

Parental Influence in *Sharp Objects* and *The Silent Patient*

Amuthavalli S

School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Chennai, India

Saradha Rajkumar

School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Chennai, India

Abstract—This article employs Erikson's theory of psychosocial development to explore parental involvement through personality development in select novels. Parent-child relationships pose the most important need for a child's development. Children learn to understand the world around them only through parenting / care. Gillian Flynn's *The Sharp Objects* and Alex Michaelides' *The Silent Patient* are one of the modern thrillers of the current period. Here, both the authors paid the utmost attention in creating the characters with the postmodern details that makes the readers grasp the trauma faced by the characters. The female protagonists in the novels are found to face trauma created by their own parents. Here it brings out the importance of the parents guiding their children in order to appear as a better version in the eyes of the society and to self. Parents/caretakers become the anchor of every child out here. It also emphasises the value of a developmental systems perspective, in which parents and caregivers are structurally and functionally fused in a multidimensional system that includes biological, social, and historical areas of organisation. As the protagonist's horrific experiences demonstrate, diversity is a major substantive element of parenting behaviour.

Index Terms—parenting, traumas, psychosocial, social influences

I. INTRODUCTION

The novel *Sharp Objects* in short is a stylishly compulsive and disturbing debut novel of Gillian Flynn. "Flynn delivers a great whodunit, replete with hinting details, telling dialogue, dissembling clues. Better yet, she offers appalling, heart-breaking insight into the darkness of her women's lives: the Stepford polish of desperate housewives, the backstabbing viciousness of drug-gobbling, sex-for-favours Mean Girls, the simmering rage bound to boil over. Piercingly effective and genuinely terrifying" (Kirkus reviews). Gillian Flynn is known for psychological writings and her novels have claimed quite a lot of awards as well as criticisms. It deals with the protagonist Camille Preaker who's returning to her hometown in order to investigate the murders that took place for the newspaper she's working for. The downfall takes place when Camille's mother failed to show her the motherly love because her mother as Adora grew up by not receiving her mother's love.

The Silent Patient is a mind-bending journey into the minds of a woman accused of murdering her husband and the therapist determined to save her. Rather than researching a crime, *The Silent Patient* looks inside a criminal's psyche, and it's a fascinating examination. Alicia Berenson's life seems so perfect. A famous painter married to an in-demand fashion photographer, she lives in a large house with large windows overlooking a park in one of London's most desirable areas. One night, her husband Gabriel came home late from a fashion shoot, and Alicia shot him five times in the face, then didn't say a word. Alicia's refusal to speak, or offer any explanation, turns a domestic tragedy into something larger, a mystery that captured the public's imagination and brought Alicia to notoriety. Her art prices are skyrocketing and she, a quiet patient, is hidden from the tabloids and attention at Grove, a secure forensics unit in north London. Theo Faber is a criminal psychotherapist who has been waiting for the opportunity to work with Alicia for a long time. His determination to get her to talk and unravel the mystery of why she shot her husband has set her on a winding road with her own motives - a quest for the truth threatened to kill him.

II. PARENTAL INFLUENCE

An infant relies entirely on their parents for survival. An individual's parents play the most crucial role in his or her future accomplishments. Parenting straddles the classic continuum's nature side, on the other hand. This brings up the various questions within us to ask like: Ultimately, whose responsibility is it to raise children? Do we need to learn the skills of parenting or does it come naturally? Our understanding of parenting is aided by psychology, personality theory, and behavioural genetics. What impact do these theories have on how we parent? Parenting was a rather straightforward procedure. The mother became the mother and the father became the father. There are many motives, meanings and expressions in parenting today. Today, parenting is considered a time-consuming and exhausting endeavour. The ideal mother, father or family is a fantasy of the past. In today's culture, "subdivisions" of the phrase include the genetic

mother, the expectant mother, the biological mother, the birth mother, and the social mother. Parenting is more than just a mother or father feeding, sheltering, and caring for a new-born or child. Growth, according to newer ideas, is viewed as being immersed in an ordered web of variables that starts at various levels of an organization. Children and parents are structurally linked in a multilevel system encompassing biological, social and historical stages of organization in this view of developmental systems (Lerner, 2002a). The formulation of Bronfenbrenner (1979) had a widespread impact on the field of human development, and in the 1980s aroused great interest in the functioning of ecosystems in the structure of human life. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's model converges with the developmental context by emphasizing the importance of a multidimensional approach to understanding, studying and applying the essence of children's developmental education.

