the lack of love and support from his only parent, Amir aches for the mother he never had (p. 6) and so cannot confide in Baba about the rape.

"Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring." (Popenoe, 1996, p.163) yet Amir always feels that Baba hates him a little (p. 18) and if the truth were to come out, "Baba would never, ever forgive (him)" (p. 98). This feeling of hatred from his father has gravely negative impact on Amir's life and choices and mostly his liberty to confide in Baba what he has witnessed. Any slight contact or involvement with each other between Baba and Amir is essentially valuable to Amir but Baba either does not realise it or just does not care. On the day of the official opening of the orphanage, Amir says Baba "motioned me to hold his hat for him and I was glad to, because then everyone would see that he was my father, my Baba" (p 14). This level of desperation for the father's love and approval push Amir to silence about the rape because he knows he will never get the so desired approval.

If only Baba had been 'present enough' to actually see his son and not to just look at him, probably Amir would not have been turned into the kind of person he became at thirty-eight years of age. Hassan's father, though poor is present in his son's life that he is able to notice when something is wrong with Hassan yet even after such life shattering event for Amir's, Baba never notices that his son is traumatised. While Ali makes effort to inquire from his son what has happened and even makes efforts to ask Amir, Baba never sees anything wrong with Amir and so never asks hence he is also never told. Amir has no conviction that when it comes to his father, love could ever be strong enough to cover his sins, let alone a multitude of them that is why he is too scared to tell his father what had happened in the alley.

Another factor perpetuating the silence among child rape victims is the notion of not achieving hegemonic masculinity (Javaid, 2016; Connell 2005). In the eyes of baba "there is something missing in that boy" (p. 21). Amir, in the view of Baba is an embodiment of the notion of not achieving hegemonic masculinity as he is neither tough, nor powerful, nor strong, he is emotional, and sensitive, and particularly unable to always protect himself from violence and threats of violence. At one point Baba even makes a comment to Rahim Khan about Amir's inability to stand up for himself. "Rahim, a boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up for anything" (p. 22; p.204). Amir is also conscious of his inability to demonstrate to Baba that he can achieve hegemonic masculinity mainly because he is an emotional person. In America Baba is told that he has a degenerative cancer, but he refuses to undergo chemotherapy and upon receiving the news, Amir's eyes swell up as he asks Baba what he is supposed to do. Amir says, "a look of disgust swept across his (Baba) rain-soaked face. It was the same look he had given me when, as a kid, I'd fall, scrape my knees, and cry. It was the crying that brought it on then, the crying that brought it on now..." (p. 144). Baba clearly hates Amir's inability to be manly in the traditional sense of man and Amir was conscious of this that is why he can never confess to him what had happened because he feels he has not been a man then and telling will not be manly either.

"The experience of parental love is the foundation for forming an image of the world as a safe and friendly environment for the child's field of activity" (2015, p. 161). With a dead mother and a father who believes in tough love to mould his son into his own image, Amir lacks a lot in parental love. When Amir asks Baba the question "'what about me, Baba? What am I supposed to do?'" (p. 144), Baba's response is "'all those years, that's what I was trying to teach you, how to never have to ask that question'" (p. 144). Which means from a young age, Baba expected Amir to be self-sufficient yet as a child without the experience of parental love and in the absence of communicated guidance, it is difficult to see and differentiate between tough love and hatred and Amir saw the latter only in his father and not the former. Each time

Amir goes out to play with Hassan, it is Hassan who always has to defend them whenever they are bullied, and Baba is always enraged by it. What Baba does not realise is that Amir only needs love, support and guidance on what to do and how to behave instead of the negative, degrading and detrimental criticism and shutting him out, which is all he offers.

In another incident Baba even wonders if Amir is really his child and to show the depth and impact of baba's uncertainty about Amir's paternity, Amir too even begins to question it. Amir overhears Baba whisper to Rahim Khan that, "if I hadn't seen the doctor pull him out of my wife with my own eyes, I'd never believe he's my son" (p. 22). Hearing such words from one's own father is quite damaging for a child and the following morning Amir is quite disturbed that Hassan even has to ask what is bothering him that he snaps at Hassan. Amir constantly makes contrasts between baba and himself. For instance, on the incident where Baba stands up against the soldier who wants to sexually abuse a woman they are travelling with, Amir replays the words of his father in his mind as he remembers how he failed to stand up against Assef in the alley and he confesses that, "sometimes, I too wondered if I was really Baba's son" (p. 107). This sense of inadequacy thus explains why Amir is never able to tell Baba because it would be a self-fulfilling prophecy of his inadequacies and Baba will disapprove of him even more if not hate him more. Amir is confident that the frail relationship he enjoys with Baba would surely be ravaged by the news of Hassan's rape but especially by the part he believes he played in the rape.

The extent to which the father-son relationship between Amir and Baba is strained is also shown where "Baba heaved a sigh of impatience. That stung (for Amir) because he (Baba) was not an impatient man" (p 17). Baba is available for everyone else except for his own son. Baba is impatient when young Amir fails to understand a concept that he was trying to explain which any other person might have failed to understand too but just because this is Amir, a son with whom he does not really find much pleasure, he is quick to exasperation. When Amir attempts to have Baba read the story he has written, making an attempt to create a relationship with the only parent he has, Baba shows apathy and the son who "most days worshipped Baba with an intensity approaching the religious... wished (he) could open his veins and drain his cursed blood from his veins" p. 30). This is a very sad feeling for a young and developing mind and does not at all create an environment conducive for confiding when a child has been victimised or witnessed another being.

Baba's animosity towards Amir is the reason why Amir cannot and does not open up to anyone especially his father. He so much yearns for love that he has to endure trauma in silence just so he can maintain a little semblance of love Baba has been dishing out haphazardly since the day of the tournament. Amir's

determination to win the kite competition is just so he could gain baba's affections. He swore that "I was going to win. There was no other viable option. I was going to win, and I was going to run that last kite. Then I will bring it home and show it to Baba. Show him once and for all that his son was worthy. Then maybe my life as a ghost in the house would finally be over" (p. 52). Twelve years of such treatment from the only person you look up to and worship, twelve years of such neglect and aloneness in your own father's house leaves the child deeply wounded. Amir's life is already traumatic before having to witness the rape of a friend under helpless circumstances. Unfortunately, the incident falls on the very day when Amir has the opportunity to be something in his father's eye and there was no way he would give that away after twelve years of waiting and yearning.

Amir is already trying to cope with existing trauma and having to deal with another is too much for a child his age. "All (he) smelled was victory. Salvation. Redemption" (p. 61) as a result of winning this game and bringing the kite home. Any other news, especially gravely sad news as the rape of Hassan would have taken away his "one chance to become someone who was looked at, not seen, listened to, not heard" (p. 62). Amir finds himself in a conundrum of telling and not telling about Hassan's rape because after the kite victory he experienced "the single greatest moment of (his) twelve years of life, seeing Baba on that roof, proud of (him) at last" (p. 63). While it is sad for any child to have to fight for parental love which should be natural, it is the reality of Amir's life that he has to fight for that love hence the intense conflict between what is morally right and what is personally right.

