

A Sociological Analysis of Child Abuse and Psychological Trauma in Colleen Hoover's *Hopeless*

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received: March 12, 2026 Accepted: April 24, 2026 Published: May 11, 2026	This study examines the representation of child abuse in <i>Hopeless</i> by Colleen Hoover, focusing on the experiences of the protagonist, Sky Davis, also known as Hope. It aims to identify the forms of child abuse depicted in the novel and to analyze their psychological effects on the main character. In this research, child abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment inflicted upon a child, including physical and emotional abuse, educational and medical neglect, and sexual violence. Using a qualitative research design, the data were collected from relevant quotations and significant narrative events in the novel. The analysis is based on the theoretical frameworks of child abuse proposed by Siswanto (2007) and Shackelford (2021). The findings reveal that Sky is a victim of sexual abuse committed by her biological father during her childhood. This traumatic experience leaves profound and lasting psychological scars, significantly influencing her emotional and behavioral development. As a result, Sky exhibits symptoms of phobia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and aggressive behavioral tendencies. Ultimately, the novel vividly portrays the devastating long-term impact of child abuse on an individual's mental health, personal identity, and capacity to form healthy interpersonal relationships.
Keywords: <i>phobia</i> <i>post-traumatic stress disorder</i> <i>sexual abuse</i> <i>types of child abuse</i>	
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1. Introduction

A child is present as a gift and a mandate that in the future every parent will be held accountable for their attitude and behavior while in the world. Therefore, they must be cared for, treated for, educated, and guided properly by both parents and family. Children are also human resources and invaluable wealth because she/he are the forerunners of the nation's next generation. The better the child's personality and behavior, the better the life of the nation in the future.

From an Islamic perspective, children are weak but noble creatures, whose existence is the authority of the will of Allah SWT through creation. Children are given to husband and wife to be cared for and treated humanely as if they were given a living both physically and spiritually. Thus, they will grow into children with noble characters who can be responsible for achieving their needs in the future. However, families and homes that are considered the safest places for children can also become places of violence. Parents are not always able to look after and care for children properly. They can hurt or abuse their children.

Child abuse is any treatment of children that poses a threat to the child's growth and development and well-being, either in the form of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. Research conducted by the World Health Organization (2020) states that around one billion children worldwide experience violence every year. Half of the total child population in the world or around one billion children experience physical violence, sexual

violence, emotional violence, injuries, becoming disabled, and 1 2 dying. Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection) (2020) states that there were 11,952 cases of violence against children throughout 2020 and the majority were sexual abuse. Various examples have often been shown through the mass media. Other examples of child abuse are a toddler who was abused by his mother's boyfriend in Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi, and a three-year-old toddler who was abused by his adoptive parents in Blitar, East Java, and news of child abuse named Angeline who was tortured by her adoptive mother, Margariet Megawe. Abuses in early childhood are not always easy to recognize. Children who experience abuse are often afraid to reveal what has happened to them. As a result, there is a feeling of fear of being blamed or distrustful of the people around. Therefore, the abuser usually continues to commit violence because there is no resistance from the victim. To prevent violence against children, laws, and regulations have been implemented.

According to the Undang-Undang Dasar 1945, Pasal 34 (1945 Constitution, Article 34), the poor and neglected children are cared for by the state. The article 34 explains that children are legal subjects who must be protected, cared for, and fostered so that the child's welfare is achieved. The Novel *Hopeless* by Colleen Hoover is a novel that tells about a girl named Sky. She is a seventeen-year-old girl who lives with her overprotective mother, Karen. Sky is honest, loving, loyal, and devoted to her mother because she complies with all the restrictions imposed by her mother. However, surprisingly Sky finds out that she is adopted by her aunt named Karen, and is formerly called Hope. Karen adopts and takes Sky from her father when she is seven years old from. As a child, Sky experiences various kinds of abuse, such as physical, emotional, and sexual abuses by her father. 3 Two reasons make the researcher want to discuss the novel *Hopeless* by Colleen Hoover. First, the storyline is interesting and contains plot twists at the end of the story. This novel is about a unique and heartbreaking love between two people. It can also make readers feel a series of emotions such as laughing, crying, and feeling the meaning of love. Second, the theme in the novel, namely child abuse grabs the researcher's interest since the researcher feels concerned about the condition of children lately. They are often abused and tortured. Therefore, the researcher wants to discuss this topic as an educational material for writers and readers.