III. PSYCHOANALYSIS AND TRAUMAS

This manuscript focuses on the child's development, the traumas s/he encounters in childhood, and the outcomes s/he himself or herself brings into adulthood. Child development is considered to be a very important stage. Childhood helps people reshape their mental evolution in relation to self and society. Theorists such as Sigmund Freud have emphasized the importance of a child's subconscious experiences and behaviours in influencing adulthood. He proposed the theory by classifying the body's pleasure centres into oral, anal, corporeal, latent, and genital stages. He did not evaluate or analyse any child from birth to adulthood, but he extended the concept through his clinical cases. However, there isn't much concerning female psychosexual stages due to the fact he frequently targeted on male psychosexual degrees through his medical sufferers with the help of his loved pal Joseph Breuer. To realise the human intellectual condition, Freud concentrated on 3 degrees: Id, Ego, and SuperEgo. He believed that the aware thoughts are aware about the present, in addition to reminiscences and feelings from the past. He compared the thoughts to an iceberg. The thoughts are like an iceberg, it floats with one-7th of its bulk above water - Sigmund Freud. Long before Freud and other post-Freudians, Darwin's theory of evolution gave birth to the theory of psychoanalysis. The motive of psychoanalysis is to find 'subconscious foundations of human behaviour in man's... ineradicable animal nature,' and the fundamental middle of psychoanalysis is to freely partner so that you can open the internal self. To describe the improvement of human intellectual health, Sigmund Freud focused completely on inner forces.

Erikson, on the other hand, focused not only on internal causes but also on external influences such as the culture in which a person grows up and the emotional trauma that they personally suffer. Erikson contrasts his argument with Sigmund Freud's theory of personality development. Personality, according to Freud, is formed in childhood. Erikson points out that people's personalities change as they age. It is not fixed and cannot be determined. Erikson feels that by focusing on controlling one's attitude towards a positive regimen, one can live a more positive and healthier life. The influence of social factors on an individual's mental health and behaviour is known as psychosocial analysis. Psychosocial trait is a term that refers to a person's psychological development in relation to their social and cultural environment. The term "psychosocial" refers to "the influence of social elements on an individual's mind or behaviour, as well as the interrelationship between behavioural and social aspects" (Oxford Dictionary, 2012). Some have even claimed that there has never been a more influential theory on psychosocial development (Dunkel & Harble, 2017, p.58). Psychoanalysis is a specific field of psychosocial research that continues to play an important role in all aspects of modern research. Due to post-structuralism, influences and many theorists going down, there are few who oppose psychosocial analysis. Psychoanalysis, applied sociology, sociology, and critical social psychology, as well as post-structuralism, social constructivism, and gay and feminist social studies have contributed to part in the development of psychosocial theory (Frosh, 2003).

The mother-child relationship is more important in psychiatry. All felt that it was the source of human sanity and maturity. What they don't realize is that the process is a two-way:

- The social environment has an impact on individuals.
- Individuals have an impact on how people behave in public.

To be clear, growing up is influenced by both society and the individual. One could even argue that clinging to one person socially could be a political effort against the dictatorship. Furthermore, libertarians have exploited emotions to mask the functioning of an individual and a society (Frosh, 2003). Identity formation, according to E. E (1968), requires the ego and the self. On the other hand, Bukowski et al. (1993) argue that age and skill are key elements of personal identity. A person's social, physical, and cognitive development can affect their perception of their social worth. Montemayor and Eisen (1977) unequivocally asserted that age plays an important role in the development of perception and self-concept. In his book *Childhood and Society*, Erikson described eight stages of development (1950). He also coined the terms "epigenetics" and "epidemiological principles", which refer to concepts of the past and present as well as genetics. The term 'core' here means 'above' in space as well as 'ahead' in time and most likely describes the space-time nature of all genetic development (implying importance in old age, 1989). According to the stages Erikson mentions, he believes that people will experience a conflict that will be the turning point in an individual's behaviour. He points out that conflict is often positive and negative at the same time. It is different for each person. The following are the eight stages mentioned by Erikson for the psychosocial development of an individual:

1. Trust vs Mistrust
2. Autonomy vs Shame

3. Initiative vs Guilt
4. Industry vs Inferiority
5. Identity vs Role Confusion
6. Intimacy vs Isolation
7. Generativity vs Stagnation
8. Ego Integrity vs Despair (Cherry, Understanding Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development 2021)

Childhood is one of life's most lovely and vital stages. During childhood, a lot can happen that can shape a person's future. During the course of a child's growth, he or she may be exposed to trauma. Child abuse or seeing any form of domestic violence is considered harmful and can be distressing. Any person who has been through a traumatic event has a long-term impact on their lives. There will be no coping mechanisms available. When a caregiver fails to protect a child from emotional harm, they are accused of betraying the child, adding to the intensity of the trauma and its possible repercussions. Suffering from trauma makes it harder to control one's conduct and emotions. Children who have been traumatised prefer to avoid conversations, crowds, items, and other things that remind them of the terrible event. They will have a restless night's sleep, and they have a proclivity to forget themselves in the process of dealing with continual challenges to their survival instincts. The mind is disintegrated by arousing strong emotions. They hinder the ability to synthesise and integrate new information, as well as causing dissociation in those who are susceptible to them. In research from Nijenhuis et al. (2010) states that traumatic reports get ingrained with inside the unconscious mind, turning into everlasting notions. Detachment from trauma and re-revel in trauma are intellectual states that one could be tempted to assume of. Traumatic events, specifically people who arise early in lifestyles and constitute a severe hazard to the body's integrity, can also additionally cause psychobiological motion structures which have advanced due to evolution. These structures' evaluative conditioning to annoying reminiscences can also additionally live bored to death to variable tiers due to intense pressure levels.

IV. SHARP OBJECTS

People are created by their parents. The common road to children's development and stature is the parent's entrusted and enduring responsibility of preparing their kids for the physical psychosocial economic conditions which they will face later in their life. The consequences, disappointments, worries, and failures that come with parenting are unavoidable. Parenthood promotes psychological growth, self-confidence, and a sense of well-being. But in the case of *Sharp Objects* written by Gillian Flynn, it brings to notice that the mother of the protagonist failed as a parent in bringing up her daughter. She was supposed to bring a positive development. *Sharp Objects* – protagonist Camille Preaker is known for doing crazy little things when she was young in her hometown. She never received any parental love whilst growing up. After her sisters' death she was totally lost and she started carving her skin out with words of comfort and to help her to be grounded. Camille Preaker, her mother, has never exhibited any affection for any of her children, even those from her first marriage and those from her second. She deals with Munchausen by proxy, a disease where she pays attention only when her kids are ill. Camille Preaker returns to her hometown for an investigation report requested by her paper company.

Camille Preaker needed to cope with traumas and the outcome; Erikson's psychosocial improvement principle is used. Culture and sophistication affect what mother and father do and who they are, however the surroundings that mother and father create for his or her kids isn't always best inspired with the aid of using those contextual factors. Parenting also demonstrates the resources available in the neighbourhood. Parenting is a complex characteristic of many aspects, consisting of the figure's very own history and personality, in addition to the capabilities of the kid being parented, as Belsky's (1984) version of parenting demonstrates. Both the figure and the kid are energetic creators in their settings in addition to respondents to the possibilities that the surroundings provide (Ford & Lerner, 1992; Wachs, 1992, 2000). Parenting involves a plethora of in-the-second interactions with the kid and his or her surroundings.