Amir hoped to "make a grand entrance, a hero, prized trophy in (his) bloodied hands" (p. 64). He wanted "the old warrior (to) walk to the young one, embrace him, acknowledge his worthiness. Vindication. Salvation. Redemption. And then? Well... happily ever after, of course" (p. 64). Amir suffers from what Pond (2017) describes as nonrecognition or misrecognition and according to Pond (2017) this "can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (p. 775). When a child has been imprisoned to such distorted sense of self and an opportunity arises to emerge above the situation, the opportunity for redemption would be welcome at any cost. If Baba had really been a father to Amir, probably acknowledged him instead of pitying him against Hassan just because he does not demonstrate Baba's ideal child, then probably circumstances would have been different. Amir yearns for salvation and an identity with his father through the grand entrance and this would have meant nothing if he was to tell the ordeal of Hassan's rape and his part in it because Baba clearly favoured Hassan over Amir.

As Amir arrives home with the prized trophy of the blue kite, everything “happened just the way I’d imagined” (p. 74), getting into the house Baba and Rahim’s heads turning, the smile on Baba’s lips and the embrace that ensued. For the first time, Amir experiences the warmth of Baba’s love and acknowledgement and in that moment, whether consciously or subconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally Amir “forgot” what had happened in the alley and it felt good. The moment he opened the door and walked in, his imagination laid out before him and confessing about the rape would have disrupted this special moment and coming out later would have even made it worse and would have destroyed every good memory that had created since the beginning of the tournament.

Different resilience models show that under the right circumstances and with the right people to speak to whom victims trust and feel safe around, they can speak out about rape so as to recover. However, it does not always follow especially with males who are rape victims because of fear of being judged especially by people who trust them. The situation is even worse where the victims feel guilty and are ridden with self-blame for the victimisation that happen to them. Fear of and/or re-victimised always seem to block every passage to resilience. Amir has Rahim for someone to confide in yet still despite all the efforts made by Rahim to reach out, Amir remains silent. On his birthday party, Rahim extends an invitation to Amir to confide in him. “You know, you can tell me anything you want Amir jan. Any time” (p. 92). At one point Amir once commented that no one ever called him Amir jan, an expression of endearment the way Rahim does which means he knew he could talk to Rahim yet still when the opportunity presence he says, “for a moment I almost did tell him. Almost told him everything” but the fear of “what would he think of me” (p. 93) stopped him. Amir is convinced that Rahim would hate him and because of the guilty and self-condemnation, he feels Rahim would be justified to hate him. At the end, Amir never tells, and the secret keeps gnawing at him up until he is thirty-eight.

Additionally, Amir’s discomfort and hesitancy to confide in Rahim is probably based upon the Islamic beliefs of which he is reared on. According to *Islamquest.net* (2008), one cannot disclose his sins, either big or small, to anyone; he must keep the secrets of his sins to himself. The self-respect a person has for himself is so significant that he can only confess his sins before God in the sense of asking for forgiveness. By confessing before Allah, he will gain respect and not lose it and only God can give divine forgiveness and increasing one’s respect lost during sin. So, even when Amir has someone he trusts, he still cannot confess what he believes to be his sin, yet it is eating him away morally, socially, psychologically, spiritually and physically. Amir’s life is greatly affected, rather shaped by the rape and the silence. He is so torn by his self-inflicted shame that he feels unworthy. When Ali brings him the birthday present which he and

Hassan have gotten for Amir– a book - which he presents to Amir saying it was probably “modest and unworthy” of Amir; Amir actually “wanted to tell Ali it was not the book but him who was unworthy” (p. 96). Rape is associated in this culture with sin and dirty and Amir felt he was dirty and sinful hence the unworthiness. In most religious beliefs including the Christian religion, when one is full of sin, they should confess their sins in order to be clean (1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Proverbs 28:13). Until one has confessed, they remain dirty and unworthy of the kingdom of God, and this is what Amir feels because of the silence.

Amir’s days of blissful relations with baba are short-lived. After the victorious kite tournament Amir says, “Baba agreed to everything I asked” (p. 76). However, this relationship quickly turns sour when Amir requests Baba to consider changing the house help. Suddenly they return to the double traumatising of the platonic relationship with Baba and the secret. Amir is overburdened for a child. Since Hassan would not retaliate or hurt him back so he can feel some form of recompense for his sin, Amir cannot stand the secrecy. Having to see and deal with Hassan every other day while the intense heat of guilty burn his conscious and subconscious voraciously is increasingly unbearable, Amir resorts to scheming; he becomes a liar of the worst kind. He figures that since Baba preached to him that the worst sin of all is theft and had shown great detest for thieving if he frames Hassan for stealing his birthday presents, surely Ali and Hassan will be chased from the house. This shows the extremes to which trauma endured in silence can shape the identity of a child. Seeing that both Hassan and Ali have been crying because of his scheming, Amir “wondered how and when (he’d) become capable of causing this kind of pain” (p. 97). It is really not his nature, but trauma has thrust forward within him a very negative quality which manifests in the form of lying.

When one has lived a life tortured by guilty, it is so common and almost natural to believe that whatever bad that turns to happen in present life is punishment for a past wrong. This shows that trauma haunts a person until they find ways to deal and/or live with it. Amir believes that his inability to have a child with Soraya, even after the doctor has said there is nothing wrong with either of them is because of his ‘past sins’. While logically one would argue that a rape not spoken about has nothing to do with Amir’s marriage, but Amir feels that “... perhaps something, someone, somewhere, had decided to deny me fatherhood for the things I had done. Maybe this was my punishment, and perhaps justly so” (p. 173). It is so easy to fall into the gaping hole of despair and superstition when one is dealing with unresolved trauma. It is also quite sad how one tends to justify the wrongs that happen in one’s life when one is living with haunting ghosts from past experiences.

Amir could have told Ali the truth when confronted by Ali after the rape but possibly he wondered that if Hassan had not told his own father the truth, then it was not his truth to tell as well. Amir thus feigns ignorance and tells his own lie too that perhaps Hassan was sick. UNAMA (2020, n.p) notes that in Afghanistan “silence about rape emanates from the already existing culture of silence and the stigmatization associated with rape in which shame is placed on the victims instead of the perpetrators.” It is from this background that both Amir and Hassan feel unable to share the sad experience they just suffered due to feelings of guilt on the part of Amir and humiliation on the part of Hassan. Many are themselves blamed for being sexually abused or raped and are often shunned by their communities – or even threatened – if the allegations come to light. Both Amir and Hassan fear they would be blamed for letting the rape happen.

4.2.4 Rape, silence and effects on child victims in *The Kite Runner*

The impact of rape and silence in child victims and the long-lasting effect of rape trauma is demonstrated in the opening statement of the text when Amir confesses that, “I became what I am today at the age of twelve, on a frigid overcast day in winter of 1975” (p. 1). He reminisces over the life he lived in Kabul up until, “the winter of 1975 came along and changed everything. And made me what I am today” (p. 2). After having been witness to the rape of his only ‘friend’ and the circumstances forcing him into silence, Amir’s life is changed for the bad.

