

Breaking Boundaries: Paedophilia and the Effects of Sexual Gratification in *My Dark Vanessa*

Sania Saeed, MPhil Scholar, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Zarmeena Khan, Lecturer, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Anila Akbar, Lecturer, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Abstract:

The aim of this research is to analyze the characteristics of paraphilia in Jacob Strane in *My Dark Vanessa* novel by Kate Elizabeth Russell. Jacob is 42 years old teacher with pedophilic nature. The pedophilic behavior that exists in Jacob are his sexual fantasies and also sexual acts involving 15 year old children. The work is analyzed by using Luring Communication Theory, as a pre-guide to the framework set by the predators which involve the communicative strategies of entrapment used by the predators to lure their victims into ongoing sexual relationship. The work is based on psychological transitions and the effects of sexual gratification that caused Vanessa psychological harm and had damaged her personality. Erikson's psychosocial theory is used to focus on the certain personality development tasks that focus on one's strong and imbalance personality traits. Failure in these development tasks leads to identity crisis and loss of self. This is a qualitative research and critical analysis will be applied as a tool to analyze the text.

Keywords: Pedophilia, Abuse, Psychosocial Theory, Sexual gratification, Me Too movement, Luring Communication Theory.

Introduction:

Pedophilia is a term that has not been publically addressed or orated by the people. It is a psychological issue that has plagued the mindsets of many pedophilic predators that leads to the result of child abuse, molestation, harassment and rape. Studies about human beings are always intriguing such as Physiological, psychological and anatomical. Though, clinical psychology, psychiatry and psychopathology, these fields deal with personality development, mental functions and with personality disorder. Same as psychoanalytic theory, psychosocial

theory also constitutes the right mean to analyze human's personality and psyche. Human beings at their development stages develop certain characteristics which maintain their acts and behaviors to perform accordingly to their social norms, ethics and values known as personality traits. Humans have the ability to not only think intensively but also emotionally and reasonably and their personality can sometimes be deviant.

As a part of sexual gratification, the other sexual interests like lesbianism, gayism are unpreventable; same as

Pedophilia is used to refer to the behavior which is also unpredictable and ineradicable till the instinct of sex lasts as the world exists. The sexual gratification can be observed in various literary texts which are the reflection of real life.

Sexual gratification is an act committed by the individual to stimulate the sexual interest or desire. It is an act of especially, pleasing and satisfying one's own desires and sexual urges. Such phenomenon's provides us insights and also puts light on shady areas, on all the issues and problems which happen in reality. Nabokov's *Lolita* and *The Tampa*, such novels provide information about the strategies, thoughts and interests of pedophiles.

Kate Elizabeth Russell is an American author "*My Dark Vanessa*" is one of the novels by Kate Elizabeth Russell who is an American Author who was born and raised in the town of Clifton and Maine. Her debut novel, "*My Dark Vanessa*" was published in 2020, in which she has raised the issue of Sexual abuse and predators strategies used in the "Grooming" of the victim. Her novel has been shortlisted for Swansea University Dylan Thomas 2021 prize. Her novel is a fictional account of a traumatic sexual relationship between the protagonist, a 42 year old English Teacher, Jacob Strane and 15 year old student Vanessa Wye. The novel is presented with a different narrative that explains the art of manipulation that is often used in the text to lure the victim in. it is an honest narrative about the normalization of abusive, harrasive

behavior, slut-shaming and victimization of women who did not came forward which causes the cycle of abuse to continue, while providing the safety to the abusers, so they may walk free.

Moreover, *Luring Communication Theory* is employed to analyze the novel *My Dark Vanessa*. The protagonist's sexual gratification and imbalance personality as a pedophile is a form of sexual perversion which establishes certain deviations in the sexual preferences. This novel is an erotic literary work which exposes an inappropriate morbid issue. It contains an issue which is still considered as taboo in 21st century but is controversial, I.e. sexual gratification in the form of pedophilia. This imbalanced personality disorder must be taken into account since the manifestation of the action is conducted to get the sexual gratification.

My Dark Vanessa (2020) is a story that centers upon two major characters, Vanessa Wyes and her teacher Mr. Jacob Strane. The story mainly focuses on the themes of Pedophilia, sexuality, denial, manipulation, trauma, suppression, lack of family hood (disassociation) which is considered courageous for a female writer to write about such issues in a society where these issues are not being addressed as problems and are destroying the lives of innocents. This novel not only helps the readers to investigate the aspects or the process of the destruction, but also helps the readers to observe closely the minds of pedophilic sufferers. Pedophilic literature its self is an umbrella term that is diverse and extensive and it not only assists in the

proceeding of how and why such incidents happen but also enlighten us about the future consequences, the psychological harm and mental trauma that it causes.

Elizabeth allows her readers to the mental process of her characters. She has portrayed the story in a subtle style as the story deals with plenty of issues such as ethical, cultural, behavioral, psychological, and mental without being too explicit. Jacob Strane is portrayed as a typical lusty man who cannot see anything within the limitations but is willingly damaging the rules of nature for his evil pedophilic desires. He is a teacher and uses his profession as an advantage to trap the victims who are not mentally and economically strong. As, Vanessa is a very shiny, depressed and a lonely student at boarding school when Strane starts taking privilege of her loneliness and depression and begins grooming her for sexual affair that results in an appalling, dark shadow over her life throughout the novel. Strane's sexual preferences resulted in having sexually connected with Vanessa and being at the age of psychological development, Vanessa is unaware of the fact, he was training her mind to not make her feel as a victim of abuse. The phenomenon of pedophilia that occurs as in "My Dark Vanessa" novel is fairly a step towards reality and most people with this sexual disorder and sexual preferences are male.

