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VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN REALISTIC NOVELS FOR CHILDREN: *THE TULIP TOUCH* BY ANNE FINE, *SECRETS* BY JACQUELINE WILSON

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Abstract

The novels for children about violence against children may be shocking for some adults, for those in particular who are not used to reading contemporary realistic novels for children. Violence against children is dealt with by the writers for children, and these writers are encouraged by some researchers. However, violence is the subject matter which must be dealt with cautiously. Anne Fine and Jacqueline Wilson are the two British writers for children dealing with violence against children in their novels. The aim of this paper is to discuss how Fine in the Tulip Touch and Wilson in Secrets deal with violence against children.

Both Fine and Wilson have been able to write novels about physical abuse, depicting less violence scenes. Fine has focused on the consequences of the indifference of people and the institutions to violence against the child while Wilson displays what the abused child feels and how she is able to overcome her problem. Besides, Wilson emphasizes the significance of the concern of the people around the abused child. Considering both writers' efforts to emphasize the function of adults' concern for the problem of the abused children and the role of the adults in solving violence problem, we may suggest that the realistic novels for children about abuse should be read by adults as well.

Keywords: *Fine, Wilson, Violence Against Child, Children's Fiction, Tulip Touch, Secrets, Abused Child, Realism*

Öz

Gerçekçi Çocuk Romanlarında Çocuğa Karşı Şiddet: Anne Fine'nın Tulip Dokunuşu, Jacqueline Wilson'ın Sırlar Adlı Romanları

Çocuğa karşı fiziksel şiddet hakkındaki çocuk romanları, bazı yetişkinlere, özellikle gerçekçi çağdaş çocuk romanlarını okumaya alışkın olmayanlara çok şaşırtıcı gelebilir. Ancak çocuğa uygulanan şiddet, çocuk kitapları yazarlarınca ele alınır ve bu konuyu ele alan yazarlar, bazı araştırmacılarca da yüreklendirilir.

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Bununla birlikte, şiddet dikkatlice ele alınması gereken bir konudur. Anne Fine ve Jacqueline Wilson romanlarında çocuğa karşı şiddeti ele alan iki Britanyalı çocuk kitapları yazarıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Fine'nın Tulip Dokunuşu (The Tulip Touch), Wilson'ın Sırlar (Secrets) adlı romanlarında fiziksel şiddeti nasıl ele aldıklarını tartışmaktır.

Fine ve Wilson çok az şiddet sahnesi çizerek, fiziksel şiddet hakkında roman yazmayı başarmışlardır. Fine çocuğa uygulanan fiziksel şiddete kişilerin ve kurumların duyarsız kalmalarının sonuçları üzerine odaklaşırken; Wilson, şiddet mağduru bir çocuğun neler hissettiğini ve bu sorununun üstesinden nasıl geldiğini gösterir. Bunun yanı sıra, Wilson şiddet mağduru çocukların etrafındaki kişilerin şiddete karşı duyarlılıklarının önemini de vurgular. Her iki yazarın da yetişkinlerin şiddet mağduru çocuğun sorununa gösterecekleri ilginin işlevini ve yetişkinlerin şiddet sorununu çözmedeki rolünü vurgulama çabalarını göz özüne alarak, şiddetle ilgili gerçekçi çocuk romanlarının yetişkinlerce de okunması önerebiliriz.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Fine, Wilson, Çocuğa Uygulanan Şiddet, Çocuk Romanları, Tulip Dokunuşu, Sırlar, İstimara Uğrayan Çocuk, Gerçekçilik*