Hood (2012) describes the sense of self as that continuous experience of being a complete and authentic person who feels in control of their own activities. Amir does not feel in control of his own activities suggesting his sense of self is distorted. The way he regrets after snapping at Hassan unnecessarily shows how much he has been affected by the ordeal that transpired in the alley. He opens the door minutes later and finds Hassan has already gone away as he has rudely ordered and Amir “fell on his bed, buried his head under the pillow, and cried” (p. 83). Clearly it is not his intention to treat Hassan so cruelly, it is not his nature either and yet he does it anyhow. Furthermore, as Amir takes up to scheming as ways to deal with the silence about rape, he takes his own money and watch, hides them under Hassan’s mattress and turns to accuse Hassan of stealing. When Hassan is asked and he agrees to stealing, “Amir flinched, like he’d been slapped. His heart sank and he almost blurted out the truth” (pp. 97-98) yet he still cannot. Amir’s life is fast changing as he has learnt to do things which cause serious harm to others, mistakes he carry out in the name of trying to deal with his trauma.

Mardner (2006, p. 2) reflecting on the views of Caruth (1996) says that:

The extent that trauma opens a breach in experience and understanding, it also opens up new possibilities for experience and new modes of understanding. For Caruth, the very structure of repetition inherent to “traumatic belatedness” compels the traumatized person to survive the trauma by finding ways of bearing witness to it (p. 2).

It does not always follow that the new possibilities and new modes of understanding or strategies for dealing with the trauma are positive. It is from this perspective of trauma that one can understand the choices made by Amir following the rape of Hassan such as framing Hassan, harassing him or his sudden temperament after the rape experience. A simple conversation with Ali asking him what had happened after the tournament, a genuine question that simply required an honest answer, Amir snaps at Ali asking the older man how “should he (Amir) know what’s wrong with (Hassan)” (p. 76). On another occasion, he snaps again at Hassan for “trying to be friendly to me” (pp. 82-83). Amir is constantly angry at himself, at the world, at everything. As Johnson (2019) annotates that “silence births something inexpressible which thrusts itself forward from the innermost being, something unspeakable, something negative”, for Amir it is anger, lies, scheming and other devious traits which thrust forward.

Even though Amir is having a good relationship with his father, the trauma gnawing away at his subconscious thrust a profound emptiness in him. He says, “finally I had what I’d wanted all those years. Except now that I had it, I felt as empty as the unkempt pool I was dangling my legs into” (p. 80). The rape and the silence about it took away his sense of self and left him void. When his father drops him at school after the long winter holiday, Amir says the old him would have beamed with pride as his father’s mustang drew more than one envious look “but all (he) could muster was a mild form of embarrassment. That and emptiness” (p. 84). Because of the silence about the rape which Amir experienced by witnessing, he has a constant feeling of emptiness in him that denies him the right to enjoy as any normal school going child should.

Rape like any trauma does not go away unaddressed. At school, Amir tries to occupy himself “with gravity and momentum, atoms and cells, the Anglo-Afghan wars, instead of thinking about Hassan and what happened to him. But, always, my mind returned to the alley. To Hassan’s brown corduroy pants lying on the bricks. To the droplets of blood staining the snow dark red, almost black” (p 85). Trauma is like a ghost from the past that haunts its victims in the present. Amir cannot concentrate on his schoolwork because only for a short while did school take his mind off what he feels he “had let happen” (p. 85) that winter. Feelings of guilty and self-blame endured in silence have that impact on a person, to distract him or her from meaningful and productive existence. Every time there is mention of rape, Amir is traumatised and taken aback. As the soldier threatens to kill Baba and rape the woman, Amir’s “mind flashed to that winter

day six years ago. Me, peering around the corner in the alley. Kamal and Wali holding Hassan down. Assef's buttock muscles clenching and unclenching, his hips thrusting back and forth" (p. 107). The specificity with which Amir recalls details of an event that happened six years back demonstrates how trauma is a ghost that unless it is avenged by outing it, it will not go away.

Every twist and turn are potential springboards for the rape incident to spring to the fore of Amir's conscience. The mention of rape or the occasion Baba stands up to someone to protect another person. That contrast in personalities between himself, and Baba is a trigger of the memory of the events in the alley. Any slight contrast between himself and Baba especially in terms of physical strength and tenacity brings with it his victimisation as he watched the lamb in the form of his friend being sacrificed by Assef in the alley for his sake. As Hassan was being raped, so was Amir indirectly and the memory cannot and will not fade because he has not really dealt with it. Amir says, "the rest of the ride (to Pakistan) is scattered bits and pieces of memory that come and go..." (p 114) yet when it comes to the traumatic incident of 1975, he remembers it as clearly as day and every detail of it showing how traumatic experiences are pasts which are very much alive in a person's present thus forcing the victim to relive them every other day.

Trauma distances relations as evidenced by the rift that developed between Hassan and Amir. For a week, Amir barely saw Hassan yet these two used to see each other every day since the day Hassan was born. Amir explains how Hassan, "used to wait for me to sit at the breakfast table before he started ironing – that way we could talk" (p. 75). Now all that Amir had to deal with was finding "toasted bread, brewed tea, and a boiled egg already on the kitchen table. (His) clothes for the day ironed and folded..." (p. 75). The rape changed Hassan and his father, Ali, worried how his once cheerful son "now all he wants to do is sleep. He does his chores... but then he just wants to crawl under his blanket" (pp 75-76). After their triumph, as Hassan ran for the blue kite, he "smiled his Hassan smile and the next time (Amir) saw him smile unabashedly like that was twenty-six years later, on a faded Polaroid photograph" (p. 63). Hassan became withdrawn from society and so did Amir and Sohrab and Kamal which is a typical characteristic of trauma (Hay, 1998).

While Amir feels guilty for the rape of Hassan and the silence he is keeping, Hassan also has withdrawn from society as a traumatised victim and because of the silence that has developed, he feels guilty for the deteriorating friendship between him and Amir. Rape and silence always bring about guilty and self-blame for every wrong that happens. Hassan cries to Amir that, "I don't know what I've done, Amir agha. I wish you'd tell me. I don't know why we don't play anymore" (p. 82). Even when Amir insists that Hassan has

done no wrong, Hassan still believes there is something he has done wrong and he continues to persuade Amir that “you can tell me, I’ll stop doing it” (p. 82). Rape trauma often breeds guilty senses in its victims even when they have done no wrong.

Emotional wounds do not only wear out the psychological efficiency of a person but also the physical. Amir feels tired to go “hike up the hill (and) Hassan looked tired too— he’d lost weight and gray circles had formed under his puffed-up eyes” (p. 81). Trauma weighed down on Hassan to the extent that he “looked older.... No, not older, *old*. Lines had etched into his tanned face and creases framed his eyes, his mouth” (p. 86). For his eleven years old, Hassan has been extremely wearied by the pain of his violation which he has to carry on his little shoulders alone. One’s problem can be carried by another by simply having that other person know about it and it works to make the burden less heavier on the psych and thus wear the bearer a little less. Hassan has his own self to carry the cumbersome load of his experience and it wore him out physically.

