CHAPTER - IV

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN AND BELOVED-A COMPARISON

Woman the eyes of the society is very easily victimized by the society. She always becomes the scapegoat, and suffers much in this partial world. The writers are the people who always catch every nuke and corner of this idea. In every country, according to the situation women suffer. Both physically and mentally they were tormented by the society. They always suffer under the hands of men and society. Anita Desai and Toni Morision portray this psychological affectation, in their novels. To highlight, how sexual arrogance and male domination psychologically affect a woman, the researcher, has selected one novel from Desai and Morrison respectively. Anita Desai’s, Fire on the Mountain and Toni Morrison’s, Beloved are best, to be compared. Nanda Kaul, Ila Das, Raka of, Fire on the Mountain and Sethe, Denver and Beloved of the novel Beloved come under this suffering category.

Anita Desai’s novel Fire on the Mountain is written in three parts. The first part deals with the psychological affectation of Nanda Kaul an old woman, and the second part describes the character of Raka, the grand daughter of Nanda Kaul and how she was affected psychologically by the society and the third part narrates the terrific incident of sexual arrogance of Ila Das, the
childhood friend of Nanda Kaul. Nanda Kaul who was a busy woman throughout her life, wanted to lead a peaceful life and to live in fantasy. She secluded herself from her family and lived alone in Carignano. She completely disliked the duties and responsibilities in life. Her loneliness was disturbed by her daughter’s letter, stating that she was going to send her daughter Raka to her due to some critical situation. This disturbed Nanda too much and at first, she accepted Raka unwillingly, as she was so much out in the business of rearing a child. She was confused about the needs of Raka. Nanda kaul had unnecessary tensions because of Raka. Raka was fascinated by the hills, winds, charred house at the top, and all the aspects of nature. Nanda Kaul now realised Raka was a different child in as much as she evidenced no interest in human society and its affairs. On the other hand, she was fascinated by the hills around. She had soft and delicate emotions for the animals and birds. Nanda Kaul realised the truth that Raka was not an ordinary girl. Initially Nanda Kaul accepted Raka unwillingly, but later she was reluctant to let her go away.

The third part of the novel focused completely the life of Ila Das. Ila Das and Nanda Kaul had been together in school and college. Ila Das was a child who had undergone a lot of suffering. Ila Das was short, had a horrible voice and her gait was equally horrible. Hence she felt embarrassed all through her life. Like her figure, her life also became ugly. She and her sister Rima were deformed. The two sisters struggled hard for their bread. With the help of
Nanda Kaul, Ila Das did a course in social service which gave her the job of a social welfare officer, a challenging job. She worked in the hills near Kasauli, where the people were illiterate and on one occasion, when she tried to stop child marriage, she annoyed Preet Singh. Being annoyed by the activity of Ila Das, Preet Singh molested and killed her.

The stormy information was passed on to Nanda Kaul through telephone. She could not believe that Ila was molested and killed. She was unable to bear the shock. This great shock led her to her death. Raka’s psyche was bruised and she set fire to the forest. She liked to set fire to the whole world which molested and killed women.

The novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison vividly portrays the ill fate of slaves through an example, Sethe. Sethe, the central character of the novel suffered, physically and mentally because of her bitter past and led a lonely life in the house, 124 Bluestone Road. In the beginning of the novel itself the terrific base of the house was depicted. All the family members of the house, consisting of Sethe’s sons, Howard and Burglar, and her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs left the house or died. So in 1873, Sethe and her daughter Denver were the sole occupants of the house. The house was believed to be haunted. Beloved, who was believed to be, the dead sister of Denver was haunting the house. She was killed by Sethe, when she was two years old. The two women were completely alienated from the society and lived a lonely life. Paul D, an
old companion of Sethe arrived to see Sethe and Denver her daughter was threatened by their relationship. Sethe told Paul D about her past bitter story, how she was misused and molested by the school teacher’s nephew. Paul D broke the fear of ghosts; but Denver did not like the presence of Paul D.

The crucial turning point of the story occurred when Beloved appeared as a young woman in the novel. She was sitting outside the house, 124 Bluestone Road and addressed herself ‘Beloved’. Beloved adored Sethe only when she narrated the story. Denver was jealous of the sharing between Beloved and her mother. Paul D was the only person who suspected the motive of Beloved.

Meanwhile Sethe described how she was nursed by a white lady, Amy Denver to deliver the baby, Denver. In this juncture Baby Suggs her mother-in-law who was also a slave in Sweet Home got freedom, released herself and became a preacher. So Sethe left the place and when Amy who nursed her to deliver Denver, left her, she was again nursed by Baby Suggs. Sethe accepted the final reality that Halle her husband may not return back. At 124 Bluestone Road, after their return, Paul D kissed Sethe and they started to make love. Beloved felt jealous of Paul D’s closeness with Sethe. On that night Beloved with a kind of seduction, seduced Paul D.

Sethe being psychologically affected by her past went to the cruel extreme of killing her children. In the flash back Sethe remembered, one
morning, the school teacher who was the owner of Sethe, claimed her children and in order to save her children, she tried to kill the children, but unfortunately three of her children escaped except Beloved. For that Sethe was put in jail.

At 124, Paul D did not know anything about Sethe. Many times Sethe tried to explain everything to him. But before that, Stamp Paid showed the newspaper cutting about Sethe’s past and Paul D hated this attitude of Sethe and departed from her.

In part two of the novel, Stamp Paid regretted for the condition of Sethe. Sethe’s attempts to reconcile with Paul D had become vain. Later Stamp Paid too stopped his visit to 124. Sethe believed Beloved as her dead daughter.