In past, such issues were not taken seriously but now it has become a serious concern in the contemporary society and is being identified as a genuine problem

spreading in the society and destroying the generations. Since, each experience and encounter is distinctive in its own way and have its own complications, but it is crucial to highlight all the factors or aspects involved in the cause these include social, political, ethical each factor, in its own, is impacting such attitudes, provoking them and even performing as the catalyst for the continuation of such behavioral issues in the community.

1.2 Research Questions

This paper aims to explore following research questions:

1. What is pedophilia and how its other factors are operating in characters' lives?
2. How Russell has used her characters as virtual means to warn us about the abusers and their 'child grooming' strategies?
3. How is social media playing its role in saving or exploiting the generations and how the society, schools systems or families are playing their role to prevent and save their children from being victimized?
4. To examine what is the current situation of society and the progress in child victimization cases?

Literature Review:

Studies about human beings are always intriguing such as Physiological, psychological and anatomical. Though, clinical psychology, psychiatry and

psychopathology, these fields deal with personality development, mental functions and with personality disorder. Same as psychoanalytic theory, psychosocial theory also constitutes the right mean to analyze human's personality and psyche. Human beings at their development stages develop certain characteristics which maintain their acts and behaviors to perform accordingly to their social norms, ethics and values known as personality traits. Humans have the ability to not only think intensively but also emotionally and reasonably and their personality can sometimes be deviant.

As a part of sexual gratification, the other sexual interests like lesbianism, gayism are unpreventable; same as Pedophilia is used to refer to the behavior which is also unpredictable and ineradicable till the instinct of sex lasts as the world exists. The sexual gratification can be observed in various literary texts which are the reflection of real life. Sexual gratification is an act committed by the individual to stimulate the sexual interest or desire. It is an act of especially, pleasing and satisfying one's own desires and sexual urges. Such phenomenon's provides us insights and also puts light on shady areas, on all the issues and problems which happen in reality. Nabokov's *Lolita* and *The Tampa*, such novels provide information about the strategies, thoughts and interests of pedophiles. According to James Morrison (1940), in Greek language the term 'Pedophilia' is known as "Love for children". Araj and Finkelhor (1985) has worked on psychology of pedophilia in

which they argues that in psychology, pedophilia is called a "psychiatric disorder" in which patient's faces "abnormalities" in their sexual orientation (96).

As far as, the sexual preferences and sexual aberration is concerned, not every pedophile faces the sexual aberration. Same as Humbert in *Lolita*, is obsessed to nymphets to gratify his sexual desire and this is because of his early childhood sexual experience with his girlfriend Annabel. He finds for his sexual gratification in prepubescent girl who can satisfy his sexual desires. Being an abuser, he makes all justifications of all of his conducts that whatever he does is normal, same as Strane. *My Dark Vanessa* is presented with a different narrative that explains the art of manipulation that is often used in the text to lure the victim in. it is an honest narrative about the normalization of abusive, harassive behavior, slut-shaming and victimizing women who came forward that causes the cycle of abuse to continue, while providing the safety to the abusers, so they may walk free.

Moreover, Luring Communication theory is employed to analyze the novel *My Dark Vanessa*. The protagonist's sexual gratification and imbalance personality as a pedophile is a form of sexual perversion which establishes certain deviations in the sexual preferences. This novel is an erotic literary work which exposes an inappropriate morbid issue. It contains an issue which is still considered as taboo in 21st century but is controversial, i.e. sexual gratification in the form of pedophilia. This

imbalanced personality disorder must be taken into account since the manifestation of the action is conducted to get the sexual gratification.

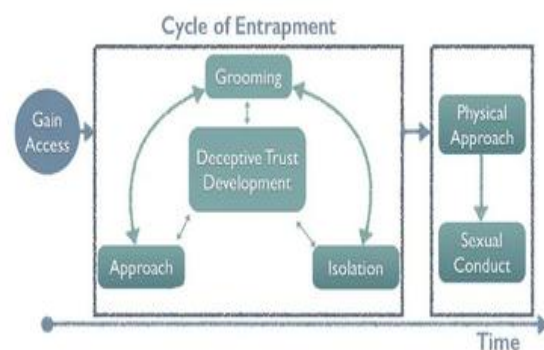
E.J. Phares (1991) has worked on exploration of individuals' personality traits involving their "behavior, feelings and unique thoughts" (05). Phares' work draws attention towards individual's personality and behavioral changes that persist over time in different situations. As Seto (2008) has also worked on exploration of pedophilia and sexual offending against children, adds that, pedophilia has an "exclusive sexual preference for prepubescent children" who do not have any sexual interests in any sexual peers and also do not show any sign of secondary sexual development (05). Though, the key factor in defining pedophilia is the tendency that tells prepubescent children are by choice the sexual objects for the pedophiles. Imbalance traits in every individual are because of the failure of their each development task.

Likewise, the sexual arousal led Jacob to take actions that showed his pedophile behavior. As it is clear in the mentioned lines when Jacob says your dress is nice and I "like your style". "It seems strange for a middle-aged man to notice girl clothes. My dad barely knows the difference between a dress and a skirt" (P: 33). These attitudes include sexual fantasies and sexual behavior involving the underage object. Though, the Pedophile behavior that Jacob showed was his touching Vanessa and giving her erotic books to read with aim to bring her attention towards his animalistic

intentions. "I was a child and she was a child" (82) the contrasted elements of the text are clearly presented to understand the reality but "Images of Lolita" and memories of Mr. Strane whispering and telling her that "you and I are the same as he stroked my knee" (82) but both have different personality traits and in the approaches of life. His desires brought him into unconscious world that made him forget his figure as a teacher who had to teach the students.