Six years after the rape of Hassan by Assef and his friends Kamal and Wali, Amir then meets Kamal among the refugees in the basement. Kamal himself having been a victim of double rape experiences one in which he was witness and another a direct victim, the physical effects of the psychological wound caused by both rape incidents show on Kamal’s face and person. “He had withered – there was simply no other word for it” (p. 111). His eyes gave Amir “a hollow look and no recognition at all registered in them. His shoulders hunched and his cheeks sagged like they were too tired to cling to the bone beneath” (p. 111). Just like Hassan, rape experience and the ensuing silence ages the victims so quickly. Kamal’s father describes to Baba how four men gang raped Kamal, like Hassan who tried to fight, Kamal also tried to fight but was overpowered. Just like Hassan too he came home “bleeding down there... his pants ... doesn’t talk anymore... just stares...” (p. 111). Effects of rape in these boys is seemingly the same, marked by withdrawal and deterioration. Kamal is described as having been once a handsome boy is scarred by the rape experience and he has deteriorated physically and socially into almost a zombie.

Hassan and Kamal are not the only ones who have lost connection with the present as a result of their rape experiences, Sohrab too is distraught. After fighting their way out of Assef’s house, Sohrab barely says anything nor answer when spoken to. He is quiet from the time they flee Kabul. Later he tells Amir that he can play panjpar and each time the game is played in silence (p. 281). The level of Sohrab’s withdrawal is however more intense than all the others because he flinches at any kind of contact especially with a male. While fatherly love demonstrated through contact, hugs et cetera often provide children with a sense of being loved, and safety, Sohrabs recoils at any kind of touch. As they play cards,

Amir puts his hand on Sohrab's arm gingerly, but Sohrab "flinched, immediately dropped his cards, pushed away the stool and walked back to the window" (p. 281). Sohrab is scared and uncomfortable with any physical contact because that is part of the sexual victimisation he had to endure for several years in the hands of Assef.

It is not a normal scene to have young children consistently in pensive mood, but this is Sohrab's normal. He stood in the crimson light, forehead pressed to the glass, fists buried in his armpits. Since the incident, Amir and Sohrab play panjpar in silence each day and most of the day, they hardly spoke. His innocence has not only been broken but has been completely shattered. The very characteristics that make a child feel loved frighten Sohrab because Assef used those to abuse him. If he is not standing by the window, Sohrab sits on the bed, his knees drawn to his chest and watches images on the screen, stone faced and rocking back and forth (p. 286). There is some degree of abnormality in Sohrab's postures and probably this owes to years of continuous fear of and abuse. Even when spoken to, like when Farid bids him farewell, Sohrab is clearly absent, he just continues rocking himself back and forth. He is somewhat estranged from the present, probably a characteristic he had to master during years of abuse and forced silence.

Furthermore, Sohrab's sitting posture suggest years of dehumanisation because as they sat at the Mosque after Sohrab had left the lodge without communicating, he sat next to Amir with his knees to his chest. Sohrab has been lonely for some time having lost both parents and then becoming a sexual victim to a very cruel man, it is understandable when he hugs his knees, an indication of loneliness and aloneness. In that instant, Amir tries again to reach out to Sohrab by making physical contact as Sohrab starts crying but the child flinches again leaving Amir helpless of how to console the boy. Amir wants to pull Sohrab "close, hold him, tell him the world had been unkind to him, not the other way round" (p. 292) but he cannot because Sohrab is afraid of physical contact. That is how much trauma has damaged his innocence and shattered his ability to view anyone or anything as safe besides his knees.

A lot of Amir is reflected in Sohrab, especially in their view of the world when Amir was the same age as Sohrab such as the idea of taking the blame upon oneself for the wrongs done to you. It is very sad how a child so young would be grateful for his parents' absence and the absence of those he loves because he believes he is too dirty and sinful for them to see him. He says, "I don't want them to see me ... I'm so dirty. I'm so dirty and full of sin" (p. 293). It is very difficult for children to differentiate between what has been done to them and what they did especially in cases of sexual abuse where they are seemingly manipulated into acting 'voluntarily'. Sohrab feels dirty because, he confesses to Amir that, "those men –

they did things... the bad man and the other two... they did things ... they did things to me” (p. 293). He cannot even put words to what was done to him because it is extremely bad, and he feels guilty because he feels he participated in those things.

Rape and silence create fear and distrust. When children lose trust in systems which should give them protection, they lead haunted lives. Sohrab is so afraid of being sent to an orphanage even just for a short while so that his papers to travel to the America can be sorted out. He is so afraid due to the trauma he has experienced because it is at the orphanage where he is used to trade for money for the upkeep of the orphanage, traded to the men who violate him in unexplainable ways. Sohrab associates the orphanage with sexual abuse, with the monsters that lurk in waters, waiting to grab the innocence of children into murky waters. He cries to Amir pleading not to be sent to the orphanage even though it is a different orphanage from the one in Kabul. He says, “Please! Please, no!... I’m scared of that place. They’ll hurt me” (p. 313). The fact that it is an orphanage, the whole system represents those monsters for the poor child. His utter lack of faith in the system is echoed in his words of disagreement to the promises offered by the system. He argues that “they always say they won’t but they lie. They lie! Please, God!” (p. 313). Sohrab is so desperate not to be thrown back into this undependable system that exposed him to violation.

His fear and distrust of the protection systems and services is so great that he opts for death rather than being sent back to an orphanage. The abuse has been so intense for Sohrab that death is a far much better alternative. Even though he has grown up in a religion that condemns suicide unless it is being done in the name of Allah, Sohrab finds death much safer than being alive at an orphanage. He gets into the bathtub, “twisted a razor handle and opened the twin safety latches on the head and slid the blade out holding it between his thumb and forefinger” (p. 321). He expresses to Amir that he was “tired of everything” (p. 324) because Amir, another system of protection has broken his trust just like the orphanages. Sadly, Amir “did not have to worry about Sohrab’s smiling again because almost a year passed without a single word from Sohrab” (p. 326) to show the extent of his psychological, social and emotional trauma. Amir says, “now the light was gone... and I wondered when it would dare return” (p. 326). Sohrab always resort to silence because that is all he knows yet it also takes him to very dark corners and forgets him there.

Rape trauma like any other trauma creeps through dreams. After watching the victimisation of Hassan, having looked into Hassan’s eyes, Amir becomes instantaneously aware that the kind of look in Hassan’s eyes, like that of the sheep “is a look that will haunt my dreams for weeks” giving him “nightmares (that) persist long after the blood stains on the grass have dried” (p. 72). Amir has even lost the freedom to sleep as “an hour later, I still couldn’t sleep. I kept tossing and turning as my relatives grunted, sighed and snored

in their sleep. I sat up” (p. 80). The night Amir acknowledged the blame upon himself for the rape of Hassan, he says, “that was the night I became insomniac” (p. 81). As Baba explains to Amir, the greatest sin is theft and by raping Hassan and Amir being forced into silence, he is robbed of the power to rest mentally and physically. Thus, rape as a variation of theft steals the ability to sleep from its victims, the ability to dream, to be free or to have productive fearless lives.