Sethe remembered her last day in the Sweet Home, how she was beaten by her master’s nephews. Denver claimed Beloved as her dead sister.

Beloved, the strange figure in the novel contained some internal thoughts and memories. She had a vision where she saw a woman with a flower basket and she herself was standing on a deck of a ship containing slaves. The woman she craved for was lost in the sea. Later Beloved was standing in the rain; she felt she experienced everything in water. Beloved comes out of water. She said to Sethe that Sethe was the face she lost and wanted to join her.

Stamp paid, met Paul D and told him what really happened to Sethe. Denver got a new job with the help of Mr. Bodwin. Beloved became a great problem for Sethe and was affected psychologically too much. With the help of
the Church ladies, Denver tried to relieve her mother. But when Sethe ran towards Bodwin, Beloved screamed and stared at him and disappeared. Some months later, Sethe slowly regained from the impact of Beloved and they started a new hopeful life.

Both, Nanda Kaul and Sethe were affected psychologically by the trauma of their past. Basic Psychoanalytical meaning of the trauma is that, it is an event, defined by its intensity. Trauma leaves a long lasting effect on psychic life of the subject.

No doubt the bitter past affected the psychic life of Nanda Kaul and Sethe. They liked solitude in order to forget their bitter past. They did not want to remember any of their past. Nanda Kaul even disliked the coming of the post master and Sethe’s complete seclusion from social activities are examples for their hatred towards their past. Hence they wanted to repress their memories. As Pamela Thurschwell says:

An operation whereby the subject repels or confines to the unconscious, a desire that cannot be satisfied because of the requirements of reality or the conscience…. After Writing Studies in Hysteria, Freud came to believe that there was always a sexual content to the repressed unpleasant memory that led to the hysterical illness. (21-22).
Though, both the protagonists wanted to lead a secluded life, they were intruded by characters like Raka, Ila Das, Paul D and Beloved. When these characters intruded in their life, they reminded of their past. Remembering their past, disturbed and psychologically affected them, more and more.

For a human mind, disappointments become the major destructive force in life. For few, disappointments affect the psyche and developed a mental disorder. It may even lead to physical destruction. Likewise Fire on the Mountain deals with the psychological problems of an elderly woman, Nanda Kaul and her physical and mental suffering. Nanda Kaul who was disappointed and bored of life lead a lonely life at Carignano in Kasauli to live like a recluse. Like many other Indian women, Nanda was psychologically wounded due to her dull, boring past and liked to live a lonely life. Her alienation was self-made that is, self-alienation.

Nanda Kaul’s reason for alienation was her disappointments in the hectic world. After her husband’s death she felt a kind of emptiness in life and realised emptiness in all her life. She was a puppet and liked to spend the rest of her life in loneliness. Nanda Kaul realised her life a total waste only after her husband’s death.

Nanda Kaul’s childhood happiness and perfect married life and sudden realisations of emptiness in life affected her psychologically. Nanda Kaul was born in a gifted family and enjoyed princely joys and comforts. Her father was
a rich person and they lived on the banks of Dal Lake. They rode through the orchards, pick cherries, and enjoyed well.

Nanda being a child enjoyed her life in her father’s hand and her father was a person with many interests. He had a craze in making experiments on horticulture and equally, was an adventurous man, who also liked travelling.

Nanda Kaul’s pet animals were amazing to be noted. They brought up a big Himalayan bear which she brought from the forest. It was kept in the house “like a pot King Kong”. Also they had wild hunting dogs, fierce leopard cats, peacocks, big wild mastiffs and lories’. Nanda kaul had learnt to play the piano, the flute and the veena.

Nanda kaul’s married life also was a very happy one. Her husband was a busy Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University. Her luxurious life was even described by her friend Ila Das as, “…always a picture. No matter how simple the occasion, she was always in silk, always in pearls and emeralds. I wish you knew what a picture she was, dear”. (132)

She was also described as an ever fresh and courteous person by Ila Das, “… tea waiting in winter, lemonade in the summer-pets running free everywhere, the children and their friends playing cricket on the lawn, and all cares could be forgotten for an evening.” (131-132)

She kept pet animals like cats, dogs and even monkeys. They enjoyed by playing badminton and Ila Das remembered the badminton court even after
many years. Nanda Kaul led a busy life, ordering about too many servants, entertaining too many guests and taking care of so many children, that she felt fully fed up with life. When she became the Vice-Chancellor’s wife the busy world, had not pleased her. When her husband died, her children came to help her to vacate the Vice-Chancellor’s house and then escorted her to Kasauli. Her sons and daughters had families and employments to tend, so they could not stay with her. They left her alone. But this loneliness did not make Nanda Kaul unhappy; on the contrary she was glad that it was all over. She deprived herself of her duties. This showed Nanda Kaul’s detachment in life as Kamini Dinesh points out rightly:

The novel incorporates a bizarre psychology. In her frustration Nanda frantically searches for detachment. Life has not honored her claims. As here original self-effacing solution has not worked through out her life, she substitutes it with the strategy of resignation... so much is made of the protagonist’s rebellious detached attitude and her desire to live in complete isolation that we tend to regard Nanda Kaul as a formidable old woman who has snapped all ties and discarded every one. (92)

Through Nanda Kaul, Anita Desai beautifully portrays the human relationship. She had the opinion, all human relationships are inadequate. Basically everyone is solitary. Involving oneself in human relationship will lead to disaster. Another reason for Nanda’s alienation was her husband. Nanda,
herself had been treated as a mere social convenience, by her husband, the Vice-Chancellor. He never had the emotional honesty to marry the woman, he loved all his life. This was one aspect of the past, she was afraid to recollect it as it was even worse to be a wife, to maintain a social image than simply not being treated a partner in love. She always had a thought that their house belonged to him and not hers. Her husband had not loved her, cherished her and kept her like a queen; he had only done enough to keep her quiet. He had a failure in his love affair with Miss David, the mathematics mistress, whom he had not married because she was a Christian but whom he loved, all his life. For her, her children were aliens. She never tried to understand or love them.