The following model, illustrates the framework of this study conducted with special reference to Paedophilia and the effects of sexual gratification

OLSON'S THEORY OF LURING COMMUNICATION (LTC)



Olson, L. N., Daggs, J. L., Ellefjord, B. L. and Rogers, T. K. K. (2007), Entrapping the Innocent: Toward a Theory of Child Sexual Predators' Luring Communication. *Communication Theory*, 17: 231-251

According to Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-V), 5th addition (2013), paraphilia is an intense or some kind of persistent sexual interest "other than sexual interest" in preparatory fondling or of the genital stimulation with physically mature, consenting humans partners. It is classified as paraphilia in two groups, one is sexual

masochism and the other is frotteuristic disorder (that resembled distorted components of human courtship behavior). The other group is based on anomalous target preference pedophilic disorder directed towards humans, transvestic and fetishistic disorder.

However, Pedophilia itself is also categorized in the sort of paraphilia. Meanwhile, Michael Seto (2008) investigates on this in his book Pedophilia and Sexual offending also mentions that according to the American Psychological Association 2007 (APA Dictionary of Psychology) pedophilia is described as paraphilia: Though Paraphilia is also a psychological preference in which sexual acts or fantasies with prepubescent children are the “persistently preferred method” in order to achieve sexual excitement from those (individuals) who are many years younger than the pedophile. Also their sexual activities usually may vary from “looking and touching” but sometimes these activities involve “intercourse” (698).

Moreover, in diagnosing a pedophile, DSM-V comes up with several criteria to dictate the behavior of a pedophile, among others:

1. Individuals about at least six months intense sexually arousing fantasies, recurrent, sexual urges or the behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent children generally age 13 years or younger.

2. Individual's actions on these sexual urges and fantasies causes fixed interpersonal difficulty and distress.

3. Individuals at least age 16 years and at least five years older than the children in criterion A.

For understanding the symptoms, the criteria above are aimed that arise in a pedophile sufferer. In diagnosing, one cannot arbitrarily determine whether the sufferer has a pedophile or not. Because there are people who only experience pedophile sexual orientation but actually are not pedophile sufferers. Following examples are provided by Blanchard Ray (2013), he has worked on the exploration of DSM-V in pedophilic disorder, in order to uncover the issues related to the certain disorder. Blanchard gives a dissenting opinion that People who deny about having sexual interest towards the individuals younger from them are among those who often “behave as a pedophile” (696).

Pedophilia is classified into three types by Blanchard (2013), First, Pedophilic type, in which individuals are sexually attracted to children younger than 11, second one is “Hebephilic type”, in which persons are sexually attracted to children younger than 11-14. Third one is “Pedohebephilic type”, in which individual is sexually attracted to both (677).

Moreover, Glueck (1955) has itself created a sign of sexual preference, named as “hebephilia” for pubertal children. Though, the term Pedohebephilic was discovered by Seeley, Marshall, Freud and Glinfort (1972) as a sign of sexual preference. All the classifications of Blanchard, aims to help in classifying pedophiles. According to Blanchard, all of

this should be done because the age of consent in every country is different. Blanchard refers to Tanner stages for physical growth because those stage methods are appropriate scientifically and medically in defining prepuberty to which in the novel Jacob was praising, as the dark beauty of Vanessa.

Blanchard divides the classification of the types of pedophiles based on the Tanner stages:

1. In Tanner stage one:
Pedophile is sexually attracted towards preadolescent children (pedophilic type).
2. Hebephilic type is the one in which pedophile is sexually attracted towards pubescent children (Tanner stage 2-3).
3. Pedohebephilic type, individuals are sexually attracted to both sexes.
4. In Ephebophilia, individual is sexually attracted to adolescents age 15 to 19 olds.

Though, the term Ephebophilia was revived by Ray Blanchard. It was originally used in the late 19th to mid-20th century. It is one of a number of sexual preferences across age groups subsumed. However, women sexual interest in adolescents is significantly less than man's sexual interest. Anyhow Blanchard's classification aims to provide clarity of Strane's pedophilic status categories in My Dark Vanessa novel. Moreover, comorbidity of pedophile is often used in the medical world. In 1970, Feinstein has introduced the term

comorbidity to indicate the presence of more than one illness in a patient. This term is also used in the world of medical, As well as, in the psychiatric world for those who experience hypertension. Similarly, in psychiatric world who is depressed. The novel presents the concept of comorbidity and depressive disorder in their characters. As Mahler and Friedlander (2001) has worked inexploring the causes of "Major depressive disorders".

As depressive disorder is basically a mental health disorder that is characterized by a constant depressive mood or losing attentiveness in their daily activities of life. Also, sufferers from unhappiness in their life that says continuously numerous factors can lead the individuals towards this disorder. A depressive disorder is basically one of the accompanying disorders (disease) in Vanessa. The most obvious feeling of depression is sexual depression and her separation from Jacob. This is as it is presented that she has not felt pleasure while having sex with him. Which is clear from her Vanessa's thoughts that when he moves up into the bed and pushes into me, my eyes fly open, "Don't"(256). He freezes and asks, you want me to stop? My head rolls against the pillow. He only waits a beat longer but never stops. I shut my eyes and again sees "loaves of bread rising, endless bags of sugar, groceries moving forever forward, boxes of cereal, broccoli crowns and cartons of milk disappearing into the horizon" (256). This is the description of disembodiment that she gets a bit disembodied which recently has a clichéd

description of rape disembodiment, something that would occur post-traumatic stress disorder, when she has sex with him when she was older like she completely gets out of her body and thinks about the most random things like bread rising. Moreover, psychologically depression arises when to control a negative event to happen in their life and feel powerless till it veers into the state of despair. Since, there are several types of depressive disorder such as:

- **Dysthymia:**

A persistent depressive disorder, According to Mayo clinic 2018, dysthymia is a form of depression. It is a long term continuous chronic disorder in which patient loses interest in their normal daily activities, feels hopeless, faces lack of energy, low self-esteem, avoid social activities and have feelings of inadequacy.

- **Major Chronic Depressive disorder:**

MCDD is when the patient experiences an intense and persistent emotion of sorrows and sadness for an extended period.