As a result of the rape and the silence about the rape, Amir shoulders the blame for Hassan’s rape as he feels that he brought it upon Hassan. In his mind, he convinces himself that Hassan’s dream has been wrong when he said there was no monster in the water. After the rape of Hassan, “there was a monster in the lake. It had grabbed Hassan by the ankles, dragged him to the murky bottom. I was that monster” (pp. 80-81). Sadly, children are taught about wrongs, but the education is not incomplete because they are not taught to differentiate between their doing and what has been done to or on them. One school in Namibia has its learners pledging that they will not to be sexually immoral. Such a pledge is gravely erroneous and dangerous because the children just grow up knowing that sexual immorality is wrong but without full understanding of what it really means to practice sexual immorality. In cases where rape results from persuasion, the child will not know to differentiate rape from just sexual immorality. This is exactly what Sohrab has been put through. He has been made to entertain these men, after dancing, he brings himself to stand between Assef’s thighs, he does not fight when the men do the things that they do to him. Being so young he is not able to think that it is because he cannot really defend himself or report anywhere because he has no one and the system is crooked. He does not understand the principles of him acting and being acted on. At the end of the day, he shoulders the blame and considers himself dirty.

Amir is tormented by the knowledge of Hassan’s rape and the silence he keeps that he also yearns for punishment. He hits Hassan with a pomegranate and wants Hassan to hit him back just so that he could feel some sense of recompensing for a crime he really did not commit. Amir “hit him (Hassan) with another pomegranate, in the shoulder this time.... ‘Hit me back!’ I spat. ‘Hit me back, goddamn you!’ I wished he would. I wished he’d give me the punishment I craved, so maybe I would finally sleep at night. Maybe things would return to how they used to be between us” (p. 86). Amir thinks if he snaps at Hassan and Hassan “would give it right back to him, break the door open and tell him off – it would have made things easier, better” (p. 83). The more Hassan does not respond the way Amir wishes or hopes, the deeper his trauma grows and the more the silence torments him.

Sohrab has been so damaged to the extent that when asked if he wants to go to America with Amir, he never really gives a response but just “a quiet surrender, not so much an acceptance as an act of relinquishment by one too weary to decide, and far too tired to believe” (p. 326). Rape and silence (trauma) disrupt the ability to reconcile and resolve that dark episode of one’s history and ensure the development and meaningful function of the individual in society (Aydin 2017). Amir says, “perspective was a luxury when your head was constantly buzzing with a swarm of demons” (p. 326). Unless the ghosts from one’s pasts are made to settle, it is difficult if not impossible to see anything differently. If the ghosts bring about fear and dishonesty, then one cannot judge anything without that same fear and distrust.

Blinded by his own trauma, and the burden of secrecy, Amir never realises the depth or breadth of the consequences of his actions until the day Hassan and Ali leaves the house. He thought putting Hassan out of the house will take away the pain and discomfort brought by seeing him every day. He thought it would wash away the memory of the cold winter day of 1975. But with his father begging Ali to stay, Amir says, “I understood the depth of the pain I had caused, the blackness of the grief I had brought onto everyone, that not even Ali’s paralyzed face could mask his sorrow” (p. 99). When one is in grave pain especially resulting from a psychologically traumatic experience, it is common to often make very bad decisions which the individual lives to regret. Trauma victims tend to make decisions which turn out to hurt them mostly. The more one tries to run away from the ghosts in their lives, the more they turn into those ghosts themselves. Therefore, without redressing, trauma is a kind of wound that changes lives.

The greatest danger of silence is that one does not get to put a picture out for the world to judge fairly. Since Amir did not tell anyone about the events of 1975 and in a bid to deal with what he believe was his wrong, he made more mistakes and the call by Rahim Khan to come back to Kabul because there was a way to be good again implies that Amir had been judged as bad by society and by himself. Sadly, Amir considers his victimisation as his sin and betrayal and his guilty stems from the conviction that he has taken his guilt out on the very same people he had betrayed and then tried to forget it all. All he has managed to do in the name of dealing with his guilty is to become insomniac because even in America and being a grown married man, he still struggles to sleep.

4.2.5 Speaking out as a resilience strategy in *The Kite Runner*

Barkley (n.d.) says that forgetting is not a voluntary act but as Wood (2019) argues, speaking out about trauma enables forgetting and eventually healing. The more one wants to leave something behind them,

the more that something follows you especially if it is contained within. This is very true with traumatic experiences and Amir confirms to this when he says:

I remember the precise moment.... That was a long time ago, but it's wrong what they say about the past, I've learned, about how you can bury it. Because that past claws its way out. Looking back now, I realise I have peeking into that deserted alley for the last twenty-six years (p. 1).

Resilience does not mean willing away your traumatic experiences because they will not go away just like that without confronting and dealing with them. Often talking about the traumatic experience is one way towards coping. Since resilience is both a process and an end (McCleary & Figley, 2017), Amir spends twenty-six years of his life seeking for a small window just to speak out his experience in order to start his healing.

Where silence is non-disclosure, Ringel (2011) points out that trauma sufferers always find themselves torn between the two choices of telling and not telling about their trauma. As a Shona proverb says *chiri mumoyo chiri muninga* (that which is in the heart is hidden), it is the one who carries it who dies with it or dies of it unless one decides to let it out. No one can reach to fetch out what is hidden in another person's heart. Amir wishes he could just tell someone about what had happened in the alley that winter day. While they slept at his uncle's place in Jalalabad, he says out loud but to no one in particular, "I watched Hassan get raped" (p. 80). When his Kaka Homyoun grunts in his sleep a part of him is happy to have been heard but he realises no one has actually heard him. He says a part of him yearned and hoped someone "would wake up and hear, so I wouldn't have to live with this lie anymore. But no one woke up..." (p. 80). Not having this opportunity to say out the secret he harboured felt like a curse for Amir and the only way to rid himself of the curse was to speak out. He yearns for the resilience offered through speaking up.

When Amir realises that Hassan has told his father about the event in the alley and when he also found out that Hassan knew that he had watched as he was being violated for his sake and did nothing, instead of panicking or fearing that Baba might be told about the truth, Amir "strangely, was glad that someone knew..." (p. 99). It was so important for Amir to just have someone else know about what happened because he feels that at least then he does not have to pretend to be without sin. From his point of view, it was important that "someone knew me for who I really was; I was tired of pretending" (p. 99). Just having someone know the secret he is keeping lessened the burden of the secret; whether he would be blamed or judged would be secondary, what matters is that the secret was no longer his alone to bear. The fact that Ali does not say it to Baba means he too is now living with Amir's burden of the rape incident. It made it lighter for Amir hence the importance of speaking out as a resilience strategy.