Introduction

Contemporary realistic novels for children may be shocking for those adults cherishing childhood as a period of mirth, free from the problems adults face, therefore regarding the novels for children as the books about some trivial school problems or about such simple issues of childhood as the quarrels or the rivalry between friends or siblings. Nevertheless, childhood is not a period of joviality for a great many children since they suffer from such serious problems as bullying, maltreatment, depression of adults, the problems after the divorce of parents and death. Since childhood is not a period of delight for a good many children as we have tried to illustrate, the writers of realistic novels for children write about the serious problems children suffer. As the examples above indicate, most of these problems are created by adults. Of the problems created by adults, maltreatment is the widespread one since the term is used to refer to a wide range of behaviours and conditions such as physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect (Giovannoni 4). Thus, the writers of realistic novels for children deal with maltreatment, and therefore some realistic novels for children are full of the scenes displaying neglect, emotional or/and physical abuse. Since the term maltreatment refers to a wide range of behaviours and attitudes, this paper will focus solely on physical abuse, and hereafter, the term abuse will be used to mean physical abuse.

The writers dealing with the serious problems children face have been encouraged by some researchers for several reasons. April A. Mattix and

Patricia A. Crawford assert that "… quality literature provides a sociocultural context in which social issues can be examined and a means by which to explore the world of self and other" (319-320). In other words, if the child reading such books does not suffer from physical abuse, s/he will be able to understand what problems some other children have to endure, and so s/he may empathize with the abused children at school and may support them. If the child has a problem similar to the one presented in these novels, s/he will have a chance to see that s/he is not alone. Cynthia McDaniel explains the importance of these novels for the children suffering from abuse or other serious problems as follows:

> Even without a teacher's or parent's guidance, literature can help children to recognize potentially harmful scenarios, to identify their own victimization, to receive reassurance that they are not abnormal, and most importantly, to seek help. A powerful antidote to feeling like "I'm the only one" is to discover others facing similar situations through literature (204).

As pointed out by McDaniel, abused children may be encouraged to seek help through realistic novels, instead of feeling abnormal and suffering silently, and these novels may show who may help them since they give or imply messages. Concerning the messages about abuse in children's fiction, Wendy M. Smith-D'Arezzo and Susan Thompson point out that the messages in children's books should be "healthy and authentic messages to give abused children hope; and to help other children understand people and their situations; and as children get older to encourage them to be advocates for others" (336). The discussion above displays that the researchers regard the realistic novels for children as valuable means to get in touch with abused children to help them and to make those who have not such problems aware of the situation of the abused ones.

Although such novels are crucial due to the above-mentioned reasons, and "Literature can be powerful, inspiring, encouraging, informational, and potentially life-changing" (McDaniel 204) for abused children, writing novels for children about physical abuse is on knife –edge. Although these novels are 'informational' and include direct or implied messages for children, there are some important factors that must be considered by the writers while composing their novels about abuse. Otherwise, these novel may have an adverse effect on children. First, the writers should refrain from depicting too many scenes displaying violence. If the writer depicts too many scenes to illustrate the violence the child-character endures, the child-reader may be inured to violence; above all, s/he may learn violence and behave aggressively. Contemporary psychologists think that aggressive

behaviour is learnt, and the psychologists Clifford T. Morgan, Richard A. King, John R. Weisz and John Schopler put this view as follows: "Aggression is contagious" (291). Therefore, if the writer is not cautious about depicting the scenes displaying physical abuse, a valuable resource may turn into a hazardous tool teaching violence to children. Therefore, to what extent the writer depicts violence scenes in her/his book is of utmost importance.

As well as depicting minimum scenes exhibiting violence, the writer should strive for giving true and realistic messages to abused children. Masha Kabakow Rudman studying children's novels about abuse in American literature suggests some criteria that a quality novel about abuse should have to the teachers or librarians choosing books for children. Rudman's criteria are as follows:

> Books about physical, emotional, or sexual abuse should never blame the victim.
>
> A collection should be balanced, with at least some books identifying the abuser as someone known to the victim rather than a stranger.
>
> Books on addiction or abuse should reflect the fact that abusers and addicts represent all classes, all economic and social backgrounds, and both genders. The norm should not be that they are poor and non-Caucasian.
>
> …
>
> Happy endings that occur without hard work and knowledgeable interaction make for poor literature and convey harmful messages. Easy solutions are not helpful or realistic.
>
> …
>
> As in all good literature, characters should be fully fleshed out.
>
> ….
>
> Books should include information to help readers recognize whether they are victims of abuse.
>
> Wherever possible, alternative ways of getting help should be suggested.
>
> ….
>
> Some books should contain models of how people were able to break cycle of abuse (350).