This research identifies the types of child abuse and their effects as depicted in the novel *Hopeless* by Colleen Hoover. The study is expected to be beneficial both practically and theoretically for various stakeholders. For researchers, this study contributes to the development of knowledge, particularly in the area of child abuse analysis within literary works.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sociology of Literature

Damono (2002: 8-9) states that sociology is an objective and scientific study of humans in society; the study of institutions and social processes. Ratna (2011: 2) states that the sociology of literature is an understanding of literary works by considering the social aspects contained in them. Suwardi (2011: 6-7) views sociology as a valley that can lead literary researchers to freely understand literature from a social perspective. Sociology and literature complement each other when both of them want to understand humans. Humans as social beings can be understood from the side of sociology and literature. Of course, sociology tends toward real human social life. As for literature, human life has been imagined. Literature sometimes hides the facts of humanity. He continued that sociology and literature both deal with humans in society and human efforts to adapt. From this view, it seems that literature will not be separated from social problems. The difference that exists between the

two is that sociology carries out an objective scientific analysis, while literature infiltrates the surface of social life and shows how humans live in society and their feelings.

Through the explanation above, it can be interpreted that sociology and literature cannot be separated because they both study the human condition and the role of humans in society. Literature deals with the surface of social life and shows how humans experience society and their feelings, while sociology carries out an objective scientific analysis.

The sociology of literature is an interdisciplinary science, which pays attention to aesthetic facts and human facts. Literature as an aesthetic fact will reveal the ins and outs of human life. Human life itself is packaged in a fictional context. It is the interweaving of literature and human beings that often draws an understanding of the sociology of literature. The sociology of literature as a method that understands humans through imaginative facts requires a solid paradigm (Suwardi, 2011: 6-7). To reveal literary works in terms of sociological aspects, Wellek and Warren (1989: 111) put forward three types of approaches, namely (1) author's sociology which is concerned with social status, social ideology, and others concerning the author as a producer of literary works, (2) the sociology of literary works which is concerned with the literary work itself, and (3) the sociology of literature which is concerned with readers and the influence of the sociology of literature on society. Furthermore, Ian Watt (in Goldmann, 1981) suggests three kinds of approaches to the sociology of literature, namely (1) the author's social context, (2) literature as a mirror of society, and (3) what society the author aims at.

2.2 Child

In the Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia, etymologically, a child is defined as a small or immature human being. According to the Islamic view, children are entrusted by Allah SWT to both parents, the community, the nation, and the state which will prosper the world as rahmatan lil'alam and as heirs to Islamic teachings. This understanding implies that every child who is born must be 7 recognized, approved, and secured as the implementation of practices accepted by parents, society, nation, and state (Syarifuddin, 2006: 44). According to Koesna (2005: 113), children are young people at a young age in spirit and in their life journey, because they are easily influenced by their surroundings.

Hasibuan (2004: 78) states that children are the future of a nation, therefore they need to be fostered and protected so that later these children grow to become high-quality human development. The position of children in the legal environment as legal subjects is determined by the legal system for children as a group of people who have legal status and are classified as incapacitated or underage. One way of guidance and protection is with the law. According to Pasal 1 butir 5 Undang-Undang No. 39, the year 1999 concerning Human Rights are as follows: a child is every human being under the age of 18 (eighteen) years and is not married, including children who are still in the womb if this is in his interests. In Indonesia, the law has guaranteed the fulfillment of children's rights, although in reality cases of child abuse are still quite high. Among the rights of children contained in the Undang Undang Perlindungan Anak no. 23, the year 2002 include the right to play, recreation, participation, contact with parents if separated, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, life with parents, survival, growth. Children also have the right to get a name, identity, citizenship, education, child-friendly information, the highest health standards, and a decent standard of living. In addition, children have the right to get personal protection, to get protection from arbitrary actions or arrests, to get protection from cruel treatment, punishment, and inhumane treatment, to get protection from physical and non-physical torture, and several other rights.

Based on the explanation regarding children, it can be implied that children are human beings who come from male and female partners. It is said that they are still children if they

are under eighteen years of age and are not married. As the next generation of the nation, children must be protected. Therefore, the government and the state apply several laws that can safeguard their welfare and rights.