Amir constantly envies those around him who have the impetus to speak out their secrets because he then watches as they manage to move past their worst fears. He envies Hassan who pours out his experience to his father. He also envies Soraya, his wife because “her secret was out. Spoken. Dealt with” (p. 152) while all he can do is open his mouth and close it without saying anything. Like all the other incidences and chances, he has had, Amir again opens his mouth and almost told Soraya that he had “betrayed Hassan, lied, driven him out and destroyed a forty-year relationship between Baba and Ali but he didn’t” (p. 152). Amir admits that one quality he lacks has always been courage and, in that area, Soraya is a better person than he.

Rape as trauma does not only hurt the direct victim but it silences even societies forcing them into victims of narrative trauma. Hassan tells his father about the rape and Amir gets to know the day they left the house that Ali knew. He says, “Ali glanced my way and in his cold, unforgiving look, I saw that Hassan had told him. he had told him everything, about what Assef and his friends had done to him, about the kite, about me” (p. 99). That Hassan had told his father probably explains his ability to recuperate from the trauma earlier than Amir, his ability to request Amir to go hike up the hill or to play, his being able to request Amir to read him the novel. All the efforts that Hassan makes to try and reach out to Amir are probably because he has shared the secret and has had help from his father carrying it which made the burden a little lighter and made recovery a little possible.

Furthermore, speaking up earned Hassan some bit of affection and protection from his father which also aids in healing when the victim has support. Even though Ali could not speak up about the alley incident to Agha sahib, but he could draw his son to him, curling his arm around his son’s shoulder, a protective gesture meant to protect his son from predators. That show of affection is what Amir lacks and making him feel that even though he were to speak out to his father, he would not get the same level of affection or be looked at the same. Speaking out to his father protected Hassan in many ways beyond a simple curl around his shoulder. After being accused of theft, Ali decides to leave Kabul with his son for Hazarajat. Even after Baba persuades him to stay and sworn to forgive Hassan; with grief all over his face, Ali remains firm on his decision because he wants to protect his son. He abandons a relationship of over forty years just to protect his son because of what he knows.

The evidence that speaking out about rape provides a quicker way to cope with a traumatic experience is demonstrated through the reactions of Hassan and Amir to their relationship. When Amir arrives at Rahim’s house in Afghanistan, twenty-six years after the winter day incident and Hassan’s name is mentioned for the first time in those twenty-six years, he wonders when he had last spoken the name.

Amir says that just speaking the name of Hassan causes “those thorny old barbs of guilt (to) bore into me once more, as if speaking his name had broken a spell, set them free to torment me anew” (p. 186). On the other hand, Hassan asked after Amir each time he met Rahim because he had spoken out sooner thus rising above his trauma thus managing to forgive Amir for all the wrong choices he had made. Hassan inquires incessantly from Rahim about the welfare of Hassan and Rahim tells Amir that, “Hassan asked about you... (he) had so many questions about you. Had you married? Did you have children? How tall were you? Did you fly kites and go to the cinema? Were you happy...” (p. 191)? These are questions of concern suggesting Hassan found a way to cope with his dark experience.

Resilience as indicated earlier is built over time. After Sohrab has expressed to Amir that he has been victimised by the bad man and his guards, Amir eventually succeeds to offer Sohrab comfort through physical contact. Trust begins to build between the two until Amir asks to send Sohrab to the orphanage for a short while. Immediately the trust is broken, Sohrab attempts to take his life and after Sohrab’s suicide attempt, Amir tries to touch his shoulder but Sohrab “flinched. Drew away” (p. 325). Amir then says, “I dropped my hand, remembering ruefully how in the last days before I’d broken my promise he had finally become at ease with my touch” (p. 325). Speaking out fills up the void created by trauma enabling physical contact to occur and to mean something else different from what the victim of rape probably knows. Words can make and break people and rape since it is dialogic, it makes and breaks people as well.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented a detailed analysis of *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and *The Kite Runner* (2003) laying out how the issues of rape and silence as portrayed in the two selected texts, how the lives of characters are affected by rape and silence and how speaking out provides a way for victims to deal with the trauma of rape. The first novel explored, *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) presents rape and silence from the point of view and experiences of young female characters from Zimbabwe while the second text, *The Kite Runner* (2003) expounds rape and silence phenomena from the point of view of young male characters in the war-torn Afghanistan. The differences and similarities in the experiences of these characters will be commented in the concluding chapter 5 of this report.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Chapter Four of the research dealt with the detailed analysis of the selected texts, *The Kite Runner* (2003) by Khaled Hosseini and *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) by George Mujajati. The discussion of the texts was based on the research objectives, the literature review and the theoretical framework. This current Chapter Five focusses on conclusions of the research and provides an outline of the recommendations made by the researcher. The conclusions were arrived at after looking closely at the data in chapter four on the themes of rape and silence among child rape victims in the two selected texts.

The researcher was particularly moved to carry out this research after observing the rise in incidences of child rape versus the gaping silence that continues to widen about the issue. A review of literature then showed that there is silence among children who have suffered rape due to a number of factors. This researcher then sought to look into the matter from a literary perspective based on the belief that literature is a mirror of society and that writers do not write for the sake of writing but aim to communicate a specific message, unveil and/or condemn a certain evil in society. Guided by the trauma and resilience theoretical framework, the researcher sought to understand the concepts of child rape trauma and silence from the perspective of the victims, the causes and impacts of silence among these victims and to establish how and why speaking out as a resilience strategy has been used by the child victims in the two texts. The study reviewed the experiences of seven child victims of rape from the two texts, of which three are female and four are male. This chapter thus gives a summary of the conclusions the researcher arrived at after a thorough analysis of the data and gives recommendations based on these conclusions and experiences made in the course of the study.

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Establish factors perpetuating silences among the child victims of rape in the two texts.

From reading the two texts, this researcher concluded that while there are different kinds of silences associated with child victims of rape, there are basically two broad categories namely, under/non reporting and non-disclosure. One would realise that other types of silences such as polite silences, privileged silences, veiled silences, intentional silences, and unintelligible silences as explored in Mazzei (2003) are mainly in terms of either under/no reporting or non-disclosure. Based on the two texts under

study, female rape victims mostly demonstrate silence as under / non reporting. Female child victims report the rape experience to their mothers but no further action is taken from then on to ensure that the perpetrators receive appropriate punishment for their sins or for the victims to get justice or healing. On the other hand, male victims in *The Kite Runner* (2003) mostly do not disclose their rape until a later time. Though one victim, Hassan, tells his father about the rape, it is not spelled out in the text how long after the incident occurred does the victim report to the father unlike the girl victims who report the incident soon after it occurs.

Various factors restrain the female victims from reporting the matter to the authorities (police) and the most common one is parental control or lack of parental support especially from the father. Takundwa flatly refuses that Sofia's rape be reported to the police. Since the female victims reported the rape to their mothers, the mothers had a responsibility to inform the father and the latter had the final say on the way forward on how to proceed with the matter. In the two cases of rape in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) where Fatima and Sofia report their rape to the mothers, the eventual course of action adopted is to force the girls to marry the rape perpetrators instead of seeking justice for the girls through reporting to the police.