Left alone in Carignano, she started to live alone. Her liking for loneliness highlighted, when she thought that she should not be disturbed by any one. She did not want the postmaster to stop at Carignano and had no wish for letters. She liked to have peace of mind and she disliked anybody who tried to reconcile her once again with the world, which she had renounced. So when the postman came, she became nervous and when he slowed down near Carignano:

... she stopped to get her breath and glanced down just as the postman came out of a shadowed fold of the mountain on to the road below her gate. Still plodding on, dismally on, closer to Carignano. Her nostrils
pinched and whitened with disapproval... Hurry man, she mentally
snapped - get it over with (5)

She enjoyed being left alone at Kasauli which was cut off from the rest of the
world.

Nanda Kaul’s detachment was highlighted with her acceptance of
Carignano, as she had found it. She had not planted any new trees nor had she
felled any of the standing one. The garden remained the same as she entered the
house. “Unlike any other owner of house and garden, she had not said; Here I
will plant a willow, there I will pull out the Spanish broom and put in pampas
grass instead”. (33) As Premila Paul and R.Padmabhan Nair observe:

Withdrawal becomes a necessity to nourish all illusions. Being alone is
“a moment of private triumph, cold and proud” for her. It proves an
armour against possible hurts and betrayals. It is an escape route from
responsibilities, demands and obligations that she detests. The
emotional frigidity that she wears at times is a mask, at times very much
a part of her because of regular wear (218).

Though it was obvious, Nanda Kaul’s detachment and loneliness was
self-made, there was a fact underneath this detachment. Nanda Kaul who was
psychologically affected and tired due to the humdrums of life hated the contact
with the world. This hatred was mainly focused as an escape from reality, and
her wish to dwell in a world of illusion or fantasy like Sita of Where Shall We
Go This Summer. Carignano served her for this purpose. Her loneliness in the mountain was basically a result of her psychological affectation of the past. This fact we know through her reactions of withdrawal and fantasy.

The novel opens with Nanda kaul as a solitary figure in the hills. Her self-alienated pose and her withdrawal from life and family was not the result of any existential realization of man’s ultimate loneliness but she had been reduced to such a state. At one point Nanda kaul realized that her past could not be faced with pride and her future could not be anticipated with hope; Nanda tried to delink the present from the past. Like Sethe of Beloved, she is overloaded with the memories of the past. Her rejection of the outside world in retaliation of her own rejection is seen in her fear of links like the telephone bell and the postman.

Nanda kaul selected fantasy to replace reality, to manage the present withdrawal became a necessity to nourish all illusion. This fantasy served and provided armour to cover her against possible hurts and betrayals. When Nanda was left alone in Carignano her sons and daughters seemed mere furniture to her. Nanda had been always a self-centered person and not mother like. Ultimately she liked to dispose them. Then the only person, whom she showed little care is Tara. Tara’s ill-treatment by her husband gave Nanda a soft corner for that girl. As pointed out by Premila Paul and R.Padmanabhan Nair:
... withdrawal is necessary to sustain the world of fantasy and fantasy in turn is necessary to sustain the life of withdrawal fantasy thus becomes a way of life. Nanda’s proclaimed existence of withdrawal itself is a part of her fantasy, her detachment is sham. Nanda seeks a life free of all demands in withdrawal. But ironically that is the greatest demand a human being can make on others—to be left alone. She considers Carignano “so exactly a right house for her” and becomes very possessive about it. (219)

Nanda was possessive of Carignano and Carignano served her with an atmosphere of loneliness and clam. Sometimes we get a glimpse of her real self. She questioned herself, whether she had been left with anything and also she had self-sympathy, she could give only silence as an answer and protested against the world by withdrawal and by living in fantasy.

Nanda’s detachment in life was further evident when she spoke of her father’s adventures and collections to Raka. For her the statue of Buddha was “the sole survivor of that splendor”. This suggested that at the end all past splendors vanish and it is detachment that remains. This detachment automatically made her to select loneliness and fantasy.

In this novel, Fire on the Mountain Nanda Kaul selected fantasy as a medium to escape from reality. For her, the real world was something nagging and unwanted. So she liked Carignano. It is an important symbol of the novel
and is originally set up as a life sustaining health resort but for Nanda Kaul it is only a way out. Throughout the novel, the house Carignano was associated with death. It was a place where memories resided.

The house was built in 1843 by Colonel MacDougal and written memories of his military exploits are mentioned in Carignano. But it was a horror house and seven of the Colonel’s children were buried there. After that due to storm, a corrugated sheet blew off and chopped a collie’s head. Then the house was occupied by a pastor of Kasauli church. He planted apricot tree and bought a bird bath, but the birds died in a week. After that the house became a place for the birds. His wife who disliked him wanted to murder him but unfortunately fell on a rock and with broken head she died. The pastor lived long and died of tuberculosis and it is believed that his ghost was haunting the house. Next Miss Abble who saw the ghost of the pastor, never allowed her gardener to plant marigolds. Miss Lawrence, who planted a yellow rose creeper, which astonished Nanda kaul, with its emergence of flowers every year. Miss Jane Stremsbury, who considered herself a mediciner, came next and with her wrong treatment killed her cook. Two years later she was dead and buried in the Kasauli graveyard under a tall Cyprus. Later with Miss Weaver, Carignano became a entertaining place of memsahib’s and Tommie’s. This house had its first Indian occupant, Miss Nanda Kaul. The unluckiness of the house is very
much evident when the postmaster shouted to his child to stop stepping inside the ‘Carignano’. The house was simply considered a place of ill-omen.