A. Trust vs Mistrust

This is the very first stage framed by Erik Erikson in order to understand the human psyche development influenced by the surroundings an individual grew up in. This stage begins from birth till age 3, where they develop the trust of the mother or the caregiver. When the child has been fulfilled with love, care and the nutrition they need, they tend to develop trust around the society. As they grow they will be a better human with clear and happy thoughts. For the past two decades, academics have concentrated on theory of mind, which has altered our knowledge of early childhood cognitive development and has significant consequences for social cognitive development (Gelman & Banaji, 2013). If children experience a favourable influence of trust, they are more likely to acquire a secure feeling about themselves and others. If they fail at this level, they will develop self-doubt. Camille felt unloved even as a kid because she didn't receive any motherly love from her mother. That becomes the foundation for all of her life's issues. Adora shared Adora's feelings about her mother, who didn't receive any love from her and didn't pay any attention to any of her children.

B. Identity Vs Role Confusion

The developmental stage is the fifth and most significant stage. In this situation, the individual will fight for his or her identity in society. When they successfully complete this stage, they will have a better understanding of who they are and will most likely discover their life's purpose and passion. They will go through a depressive phase if they fail. Camille scratched the first word 'wicked' into her flesh when she was thirteen years old *"Cutting like a child along red imaginary lines. Cleaning myself. Digging in deeper. Cleaning myself. Pouring bleach over the knife and sneaking through the kitchen to return it. Wicked. Relief"* (Sharp Objects, P.76).

She adores carving the phrase out loud and cutting her skin. Her scars became her identity, and she believed that *"my scars have a consciousness of their own"* (Sharp Objects, P.75). She describes herself as a *'cutter...snipper, slicer, carver, chatter'* (Sharp Objects, P.76). Her words are self-explanatory. It all started when she lost her dear sister Marian when she was thirteen years old. She had been gang raped and had no idea what her future held.

C. Intimacy vs Isolation

The young adult, emerging from the search for and the insistence on identity, is eager and willing to fuse his identity with that of others. He is ready for intimacy, that is the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises - (Childhood and Society, p.263)

This stage is about developing close relationships with others and settling down in life. Success offers a sense of security and devotion to life, whereas failure brings isolation, loneliness, and depression. She's never been in a relationship since she's always cut herself. She doesn't think it's necessary for anybody to keep an eye on her for any reason. *Cook, cupcake, curls... baby doll, harmful* (Sharp Objects, p.76) *'queasy', 'perky', 'panty', 'cherry' are some of the terms she uses to describe herself* (Sharp Objects, p.78). *Sew, baby, go away, bad, weep* (Sharp Objects, p.79). She came to Wind Gap to investigate the murder, and as the case progresses, she allows John Natalie's brother to get close to her. She lets him read her wounds because she is *"so damned tired of hiding. More than a decade devoted to concealment, never an interaction- a friend, a source ... Let John look. Please let him look"* (Sharp Objects, p.268). This demonstrates how alone she has felt as a result of her sad thoughts. She is also in a mental health facility. She attempts to visit doctors to feel better or safer, but it doesn't seem to work for her. She understood every phrase that sets the tone. She felt safe because of the clippings. The only part of her back she didn't carve was the centre,

"...which was too impossible to reach, is a circle of perfect skin the size of a fist" (Sharp Objects, p.79). *"They often call depression the blues," she says, "They always call depression the blues, but I would have been happy to awaken a periwinkle outlook. Depression to me is urine yellow. Washed out, exhausted miles of weak piss"* (Sharp Objects, p.80).

Camille's mind kept wandering back to recollections of her mother's treatment of her in public and private, making her feel disoriented and trembling. Adora portrayed Camille as a *"loving child" in public, yet when she returned home, she would "drift off to her chamber like an incomplete sentence"* (Sharp Objects, p.123). She'd ponder what she'd done to deserve such treatment. Richard attempted to get to know her while assisting each other in the investigation of the killings. He referred to her as a *"difficult one"* (Sharp Objects, P.185). She wanted to get to know him and take the next step with him in the following days. I meant it when I said, *"You and I might have gotten along just fine."* *I was suddenly upset that I'd never known a boy like Richard as a kid, someone who could at least push me"* (Sharp Objects, p.186). When Adora was challenged with her childhood mishaps, she told Camille that she understands how she feels. *"Camille, I wanted to adore you. You, on the other hand, were quite difficult. Marian was a breeze to work with."* (Sharp Objects, p.305).