2.3 Child Abuse

2.3.1 Definitions of Child Abuse

Huraerah (2006: 36) defines abuse as improper behavior intended to cause physical, emotional, or financial harm to an individual or group. Shackelfords (2021: 1043) continues that abuse is aggression that is broadly defined as behavior that causes harm, injury, or pain to others through physical, verbal, or indirect means. Child abuse or child maltreatment is a term commonly used to refer to violence against children. According to Soetjningsih (1995: 156), child abuse is the wrong treatment of physical and emotional children, neglect of education and health, and the occurrence of sexual violence in children. He continued that child abuse is defined as an intentional act that can cause harm or harm to children physically or emotionally. The term child abuse can cover a wide range of behavior, from acts of direct physical threat by parents or other adults to neglect of a child's basic needs.

Shackelfords (2021: 1043) says that child abuse is defined as aggression or neglect towards a minor (usually by an older individual, for example, parent/trustee, caregiver, or family member) that harms or jeopardizes the child's well-being. Child abuse can occur in various ways such as physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse. Power differences in child abuse are generally implied in the age difference between perpetrators (adults) and victims (children) whereby older perpetrators wield more power and control than victims. Huraerah (2006: 36) defines that child abuse as an act of repeatedly physically and emotionally harming a child who is dependent, through compulsion, uncontrollable corporal punishment, degradation, and permanent ridicule or sexual violence, usually carried out by parents or other parties who should care for the child. Suyanto and Sanituti (2002: 96) acts of abuse against children are any actions that have physical and psychological impacts, which cause traumatic injuries to children, both those that can be seen with the naked eye or seen from the consequences of the physical well-being and mental-psychological development of children.

Acts of abuse against children not only cause children to experience physical injuries which can be healed in a matter of days through medical treatment but often the abuse also result in traumatic injuries that are not impossible to remember until they are adults. Acts of abuse experienced by children are treatments that always have long-term impacts and become a nightmare that never goes away from the minds of children who are victims. Based on the explanations from experts regarding child abuse above, it can be concluded that child abuse is a series of violence perpetrated by adults who are more mature towards children. This abuse can be physical, verbal, emotional, or neglect and this can have bad consequences for children, both in the short and long term.

2.3.2 Causes of Child Abuse

According to Fatimah in Suyanto and Sanituti (2002: 33), six conditions are driving factors or causes of violence against children. They are:

1. **Economic Problems:** Poverty often brings families into situations of disappointment that can lead to violence. Financial problems or economic limitations can create all kinds of problems in terms of meeting daily needs, education, health, buying clothes, and paying house rent. Everything can relatively affect the soul and the pressure that often ends up being placed on the child.
2. **Family Problem:** Refers to the family, especially the relationship between less harmonious parents. A father will be able to commit violence against his children solely as an outlet or as an effort to release his annoyance and anger toward his wife.

3. Divorce: it can cause domestic problems such as issues of child maintenance rights, giving affection, providing maintenance, and so on. The consequences of divorce will also be felt by children, especially when their parents remarry and the child has to be taken care of by stepmother and stepfather.
4. Birth of Children Outside of Marriage: Births outside of marriage creates problems between the parents of the child and the family of the couple. As a result, children will receive a lot of unfavorable treatment such as children feel excluded, having to accept discriminatory treatment, being excluded by the family, and having to accept unfair behavior and other forms of violence.
5. Psychiatric Problems: Parents who commit acts of violence or abuse against children are those who have psychological problems. They are always in a situation of anxiety and stress or depression. Typologically, the psychological characteristics that characterize the situation include feelings of inferiority, expectations for unrealistic children, expectations that are contrary to their conditions, and a lack of knowledge about how to raise good children.
6. Educational Problems. Not having adequate religious education or knowledge. Through the points regarding the causes of child abuse, it can be concluded that it can occur due to problems that occur in the family and parents who play the most important role as a cause of abuse against children

2.3.3 Types of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be divided into several categories, namely physical, emotional, neglect, or sexual. According to Shackelford (2021: 1044), child abuse can take many forms which include physical (for example, hitting, punching), verbal (for example, demeaning, hurtful comments), emotional/psychological (e.g humiliation), neglect (e.g malnutrition), and sexual abuse (e.g rape). Siswanto (2007: 124-125) divides child abuse into four categories, namely:

1. Physical Abuse Physical abuse is when a child experiences a punch, slap, bite, burning, or other physical violence. Like other forms of abuse, physical abuse usually lasts a long time. Or actions are taken to physically hurt a child such as: hitting, kicking, throwing, biting, rocking, hitting with an object, lighting the child's body with cigarettes, or matches, dousing the child with hot water, tying him up, not giving him food that is suitable for children and so on.
2. Sexual Abuse Sexual Abuse is when children are included in sexual situations with adults or older children. Sometimes this means direct sexual contact such as intercourse, touching, or other genital contact. But it can also mean that children are made to see sexual acts, see adult genitalia, view pornography, or be part of the production of pornography. Children are usually not forced into sexual situations, instead, they are cajoled, bribed, tricked, or coerced. Or actions involving sexual matters, such as kissing or touching the child's genitals, ordering the child to touch other people's genitals, having intercourse with the child, showing the child's genitals, forcing the child to undress, forcing the child to have sex with other people, making children pornographic objects like on the internet or videos, telling dirty stories to children.
3. Emotional Abuse Emotional abuse is when a child is regularly threatened, shouted at, humiliated, ignored, blamed, or other emotionally mishandled, such as making a child funny and ridiculed, calling names with inappropriate names, and always being looked for. the mistake. Or it happens when adults ignore, terrorize, blame, belittle, and so on which makes children feel inconsistent and worthless. The treatment of humiliating, berating, cursing, and calling negative names is done continuously so that the child feels

that he is what is said to him. Children who are constantly scolded feel that they are useless and think that they are bad.

4. Neglect Neglect (ignored/neglected) is when the basic needs of children are not met. These needs include the need for nutritious food, adequate shelter, clothing, cleanliness, emotional support, love and affection, education, and security. Or actions related to child development problems, such as not pleasing the house and giving proper clothes, locking the child in the room or bathroom, leaving the child for long periods, and placing the child in a situation that endangers him. If parents cannot meet their needs both in terms of physical, psychological, or emotional needs, not giving attention and the means to develop is an act of neglect.

Soetjiningsih (2004: 257) mentions the points included in child neglect namely: 1. Neglect to seek health care, for example, denying the existence of a serious illness in a child. 2. Neglect for safety, e.g. injuries resulting from a lack of supervision and a hazardous home situation. 3. Emotional neglect, namely not paying attention to children, and refusing the presence of children. 4. Abandonment of education. Children do not get an education according to their age, do not take children to educational facilities, or older children to earn a living for the family so they are forced to drop out of school. 5. Physical neglect, i.e. when the child's needs for food, clothing, or proper housing are not met to obtain optimal growth and development facilities.

2.3.4 Effects of Child Abuse

Shackelfords (2021: 1045) mentions several effects of child abuse namely: 1. High risk of experiencing mood and anxiety disorders such as bipolar disorder, phobias, and post-traumatic stress disorder. 2. Higher risk of experiencing behavioral and emotional problems such as emotional instability, depression, suicidal thoughts and attempts, and tendencies to be aggressive. 3. May alter future stress response (e.g., increased sensitivity). Children who have been abused or neglected (especially children who were physically abused) are more likely to have a record of arrest for delinquency and crime as teenagers and adults. 4. At a higher risk of being hurt by intimate partner violence in adulthood, abandoned children are more likely to become perpetrators of intimate partner violence in adulthood. 5. Early trauma can affect neurological and physiological functions. Adults who were emotionally abused as children show different brain activity (e.g., more amygdala activity and less right dorsolateral prefrontal activity) when looking at faces expressing fear or anger.

Child abuse has also been consistently associated with long-term difficulties in cognitive and social development. Victims often exhibit impairments in attention, memory, and learning processes, which can negatively affect their academic performance and interpersonal relationships. Moreover, children who experience abuse may struggle to develop trust and secure attachments, leading to social withdrawal or maladaptive relationship patterns in later life. According to Dante Cicchetti and Fred A. Rogosch (2001), early maltreatment disrupts normative developmental pathways, particularly in emotional regulation and social competence, increasing the likelihood of long-term psychological maladjustment.