Carignana became the place of English woman, neurotic and singles. The house had been haunted by fugitives who ran away from the plain. Though an Indian, Nanda fits into the line of such maiden woman. Nanda’s retiring to the house was mainly due to its remoteness and hence the thought of exiling from the reality. Premila Paul and R. Padmanabhan Nair observe:

Carignano was no longer a sought-after place but a deserted house after Independence. Both the place and Nanda have become irrelevant for people. Carignano thus stands irrelevance, rejection, escape, put-on withdrawal, loneliness… Escapism is not the solution to a problem. But Carignano has sheltered her, it has given her some relief from familial obligations at least for a while and, she has reached a point of no return, Nanda has a special attachment to it… Carignano is thus not a solution, but a diversion, an edifice of fantacy. (224)

But her alienation did not withstand for much time as it was interrupted by a letter from her daughter about the arrival of her grand daughter Raka.

The Story of the novel Beloved by Toni Morrison revolved around the character Sethe. Sethe who was psychologically affected by her bitter past was living with her only daughter Denver in 124 Blue Stone Road. Like Nanda Kaul in the novel Fire on the Mountain, she hated her past and wanted to reside alone
in the house 124. 124 served her purpose of being alone like how Carignano
acted for Nanda Kaul. But her loneliness was interrupted by Paul D and
Beloved. As Karan E.Fields observes:

When she returned from jail with Denver, neighbors and former friends
left herself and she sought no one. ... She accepted mater of factly the
baby ghost’s interfering presence in the house and made practical
allowance for it. She accommodated Denver’s solitude, loving in pararell
with her when anything else was impossible. The paradox of the story is
that, with the arrival of two apparitions that beded better things, Sethe
collapsed. First Paul D, who was the last of the Sweet Home men
rejoined her with her past. He interrupted her sober practicality with
laughter, a “bed life”, the comfort of past acquaintance, a vision of the
future and the offer of safety is in which to entertain an inward life....
Beloved interrupted Sethe’s sober practicality with the deadliest of
temptations ... and to explain, to seize the forbidden fruit of doing the
past over again better. (275)

Sethe being a slave suffered a lot, and as its outcome she liked to live a
detached life. She never showed any interest in life till Beloved and Paul D
intruded her life. The slaves were not even the rightful owners of their self.
They had a menial life. She was a slave in the past. Her bitter past was
expressed through her psychological repression. This past was filled with
traumas of slavery. Sethe suffered a great deal of pain to herself and to those around her. Her suffering was both physical and psychological.

When Paul D arrived at 124 Bluestone Road, Sethe was reminded of her frightful, bitter past. Paul D explained to her, how he traveled from Sweet Home to Ohio. This made Sethe to remember her childhood. In childhood, Sethe never really knew her mother. As a slave child, she was taken away from her parents. She spent her total life in isolation. Sethe’s attachment towards her daughter Denver is mainly due to her childhood loneliness. She experienced many bitter things in the Sweet Home, hence she did not reveal anything to her daughter Denver. Sethe thought that her mother was working in the fields from dawn to dark. Sethe remembered that once her mother carried her behind the smokehouse and showed her a circle and cross burn in the skin just below her breast. And further she said that all the other women with her were dead and she was the only one who was left behind. When Sethe asked her mother about the mark, she slapped Sethe. Very soon her mother was hanged and her body was lowered from the rope. Sethe tried to see the circle and the cross on her chest but she did not find any. Sethe explained this story to Denver and when Denver asked what happened to her mother she just said, “Hung. By the time they cut her down nobody could tell whether she had a circle and a cross or not, least of all me and I did look” (73). Sethe said, she never knew the reason, but she remembered, there were several slaves who were hung at that time. Denver
was relieved when Sethe stopped the story; but Beloved loved all of Sethe’s stories. About the painful past memories of Sethe as Deborah Hontitz in his essay puts forth:

...... her memories of Ma’am are buried not only because their relationship was vague and their contact prohibited but also because those recollections are inextricable woven with feelings of painful abandonment. If Sethe remembers her mother, she must also remember that she believes her mother deserted her. (267)

Sethe’s trauma did not begin with her escape from Sweet Home. When she was taken away from her mother, she strongly regarded that mothers did not have time to raise their children. The only way to safeguard their children from the rapists was to kill their children. In the system of slavery, the owners regarded children as property, the adults as work animals. The female slaves were given a mark in their chest for the convenience of their owners to claim them. Sethe had not been permitted to know her mother. Sethe remembered little about her mother and did not remember much about her childhood. One major reason for that was Nan who raised Sethe in a communal way speaks a different language that could not be understood by Sethe. “What Nan told her she had forgotten, along with the language she told it in.” (74) Sethe’s mother and Nan came as slaves from Africa. Being women, they were tortured and were molested many times. These painful memories of her past only paved way
to her child’s (Beloved) murder. She wanted to rescue her children from the cruel slavery, so she did it. While discussing about the psychological affectation of Sethe, Shelby Larrick, a critic had made a remark that all Morrison’s characters struggled with the psychological repression of their pasts. While much of their pain stemmed from the horrors of slavery, it was also from their relationship with Sethe. Throughout the novel, Sethe suffered more psychological damage than any other character; the killing of her daughter was a very drastic measure to take, but because of the psychological traumas of her past, she was unable to find any other solution.