D. Generativity vs Stagnation

This stage is about settling down in life, starting a family, and giving back to the community. Guilt and sadness are brought on by the unfavourable impact. Adora was a self-obsessed woman who never looked after her children. She expressed her dissatisfaction with Camille, blaming her for being so nasty to her. *"... even as a kid, you were the one who never liked me."* *Don't you dare to turn this on me, since I've never felt anything but frigid from you"* (Sharp Objects, p.190). She questioned Camille, though, about how she sought to get to know her through the memories of those murdered girls. *"They reminded me of you, running around town wild. Like little pretty animals. I thought if I could be close with them, I would understand you better. If I could like them, maybe I could like you. But I couldn't"* (Sharp Objects, p.191).

Unless one of her daughters is sick or she makes them sick, she has never been close to them. Camille suffered bruises after falling down the stairs. *"I feel sick, Momma," Camille stated as she was approached by her mother* (Sharp Objects, p.190). *"I know baby," she said* (Sharp Objects, p.190). She looked after her by giving her medicine and lavishing her with motherly affection. Camille later talks with Amma, her half-sister, to try to understand more about her mother. She eventually learned that Amma had been given the same medication that had made her unwell, and she attempted to control her mother. Camille was shocked when Amma revealed herself to her. *"I don't mind. Sometimes I don't take it – just pretend. Then we're both happy. I play with my dolls or I read, and when I hear her coming I pretend to be asleep"* (Sharp Objects, p.249).

Camille learns about her mother through one of her friends, and when questioned, she says it like this: *"was my mother ... a nice person?"* (Sharp Objects, p.260). She then *"Adora devours you, and if you don't let her, it'll be even*

worse for you. Look what's happening to Amma. Look at what happened to Marian." (*Sharp Objects*, p.261) "I think she's sick, and I think it's time for you to go, Sweeper..." "I mean leave Wind Gap. It is not safe for you here." (*Sharp Objects*, p.261). Camille brings up the talk by questioning her momma about why Amma is sick and what happened to Marian. But she focused on her skin and she looked as if she got ruined whilst taking care of Camille. Camille is clogged by her own thoughts "Either the drink makes me sick and I know I'm not insane, or it doesn't, and I know I'm a hateful creature" (*Sharp Objects*, p.287). But Adora loves taking care of Camille "You were never such a good girl when you were little, ... You were always so wilful. Maybe your spirit has gotten a bit more broken. In a good way. A necessary way" (*Sharp Objects*, p.287). Camille arrived at Marian's hospital and went over the file. It all made sense, and she was heartbroken after learning the truth and realising how late she had discovered the genuine cause of her sister Marian's death. "Mother shows no interest in Marian when she is well, in fact, seems to punish her. Mother holds child only when she is sick or crying" (*Sharp Objects*, p.292). Camille understands about her momma who's suffering from "Munchausen by Proxy...you make yourself sick to get attention. You got MBP; you make your child sick to show what a kind, doting mommy you are" (*Sharp Objects*, p.293). Camille realised the purpose of her existence and the awful truth about her mother as a young adult. She tried everything she could to win her mother's love. She was never going to be able to grasp it. Humans tend to understand the importance of life at this time of life, and they obtain a kind of wisdom. Some they will never obtain, even if they are dying. Camille gained insight, whereas Adora lost her life due to MBP, and she couldn't match the profile imposed by society without tormenting herself and others. Camille discovered the truth and also took care of her half-sister.

V. THE SILENT PATIENT

Alex Michaelides' compelling novel *The Silent Patient*, released in 2019, explores Alicia's anguish following the death of her husband, Gabriel. Theo is enraged by Gabriel's infidelity with Kathy, his wife. Theo, blinded by wrath, injures and threatens to kill both Gabriel and his wife, but does not carry out his threat. There is a remarkable turn of events, which is depressing. Alicia assassinates Gabriel in cold blood after discovering her husband's adultery. From her trial through her incarceration in a psychiatric facility, Alicia has remained silent out of guilt. In the manner of a criminal returning to the scene of a crime, Theo takes a job at the psychiatric institution where Alicia has been admitted with the deceitful goal of helping Alicia. The novel's premise centres around Alicia, a silent patient who attempts to show that her seemingly innocent therapist, Theo, was also complicit in Gabriel's murder.