The role of parents and parental support in as far as silence among child rape victims is concerned is quite undisputable. While for the girls, the mothers are powerless to make decisions, the fathers are either just not supportive enough when it comes to taking the legal route or they just do not get involved completely. In some cases, like that of Sofia, the father (Takundwa) adamantly refuses going to the police thus causing the child to suffer even more especially where she ends up forced to marry the very person who emotionally wounded her. For the boys in *The Kite Runner* (2003), the emotional absence of the present parent mainly causes the silence for the main character Amir. Love brings a child closer and opens pathways for easy and free communication, yet when faced with a patriarchal father who believes in tough love and no space for display of affections, the child remains distant from the only available support system, and it thus hinders chances of disclosure, as is the case of Amir and Baba.

In both cases of female or male child victims of rape, cultural values and norms play a pivotal role in perpetuating silence about rape. The decisions made by the mothers in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) when dealing with their daughters who have been victimised sexually is solely based on societal values and norms. Decision making is a father's responsibility, and his decisions are final, so it does not matter if the mother has or had a different opinion, what the father as the head of the house decides is undisputed. Mothers and children are considered property of the man and the man has power to do as he deems

necessary with the property in his household that is why when Takundwa threatens his wife and daughter, they cower and do not report Sofia's rape to the police.

Patriarchy especially in most African societies ascribes the role of child rearing to mothers but the role does not include making decisions concerning the child. In cases where the mother is absent like in the case of Amir, Hassan, Kamal, Sohrab in *The Kite Runner* (2003), the fathers are not acculturated to provide emotional support to their children. Ali maybe be considered an exception as he does provide some form of support. The researcher however, only concluded this from inferences as it is not explicitly stated in the text. The ideology of hegemonic masculinity socialises and restricts men to aggressiveness and toughness as the standards for manhood, showing emotion or weakness are for women and being raped means being womanised and being womanised means the man is weak. Amir's father ascribes to these notions of hegemonic masculinity which clearly affects his son. Where fathers ascribe to such ideologies, the boys remain quiet because there are no spaces allowing them to be victims or to be weak. Even admitting to one's own parent, especially the father that you have been womanised through rape is for some boys not only impossible but even taboo.

Corrupt or ineffective protection systems and services are also responsible for the silence among child rape victims. In cases where the rape is committed by influential people or by members of the very legal systems which should protect the children, it is impossible for the children to either disclose or report. The closeness of rape perpetrators to the victim restricts the child to silence as well. In the event that the child is victimised by his or her own father either directly or indirectly like in the case of Tabitha and Sofia yet the child has to report to the father who is the figure of authority in the home and the father then has to decide to take the matter to the police or not. The latter action would be the father's choice thus leaving the child hopeless.

The prevalence of rape myths also perpetuate silence about rape among child victims. Such notions as that child rape perpetrators are adults and mostly strangers make it difficult for children raped by their age mates who may simply be stronger and bigger physically than the victims as is the case with Fatima in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and Hassan and Amir in *The Kite Runner* (2003). In cases where the child victim may have been in a childhood romance with the perpetrator, it is also hard for the child to report or disclose about rape due to fear of not being believed, being shamed or ridiculed as is the case of Fatima. Guilt and self-blame for the rape plays a pivotal role in sealing child rape victims' silence about their experiences.

5.1.2 Examine male and female child victims' responses to the rape experience in the two texts.

This research established that boys and girls respond to rape differently. While it may not be the case in all scenarios of rape, evidence from the two texts studied shows that immediately after rape, the victims reactions and behaviours are different. The difference between the victims in Mujajati's *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) and Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) is that the female victims report their experiences to their mothers as soon as they get home. Though the circumstances of their telling are different, Fatima tells her mother about the rape out of fear and as a consequence of the mother's revictimisation. She is cornered into saying out what happened to her. Sofia on the other hand actually confides in her mother. She makes a conscious decision to tell her mother and so as to garner support. She makes a conscious decision soon after the rape that she will report the matter to the police but first she has to go home and tell her mother.

The nurturing characteristic of mothers probably play a pivotal role in ensuring that the victimised children come to them and report. Amir, one of the male victims confesses how he aches for the mother he never met which suggests that if his mother had been present, probably he would have disclosed the rape he indirectly experienced as soon as it occurred. Unlike the female victims, all the four victims in *The Kite Runner* (2003) have absent mothers. Amir's mother "haemorrhaged to death during childbirth" (p. 6), Hassan lost his "less than a week after he was born. Lost her to a fate most Afghans considered worse than death" (p. 6); Sohrab's mother is murdered, and Kamal's mother is killed by a stray bullet. This unfortunate coincidence may explain how and why the boys in the studied text respond to rape by not revealing to anyone as soon as they get home. The reviewed literature also showed that boys take a lot longer than girls to speak out about their rape experiences. Hassan tells his father about the rape but not on the day of the incident as the girls in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) do with their mothers.

Another difference in response to rape is that of silence in terms of expressing emotion. When the girl victims have passed the momentary paralysis stage often associated with trauma such as that caused by rape, they cry. Most psychological research demonstrate that crying is a way of letting out one's contained emotions and it is critical to recovery. However, the boys do not cry. Soon after the rape, both Sofia and Fatima arrive home and the moment they see their mothers they break town and torrents of tears gush out whereas the boys do not cry. Amir expected Hassan to cry but Hassan wipes off a few tears and it ended there. Boys do not show emotion through bursting out crying like the girls do, instead boys man up and sink it all in. Patriarchal ideology teaches that crying is for girls while boys have to be tough in any circumstance.

5.1.3 Explore how rape trauma shapes identities of the child victims in the two texts under study.

The cliché that what you experience in life either breaks you or makes you is very true to trauma of rape victimisation especially when the victim is forced or manipulated into silence. This research concurs with the argument that “the experience gathered throughout one’s life constitutes the material for individual development and can influence the psychological structures on the basis of former experiences” (Tyszkowa, 1996, p. 140 as cited in Aleksiejuk, 2015). While researchers might talk about voluntary silence and such other types of silences where the victim ‘chooses’ to not speak up, there is always some force, ideological or other which manipulates the victim into silence. The effects of such response to rape, voluntary or forced has detrimental effects to child development and identity creation. Female victims in *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) live bitter lives and never know happiness as a result of the rape experiences they endured in silence. While they may not have made deliberate choices to be bad, the ghosts of their pasts take away their happiness. Sofia no longer smiles or laughs, and she is always quick to anger and quick to tears. At one point she even confesses to Jeremiah that tears just flow on her cheeks without her intending them to and this clearly shows how deep she is traumatised by her experience and forced silence. Even though she has a beautiful house and drives a beautiful Porsche car, she is not happy because she cannot get past the fact that her life has been robbed from her. While the material things she owns could be considered every young girl’s dream, they fail to heal the wound inflicted upon her person and that wound is her legacy.

Labels such as unhappy woman, bitter person, angry person among others are not identities that just come by. They are not happy qualities that one would actually seek to have or enjoy for themselves but because of the experiences these ‘now women’ endured when they were still girls, their lives took paths directing them along such negative identities. The women in Mujajati’s *The Sun Will Rise Again* (1999) are very sad women, the rape experience fates them to perpetual sorry state and no amount of material possession can free them from the shackles of this deep sadness.