Another important loss in her life was her husband Halle. She loved him but after a while, she did not know anything about him. When Paul D said, “You must think he is still alive”. She replied “No. I think he’s dead. It’s not sure that keeps him alive.” (9) She wanted to go to the Clearing to pay tribute to Halle. She took Denver and Beloved with her. She went to Bluestone where Babby Suggs greeted her warmly and kissed her. She felt sad for her missing son. She conducted a big party. But her intuition told her that something bad is going to happen.

The most terrible incident in the life of Sethe was nothing but the murdering of her, own child. One day four men – school teacher, nephew, a slave catcher, and the Sheriff – approached 124 Bluestone Road in order to catch her children. They were like animal catchers. Sethe did not want her
children to go back to Sweet Home as slaves. She broke the neck of Beloved who was drinking milk and threw Denver into the wall, but fortunately, she was saved by Stamp Paid; Buglar and Howard who were bleeding were rescued by Baby Suggs. Toni Morrison shows Sethe’s red love for her children. Sethe wanted to save her children from slavery; unable to get any children, the four men left 124. As Walter Clemons says:

Under a system in which “men and women were moved around like checkers”, Sethe’s murderous act was a distorted exertion of her balked maternal instinct.... She wanted to rescue her children from the life she’d fled and killing them to prevent their return to slavery was the expedient that occurred to her. She welcomes the arrival of spectral Beloved as a chance to explain herself. Sethe’s arrogance has made the black community of Cincinnati shun her, and Paul D, who has not heard of her bloody past during his 18 years of wandering, deserts her when he learns of it. Her isolation binds her in an unholy relation with Beloved. (263)

After facing all these bitter experiences Sethe live alone in 124. 124 was the Baldwin’s home that they rented to Baby Suggs and then to Sethe. The house was once a way station for fugitive slaves. The house was filled with spite and the red light of the ghost 124 was at first a waiting place, before Sethe was there. It was closely associated with death. In the beginning of the novel itself the spitefulness of the house is described as:
124 was spiteful. Full of baby’s venom. The women in the house knew it and so did the children. For years each put up with the spite in his own way, but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims. The grandmother Baby suggs, was dead, and the sons, Howard and Buglar, had run away by the time they were thirteen years old. (3)

All around her, gradually left the house or died. Her sons, Howard and Burglar and her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs left her alone. She and her daughter were the only occupants of the house. The house was spiteful because it was haunted by a ghost. Because of the fear of ghosts, Sethe’s sons left the house. Even Baby Suggs died in the same house. In that house she even experienced many personal traumas. Sethe and her daughter Denver were left alone in 124, and alienated completely from the community. The isolation of Sethe was disrupted one afternoon with the arrival of Paul D to 124 Bluestone Road; arrival of Paul D refreshed her memories of past. The things which she wanted to forget were reminded by Paul D. Though the house was haunted by the ghost, it helped Sethe to hide her past memories. Moreover they convinced themselves, by thinking that, the ghost was none other than their dead daughter and sister Beloved. In the name of fear, Sethe concealed her past memories and lead a plain life in 124 Bluestone.

_In Fire on the Mountain_, Nanda Kaul’s long silence and detachment in life was disturbed by her grand daughter Raka. When Nanda Kaul received a
letter from her daughter Asha informing that she was sending her grand
daughter Raka, to live with her due to unavoidable circumstances, Nanda Kaul
said ‘no’ even before opening the letter. Since Raka had not fully recovered
from typhoid, she was compelled to stay with her grandmother. Nanda kaul
could not say ‘no’ and was nervous in receiving the girl. Raka was described by
Asha, first as one who “was only just recovering from a near-fatal attack of
typhoid…” (15). When she entered the compound of Carignnano, she appeared
to Nanda kaul as a “dark cricket” or a “mosquito”. The arrival of Raka was an
unwelcome intrusion for Nanda Kaul. She was an intruder, an outsider, a
mosquito for Nanda Kaul.

Nanda kaul wanted to lead a secluded life due to her heavy past, but
Raka entered, like an intruder but later became a breeze in the life of Nanda
Kaul. The emergence of Raka changed the life of Nanda Kaul. All her
assumptions about Raka became false. Later Raka became an integral part in
the life of Nanda Kaul.

At first she even hated to plan the menu for Raka. Her detachment was
evident when she did not go to receive her grand daughter to the taxi stand,
after meeting her she only showed a kind of detachment and lacked warmth.

Soon it was not possible to postpone the meeting any longer and both
moved a step closer to each other and embraced because, they felt they must.
“There was a sound of bones colliding, each felt how bony, angular and unaccommodating the other was and they quickly separated” (44).

Though Raka was an intruder for Nanda, her idea did not withstand for a long time, Raka was not a normal child, and she shunned all tenderness viciously. She was totally different from other children of her age. She possessed imagination and always loved privacy and seclusion. Nanda Kaul wanted to reject her company but to make matters easy Raka ignored the company of her great grandmother. Without informing her great grandmother she roamed all around in the ravine or visited the lonely burnt house on the hill. She did not care for her:

She ignored her calmly, so totally that it made Nanda Kaul breathless.
She eyed the child with apprehension now, wondering at this total rejection, so natural, instinctive and effortless and compared with her own planned and wilful rejection of the child (52).

In the novel another character who was psychologically affected was Raka herself. Her psychological affectation was mainly due to her broken home. Raka was unique and she chose unfrequented tracks, discarded conventional ways of thinking, detested being domesticated by schools, clubs, homes and city life. Anita Desai called her, a natural recluse and thus compared her with Nanda Kaul. Nanda Kaul was a recluse because she hated the long boring life. Her great grand daughter was recluse by nature, by instinct.
However Raka was not a born recluse, she had become an introvert by her circumstances. She was a victim of psychological affectation of a broken home. She faced much confusion in her eight years of life, she considered her experiences as bitter ones and she considered her home as weird as the New Year dance in Kasuli club. In all her life she faced only bitterness, distrust and violence.