Trust Vs Mistrust - plays an important role in every childhood as previously mentioned above. Here, Alicia didn't receive any parental love when she needed it the most. Her mother died in an accident and her father did not show any sympathetic affection towards her. Alicia compares the summer and her mother's death in her diary. "It reminded me of another summer, hot like this one – the summer Mum died . . . In my memory that summer lasts forever" (*The Silent Patient*, p.63). After her mother's death, she no longer trusts anyone. Parents are seen as positive actors in their children's lives. She is broken without parental love and she is looking for someone she can trust again and deal with her childhood traumas. Parents use the environment to help their children's behaviour and development. They use it to offer youngsters with nutrition, stimulation, and emotional support. Through Bronfenbrenner's theory it is clear that a child's development is based entirely on the surroundings they grew up in. According to Bronfenbrenner, the most detrimental influence to a child's growth is the volatility and unpredictability of family life that our economy has created. Children seeking affirmation seek attention in unexpected places, and a lack of self-discipline leads to anti-social behaviour and an inability to provide self-direction. If the relationships in the immediate microsystem fail, the child will be unable to explore other aspects of his environment (Addison, 1992). The author mentions Winnicott and Bion, who focused their theories upon "holding" and "containment" theories. The classification of symbiotic, symbiotic, and parasitic partnerships by Bion (1970) can assist us comprehend the nature of Alicia and Gabriel's connection, or at least how Alicia views it. The term "contain" was coined by Bion to characterise the crucial interaction between thought and speech. Congenial, symbiotic, and parasitic communication are three types of communication that occur at distinct phases of growth, according to him. Since the novel focuses on the trauma suffered by the characters, it is up to the author himself to provide the thinking of the theorists in question. The sources for further analysis of Erikson's stages of development are not entirely available. The author developed a plot that focuses on the mental health of Alicia and Theo Faber, a psychotherapist who joins a mental institution to treat Alicia's illness. The novel begins with "Alicia Brenson was thirty-three when she killed her husband" (*The Silent Patient*, p.7). She killed her own husband with multiple shots and cut his wrists. She was arrested and she never spoke again. She never defended her murder plot and all she's done since the murders happened is to paint "ALCESTIS" (*Silent Patient*, p.10). The painting is inspired by the Greek tragedy Alcestitis, which corresponds to her own tragedy of being The Silent Patient.

Alicia's past is conveyed through her handwritten diary where she pen downs utmost everything with mere filters of thoughts here and there. One such instance was her painting of her husband Gabriel on cross. Because "He saved me – like Jesus" (*The Silent Patient*, p.70). She was all alone and she had friends whom she met during the night and they disappeared like nothing. When she met Gabriel her whole world changed and she never bothered about her disappearing friends. She compares her husband to the lord Jesus. While painting, she finds his eyes "dead, lifeless" (*The Silent Patient*, p.71). In simple terms, a commensal connection is one in which one benefits while the other is unaffected, a symbiotic relationship is one in which both parties benefit, and a parasitic relationship is one in which one

party benefits while the host suffers. Bion has placed a strong emphasis on the container and contained developing a symbiotic interaction. However, while Alicia and Gabriel's relationship appears to be very symbiotic at first, we soon learn that, while the host Gabriel remained unharmed until he was shot, Alicia developed a parasitic bond with Gabriel from which she draws her energy and meaning in life because she feels contained with Gabriel. However, Theo Faber, a psychotherapist who comes to save Alicia from becoming a silent patient, seems to understand that her childhood was just as traumatic as his. When he tried the talking cure he understood that "*Her silence was like a mirror – reflecting yourself back at you. And it was often an ugly sight*" (*The Silent Patient*, p.101). There were many diary incidents that bring forth the dilemma Alicia is facing all alone and her struggle within herself and the people around her. One among them was where she loved her husband dearly at the same time she wanted to hurt him badly. She never wanted to have kids and she is scared since her mother's blood is running within her. "*I'm in danger of ceasing to exist. Like I might disappear. . . I wish I could disappear*" (*The Silent Patient*, p.129).