Furthermore, the intergenerational impact of child abuse highlights how trauma can extend beyond the individual to affect future family systems. Individuals who have experienced abuse in childhood may be at greater risk of perpetuating cycles of violence, either as victims or perpetrators, due to unresolved trauma and learned behavioral patterns. This phenomenon is supported by Cathy Spatz Widom (1989), whose research demonstrates a significant correlation between childhood victimization and later involvement in violent or criminal behavior. Therefore, understanding the long-term and cyclical consequences of child abuse is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the depiction of child abuse in the novel *Hopeless* by Colleen Hoover. Qualitative research is utilized to explore and understand the phenomena experienced by the characters and to generate descriptive data in the form of words, narratives, and textual interpretations. According to Lexy J. Moleong (2017), qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena from the participants' perspectives and produces descriptive data in written or spoken form.

The primary data of this study are derived from the novel, which consists of 408 pages and was published in 2012 by Simon & Schuster. Meanwhile, the secondary data are collected from relevant books, scholarly journals, articles, and credible online sources that support the analysis. The data collection process involves several steps, including close reading of the novel, identifying and marking relevant quotations, note-taking, and classifying the data based on the theories of child abuse proposed by Siswanto (2007) and Todd K. Shackelford (2021).

The collected data are analyzed using a descriptive interpretative approach. This analysis involves interpreting the selected quotations to identify the types of child abuse and examining their psychological effects on the main character. As noted by John W. Creswell (2014), qualitative data analysis focuses on interpreting the meaning of textual data to gain a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon. Through this method, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how child abuse is represented and its psychological impact as portrayed in the novel.

4. Discussion

4.1 Analysis

This chapter discusses the child abuse experienced by the protagonist, namely Linden Sky Davis or Hope in the novel *Hopeless* by Colleen Hoover. Then, the researcher focuses on discussing the types and effects of child abuse experienced by Sky. There is only one type of child abuse found in the novel, namely sexual abuse, and the effects experienced from sexual abuse include phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, and tendencies to be aggressive. The types and the effects of child abuse experienced by Sky are analyzed in the following sub-chapters.

4.1.1 The Types of Child Abuse

Siswanto (2007: 124-125) divides child abuse into physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. These types are all types of violence perpetrated by adults against children. Then, in the novel *Hopeless*, the study identifies only one type of child abuse experienced by Sky, namely sexual abuse. This type is discussed and proven through the subsection below.

4.1.1.1 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is sexual mistreatment where children are included in sexual situations with adults or older children (Siswanto, 2007: 124). Forms of sexual violence against children are all actions that include harassment and violence against minors. It can take various forms, such as making physical contact (holding or touching), showing genitals to minors, having sexual intercourse with children, masturbating in front of children, having obscene conversations, and producing or distributing indecent films or images to minors. Of all the forms described, the sexual abuse contained in this novel *Hopeless* is having intimate relations with children.

I try to count them, but I keep stopping at number five. I can't remember what number comes after five, so I have to start over. I have to count the

stars over and over and only five at a time because I don't want to feel my daddy right now. I don't want to feel him or smell him or hear him and I have to count them and count them and count them and count them until I don't feel him or hear him or smell him anymore. Then when my daddy finally stops making me thank him, he pulls my light gown back down and whispers, "Goodnight Princess." I roll over and pull the covers over my head and squeeze my eyes shut and I try not to cry again but I do. I cry like I do every time daddy brings me a present at night. I hate getting presents (Hoover, 2012: 255).

The quotation above illustrates the act of sexual abuse committed by John to Sky. John is Sky's biological father. Her father visits her in her room every night to have sex. Sky loves gifts, so whenever her father buys gifts for her, he asks her to thank him by serving him. Little Sky cannot go against her father's will. Therefore, she just accepts everything done by John. To divert her pain, little Sky starts counting the stars, she keeps repeating the count because she only knows up to five. She hates feeling and smelling his father's body. Every time that incident happens, Sky cries, because that is all she can do. From the quotation and explanation above, it can be concluded that Sky is sexually abused by her father. The sexual abuse experienced by Sky can also be seen in the data below.

Holder adamantly shakes his head and shushes me with a quick kiss. "Don't you ever say that again. Don't you ever think that again. Your father took that first from you in an unthinkable way, but I can guarantee you that's all he took. Because you are so strong, baby. You're amazing and funny and smart and beautiful and so full of strength and courage. What he did to you doesn't take away from any of the best parts of you. You survived him once and you'll survive him again. I know you will." (Hoover, 2012: 234).