The trauma of rape and the silence that ensue shapes the identities of the male victims in Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* (2003) as well. Amir describes himself as insomniac and he only got this condition after the rape of Hassan which he witnesses but mainly, the insomnia owes to the fact that he has kept silent about it. He spends twenty-six years of his life hoping for the courage just to speak out about the rape and every day that he does not speak up, it affects him more. While some research show that several rape victims become rape perpetrators themselves, none in the studied texts really identified with the perpetrators to that level though Amir makes several very bad decisions as a direct result of the bad experience he had.

For instance, Amir frames Hassan for stealing when Hassan has actually not stolen anything; he snaps at his elders on several occasions, and he destroys a relationship of forty years between his father and Ali. All these bad habits emerge only after and as a result of the rape experience and mostly because of the silence about the rape because it eats away his core.

Decisions made from a standpoint of trauma may seem right to the one making them, especially at that particular time they are making them. However, such decisions often come back again to haunt the victim because most times these decisions are either simply not right or not wise. Victims of rape are mostly angry wounded people and the decisions they make are decisions made from a place of anger, hurt and betrayal. Sofia's decision to advance towards Nyati with a knife in her hands leads to the untimely death of Nyati. When asked by the lawyer if she intended to use the knife, she confesses that she had no idea what she really was going to do if she had gotten close enough to Nyati had he not fell out of the flat. Soon after Nyati falls down and lands on his head, Sofia surrenders herself to the police just like Amir regrets every decision he has made to hurt those he loved. Sofia did not like Nyati at all but still that does not mean she wanted his death on her hands but out of anger, she takes steps that ends her in a prison cell. Rape and silence create 'monsters' out of good-hearted children, it creates hateful and hurtful souls in both boys and girls victims.

5.1.4 Outline the importance of speaking up about rape experience as a resilience strategy.

Findings from the selected texts led to the conclusion that speaking out is about healing, justice and forgiveness. The research has also proven true the argument posited by Moon (2019) that speaking out is key to trauma. The stories in both texts are told from the viewpoint of central characters bent on speaking out their truth in order for them to be free. Sofia refuses the lawyer's guidance and advise to change her statement because it is important for her to tell the truth, her truth and she strongly believes that this truth will set her free. Similarly, Amir spends twenty-six years of his life wishing he could just tell the truth and any knowledge that his truth is known to someone else like in the incident with Hassan's father gives him some semblance of freedom. When he eventually speaks out to Rahim Khan and to his wife, he feels as though a heavy cumbersome load has been lifted from his shoulders.

Speaking out gives Sofia justice as she is in jail on charges of murder, but she gets exonerated after speaking out her truth. Hassan recovers and is able to crawl out from the shell that the rape and silence had enclosed him in. Rahim tells Amir that before Hassan died, he had been happy. Hassan recovered

earlier than Amir because he spoke out his truth to his father and to Rahim, giving him peace from the monsters that lurk in the psychological darkness created by trauma and silence.

Speaking out does not only benefit the victim who has been violated but it enables the recovery even of the whole community. Sofia's speaking out enables justice and recovery not only for herself but her mother and sister even though the sister has been dead for years. speaking out affords justice to the whole community because the Nyatis and Takundwas (perpetrators) get to be removed from the society either by death or incarceration. When the truth comes out about Tabitha, Joseph commits suicide and Nyati dies, even though his death has been by accident, the fact that he dies as a result of the truth coming out suggests the value of speaking out. Speaking out enables the victim to find cleansing of the self emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Many religions teach that when one confesses, either to God or to another person, one becomes clean of whatever wrong they would have been harbouring. The whole practice of pardoning which is practiced in some beliefs is based on the value of speaking out.

Not all victims recover as a result of speaking out and the recovery is not instantaneous, the process of resilience differs from person to person. Sofia's smile and the love in her eyes show soon after her speaking out and the judges condoning her from the charges she is accused of. The research also shows that Kamal's father had known about Kamal's rape which means Kamal spoke out and yet he never recovered to lead a full meaningful life. Even though his death may not have been a direct result of the trauma from the two rape experiences, the trauma surely facilitated his death somehow because it is the trauma that has deteriorated his health to the extent that he fails not endure being enclosed in the tanker when everybody else manages to survive. It takes more than a year for Sohrab to regain his sense of self even though he had spoken out about his rape to Amir. Various factors come into play to aid speaking out for a person to recover. Resilience models shared in the literature review and theoretical framework show that there are other conditions which maybe or are necessary for speaking out to be most effective as a coping strategy for rape trauma endured in silence.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the conclusions made in this research:

- Firstly, this researcher recommends that this research could be best pursued further from an interdisciplinary perspective merging literary theoretical frameworks and those from sociology or anthropology to chart the way forward as literature is a vehicle for societal recovery, discovery and rediscovery.

Objective specific recommendations made by the researcher are:

5.2.1 Objective 1: Establish factors perpetuating silences among the child victims of rape in the two texts.

- More literature demonstrating the value of parental support and show of affection to children, mostly by fathers is essential for the betterment of societies in terms of reduction of cases of child rape trauma suffered in silence.
- More literary works to be published using the child narrative voice centred on the themes of parental love and affection and/or the absence of it or parental neglect so that readers may know the implications of this.

5.2.2 Objective 2: Examine male and female child victims' responses to the rape experience in the two texts.

- Most rape literature makes mention and reference to rape of women and children yet there is need to separate between these and also to separate between male and female children because for them just as in adults, rape is a gendered phenomenon and should be treated as such. The experiences, consequences and implications of rape differ for boys and girls and literature ought to be sensitive to that.

5.2.3 Objective 3: To explore how rape trauma shapes identities of the child victims in the two texts under study.

- This research revealed that the identities of the rape victims carved as a result of the rape and silence were largely negative, it would therefore be interesting to examine literature in which the victims emerged stronger and positive identities were shaped even from the negative experiences as this will enable chatting new ways for resilience theories.
- With this objective in mind, the researcher recommends an exploration of Friedrich Nietzsche's aphorism that 'what does not kill you makes you stronger' using resilience theories.

5.2.4 Objective 4: To outline the importance of speaking up about rape experience as a resilience strategy.

- There is great need for more literature on child rape and trauma in Africa, especially on male child rape victims not only in terms of research but mostly fiction and non-fiction literary works.

- There is also great need for trauma literature based on child narrators rather than just adult narrating on childhood victimisation because there is power in using child narration in literary works.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the findings of this research demonstrating that there are various factors perpetuating silence among child rape victims and the most prominent one is parental neglect and lack of parental affection. Rape suffered in silence has very negative consequences on the psych and development of children. Boys and girls respond differently to rape and the consequences of rape are also different. However, speaking out about rape has a great impact on recovery for both boys and girls. Though it has been shown that circumstances which motivate speaking out differ from person to person and the rate of effect of speaking out also differs. The recommendations made based on the research and its findings include the need for more literature on child rape especially in Africa and that it would be beneficial to approach child trauma studies from an interdisciplinary perspective of literature and sociology or anthropology.

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