Raka became a prey for her father and mother’s loveless life. They did not love each other. Childhood is a formative period when a person has intrinsic desires for spiritual health. But Raka’s fate was not so fair. Raka’s parents had no time or inclination to cater to the emotional needs of their child. Raka’s mother was in a helpless and hopeless position to do any happy deeds for her child. Tara’s shattered mental equilibrium and deteriorating physical strength and helpless position to do any happy deeds for her child. Her deteriorating physical strength rendered her helpless. Raka’s father never cared and opted time, for the well being of the child. Both her parents fought with one another and her father was a drunkard too. Her bitter experiences drove her of her childhood innocence, trust and feeling of joy in the company of others. Psychologically she was a victim of emotional deprivation. Her loveless childhood life filled her heart with a kind of loneliness and made her to distrust and suspect everything around her. So she disliked all human relationship and developed a liking for harmless nature. She considered nature safe for the
civilized world. She liked nature too very much. She liked walking on the mall, slipping under the rails and disappearing down the grassy slopes, meeting none but the goats and the villagers. She admired the thrashing of wheat. She dispensed seeing what she disliked.

Raka left her great grandmother alone. She had no desire to be with her great grandmother who was watching her. She liked to be alone and did not want anybody to worry about the hazards. She was on the way to her ultimate goal. She never cared for anything. The confusion in the life of her parents developed in Raka, a sense of averseness to belongingness. So she never felt she missed her parents. Raka totally hated her father and got disappointed whenever she heard of her father. At her parents home too she never showed any linking towards relations and people. She never was disturbed by solitude.

Raka who was not disturbed by solitude liked to be alienated and was willing to be alone. She unknowingly recognised loneliness as the medicine for her pains. So Raka was happy in Kasauli. She liked everything around her, the charred house on the ridge, the fire-blasted hill top, creaking of the pine, sounds made by the cuckoos. Raka disliked the artificial behaviour of the people around her. One day while coming back from her daily exclusions, she curiously wanted to know about the people inside. Ram Lal the cook and servant of Nanda Kaul told her, how ladies dressed in the balls like queens and men as princes, drink, speaking spirits that made them sing. But she did not see
kings and queens in the rosy court. It was lunacy rampart. She felt as if her head was bursting into two halves. The total scene around her seemed to be a nightmare for her. The atmosphere and the activities of the people only reminded her of her father.

Nanda Kaul’s childhood memories were awakened by the intrusion of Raka; Nanda Kaul never had good relationship with her children before. Nanda Kaul decided to spend the remaining days of her life in the deserted lonely house in Kasauli as she was held up with the duties of her long life. Later her children became mere aliens for her:

After her husband’s death, her sons and daughters had come to help her empty the Vice-Chancellor’s house, pack and create this belongings and distribute them, then escort her to Kasauli. For a while, they had stood about in Cariganano, like too much furniture. She had wondered what to do with them. (33)

Nanda Kaul had only duties and obligations with her children and nothing more. Pathania a critic of Anita Desai observes:

Due to the strong material instincts woman, as a rule, derived a peculiar joy in bringing up their children. The fond memories of their childhood later fill their heart with tenderness. But Nanda Kaul is an exception to this... Bringing them up had been more of a duty than an act of love or a
source of satisfaction, “Discharge me - she groaned. I’ve discharged all my duties Discharge”. (The Filial Ties 20)

Children are always a picture of pure joy and happiness, but it was not for Nanda Kaul. Even the sight of bright hoopoe feeding its nestling does not arouse tenderness in her. When Raka reached Carignano, Nanda maintained only a detached relationship and kept herself away from her, because the coming of Raka became a kind of remembrance of her own children. For Nanda Kaul, Raka became an agent of awareness too. The corollary theme of innocence and initiation into adulthood is closely intertwined with the theme of fantasy and reality. Raka was the combination of innocence and awareness too. It was very clear that a child had been chosen to help an adult to review her life of confront reality. In this novel, the adult acted like child, was very adamant of accepting the duties, and the child acted as an adult who made the adult realise this fact; Nanda failed to establish a relationship with Raka and she cannot let the adult in her die and be child-like.

Raka acted completely against the assumption of her great grandmother. Nanda thought her as an intruder but Raka became a lover of nature, and secluded herself from her great grandmother. The total seclusion of Raka brought Nanda Kaul a sort of self-realisation and changed the attitude of Nanda. She became sick of her emptiness beneath the seeming facade of fulfilment, whereas the tortured growth of her childhood had blunted the spontaneous
growth of her soul. Nanda realised this lack of tenderness, love and care for Raka. She changed her attitude and began to love Raka. She told long childhood stories in order to capture the mind of the girl, but Raka was too difficult to be caught. These nostalgic memories of childhood kindled the maternal instinct of Nanda. In her attempt to evade her self-imposed exile, only involved her to Raka. The multifaced Raka and her character transformed Nanda. It made her once again to recollect her past as a daughter, wife and mother. Nadha viewed Raka as an uninvited mouse or cricket to Carignano. Later she changed her attitude completely. Somehow Nanda wanted to attract the attention of Raka and when Raka enquired about her mother, Nanda began to tell the truth about her. Half way through she thought a child could not withstand the truth, so she began to feed her on untruths, on the fabrication about her own family life which may serve as a tranquillizer to Raka and a sort of wish-fulfilment. Nanda even lied to Raka that her father brought a little bronze statue of Buddha from Tibet, and that he was a traveler, explorer, discoverer, and had private zoo with bears and leopards, in order to attract the attention of the child.