The criteria suggested to the teachers and librarians by Rudman should be observed by the writers desirous of writing novels about abuse as well.

Dame Jacqueline Wilson and Anne Fine are the two British writers famous for their realistic novels for the children aged 9-12. Trying to write about almost every problem a child may encounter in her/his daily life in their novels, Wilson in *Secrets,* and Fine in *The Tulip Touch* deal with physical abuse. The aim of this paper is to discuss how these writers present this crucial, delicate issue in their novels, whether these novels meet the above-mentioned criteria by Rudman.

Violence Against The Child In Anne Fine's *The Tulip Touch* And Jacqueline Wilson's *Secrets*

Anne Fine has written *the Tulip Touch* after the trial of two ten-year-old children charged with the murder of the toddler James Bulger (Tucker 62). In this novel with the black cover on which the sentence "no one is born evil. No one" (Fine, cover) is written, Fine tells the story of a malicious child, Tulip. However, Fine never accuses Tulip of her malevolence. Calling the attention of the readers to the problems Tulip has suffered, the writer presents Tulip as a victim, the victim of physical abuse exposed by her father, Mr Pierce. Throughout the novel, though the readers feel to what extent Tulip suffers from physical abuse, Fine manages to relate physical abuse without describing any scenes exhibiting violence. Fine achieves this, by presenting the story from the viewpoint of another child, Natalie. Natalie's father is a hotel manager, therefore she has to live in different towns. When Mr Barnes, Natalie's father, is sent to a hotel called the Palace, Natalie and her family have to move to the town where she meets Tulip. Throughout the novel, Natalie narrates her friendship with this weird girl isolated by her peers. Since Natalie is able to tell what she has seen, there is no scene exhibiting physical abuse. Instead of physical violence, Natalie witnesses Mr Pierce's threat for once, and narrates it as exemplified in the following quotation:

> For once, as we were strolling home together after school, I heard a vicious bellow, and looked up to see Mr Pierce leaning out of his truck window.
>
> 'Better get home before me, Tulip, or I'll snatch you bald headed!
>
> I stood, rigid. Snatch her bald-headed? But Tulip had already fled. I followed her as far as the corner, picking up things that spilled out of her schoolbag, and thinking about the odd things I'd heard her saying in our games. 'I'll peel you alive, like a banana!' 'Smile at me

> wrong today, and I'll crush you!' 'I'll make your eyes look like slits in a grape fruit!' I'd always put them down to Tulip being clever – good with words. But was I wrong? Was it Tulip I'd been hearing, or her terrifying father? (Fine 44).

The quotation above is the only scene exhibiting violence Tulip endures. Tulip's rush without caring the things spilling out of her bags after the words of Mr Pierce indicates that he materializes what he says. The sentences Tulip utters while playing suggest that Tulip often hears such threats, therefore she has internalized them. Except for the one above, the writer has not presented any scenes displaying violence to her readers. Instead of depicting the scenes directly exhibiting violence, the writer has preferred conveying physical abuse through the comments and the deductions of Natalie as exemplified in the quotation below:

> Tulip said very little, but I'd picked up the fact that she was always punished for stupid things like knocking a fork off the table, or leaving a stiff tap dripping a tiny bit, or not coming quickly enough when Mr Pierce called her (Fine 92).

The above-given quotations illustrate how Fine has presented the violence scenes in the novel. It should be pointed out as well that such scenes are few in the novel. Employing another child-character to narrate the story, Fine has managed to write a novel about physical abuse without any scenes directly displaying violence.