On the other hand, Theo is trying hard to piece together Alicia's background through her acquaintances, co-workers, relatives, and works. Theo discovers her father's hatred from her cousin. He could understand the hatred she received because he was the victim of a childhood trauma too. Alicia's therapist describes her as someone who is "*highly paranoid, delusional – psychotic, even. . . always up and down – typical borderline*" (*The Silent Patient*, p.249). Alicia finally mentions about the plotline about the day murder took place. Only in the end the readers get to know the suspense about Theo Faber was the one who persuaded Alicia about Her Husband Gabriel cheating with Theo's wife Kathy. When Alicia discovered the adultery and how her husband chose him over her: "*I remained silent. How could I talk? Gabriel had sentenced me to death*" (*The Silent Patient*, p. 325). Alicia's suppressed thoughts took over her faith she had over Gabriel ". . . all my dreams shattered – leaving nothing. . . All I did was pull the trigger" (*The Silent Patient*, p.326). The contain-and-contain relationship between Alicia and Gabriel is parasitic, non-symbiotic, and very similar.

At least unconsciously, Alicia's childhood experiences hindered her from building a healthy symbiotic relationship with the container or with her husband Gabriel. Theo Faber came to the asylum only to reframe her thoughts that this murder has nothing to do with him and he wanted to make sure that he was not involved in any aspect of murder. So Theo injected Alicia with morphine and he made Dr West take the blame for his actions. However in the end Alicia did not die and she went into a coma. It is sarcastic in a dark sense where he complains "*Perhaps some of us are simply born evil; and despite our best efforts we remain that way*" (*The Silent Patient*, p. 336).

VI. CONCLUSION

"Traumas produce their disintegrating effects in proportion to their intensity, duration and repetition"(J. Pierre, 1909). To sum up, parents from *The Sharp Objects* and *The Silent Patient* have failed to raise their children into a better person when they were young. Parents do create people around the world. They sometimes tend to forget the fact that they are the common pathway of the child's development. They are the source for the cognitive, mental and the physical growth of an individual. Parenting is "a lifetime of relationships," according to cross-cultural perspectives on parenting," as Townsend (2000) expressed it.

REFERENCES

- [1] Addison, J. T. (1992). Urie Bronfenbrenner. *Human Ecology*, 20(2), 16-20.
- [2] Arnett, J. J. (2017) Life stage concepts across history and cultures: Proposal for a new field on indigenous life stage. *Human Development*. 59(5):290-316.
- [3] Banaji, M. R., & Gelman, S. A. (Eds.). (2013). *Navigating the social world: What infants, children, and other species can teach us*. Oxford University Press.
- [4] Batra, S. (2013). The Psychosocial Development of Children: Implications for Education and Society — Erik Erikson in Context. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, 10(2), 249–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973184913485014>
- [5] Belsky, J. (1984). The determinants of parenting: A process model. *Child Development*, 55, 83–96.
- [6] Bornstein, M. H. (2013). *Handbook of parenting: Volume 2 Biology and ecology of parenting*. Psychology Press.
- [7] Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- [8] Bronfenbrenner, U. (1999). Environments in developmental perspective: Theoretical and operational models. In S. L. Friedman and T. D. Wachs (Eds.), *Measuring Environment Across The Life Span* (pp. 3–30). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- [9] Cherry, K. (2021, July 18). Understanding Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development. *Verywell Mind*. Retrieved August 18, 2019 from, <https://www.verywellmind.com/erik-eriksons-stages-of-psychosocial-development-2795740>
- [10] *Dictionary*, O. E. (2004). Retrieved October 14, 2020 from, <http://dictionary.oed.com>.
- [11] Dunkel, C. S. & Harble, C. (2017). A review of measures of Erikson's stages of psychosocial development: Evidence for a general factor. *Journal of Adult Development* 24(1): 58–76.
- [12] Erikson, E.H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- [13] Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity youth and crisis*, New York (WW Norton) 1968.
- [14] Flynn, G. (2007). *Sharp Objects* (Reprint ed.). Crown
- [15] Ford, D. H., and Lerner, R. M. (1992). *Developmental systems theory, an integrative approach*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- [16] Frosh, Stephen. (2003). Psychosocial Studies and Psychology: Is a Critical Approach Emerging?. *Human Relations*. 56. 10.1177/00187267035612005.