- **DMDD:**

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder, According to the American Academy of child and adolescent psychiatry (AACAP) 2019, it is a situation in which child go through frequent and severe temper tantrums that affects their ability to function properly at school, with family and friends too. As in the novel when Vanessa's mom asks her about the Polaroid and she denies to show it to her. She asks angrily to give it to her but "She holds out her hand like there's

a chance I might give it up that easily, like I'm a child" (188) and keep on telling her mom by yelling "it is nothing, ok?" It is nothing, saying this over and over again "rising into a panic until it reaches a scream so forceful Mom steps away from me, the high note seems to linger, ringing through the half-emptied room, That was him, she says, "You and him" (188).

These lines clearly indicate the effects of Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder in her character that have been developing because of stress and trauma. Vanessa has feeling of excessive pain and comes out at an unexpected moment clearly indicates that the person is suffering from such panic/psychological disorder.

- **Bipolar Disorder:**

According to Mayo Clinic, it is formerly known as manic depressive condition (mental health) that provides extreme swings such as depression and high emotions (hypomania and mania). Scott, Haddad and Anderson (2012) explored on the issue of "Bipolar disorder" which is a mental disorder that is characterized by "drastic emotional changes" such as bad (depressive) and happy (mania) changes.

- **Anxiety Disorder:**

It is a type of mental health condition. According to khala, Cameron, Bystritsky (2013) it is a disorder that followed by worry and fear, and causes sufferers to have excessive anxiety that basically effects their daily life. There are other several types of anxiety, such as:

- **GAD:**

Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by hypertension or as chronic anxiety. Even at times, when there is some or nothing to provoke it. Kessler (2000) has worked on the exploration of “comorbidity, generalized anxiety disorder”. His work explains the conditions of the sufferers (abusers/victims) who have gone through mental disorders. As GAD explains the condition and the abnormal attitudes of the people “who suffers from a general anxiety disorder, they can feel worried or anxious about various things, ranging from health, and work to simple (normal) things. Such as their interaction with others” (02) the consequence of this disorder becomes an hurdle in the daily routine activities in the patients of this disorder. As in the novel, Elizabeth writes about Vanessa’s attitude. When she was asked to leave the school “I am so frustrated, I scream and shove him away from me with all my weight. I say, they are making me leave tomorrow. He takes a step back, I wait for his face to show something, anger, regret or panic for having let this situation reach this point, but he is completely blank. He is like a stranger standing before me” (186)

The sadness experienced by Vanessa above is one of the signs that clearly presents that Vanessa is experiencing depression in herself. Her expectations have been ruined. Her belief has been shaken. Her loss of concentration, her lack of interest in books and poetry in her adult life is the clear evidence of depression. Later in her life she did not have strong relationship with anyone. This is because of her strong

interaction with Jacob was at some point chaotic. She would not speak against him ever and took the pain in her heart, leaving her identity, her life to be complicated and not resolved. His pedophile attitude triggered Vanessa’s trauma.

- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:**

OCD, is a disorder that is characterized by recurrent and unwanted obsessions (feelings/thoughts) by compulsions. Sarris, Berk and Camfield (2012) has worked on the Obsessive compulsive disorder, self-help and life style interventions for OCD, states that OCD tends to do something repeatedly to relieve anxiety that comes from their mind. And there are symptoms can interfere in sufferer’s personal relationships school and work.

- **ASPD:**

Anti-social personality disorder, According to Berger and F.K (2016), ASPD is characterized by behaviors that certainly do not violate or care about the human rights of others in a prolonged manner but ignores others. It has two common characteristics, such as introverted and asocial. An introvert does not spend time with others nor try to find happiness in interaction with people. While, the Asocial type is commonly considered as an individualist who do not feel any connection or attraction with society or people feel as avoid them. There are further multiple types of ASPD:

- **Impulsive Type:** are those sufferers who are very impulsive and have

difficulty in controlling their action and have negative thoughts.

- Instrumentalized:

Individuals classified in this type are materialistic one; prefer material goods, money and power.

Further, According to DSM-V the other paraphilic disorders are the individuals who have one paraphilic disorder but the possibilities are for the infected person with more paraphilia disorders at one time. Other PD are:

- Exhibitionistic Disorder:

In ED, individuals sexual experiences and sexual deviations, DSM-V (2013) by American Psychiatric Disorder states that “Exhibitionistic (ED) disorder is when someone tries to expose their sexual organs/ body parts to others unexpectedly thus this type is typically classified as paraphilia which is an obsession which sexual activity in an unethical way” (576)

- Frotteurism Disorder:

Lussier, Piche and Patrick (2018), explores on the “Frotteurism psychopathology” which is a sexual condition in which the abuser/sufferer uses actions of touching and rubbing against non-consenting person/individuals. A sexual disorder in which, the frotteur feels sexual arousal (pleasure) by rubbing his sexual organs. Other than that, those individuals who carry out actions of frotteurism are known as frotteur.

- Voyeuristic Disorder:

In VD, sufferer spy's on others private activities and have interest in watching other people's sexual activities or

without clothes. Though, in the voyeuristic disorder individuals look for a hidden peek so they won't be caught by other people. This sexual deviation can be called as a paraphilia disorder. As in the novel, My Dark Vanessa, Jacob strane looked very fond of taking “Polaroid” pictures of Vanessa after sex, her being lied in bed, posing for him. He arranges her hairs over her breasts and opens the window shade so that the light will “drape across my body” (160) Jacob often used to take pictures of her which helps the readers to analyze his character deeply.

The sufferers of Voyeurism dare to break the boundaries to satisfy desires and dare to photograph or record another person sometimes without permission too. As in the novel, Jacob's pedophile nature has made him cross all the boundaries. The elements of voyeurism are detected in his nature too. Jacob's dark nature contains the elements of mystery, him being hiding or faking out things when he is finished after sex, he brings the polaroid back from his living room and asks Vanessa to “not dressed up” and reassures her that he those pictures of her will only be “for his eyes” (157). So, that he could remember the moments of how she is looking right now.