Similar to Anne Fine, Jacqueline Wilson has dealt with child physical abuse in *Secrets*. In *Secrets,* the stories of two girls, Treasure and India, from different social classes are told. Different from Fine's *the Tulip Touch*, in *Secrets,* there are two narrators, and these narrators are the major characters of the novel as well. Treasure and India keep diaries and put down their secrets in their diaries. The events in the novel are presented through the diary entries of these two girls. At the very beginning of the novel, through Treasure's diary entry, the first violence scene is presented to the readers as follows:

> He stood up and unbuckled the heavy leather belt round his jeans. 'She needs teaching a lesson once for all.'
>
> Mum tried to laugh him out of it, acting like he was just kidding. She said he didn't really mean it. He was just trying to scare me. We were all scared. When he raised the belt Mum yelled at me to run for it. I didn't run fast enough. He got me on the side of my head and broke my glasses and cut me all down my forehead (Wilson 8).

As the quotation above exhibits, the violence exposed to the child has been described in detail. However, it is the only scene in the novel in which child physical abuse is presented. This is because after this event, her grandmother takes Treasure to her own house. Treasure calls this tragic event as "the start of my whole new life" (Wilson 7). Depicting the scene in which Treasure is exposed to violence at the very beginning of the novel, showing this tragic event as the turning point in the life of Treasure, Wilson does not have to depict any other scenes exhibiting child physical abuse. Not only child physical abuse but also the violence exposed to an adult has been depicted less in *Secrets*. There is only one scene in which violence against woman is mentioned. In this scene, Treasure tells India that Terry beat her mother, Tammy, while she was pregnant to Garry (Wilson 148). Treasure tells it to illustrate how cruel Terry is. Except for these two scenes, in *Secrets,* there is no other scene displaying violence exposed to either a child or an adult. Instead of depicting violence scenes one after the other, Wilson focuses on 'the new life' of Treasure in the grandmother's house and grandmother's struggle for protecting her against Terry's cruelty, as well as the life and the problems of India and the friendship between these two girls from different backgrounds. By doing so, Wilson has been able to write a novel about physical abuse keeping the violence scenes at minimum.

Both in *the Tulip Touch* and *Secrets,* the children are the victims of domestic violence. While Tulip is abused by her own father in *the Tulip Touch*, in *Secrets,* Treasure's mother's boyfriend uses violence. Thus both Fine and Wilson warn their readers that danger does not always come from outside home; sometimes relatives may be as abusive as strangers.

Though Wilson and Fine have achieved keeping the violence scenes at minimum, they have been able to display the personality traits of the abusers. As mentioned above, Terry in *Secrets* beats both Treasure and her mother, Tammy. Ernest N. Jouriles et al. point out that "… certain individuals have a propensity for aggressive behaviour, and because of this propensity anyone who spends time with these individuals (partners and children) is at increased risk for becoming a victim of violence" (229). The fact that both Treasure and Tammy have been the victims of violence used by Terry may imply that Terry is a man prone to aggressive behaviour. In *the Tulip Touch,* Mr Pierce is an aggressive person, as well. The above-given quotation exhibits that Mr Pierce orders Tulip to go home by threatening her. Penelope K. Trickett and Leon Kuczynski studying the discipline strategies in abusive and non-abusive families assert that "… abusive parents used a greater total number of punishment techniques and were more likely to use severe physical punishment and less likely to use requests and reasoning than controls [non-abusive parents]" (120). Hereby, we may conclude that

Mr Pierce is an abusive parent adopting threatening as a discipline strategy and often materializing his threats. Similar to *Secrets,* in *the Tulip Touch,* both Tulip and her mother are the targets of violence exposed by Mr Pierce. Different from *Secrets*, in *the Tulip Touch,* Mrs Pierce is the real target of aggressive behaviours of Mr Pierce as seen in the following remarks of Tulip:

> 'It makes no difference what I do,' Tulip explained. 'He picks on me to start a fight with her' (Fine 92).