The incident in the quotation above takes place when Sky is eighteen years old and has just recalled memories of her childhood that she subconsciously forgets. Through the above information presented by Holder, Sky indeed experienced sexual abuse. Sky's father takes her virginity by having intercourse when Sky was three years old. In other words, the sexual abuse that Sky experienced is direct sexual contact, namely intercourse. Holder also understands that Sky's father's actions were criminal and depraved behavior. However, he convinces and reassures her that Sky is a strong woman who could stand strong and survive through this ordeal. The latest data to prove the sexual abuse experienced by Sky can be seen in the quotation below.

I don't verbally respond to that statement, but I have to physically refrain myself from reacting to his bullshit. He could spend the rest of his life apologizing and it would never be enough to erase even one of the nights my doorknob turned. "I want to know why you did it," I say with a shaky voice. I hate that I sound so pathetically weak right now. I sound like the little girl that used to beg him to stop. I'm not that little girl anymore and I sure as hell don't want to appear weak in front of him (Hoover, 2012: 245)

The data above shows the pain and bitterness that Sky feels when she meets her father again after thirteen years. Even though she wants to forgive him, she cannot do that. Unknowingly, her body's reaction rejects his father's presence. The word sorry and regret is not even enough to erase the memories and pain she has experienced. But the thing that distinguished her now is that Sky does not want to be afraid and looks weak again in front of

her father. That she will no longer be able to hurt and not disgust her anymore. This shows the character development experienced by Sky.

4.1.2 The Effect of Child Abuse

In Chapter II, Shackelford mentions that there are many effects of child abuse on children. However, the researcher only found three of them, including phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, and tendencies to be aggressive. Due to the lack of information conveyed by Shackelford, the researcher sought explanations through the opinions of other experts. Then, these three effects are discussed through the following subsections.

4.1.2.1 Phobias

A phobia is a form of error in interpreting (perceiving) information that is incomplete or unclear. This information is then interpreted as threatening and accompanied by a belief that the negative event or experience will recur in the future. As a result, an avoidance reaction will appear when meeting or experiencing objects that cause phobias (Purnama, 2016: 3). The response that is usually experienced by people with phobias is fear and anxiety when faced with a phobic object or situation. Based on the explanation above, the researcher concluded that Sky's phobia towards his father has indirectly made her afraid of touching the opposite sex in the future. This statement will be proven through the quotation below.

“What happened?” I ask him. I don’t understand where this is coming from. He shakes his head, his eyes full of sorrow and fear, and regret. “I don’t know. You just started counting and crying and shaking and I kept trying to get you to stop Sky. You wouldn’t stop. You were terrified. What did I do? Tell me, baby, because I’m so sorry. I am so, so sorry. What the fuck did I do?” I just shake my head because I don’t have an answer (Hoover, 2012: 177).

The above conversation takes place when Sky had yet to remember the tragic memories of her childhood. However, unconsciously, the sexual abuse that his father committed has an impact on her future love relationships. This statement can be explained when Sky trembles subconsciously when Holder wants to touch her and wants to have intercourse with her. Knowing that Sky is trembling makes Holder feel very guilty and regretful. Even though it is their wish, Sky is still afraid. This proves that the sexual abuse committed by her father left a very deep ordeal on Sky, which she can feel, even though she does not remember it. As a result, Sky is afraid to relate and make out with her partner. Not only has a phobia of men but also Sky has a phobia of her father. This can be shown through the quotation below.

Holder has a death grip on my waist again. I reach down and grip his hand with mine, just needing the reassurance that I’m not alone right now. My confidence is quickly fading with each moment being spent in my father’s presence. Everything about him, from his voice to his facial expressions to his movements, makes my stomach ache (Hoover, 2012: 244).

The meeting above occurred when Sky visits her childhood home and unexpectedly meets her father. Sky, who is sad because she just finds out about her tragic memories, gets even more scared when she meets her father, who is the source of her phobia. This is of course a reasonable response from phobic sufferers when they meet their triggers. Just meeting her father face-to-face makes Sky anxious. She starts to lose her confidence. His voice, facial expressions, and movements make Sky fear her father. Fortunately, she has

Holder who is always caring of her and by her side. Sky's phobia towards his father can also be proven through the quotation below.

I still do harbor hatred and fear for him, and he can't even touch me anymore. I still hate him and I still care to death for him and I'm still devastated that he's dead. I hate him for instilling awful things in my memory and somehow making me grieve for him in the midst of all the awful. I don't want to grieve his loss. I want to rejoice in it, but it's just not in me (Hoover, 2012: 255).