All the attempts made by Nanda to love the girl and to recover attachment to life became vain because Raka wanted only to be left alone and nothing else. It was not her granny’s love that attracted her but only the ravaged, destroyed and barren spaces in Kasauli drew her attention.
This hill, with its once destroyed house and the unbuilt one, on the ridge under the fire-signed pines, appealed to Raka with the strength of a strong sea current - pulling, dragging. There was something about it - illegitimate, uncompromising and lawless - that made her tingle. The scene of devastation and failure somehow drew her, inspired her. Raka increased the sense of alienation, in the heart of Nanda, with her activities. The sense of longingness psychologically disturbed the mind of Nanda Kaul.

Sethe’s loneliness was intruded by Palu D, the last Sweet Home man. Sethe did not see him for last twenty years. Sethe who wanted to forget her past is forced by Paul D’s intrusion to remember it. Paul D’s arrival reminded Sethe of her bitter past, she remembered the five other workers with her at Sweet Home. Sethe then talked about the hardships they faced in the Sweet Home, after the arrival of a cruel school teacher as their master. The old masters like Mr. Garner and Mrs. Garner treated the slaves with civility. But with the arrival of the school teacher, the slaves became more miserable. After his arrival the slaves rebelled and they escaped from the plantation in order to protest the tortures and violence which were imposed on them.

Sethe again immersed herself in the past memories. She explained to Paul D, what happened after her escape from the Sweet Home. She also hinted the painful memories of how she was sucked and whipped by the teacher’s whipped nephews and how they whipped her at her back. Sethe was helped by
a white girl and she helped her to deliver her second baby. After Beloved’s
Death, she engraved on the grave ‘Dearly Beloved’. Paul D, after hearing the
bitter story of Sethe felt pity on her.

Though Sethe, felt intruded of her loneliness, with the arrival of Paul D,
she soon became much attached with him; especially when he yelled at the
ghost to “hush up”, while they were talking and swinging the table around,
Sethe felt a kind of relaxation. He warned the ghost that Sethe had suffered
enough because of the ghost, and the ghost disappeared suddenly.

Sethe and Paul D soon became very close with each other and Sethe was
in fact tensed and anxious by this relationship with a man after a gap of many
years. Though she thought it to be shameful, the arrival of Paul D, relieved her
completely from the sense of withdrawal. But still, he was an agent to make
her to remember her past. Sethe remembered Sixo, a fellow slave, who walked
a long distance each day to meet his lover. In the Sweet Home, Sethe was liked
by all men. But she selected Halle, because of his calm character and his love
towards his mother. Babby Suggs made a simple white frock for their
marriage, Sethe loved the life which she had spent with Halle.

Sethe found comfort and happiness in Paul D’s arrival. Paul D comforted
both Denver and Sethe by taking them to the carnival nearby. Sethe was very
excited because that was the first time she was going out after eighteen years.
Paul D connected her once again to the society after a long time. Paul D
changed the total life of Sethe and she was totally attracted towards him. He was a man of positive thinking. Paul D, like Raka of *Fire on the Mountain* acted as a catalyst to change the attitude of Sethe. Like Raka who connected her great grandmother once aging to the society, Paul D too removed the loneliness from Sethe. Setha believed that Paul D could help her to re-enter into the community once again. She thought that Paul D would be the right person to share her bitter experiences.

After the appearance of Beloved, a young woman, Paul D wanted to know her past. One day Paul D and Sethe were alone. Paul D again acted as a reminder of Sethe’s past. In their conversation, she revealed that Halle mistreated her by deserting her and the children. Halle failed to come to the place, where she was residing, after his escape from the Sweet Home. Paul D gave her a great shock by saying the truth that, Halle also was there, when she was attacked by the nephews of the school teacher. Sethe was not able to believe the news but Paul D explained Halle’s helpless condition and tried to convince her. He also said that, Halle was heart broken. Sethe believed that Halle might be dead because he was already a heart broken man Sethe used to Say:

“The underground agent said, By Sunday. They took my milk and he saw it and didn’t come down? Sunday came and he didn’t. Monday came and no Halle. I thought he was dead, that’s why; then I thought they
caught him, that’s why. Then I thought, No, he’s not dead because if he
was I’d know it, … (82).

Sethe with the arrival of Paul D, recalled many of the past, bitter
experiences and she wanted to beat back the past. She was not able to plan her
future, because her heart was overloaded with the disappointments of the past.
Here Sethe resembles Nanda Kaul who was overloaded with the past.

Sethe became happy with the company of Paul D. She felt comfortable
in his hands. Paul D told her that he would conceal the rest of his past traumas
by shutting down his emotions. Sethe who heard the pains of Paul D was
touched by his speech and rubbed his knees tenderly. With the company of Paul
D, Sethe wanted to forget her painful past. It is obvious that both of them
wanted to heal their scars in each other’s company.

Their happiness was very soon destroyed by Stamp Paid who showed
Paul D a newspaper cutting that had the picture of Sethe. Through Stamp Paid,
Paul D came to know the murder done by Sethe. Paul D found that it was
impossible to accept that Sethe had tried to murder all her children and had
killed one of them. The news was too much for Paul D to accept. He denied it
was Sethe. But he was forced to accept the bitter truth that it was Sethe. From
that moment he saw Sethe differently. He could not resolve the new image of
Sethe. Unable to accept this image Paul D felt, he had to leave 124 Bluestone
Road. He did not say good bye but simply said not to prepare dinner for him.
Paul D too left her alone in the midway. Sethe trusted him and longed for his company but Paul D deserted her. She felt completely betrayed when Paul D told her that she had acted like an animal in killing her own baby. The statement psychologically affected Sethe.

