

# [Literature or short term depending upon the catastrophic](https://assignbuster.com/literature-or-short-term-depending-upon-the-catastrophic/)

Literature has allowed us to explore beyond the limits of thisworld and also the human psyche.

Among that are certain literary works which iscapable of posing a social challenge by setting out to explore the pain, suffering and trauma through self narratives, testimonies and flashbacks. Mythesis will throw sufficient light on the self narrated traumatic experiencesof children under various oppressing situations. Trauma is an emotional shock caused by a deeply distressing ordisturbing experience, it involves feelings and emotions. The consequences of atrauma may be long term or short term depending upon the catastrophic effectsit left on the victim.  Trauma caused bydiscrimination, sexual abuse, insecurity, domestic violence and particularlyexperiences may affect the minds of characters. Trauma and trauma theories canbe very well related to history, war, politics, psychology, sociology and particularlyliterature.

It can be evidently said that both Trauma theory and Testmonionarratives have a very close relation. Testimonial writings prove themselves asa classic expression of trauma as the writers can retrieve themselves as activeparticipants and witnesses of the history they went through. MoreoverTestimonial narratives make the reader to get acknowledged of the prevailingsocial challenges, injustices and the need to render a helping hand to thosewho suffer. A new literary method that considered traumatized children wasdeveloped in American literature towards the end of 19th century. A keenstudy on those traumatized children paralleled the research on childdevelopment studies, child psychology, PTSD and many other theories. This newtradition gained its significance when children started to narrate their own traumaticexperiences through testimonials and self narratives.

Danielle Bernock, an Americanauthor has famously quoted that:  “ Trauma is personal.               It does not disappear if it isnot validated. When it is ignored or invalidated the silent screams continueinternally heard only by the one held captive. When someone enters the pain andhears the screams healing can begin” (DanielleBernock, Emerging with Wings: A True Story ofLies, Pain, and the Love That Heals). It can be obviously said that any traumatic condition is theresult of being continuously tortured. Unless or until someone is willing tohear their screaming in silence, their trauma will remain personal. Both bodyand voice are recognized as opposites in trauma.

This is because of situationslike; insecurity, confusion, betrayal and brutality that make the victim toremain dumb in spite of the unbearable pain the body is subjected to. “ Trauma therapy, at least the best traumatheory, aims to turn trauma into voice, so that the traumatized person canspeak, and finally transform his or her trauma into narrative.  The brokenfragments of experience are made whole” (Alford, Trauma and Forgiveness).                Andthat is how trauma is stringed with testimonials and narratives to voice outtheir silenced sufferings and unheard cries, thus giving birth to a newliterary technique. Most of the Trauma theories are concerned with thetraumatic experiences of authors and how it has affected their literary works. Testimonialsor narratives can also be conceivably recognized as a representation oftraumatic experiences. It’s essential to remember Freud, who wrote thatchildhood traumas were the source of most neuroses and psychoses.

And so this dissertationwill present a detailed study of traumatized children in narratives and testimonialsby the application of various trauma theories.            In my thesis, children testimonials are broadlyclassified into five different categories and trauma in that particular aspectis studied using theories that connect the study as a whole. As for WarTestimonials, Dear World: A Syrian Girl’s story of War and Plea for Peace byBana Allabed and Tamil Tigress by Niromi de Soyza discuss the brutality andterror that engulfed the young minds. It is vividly expressed in their words whichresonates their plea against the stupidity of war and the trauma caused bymerciless deaths and destructions.

The characters of these novels are in a searchto find a let out or an escape out of the traumatic events that tangled theirlives. Also, it discloses the innocence of a child trying to explain the plaintruth by simply placing hope and peace as their requests. Both these novels exposethe dark reality of wars and the stirring traumatic impressions it leaves uponthe victims.            Aboriginal Testimonials or Testimonies of Australia’sstolen Generations survivors is about children who were born of mixed race. My placeby Sally Morgan is often specified as a milestone in Aboriginal literature and Is thatyou Ruthie? By Ruth Hegarty is a black Australian testimony that accountsthe lives of aboriginal girls in a dormitory at a notorious aboriginalinstitution. Sally Morgan as an indigenous writer, historian and activistspeaks about her bitter childhood experiences, erased identities, falselyframed heritage and the trauma it conceived in every aspects of her life. Ruth Hegartyillustrates her experience in a dormitory with other girls of the same agegroup.  She registers her resentment on theharsh government policy that broke family bonds and friendships by consequentlyputting them in an incessant search for relations they lost.