Sky's phobia continues even though her father has died. From this statement, it can be said that the harassment or abuse committed by John is an unforgettable as well as unforgivable act. Child abuse is very influential on the development and future of children. Parents should be the givers of affection, and her father who is supposed to be her protective figure has become the first person who has abused her. The pain still leaves an imprint on Sky's heart and soul. She is still afraid, resentful, and shaken by the disgusting treatment her father gave her. From the explanation above, it is clear that Sky has a phobia of her father.

4.1.2.2 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety syndrome resulting from a very painful experience after physical or emotional stress that exceeds the limits of ordinary people's endurance. The incident created fear and a sense of helplessness (Sadock, B.J & Sadock, VA, 2007). The sexual abuse experienced by Sky results in her suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. She experienced this incident when she is three to five years old. Later, she is rescued by his aunt, Karen, who also receives the same treatment from his older brother, Sky's father John. After thirteen years have passed, Sky then remembers the memory of the tragic incident that happened to her which traumatized and stressed her out. This statement will be proven through the quotation below.

I stand up and look down at the bed, holding my breath in fear of the sounds that are escalating from deep within my throat. I will not cry. I will not cry. I squeeze my eyes shut and bury my head into the bed, grabbing fistfuls of the blanket. My shoulders begin to shake as the sobs I've been trying to contain violently break out of me. With one swift movement, I stand up, scream and rip the blanket off the bed, throwing it across the room (Hoover, 2012: 06).

The data above shows Sky's emotional feelings after knowing the truth about what happened to her. Post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by Sky is an anxiety disorder resulting from the emergence of memories of traumatic events experienced as a child. Sky's response to post-traumatic stress disorder is cries and hard to control emotions and self. As a result, her feelings and behavior become out of control. She breaks into tears and throws the things she sees. This action is a normal response for someone suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, especially since Sky is traumatized by the person closest to her, her father. Emotional release is a way to fight and defend herself. Sky's post-traumatic stress disorder can also be seen in the quotation below.

Every single part of me remembers, and I would do anything just to forget. I don't want to remember how my father sounded or felt at night, but with each passing second the memories become more and more vivid, only making it harder for me to stop crying. Holder is kissing me on the side of my head, telling me again how it'll be okay, that I shouldn't worry. But he has no idea. He has no idea how much I remember and what it's doing to

my heart and my soul and my mind and my faith in humanity as a whole (Hoover, 2012: 228).

The data above explains how the trauma experienced by Sky made her stressful. Post-traumatic stress disorder can occur at any age and in any environment, including the family. The family, which is the main place of protection for a child, can also be a source of stress and fear for children. This is what Sky feels. Her father's treatment left a very deep trauma on her. The memory of this tragic event hurts her heart, soul, and mind. As a result, she loses faith in herself and others, she finds it hard to stop crying. This can also direct Sky to a more severe effect, namely depression. Further data which can prove that Sky has post-traumatic stress disorder can be explained through the following data.

I grip my knees in an attempt not to leap across the living room and strangle him. The fact that he's trying to play it off as happening one time makes me hate him even more than before, if that's even possible. He's treating it like it was an accident. Like he broke a coffee mug or had a fucking fender bender. "It was night...after night...after night," I say. I'm having to muster up every ounce of control I can find to not scream at the top of my lungs. "I was scared to go to bed and scared to wake up and scared to take a bath and scared to speak to you. I wasn't a little girl afraid of monsters in her closet or under her bed. I was terrified of the monster that was supposed to love me! You were supposed to be protecting me from the people like you!" (Hoover, 2012: 246).

Sexual abuse left a deep disturbance on Sky's mind and soul and this caused lasting trauma. People with post-traumatic stress disorder often remember the events that have traumatized them. Sufferers feel as if repeating the incident. Memories of traumatic events are also often present in nightmares so that sufferers are emotionally depressed. Sky hates and fears her father even though she is an adult now and thirteen years have passed. She also describes through her childhood memories that she is afraid to go to bed, get up, take a shower, and even be afraid to talk to her father. Instead of loving and protecting her, her father acts as a monster which traumatizes and stresses her.