The quotation above exhibits that the child here is used as an instrument by the father to assault the mother. Laura Ann McCloskey explains the instrumental use of children in domestic violence as follows:

> … if men are mainly intent on dominating and coercing their wives, children become useful tools in this sexual struggle. In so far as batterers view children as bargaining chattel in the marital relationship, hurting the children (or threatening to hurt or kidnap them) is an effective strategy to strike fear in the mothers (22).

In *the Tulip Touch*, Mr Pierce batters Tulip to provoke Mrs Pierce into intervening in the violence he uses against Tulip. When Mrs Pierce tries to stop him, he begins to beat Mrs Pierce (Fine 92). Thus, we witness the instrumental use of the child in domestic violence in the novel. The discussion thus far displays that Fine has depicted Mr Pierce as an abusive man with strict discipline strategies using violence against both his daughter and his wife. The characteristics of the abusers depicted by both Fine and Wilson are consistent with the results of the researches on child abuse. This may indicate that the writers may have read the researches on child abuse and strived for verisimilitude.

Both writers have presented two families from different socioeconomic status in their novels. In *the Tulip Touch*, while the victim, Tulip, is the daughter of a poor farmer family, the narrator Natalie's father is the manager of a hotel and her mother helps him. Besides, Natalie's father is a caring man. *Secrets* is a novel about two girls, Treasure and India, from different social classes. Treasure is from lower class while India is the daughter of a wealthy family. Moreover Treasure does not know her biological father, and does not have a proper family. Treasure's mother does not remember Treasure's father properly (Wilson 55). She narrates her life as follows: "Mum's lived all over the place with all different blokes. Each time she gets a new guy there's a new home and a new school" (Wilson 53). As for, India, the other major character of the novel, her father is the managing director of a big engineering firm, and her mother is a famous designer. In the novel, the class difference between the two children is emphasized as follows:

> 'You're rich, aren't you?'
>
> She went pink again, playing with a frizzy end of hair.
>
> I suddenly realized. 'Hey, you don't live in those huge houses where they had the fireworks? Parkfield?'
>
> She nodded, ducking her head like she wanted to disappear inside her duffel coat.
>
> 'Wow, you lucky thing! So what are you doing hanging round our estate then?' (Wilson 73).

Creating such a scene, Wilson has highlighted the different backgrounds of Treasure and India. Furthermore, in the following part of the same scene, it has been emphasized that violence occurs in lower class family as follows:

> 'What about your dad? Is he OK?'
>
> 'Oh, he's lovely. Well, he *was* –but he's got ever so grumpy lately. He'll yell at me for the least little thing.'
>
> 'Does he whack you one?'
>
> She looked shocked. 'He'd never hit me!' Her eyes went straight to the scar on my forehead.
>
> I nodded. 'Yeah, my mum's bloke did that. With his belt' (Wilson 74).

India's reaction to Treasure's question shows that India has never thought that her father may beat her. This scene displays that the child of the poor family is exposed to violence in *Secrets* as in *the Tulip Touch.* While experiencing financial problems, India's father shouts at her. However, he understands his fault, and takes India to dinner, tells her that she is "his little princess, the number-one girl in his life" (Wilson 110) to compensate his fault. Previously we have mentioned that in *the Tulip Touch,* Natalie's father is a caring man. So, we may conclude that middle class men have been depicted as caring persons by both Fine and Wilson, and this may lead to the thought that using violence is peculiar to lower class men. The fact that both Fine and Wilson have chosen the men using violence from lower classes may imply the child reader that domestic violence occurs only in lower class families, and is used by men. That both writers have depicted violence in poor families contradicts with the above mentioned criterion by Rudman as well. This may cause to miss out the fact that domestic violence is the problem occurring in all classes.

Nevertheless, Wilson has not depicted India as the daughter of a wealthy family free from any types of maltreatment. India is devoid of her mother's affection. She complains of her mother's attitude as follows:

> Mum doesn't do anything bad to me. She doesn't *say* anything either. It's the way she says it. The way she sighs. The way she raises her eyebrows. The way she rushes straight past me, talking over her shoulder. The way she never wants to sit down and talk to me. If I try to grab hold of her and start gabbling she always goes, 'Oh darling, I'm in such a tearing rush. Can't you ask Wanda? (Wilson 61).