- [17] Hoare, C. H. (2002). *Erikson on development in adulthood: New insights from the unpublished papers*. Oxford University Press on Demand.
- [18] Hossain, M. A. (2021). Exploring the Concept of Containment, Childhood Development and Silence in Alex Michaelides's Novel *The Silent Patient*: A Psychoanalytic Critique. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 05(05), 319–324. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2021.5517>
- [19] Janet, P. (1904). *L'amnésie et la dissociation des souvenirs par l'émotion*. F. Alcan.
- [20] Kakar, S. (1968). The human life cycle: The traditional Hindu view and the psychology of Erik Erikson. *Philosophy east and west*, 18(3), 127–136.
- [21] Lerner, R. M. (2002-a). *Concepts and theories of human development* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- [22] Michaelides, A. (2019). *The silent patient*. New York: Celadon.
- [23] McLeod, S. A. (2013). *Erik Erikson's Psychosocial stages—Simply psychology*. Simply Psychology.
- [24] Montemayor, R., & Eisen, M. (1977). The development of self-conceptions from childhood to adolescence. *Developmental Psychology*, 13(4), 314.
- [25] Newcomb, A. F., Bukowski, W. M., & Pattee, L. (1993). Children's peer relations: A meta-analytic review of popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, and average sociometric status. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(1), 99–128. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.113.1.99>
- [26] Nijenhuis, E., van der Hart, O., & Steele, K. (2010). Trauma-related Structural Dissociation of the Personality. *Activitas Nervosa Superior*, 52(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03379560>
- [27] Pulman, A., & Taylor, J. (2012). Munchausen by internet: current research and future directions. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 14(4), e115.
- [28] Richard, D. E. (2019). Episodes of Depression: Existential Feelings and Embodiment in 'Sharp Objects'. NECSUS.
- [29] Rolls, E. T. (2018). *The brain, emotion, and depression*. Oxford University Press.
- [30] Rudnytsky, P. L. (2013). *The psychoanalytic vocation: Rank, Winnicott, and the legacy of Freud*. Routledge.
- [31] Sharp Objects | Kirkus Reviews. (2006, October 10). *Kirkus Reviews*; www.kirkusreviews.com. Retrieved October 18, 2021 from, <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/gillian-flynn/sharp-objects/>
- [32] Shoukat, L., Arshad, K., & Azam, S. (2021). A Psychoanalytic Analysis of the Character of Theo Faber in Alex Michaelides Novel *Silent Patient*. *Journal of Social Sciences Review*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.54183/jssr.v1i3.18>
- [33] Townsend, N. W. (2000). Male fertility as a lifetime of relationships: Contextualizing men's biological reproduction in Botswana. In C. Bledsoe, S. Lerner, and J. I. Guyer (Eds.), *Fertility and the male life-cycle in the era of fertility decline* (pp. 343–364). New York: Oxford University Press.
- [34] Wachs, T. D. (1992). *The nature of nurture*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- [35] Wachs, T. D. (2000). *Necessary but not sufficient: The respective roles of single and multiple influences on individual development*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10344-000>
- [36] Winnicott, D. W. (1947). *Hate in the countertransference*. London: Tavistock.
- [37] Winnicott, D. W. (2013). *The child and the family: First relationships (Vol. 6)*. Routledge.
- [38] Widick, C., Parker, C. A., & Knefelkamp, L. (1978). Erik Erikson and psychosocial development. *New Directions for Student Services*, 1978(4), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.37119780403>.

Amuthavalli S is a Research Scholar in the field of English language and Literature belonging to the School of Social Sciences and Languages at Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai Campus. Her research area of interest is Literature specifically in the genre of psychological thriller, mysteries and suspense related.

Saradha Rajkumar is Professor and a Dean, belonging to the School of Social Sciences and Languages at Vellore Institute of Technology Chennai Campus. Her research area of interest is Literature and ELT.