As the Healing Foundation noted:                                                                                                                      “ The trauma experienced by Indigenous people as a result of colonisationand subsequent policies, such as the forced removal of children, has haddevastating consequences. The disruption of our culture and the negativeimpacts on the cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanderpeoples has had lasting negative effects, passed from generation to generation. The cumulative effect of historical and intergenerational trauma severelyreduces the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to fullyand positively participate in their lives and communities, thereby leading towidespread disadvantage” (Healing Foundation).            Holocaust Testimonial novels affords in providing adetailed historical account of what the witnesses personally experienced andalso it contributes a speculative account of everything that happened so longbefore. I am a Star: Child of the Holocaust by Inge Auerbacher elucidatesher wistful childhood that intervened at the age of seven and how her death wasdefied at the concentration camp for three years. Upon the Head of a Goat: AChildhood in Hungary 1939-1944 by Aranka Seigel covers the five years of lifefrom the perspective of a Jewish girl up to being delivered to theconcentration camp at Auschwitz. These novels provide a gripping account oftrials the Jewish families had to undergo at the concentration camps held at Czechoslovakiaand Hungary. The girls in the novels portrays the aftermath of the world warsand also about the ghettos where the Jewish families were thrown in to aconfined quarters to await an unknown fate.

Both these novels detail theplethora of emotions and how they handled it as children going through thistraumatic ordeal.               Child abuse or child maltreatment is a universal problemand children who have been sexually abused are always at the risk of developinga whole lot of symptoms like insomnia, inferiority complex, depression which atextreme conditions may lead to trauma. Testimonials written on Child abuse isreally heart breaking and reveals many awful truths that are secluded by closeddoors. Two such Testimonial writings are Sickened: The Memoir of a Munchausen byProxy Childhood, written by Julie Gregory and Street Kid: One Child’s DesperateFight for Survival by Judy Westwater.

Sickened unfolds a younggirl’s messed childhood dealing with Munchausen (MPB or induced illness) at thehands of her mother. This can be regarded as an invisible kind of child abuseas she suffers invariably at the hands of both her father and mother, enduring countlessphysical and mental abuses. It shocks the reader as she gets battered psychologicallyand gets nudged into a state of irretrievable trauma. On the other hand,                     Street Kid: One Child’s DesperateFight for Survival is truly a moving constructive story of a girl whois made to suffer under the inhuman treatment of nuns. This thought provoking testimonyis truly an eye opener in making the readers to be get aware of the socialevils that is happening around us and the society.            The development of Slave narratives or Testimonials from autobiographicalaccounts made it to be accepted as one of the widely read literary genre that ismade up of the written account of enslaved Africans and West Indians belongingto British Colonies.

At the beginning of 18th and 19thcenturies, these narratives were published in pamphlets and some were recordedas oral histories. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobsaddresses those who weren’t completely aware of the evils of slavery. She alsoexplores the physical abuses and sufferings faced by her and the other femaleslaves at the plantations. Harriet Jacobs renders a heart breaking picture ofthe traumatic events she underwent to save her children from the cruel clutchesof slavery.

History of Mary Prince, a West Indian slave, Related by Herself isa                   firsthand descriptionof the barbarism of enslavement. She reveals her anguish and pain as she talksabout the incessant and painful labor they were forced into without any rest. Thebook also makes a candid reference to the political scenario that existedduring their period of slavery and the harsh laws which spilled hatred and discriminationon the slaves. Mythesis would analyse the select novels of these Testimonial writers using thefollowing theories as a diagnostic mechanism. 1. Survival and VictimTheory by Margaret Atwood would explore the central image of a trauma victimand also would analyse and compare the four ‘ Victim Positions’ as stated byher.

2. The Theory of Logotherapyand Existentialism by Viktor Emil Frankl would do ‘ a special existentialanalysis’ on the traumatized child thus elucidating the primary motivationalforce of the individual to find a meaning in life in spite of the brutalities  they were subjected to. 3. The theory ofTrauma: Exploration in memory by Cathy Caruth, affirms that memory play a significantrole in trauma as it holds within unbearable horror and intensity. It bringsback those dark remembrances, which are usually considered as unrecognizedtruths. This includes trauma caused by wars, historical barbarism, childabuses, discrimination, etc.

.. And also she claims literature to be a windowfor traumatic experiences as it guides and teaches readers in surprising andindirect ways. 4. The Limits ofAutobiography Trauma and Testimony by Leigh Gilmore studies the limitations ofautobiographies in which trauma takes a major role. It compares and contradictsa testimonial writing as it differs within itself in testifying and also inproviding a sufficient amount of literary knowledge.

And also it demonstrateshow and why the author deflects from the necessities of an autobiography whentrauma coincides with self representation.                    This dissertation would further explore the psychologicaland physical trauma a testimony can discover. And also this would definitely bea great leap in the literary field, offered for those children who voices aresilenced by trauma and torture. It can be possibly regarded as a pioneer stepin analyzing the psyche of children not only to kindle their dreadful memoriesbut also to provide them the courage to hike and a reason to exist.