As seen in the quotation above, India is neglected by her mother, and neglect is considered as a type of maltreatment.

The mothers in both novels are ineffectual in preventing abuse. Tulip's mother in Fine's novel is introvert and unsociably. As we have mentioned above, she is the real target of the violence used by Mr Pierce. Since Tulip's mother is abused as well, she cannot protect Tulip against the violence exposed by the father. As for Treasure's mother, Tammy, in *Secrets* by Wilson, she is selfish and irresponsible. When Terry whips Treasure, Tammy defends Terry and tells her mother Rita that "… it wasn't Terry's fault. It was an accident" (Wilson 9). Moreover, she begs Rita not to take Treasure to hospital though Treasure's forehead is bleeding. The reason behind Tammy's supplication is that in hospital they may learn what has happened to Treasure and they may notify Social Workers and the police, and Terry may get into trouble (Wilson 10-11). In other words, Tammy prefers protecting Terry instead of Treasure. Creating such mothers, both Wilson and Fine exhibit that mothers fall short of protecting their children against violence for various reasons. Thus, both writers may have implied that abused children need the help of the other people around them.

Both Wilson and Fine have exhibited the effects of violence on the victims. Since Wilson has employed a first person point of view, she has achieved to show what Treasure has felt and to what extent she fears Terry. After Treasure was beaten by Terry, Rita, her grandmother, has taken her to her house where Treasure is really happy as she is far from Terry until her mother Tammy wants to take her back. When Tammy wants to get Treasure back, and threatens the grandmother to get a court order if she does not turn Treasure over to her, Treasure cannot sleep and expresses her feelings as follows:

> I'm scared of sleeping, because every time I start dreaming Terry jumps out at me and he's whirling that belt, going to *crack crack crack* with it like a whip. I wake with such a start and each time I tell myself it's OK, it's just a bad dream, but then I remember Terry isn't a dream, he's real, and he's coming to get me (Wilson 101).

This quotation exhibits Treasure's fears and psychology. Cathy Humphreys, Pam Lowe and Simon Williams propound that "Living with domestic violence creates high levels of fear and anxiety" (8), and they add that as well as "sleep disruptions" (9), "nightmares were also noted as a particularly common problem" in their research (9). Considering the research carried out by Humphreys, Lowe and Williams, we can assert that Wilson reflects the fears of an abused child realistically. Furthermore when Terry and Tammy come to Rita's house to take Treasure back, Treasure runs away and hides in the attic of India's house for a while. Peter Muris suggests that "Sexual and physical abuse represents a further category of traumas that have detrimental effects on youths affected by these events" (64). He points out as well that "avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma" is one of the signs of "posttraumatic stress disorder" (62). The fact that Treasure has run away from Terry may be regarded as a sign of posttraumatic stress disorder. All these examples display to what extent Treasure has been affected by violence. Wilson's depiction of Treasure's nightmare and fears in a realistic and detailed way is of great importance for the child-reader since if the child-reader himself is a victim of physical abuse, s/ he may feel that s/he is not alone, somewhere some other children suffer from the same problem. If the child-reader herself/himself does not have such a problem but knows a child exposed to violence, s/he may empathize with the child suffering from physical abuse.

As for *the Tulip Touch,* since the story of Tulip is narrated by Natalie, the readers do not witness what Tulip feels. However, Fine provides her readers with some scenes to enable them to comprehend the effects of the abuse on Tulip's psychology. Tulip is often absent from school. One of the rare days she is in school, the teacher asks the students to draw their self-portraits. Natalie describes Tulip's self-portrait as follows:

> It was the strangest thing. The fury and contempt of Tulip's brushwork had turned to whirlpools of violence on the paper. Everything about it was dark and furious, and every inch of it seemed to suck you in and swirl you round, making you feel *dizzy* and anxious. And everywhere you looked, your eyes were drawn back, over and over, to the centre, where, out of the blackness, two huge forlorn eyes stared out as usual, half-begging, half-accusing (Fine 100).