Moreover, Pedophile behavior that strane showed first was his interest in involving a girl who can be easily trapped and get into his trap. Jacob's pedophile behavior in addition to sexual fantasies involving adolescent individuals also includes sexual activities. The pedophilic attitude that strane showed was his sexual

fantasy. DSM-V also mentions that one of the characteristics of pedophile sufferers have is, their intense sexually arousing fantasies. The figure of Jacob in the novel also shows a sign that leads to the pedophile behavior. His fantasies encouraged him to create a strong sexual desire for sex with Vanessa. There is some evidence to the statement which shows that Jacob often fantasizes about sex, he calls Vanessa and asks her about her clothes that what she is wearing and making guesses that she is wearing the clothes he has brought her like the "Pajamas" on which Vanessa makes fun off. Jacob asks her to take her clothes off, she not move and lies to him but the things do not always work the same as you think. "It goes on" from there when he tells her what to do and calls her his "baby", a "little girl" and later his imagination turns into his sexual fantasies and he asks her to call him "Daddy" and say "I Love you Daddy" (231).

Though, his fantasies lead him to commit sexual act against the younger female victims. He chooses the perfect classroom for him and an office that can be locked, the perfect place for Jacob where no one will hear them from outside. After the class end he takes Vanessa into his office where the radiator is on "full blast" and the sea glass windows were fogged over and he there "Kisses me hard and his tongue filling my whole mouth" (164)

The desire for sexual relation with pre-pubescent and adolescent children (who have not even reached to their legal age) is not fulfilled, the pedophile never stops, Jacob's habits to fantasize never stops

before he gets what he wants. From praising Lolita character and her relationship with Humbert, the protagonist of the novel, who is also a pedophile, leads Vanessa to fulfill his fantasies and this time his fantasy was accompanied by masturbation. "Go on, he says, I love you, Daddy. I say nothing" but Jacob asks her to say these words again and again but the words that Vanessa uses to express her emotions while being with him like it is just her body that stays with him not her mind which goes far away, "in airborne", "freewheeling", flying "out of the house into the night across the frozen lake", and when his labor breathing stops "I land back in my bedroom" (137) clearly shows that she was not in reality enjoying the time she was in bed with him, she felt the same way she was the first day he touched her, out of her mind, into another world, not being in the moment, thinking he is "fucking disgusting" which surges through her (138). This highlights the confused and the hallow relationship based only on one's sexual pleasures completion status after the fulfillment of those desires he does not bother to stay for a while and hangs up the call saying "I better let you go" (138).

The lines above show the sexual acts committed by Jacob. A pedophile habit is based on fantasy. He was masturbating with her to calm down his sexual desires that are increasingly powerful. When he first taught in the class, this is first time when he noticed Vanessa, one of his students in the class who was a victim of his pedophile habit and of psychological disorder of abusing and being selfish. The first meeting he brought her

into a fantasy world by touching her with his legs and pretending to be unaware and innocent. But he was very “similar” and whispers her that “you are dark romantic like me”, pats on her knee and his other hand “strokes my knee” and my mind “slips out of me” (50). His gaze and touch took her into fantasy world, dragged her into those unknown feelings that makes her pause for a moment and to feel Strane’s movements closely. The day Jacob brings a gift of book *Lolita* for her in order to bring her attention towards him, sexual activities and making love, for her to understand it is normal not illegal. “I turn the pages and feel a slow burn within me, hot coals, deep red embers. It isn’t only the plot, its story of a seemingly ordinary girl who is really a deadly demon in disguise and the man who loves her, It’s that he gave it to me” (80). This shows the whole context of one of his trapping strategies that he used to put an insight in Vanessa’s mind that what he want from her, to which Vanessa also gives notice, “What conclusion is there to draw besides the obvious? He is Humbert, and I am Dolores” (80).

His acts are very cruel and wild. Same as she was not allowed to discuss things with others and to keep them secret. His ways to trap Vanessa are very intellectual. His dangerous desires caused Vanessa to pay a big price even as a victim. As far, his sexual desires were concerned he is willing to do anything as long as the one who comes is like Vanessa. Who takes all his blames on herself and helps him to keep his innocent status maintain in the society.

His desires fulfilled because he knew that Vanessa was an easy child to influence and also she is an adolescent child who is in her development stages and is looking for attention, security and love. His selfish behavior encouraged him to do various things to satisfy his desires. Some signs that show pedophile behavior has occurred in Jacob are having sex and fantasizing. Strane never predicted the effects of pedophile that would occur. When he fulfills his desires, he is only concerned with his sexual pleasure. And she was for him, only a sex object not as a person who loves him. Ethically, you do not ask the person you love, to call you ‘daddy’. The effects of his pedophile preferences and actions causes everyone around him, including himself must bear this effect. Also, the effect of this sexual preference is that he cannot escape his pedophile disruption too.

Moreover, this pedophilic attitude is portrayed by person having sex with students. Some of the sufferers who have been the victim of Jacob’s sexual appetite is Nessa who has suffered a lot, more than anyone in the novel. She is one of his students, who repeatedly had sex with her teacher Mr. Jacob Strane. “moving on top of me and nudging my legs apart with his knee. “So stupidly stubborn.” He tries to push in, and then has to reach down to stroke himself; he keeps going soft. I could help, but I’m still feather light, board stiff. Plus, it isn’t my problem. If a forty-eight year- old man can’t get hard for a twenty-one-year-old girl, can he get hard for anything? For a fifteen-year-old, maybe” (281). Vanessa’s

statements show her cold attitude towards him which she shows often in the novel but keeps on ignoring the reality. These are the evidences that shows the sexual activities carried out by Jacob, the first time Vanessa had sex with was Jacob. It happened when she was at his home drunk and without her consent Jacob showed his pedophilic frotteur side. His behavior clearly demonstrates the beginning of their relation. Jacob's pedophile behavior makes him, not to stop his desires even after Vanessa moved out of the school. Jacob also tried with Taylor Birch besides his second victim who was also one of his students. But she was the one who exposed him and took a strong move by taking support from 'MeToo' movement.