4.1.2.3 Tendencies to be Aggressive

Aggression, according to social psychology, is described as any behavior or action that aims to hurt a person or animal or damage physical property. Aggression can occur as a natural response to stress, fear, or a sense of loss of control. Someone responds with aggression when they feel frustrated, mistreated, or not heard (Judy, 2022). The tendency to act aggressively generally occurs when certain triggers such as anger, disappointment, or threats occur in the environment which results in a loss of control. This behavior is also experienced by Sky after she recalls the sexual abuse committed by her father. As a result, her emotions and behavior become out of control.

"I hate you!" I cry. "I hate you, I hate you, I hate you!" I'm throwing whatever I can find in front of me at whatever else I can find in front of me. Every time I open my mouth to scream, I taste the salt from the tears that are streaming down my cheeks. Holder' arms suddenly engulf me from behind and grip me so tightly that I become immobile. I jerk and toss and scream some more until my actions are no longer thought out. They're just reactions. (Hoover, 2012: 07)

The data above clearly shows Sky's aggressive behavior. This is seen when she cannot control her behavior and throws all the objects in front of her. She does not feel at ease as Holder hugs her to comfort her. Even Holder becomes the target of her anger, even though she is angry with her father. Aggressive behavior is a reaction that arises from overwhelming anger so that the perpetrator can attack someone roughly and sometimes in an unnatural way. The anger felt by Sky arises as a result of anxiety about the sexual abuse she has experienced. Sky's aggressive behavior can also be seen in the quotation below.

I ball my fists and frantically look around for something else to throw. I grab the pillows off the bed and chuck them at the reflection in the mirror of the girl I no longer know. I watch as the girl in the mirror stares back at me, sobbing pathetically. The weakness in her tears infuriates me. We begin to run toward each other until our fists collide against the glass, smashing the mirror. I watch as she falls into a million shiny pieces onto the carpet. I grip the edges of the dresser and push it sideways, letting out another scream that has been pent up for way too long. When the dresser comes to rest on its back, I rip open the drawers and throw the contents across the room, spinning and throwing and kicking at everything in my path. I grab at the sheer blue curtain panels and yank them until the rod snaps and the curtains fall around me. I reach over to the boxes piled high in the corner and, without even knowing what's inside, I take the top one and throw it against the wall with as much force as my five-foot, three-inch frame can muster (Hoover, 2012: 266).

Trauma from sexual abuse is a frightening, dangerous, and cruel event that happens to children. This trauma has wide-ranging effects on children's lives, and one of the effects is the tendency to be aggressive. Aggressive behavior can also be seen from the data above, where Sky cannot control her emotions when she learns the truth about the crimes committed by her father. The hurt she feels still exists in her sub-consciousness and becomes negative behavior and emotions. As a result, she acts impulsively and uncontrollably. Sky's impulsive behavior includes crying, screaming, punching, pushing, dumping, and throwing any items that were considered to be threats or triggers to her memories.

5. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, this study reveals several significant findings regarding the depiction of child abuse experienced by the protagonist in the novel *Hopeless* by Colleen Hoover. The main character, Linden Sky Davis (Sky), is portrayed as a victim of sexual abuse that occurred between the ages of three and five, perpetrated by her biological father, John. At the age of five, she is removed from the abusive environment and later adopted by her aunt, Karen, an event that contributes to the gradual suppression of her early childhood memories.

As the narrative progresses, Sky's repressed memories resurface when she reaches the age of seventeen, leading to the revelation of her true identity and past traumatic experiences. This discovery evokes intense emotional responses, including sadness, anger, and a deep sense of mistrust toward her family. Furthermore, the analysis identifies eleven textual instances in the novel that explicitly depict the sexual abuse experienced by the protagonist. The findings also demonstrate that these traumatic experiences result in several psychological consequences, including phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, and aggressive behavioral tendencies. Overall, the novel provides a compelling portrayal of the long-term psychological impact of child abuse on an individual's emotional and behavioral development.

Future research may explore the representation of child abuse in other literary works to compare themes and psychological impacts across different contexts. Researchers can also

apply alternative theoretical perspectives, such as trauma theory or psychoanalysis, to gain deeper insights into the characters' experiences. In addition, further studies are encouraged to examine coping strategies and recovery processes of abuse victims in literature. Finally, interdisciplinary approaches, such as reader-response studies, may be used to investigate how readers perceive and are influenced by issues of child abuse in novels like *Hopeless* by Colleen Hoover.

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