Perhaps the most striking words in the quotation above are the ones used to describe the eyes. The word "begging" may demonstrate that Tulip begs for help. In other words, she asks such people as teachers, neighbours, social workers to protect her against her abusive father. "Half-accusing" eyes

may imply that she is aware of the fact that those people around her have done nothing but whispering behind her back so far, and therefore her eyes are "forlorn". Besides, Fine has created the scenes exhibiting how apathetic the people around Tulip are as exemplified in the quotation below:

> Then, one day, I heard the office staff discussing her.
>
> 'What *has* that child done with her hair?'
>
> 'Which?'
>
> 'Tulip Pierce.'
>
> I rooted deeper in the chest of lost property, hiding my face.
>
> 'Oh, *Tulip*.'
>
> They stared out of the window in silence for a while. Then one of them said,
>
> 'She is a strange one, that's for sure.'
>
> Her colleague sniffed.
>
> 'I can't be doing with her. Bold and sassy if you speak to her. But the minute she wants something from you, she turns into Miss Cute & Mincing.'
>
> 'Have you seen her fingernails? They're bitten raw.'
>
> 'I can't *think* what she's done to her hair. It looks as if someone's been at with the garden shears' (Fine 108-109).

Creating such a scene given above, Fine has displayed that the people around Tulip do nothing except for gossiping. More to the point, Fine has depicted the school staff indifferent to the problems Tulip suffers from. Cathy Spatz Widom suggests that

> … severe abuse or neglect in childhood leads not only to aggression directed outwardly, but to aggression directed inwardly. Often overlooked evidence suggests that abuse may lead to withdrawal or to severe self-destructive behaviour and suicide attempts. Thus, not only might abused children be destructive and abusive toward others but they might also be damaging to themselves (20).

The teachers in the novel are expected to recognize the symptoms of self-destruction and do their best to help her. Thus, as early as 1977, Thomas J. Reidy emphasizes the urgency of providing intervention programmes for

abused children as follows: "This study thus strongly suggests that intervention should be initiated as soon as a child is identified as abused rather than waiting until his problems increase in severity" (1144). However, in Tulip's case, the teacher seeing Tulip's self-portrait or office staff talking about the hair and nail of Tulip do nothing to help her. Therefore, it is possible to assume that Fine accuses such institutions as schools responsible for the welfare of children of turning a blind eye to the student with serious problems, of watching the abused child turning into a monster.

Thus, Fine has presented some dramatic incidents revealing how Tulip has gradually turned into a child enjoying disturbing the people around her and damaging the objects due to his abusive father. Only two of these incidents have been given below to illustrate Tulip's mischievous behaviours: A little girl called Muriel was drowned in their neighbourhood. Tulip visits Muriel's family three times after her death, and asks the family if Muriel wants to come for a walk (Fine 135). The aim of Tulip is, of course, to upset the family of the dead girl. The second incident we will mention here is more terrifying than the previous example. Tulip burns down the hotel where Natalie and her family live, while the family and guests are celebrating Christmas, endangering the lives of the family and guests there (Fine 161-164). The fire is the last incident in the novel exhibiting Tulip's mischievous behaviours as after the fire Tulip and her family have to move to a new hotel in another city. Nonetheless Fine never puts the blame on Tulip. Instead, she presents Tulip as a victim. Diana J. English suggests that "As they get older, children who have been abused and neglected are more likely to perform poorly in school and commit crimes against persons" (48). The reason behind the presentation of Tulip as a victim may be the fact that Fine has read the studies carried out to reveal the psychology and behaviour of abused children.