'MeToo' movement became the voice of the women. Though, Elizabeth's novel characters are presented as traumatized and distressed one. She explored the sufferings of the people who are the victim of abuse. Through, her writing she gave a message to save children from child abuse that leads them to lose their self-confidence, self, sense and sanity. She has vividly stigmatized the issue of sexual abuse and pedophilic disorder. Also, disclosed the assaults and sexual problems, pain of the survivors. As Tarane Burke, an Afro-American activist and the founder of the "Me Too Movement" in her BBC news interview "Movement is not over" say that, "They are about fighting against injustice. The movements (Me Too) are predicted on undoing the system of oppressing" (2020). Me Too movement is a social movement

that started against sexual harassment and sexual abuse. The slogan "Me Too" was initially used in 2006 on social media on MySpace by a sexual harassment survivor Tarana Burke.

Likewise, other empowerment movements and social justice that are based upon breaking the silence, this movement was adopted in order to empower sexually assaulted individuals through solidarity especially in giving strength to young men and women.

Also, giving support to those who have survived sexual harassment and assault, especially in the workplace. By empowering the individuals to overcome their past and live their present intensely and fully and to never miss a chance to fight for their right as Burke, in her BBC news interview says that you do not need to beg for your "dignity" and your "humanity" nor you need to be anything but "yourself to be worthy" (2017).

Additionally, "Me Too" movement became a powerful and succinct term that brought the survivors together and to speak for them which Elizabeth wanted her character to deal with. 'ME TOO' not only connects to the countless examples of sexual abuse but also the trauma and its effect on the sufferers to highlight the horrible experiences that victims have to encounter with, which were unspoken and unheard. Elizabeth's novella brings these notions into view for the audience, not leaving to be covered or glossed over.

As Vanessa's character has suffered sexual emotional and psychological abuse

and 'Me Too' movement made sure that every experience matters and counts even if it was in past, it still matters and no matter what, "we will stand together" (Burke 2019). But Vanessa's psychological development became a hurdle in her life to understand the reality of life. "Me Too" movement brings an end to sexual violence and people from all races and backgrounds stand together and that preaches public allegations against violation and abuse. But most of the victims who have psychological development is failed leads them to only question themselves but not given them strength to face the reality and to speak.

Generally, every action has a reaction and every action always has a positive and negative effect that is called effect of the action. However, its effect is very influential on life both for others and on us also. When someone does something, they certainly do not want to have its negative effects not on themselves, not on others but Mr.Strane in order to save his reputation, he made Vanessa suffer alone. Though, he was accompanying disorder in itself, including substance use disorders such as anxiety and depressive disorder. He was only concerned with his sexual pleasure not about Nessa's mental and life destruction.

Same as Erickson's theory presents the succession in development tasks of every individual leads him/her to be strong characters, reasonable and successful in their life and failure leads to destruction. Destruction of one's self, mind, soul and rights and child abuse cases are increasing rapidly and most of the victims are the girls.

One's failure of personality development causes the other to have a miserable life.

Likewise, under Jacob Strane's absolute control Vanessa gradually lost her discourse power, becoming a 'silencer' of her life. As, Marguerite Ann Johnson, who is known as Maya Angelou, after the release of her autobiography 1969, *I know why the Caged bird sings*, in which she talks about the trauma, silence and sings of freedom. After one year of the release of her book, revealed how sexual assault has affected her mental and physical health. She was raped at the age of 8 by her mother's boyfriend, who is identified by the name, Mr. Freeman in her book. When the rapist was found guilty, still he only spent one day in jail and was released but he was murdered. Because of that, she became mute for almost years, believing her voice killed him, "I killed that man because I told his name. And then I thought I would never speak again, because my voice would kill anyone".

As Oprah Winfrey in a chat show said that, "I grew up in an environment where children were seen and heard" and in front of 3000 students she said that "anybody who has been verbally abused on physically abused will spend a great deal of their life rebuilding their esteem" as in the novel *Speaks* 1999 by Laurie Halse Anderson, the novel is not actually an autobiographical work. In her question answers section of her website claims that the 10% story is only based on her real experience of sexual assault. Melinda the protagonist of the novel, who is raped in the party, was shunned and out casted for

calling the police by her peers. she is bullied and harassed at school and received constant criticism but did not speech about her rape infront of the police the in reaction to the rape and the provocation she received from the people retreated her into resistant silence and more over when she imagines the life of Hester Prynne in Scarlet Letter “Wearing that A, me with an S maybe, S for silent, for scared, s for silly, for shame” (P: 101). Annie G. Rogers, a psychologist states that people who have experienced abuse, sexual assault often considers their trauma is “unsayable”, and is manifested through “unconscious reenactments... but at a terrible cost” (74)

Herman, Judith (1997) has worked on the exploration of “the aftermath of violence”. This paper focuses on the effects of violence, abuse, trauma and Recovery and focuses on the individuals “desires (will) to proclaim and their will to deny”(01) as Vanessa was denying the reality of her life, of her being abused which gives rise to the feelings dying every second as Melinda says that her feelings were “chewing her alive” (P: 125). Same as, Malendia, Vanessa chooses to stay silent because she was threatened and blackmailed by the rapists and later because of her misconceptions and beliefs that Jacob loved her but not raped her. Though, Malendia found her voice back, understood, accepted and faced the reality of her life but on the other hand Vanessa having the opportunity chooses to stay in her denial zone, because, she was mentally developed and groomed this way (of neglecting and denying).

Taking advantage of her weaknesses Strane took her out of her protection zone and began to control her. Though, she had no one to depend on mentally or physically. Strane emphasized that he was Vanessa’s well-wisher and a lover. He was the controller of the relationship and Nessa should obey all of his arrangements.

He rationalized his ‘selfish occupying’ of Vanessa on the shell of caring. Strane keeps her under his control and when that control he loses, he becomes violent and acts very rudely with her. He gives my hand a “shake so rough” (218) that it nearly knocks her over. He was not a caring and an innocent soul. He has always tried to assert dominance and power over her, “I imagine myself having power holding his heart, mine to abuse but even when I picture it pulsing and pumping in my hands, it is still the boss of me”(179)and that shows the cultural reality that woman’s feelings, sexuality is always repressed, ignored and rejected by the society and even by the people you love the most.

Though, Vanessa was unable to understand, because of her age and understanding of the world. The concept of slavery, domination, manipulation is still present in the society in every relation. Strane constantly instill fear in vanessa by telling her, what will happen to her, if people got to know about her relationship with her teacher. She will be left all alone. “Your name and photos will be in the papers” (234) and she will be all over the news and this will chase her forever and she will be “branded” for her whole life (234).

He threatened Vanessa, forbidding her from telling others about their relationship. An obvious way of discourse suppressing by which Strane succeeded gradually in terrorizing and depriving Vanessa's discourse power. Vanessa has always been the 'aphasia' with no chance to express her own feelings. Trapped, threatened and cheated by Strane. She still became obedient to him and lost her subjectivity.

"Do you want me to fuck you?" It's a question, but he isn't really asking" (107). The right of choice or different opinions has always been a part of Jacob's role rather than Nessa. Her losing of subjectivity is also, in one of the major causes of her ill fate. She does not show any kind of resistance even when he shouts on her, she remains silent throughout the novel. Though she knew she can tell him the truth that she does not like being woken up by him in the morning hard and practically interested in making love with him, that she is not ready to have sex with him and that feels like forced to her because "I'm not brave enough to say any of this—not even that I feel sick to my stomach when I think about him guiding my hand to his penis and don't understand why he didn't stop when I started to cry" (1090). She could not tell him that she wanted to leave and go home, ran away from the entire time "we first did it"(109). Thus, her character shows the reflection of every single (black/white/brown) woman who has been a victim of abuse and chooses to stay silent.

Sex is continuously depicted as a nightmare or injury and this story

emphasizes on the incest and child abuse inherited in their relationship. The concept of rape culture is pervasive and normalized due to our societal behaviors towards gender and sexuality. Rape is a type of sexual assault involving the sexual intercourse done without person's consent. This form of act is carried out by abuse of authority, mental and physical force, coercion and sometimes against a person who is impotent of giving valid consent. Such as, one who is intellectual disability, unconscious, or is not in legal age of consent. It is a very significant problem in our society to which institutions, media societies do not pay a serious attention to.

Also, the wrong use of social resulted in sexual violence and majority of sexual violence cases goes unreported. The abusive relationship patterns are maintained through social media and young girls and woman experience higher rates of sexual violence, and young men are most often the perpetrators. Online grooming is a term that is used broadly to explain the tactics abusers use through the internet to sexually exploit children. It is a core process of exploiting individual's trust to turn expectations of what protective attitude is leveraging shame and fear to keep a child silent. Rape culture is perpetuate through the use of the glamorization of sexual violence, objectification of female bodies, the misogynist language, all of this is because of the society that disgraces women's safety and their pride and rights. As in the novel the other female victim of Strane, Taylor at her Facebook page post that, "The schools

that once promised to nurture and protect me has sided with an abuser today. I'm disappointed but not surprised" (133) is the clear depiction of the corrupt system that has and are still doing injustice to many souls and are becoming the reason of continuous abuse system to get deeply rooted.

Moreover, Kate Eliyabeth uses the relationship between the novel's narrator Vanessa and novels namesake, Jacob, as an extreme metaphor to showcase the inherited exploitive nature and by making the man in the position of power, manipulative Pedophile, repulsive each of this exhibit gluttonous commodity fetishism. "Between breaths, he says, "I want you to come, I want you to stop, I think" (399). Vanessa, a young victim and Strane, a man of privilege who views his students only as objects to be consumed or used, his psychological journey starts from desire to lustful obsession. His character has proved feasible in comprehending the dilemma which engulfs pedophiles and their perverse infatuation for young females. Though, his personality has emerged out successfully in this regard by undermining the traumatic effects of his ferocious behavior that resulted in shattering and debilitation of Vanessa's personality. Still, she is the pitiable abandoned lover who has to go through much suffering and agony.

Likewise, we can see in the novel *My Dark Vanessa* as well that how when the protagonist was molested by her teacher for the first time she was too young to know what has actually happened to her. She didn't share it with anyone who led her to the paths of depression and self-destruction.

This part of the novel, not only highlights the curiosity in children to learn everything which is often fulfilled by their gadgets but also shows that how are society works.

In the recent METOO movement it was evident that most of the people have gone through such experience and the most painful thing about this is that those who harassed or violated them were their own relatives. Slogans like 'Mera Jism Meri Marzi' are taken in a negative context. But in reality it highlights this brutal reality of the society. It highlights those cases like 14th August's Minar-e-Pakistan incident; where four hundred men stripped, raped, harassed and tossed a woman for three hours. They tried to justify it by say that she was a TikTokker and a goat and cat being used for sexual pleasures. These incidents not only show that how low as a society we have gone but also foreshadows the future of the other women of our society. The stakes are most likely to rise from eighty six percent to hundred percent if not taken into account by our government officials.