For Fine, everybody around Tulip is as responsible as her abusive father for her mischievous behaviours. The writer explicitly gives her message via Natalie's comments as seen in the following quotation:

> There's no particular moment when someone goes to the bad. Each horrible thing that happens makes a difference, and there had probably been too many of those already in Tulip's life… And people aren't locked doors. You can get through to them if you want.
>
> But no one did. No one reached out a hand to Tulip. Nobody tried to touch. I hear them whispering and they sicken me. 'Bus seats!' grumbles Mrs Bodell. 'Locker doors!' complain the teachers. 'Chicken sheds!' say the farmers. 'Greenhouses! Dustbins! Moan the neighbours. And Mum says, 'A lovely old hotel!'

> But what about Tulip?
>
> I shall feel sorry for Tulip all my life.
>
> And guilty, too.
>
> Guilty (Fine 168).

Here Natalie is like the mouthpiece of the writer. By means of the comment of Natalie, Fine emphasizes that for most people, objects are more valuable than the life of a child. Furthermore, Natalie's remarks in the quotation are the concluding sentences of the novel, and Natalie expresses her great regret since she could not do or did not want to do anything to help Tulip. Moreover she tells that she feels guilty as she could not help her. Creating such a concluding scene, choosing "guilty" as the final word of the novel, Fine, in a sense, screams that everybody but the abused child is responsible for Tulip's aggressive behaviours. For us, concluding her novel in this way, Fine wants to shake her readers, asks them to stand up against physical abuse, and help the victims of violence around them. Throughout the novel, Fine neither gives implicitly or explicitly any hopeful messages for abused children nor she shows the institutions or the persons an abused child may seek help. Though it contradicts with the above-mentioned criterion by Smith-D'Arrezo and Thompson, that Fine has not given any messages for abused children has led us to think that Fine has written this novel for the children who are not exposed to violence to ask them to help their abused peers.

Different from Fine, Wilson creates a happy ending for Treasure. Nevertheless, she refrains from creating a facile solution for Treasure's serious problem. As we have previously mentioned Treasure runs away and hides in India's home when her mother Tammy and Terry come to the grandmother's house to take her back. While she is hiding in the attic of India's house the story of a missing child takes media's interest, and cameras and reporters wait in front of the grandmother's house. The grandmother finally guesses that Treasure may have hidden in India's house, and she finds Treasure there. While the grandmother and Treasure are coming back home, the journalists waiting in front of the house besiege her. Treasure takes this chance and tells them that she was not kidnapped, but was hiding since she does not want to go back her mum's house. She adds as well that she wants to live with her grandmother as she does not get on well with her stepfather (Wilson 210). Her statement is published on newspapers; a newspaper organizes a campaign for Treasure; some magazines, radios and television interview with the grandmother. All these campaigns serve the purpose and senior social workers call her grandmother, her mother and Treasure a

meeting. After the meeting, her mother Tammy says that she does not want Treasure anymore (Wilson 211). By creating such scenes, Wilson displays that Treasure's victory over her abusive stepfather is a hard-won one. Besides, the writer points out the fact that Treasure's problem is solved as the people around her are determined to help.

Conclusion:

As a consequence, both writers have achieved dealing with this delicate subject matter, depicting few violence scenes. By doing so, they have avoided the risk of teaching violence to children. Wilson has presented what Treasure feels so that the abused child-reader cannot feel himself alone. Different from Wilson, Fine has called the attention of the readers to the effects of abuse on the child. Therefore, it may be said that Fine's aim in writing this novel is to address those children who are not exposed to violence so that they can understand the problems of the other children, and take a stand against violence when they grow up. Besides *the Tulip Touch* may appeal to adults since the writer has focused on the consequence of the indifference of the people around the abused child. Similarly, Wilson has emphasized the importance of the concern of the people around the abused child to prevent violence against the child. Wilson has achieved it by displaying that Treasure has got around her abusive father by dint of her grandmother, her best friend India, and the media's interests. By exhibiting the mothers' inability to prevent violence, both writers ask the people around the abused child to care about them. Therefore, it is possible to assert that realistic novels for children should be read by adults as well as children so that adults can be aware of the problems children suffer and care about the children facing serious problems such as abuse.

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