Moreover, Pedophilia in Europe at some places has strict rules by the laws also the government has the concrete rule against them and people who are aware of this global phenomenon consider this issue as a huge threat and harm for their upcoming generations and their development. Also, pedophiles should not get out of jail before completing the certain criteria of term and term and regulations. Though, pedophilia in American culture has never been considered serious crime because, based on American people that are from other origins and

countries containing (having) different backgrounds. Thus, American government does not have strict rules against pedophiles like Ruses etc. also, in New Jersey, child marriage is legalized and most of them are between the age of 10 to 15. Everyday 34,000 girls are married as children and their rights of education, opportunity are ignored and robbed from them. As in India and Pakistan too, child marriages are done but in 2020, government has issued new rules and regulations are banned doing such tasks before individual's legal age which is 18.

Our society is composed of different norms and taboos surrounded by our ideal concept of a 'perfect society'. This contains of taboos regarding sexual education, harassment, violence against women and children. In these guidelines, unfortunately, children are kept away from these concepts and aspects of the society, making them vulnerable for predators. In a 2014 documentary 'Hidden Shame of Pakistan' directed by Mohammad Ali Naqvi shares the pedophilic behavior of the lower class where children; mostly orphan are being subjected to such hideous acts. This documentary shares that this is something people need to take account of. Most of the children are without guardians or does not have a close bond with them. It makes them being an easy target since sugar coated words and a little care is enough for them to be their victims. Only in Pakistan around eighty six percent children are the victims of this abuse. Those who survived are left like hanging in the middle of the bridge. They cannot ask for help, neither can share their

trauma. They die slowly and painfully in their silence, asking for help.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, with the help of above discussion, the awareness in society towards pedophilia is increasing rapidly. As there is increase in pedophiles every year and sexual violence against children is increasing day by day. And no one is taking a very significant action against these sexual perpetrators. Also, the increasing ratio of crimes against children is due to the weak preventive efforts and systems conducted by the government. Supposedly, families, schools, society perform efforts to prevent the sexual violence and crime but the process can be controlled until authorities' strong system and concerns towards innocent lives. The exploitation against children has excessively increased. In fact, the perpetrator is derived from a social status and the violence in schools, colleges is also increasing but kept hidden. Though, diagnose of this disorder generally requires the sexual encounters with the individuals under their illegal age of intercourse.

Moreover, the perpetrators often manipulate, threaten the victims or physically restrain them and create a fear in them, about giving them punishments to their loved ones if the victim does not agree with the predator (pedophile) wishes. Though, most pedophiles have strategies to trap their victim and to control them by mentally controlling them for staying in contact with them. The impact on the victims of pedophiles can be awfully painful

or traumatized and could generate major distressed issues in the children's growth. The most obvious symptoms shown by sexually abused victims are post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, stress disorder, depressive disorders, fearfulness, and hyperactivity, lack of self-esteem or sexualized behaviors.

As, Every action has a reaction and it has side effects too. However, not everyone faces negative effects but not everyone has a positive effect on themselves too. Jacob Strane is a teacher with pedophile disorders, in addition to, has anxiety disorder too. And his pedophilic behavior has negative effects on Vanessa made her lose her identity when she herself was unable to see. Jacob never predicted the effects of pedophile that occur, nor did Vanessa notice this as an illegal conduct of her teacher. When he fulfills his pedophile desires, he is only concerned with his sexual pleasure. The effect of Jacob's pedophile behavior harmed everyone living around him, including him must bear this effect too.

To conclude this idea, we can say that Russell's text not only explores the psychological and sexual exploitation done to the victims of abuse but also highlights that how these child predators, like Jacob Strane use their words to exploit and groom minors. The magnitude of the issue of abuse has been growing rapidly with urbanization and modernization of the world which has discarded each ancient moral and cultural norms and values. All the moral and natural barriers for the protection of the progeny are

now broken, removed and damaged by the modern man.

References:

- Albright, J.M. " 'smoking fetishization and the sexualization of under aged females'." (2002).
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 1996.
- Mcalinden, Anne-Marie. "Setting 'Em Up': Personal, Familial and Institutional Grooming in the Sexual Abuse of Children." *SAGE Journals* (2006).
- Merskin, Debra. "Reviving Lolita?: A Media Literacy Examination of Sexual Portrayals of Girls in Fashion Advertising." *SAGE Journals* (2004).
- Olson, Loreen N. "Entrapping the Innocent: Toward a Theory of Child Sexual Predators' Luring Communication." (2007).
- Seto, Michael C. *Pedophilia and Sexual Offending Against Children: Theory, Assessment, and Intervention*, Second Edition. 2008.
- Seto, Michael Chikong. *Pedophilia and Sexual Offending Against Children*. 2008.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today*. Routledge; 2nd edition (August 16, 2006), 2006.
- DECEMBER, Sgoodreading. "My Dark Vanessa Kate Elizabeth Russell• 1 February."

- Elizabeth, Kate. "My Dark Vanessa." (2020).
- Van der Kolk, Bessel A. Psychological trauma. American Psychiatric Pub, 2003.
- Finkelhor, David, et al. "Initial reliability and validity of the childhood trauma interview: a new multidimensional measure of childhood interpersonal trauma." The American journal of psychiatry (1995).
- Choo, Kim-Kwang Raymond, and Australian Institute of Criminology. Online child grooming: A literature review on the misuse of social networking sites for grooming children for sexual offences. Vol. 103. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, 2009.
- McAlinden, Anne-Marie. 'Grooming' and the Sexual Abuse of Children: Institutional, Internet and Familial Dimensions. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Crowell, Charles R., et al. "Using Luring Communication Theory to Analyze the Behavior of Online Sexual Offenders." Encyclopedia of Criminal Activities and the Deep Web. IGI Global, 2020. 547-564.
- Araji, Sharon, and David Finkelhor. "Explanations of pedophilia: Review of empirical research." Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (1985).
- Nevid, Jeffrey S., Spencer A. Rathus, and Beverly Greene. "Psikologi abnormal." Jakarta: Erlangga (2005): 96-101.