Not only the arrival of Paul D reminded her of her past but also his departure, took her once again to remember her bitter past. After the departure of Paul D, Sethe was miserable. She remembered her past glory, days with Babby Suggs and with her children. But it was totally short lived and Babby Suggs was dead and her sons had deserted her. The arrival of Paul D gave her little sunshine, but soon it too faded away.

Sethe, for eighteen years had lived a lonely life. She was alienated totally from the society. The house, 124 is full of a baby’s venom. Sethe accustomed herself with the ghost, when Paul D arrived at 124; the ghost was jealous of Sethe’s attachment towards Paul D. But Paul D had driven the ghost out of the house. Sethe thought it was all over. But the problem worsened with the appearance of Beloved, at 124, as a woman.

In, *Fire on the Mountain*, another character who intruded the life of Nanda Kaul was Ila Das, her friend. She was also a major reason for the interruption of Nanda’s loneliness. Though Nanda liked and had a soft corner for Ila Das, she never liked to be interrupted by anyone. Her alienation was self-made. She wanted to be alone. But her neglect of Ila Das created a major shock
for Nanda and led her to death. Nanda wanted to impose herself in a detached life, but Ila acted as a reminder of the past life of Nanda. Hence she disliked the company of Ila too. However strong the mask, she wore was, it was very easily torn out, with the news of Ila Das’s death. This affected the psyche and physic of Nanda and led her to a nervous breakdown and finally to death. As Ujwala Patil Says:

Ila Das was for Nanda Kaul a reminder of her unhappy past, a past of ‘rejection’ and ‘sacrifice’, a past in which she had contracted a marriage which had dwindled into nothing but a symbol of emotional and psychological bankruptcy…… a past which she had lived by slave-mentality, losing her identity as a person….a past about which Nanda had ‘lied to Raka’. Ila therefore was for Nanda Kaul a symbol of her own self-delusion and self-deception and being a woman like Ila, a symbol of her frustration and shame, her pretences and her lies, and hence a source of great emotional and mental disturbance. (66).

The death of Ila made her guilty and it gave her great shock and led her to die a pathetic death. Ila Das was a typical Christian spinster teacher. Both Raka and Ila Das thought that there was no real escape in the mountain, as it was impossible to escape oneself from reality. Ila Das represented both the past and the present. She acted as a reminder of Nanda Kaul’s thoughts that the present cannot sever itself from its heritage and has to be a continuation, a
natural outcome of the past. Nanda did not disrupt the flow of the past to present and to future, delink the present and freeze the flow of time. In Kasulai Ila Das was a mere reminder of the past to Nanda Kaul. As Shantha Acharya points out:

There is another intruder into the uneasy truce of Carignano - Ila Das, who follows Nanda Kaul straight out of her past. Ila Das leaves Carignano not without having disturbed the peace of Nanda Kaul. What she had not bargained for was the final confrontation with her death. The death of his ghost from the past propels her out of self-contained orbit. (60)

Ila Das left an everlasting wound in the heart of Nanda Kaul and unable to tolerate the pain of the wound she totally collapsed and died at last. Ila, the name is combined of both misery and persecution. Though she was of high birth, she was mocked by all, due to her physical appearance. She had three brothers and a sister. The three brothers were strong; only Ila and Rima were deformed children. Ila Das was short in size and often became an object of ridicule due to her small size. It was said that even Raka’s small chair was high for her small legs. She had a strange voice “like the cackle of an agitated parrot”. Even Nanda kaul thought that no human would have such a worst voice. She was harassed by teachers at school:
In school alas, she had to speak. Teachers shivered, their teeth on edge, as if a child has squeaked a pencil on a slate or slid a nail down a glass-pane, while children clapped their hands over their mouths, making giggles burst forth the more rudely when Ila Das stood up, almost prancing on her tiptoes, to recite. The Boy Stood On The Burning Deck. Hurriedly teachers hushed her, begged her to give others,... poor Ila had learnt the whole poem through, wanted so much to recite it all. Yet she had to bottle up that voice with a hiccup and sit down, fizzing and burbling impotently, her hands in her lap, while others muttered and floundered through a parody, a pretence of the verse. (122)

By fate she was born with a figure and voice which not only startled the human beings but also animals. Ila was presented as a cartoon figure, a butt of ridicule. From her first appearance, she served as a foil to Nanda whose movements are said to be silken and silver in contrast to Ila’s clumsy gait, Nanda Kaul and Ila Das experienced unkindness from the members of the family. Due to their family unkindness, Ila and her sister Rima were forced to find job for themselves. Rima started giving lessons in piano and Ila got a job in Home science Department with the help of Nanda Kaul’s Vice-Chancellor husband. When the new Chancellor came Ila was compelled to resign her job and she regretted that though she got good education it did not help her in life to do even the basic needs. Both the sisters were starving. Though she was
starving from hand to mouth, she cared for the poor people around her. So she
was willing to act as a welfare officer. Here it is obvious that Nanda had always
been selfish, but Ila had always been at the giving end. Ila’s problems were
more real and concrete. Nanda at least tried to belong to Carignano, whereas Ila
did not even have a room to call her own.

Ila had a remarkable fortitude and mental stamina. Everyday she had to
grapple with the reality of hunger and poverty. Most of her problems were due
to her honesty, consciousness, self-respect and service mindedness. She took
care of her bed-ridden mother and needy sister to her utmost ability. Though
she resigned her job as a lecturer in Home Science Department, she made
herself a welfare officer and social worker. She worked a relentless battle
against anti-human elements, ignorance and superstitions.

Ila sometimes suffered of depression but soon she convinced herself by
comparing with the less fortunate people around her. Her self respect did not let
her borrow or beg for favours. While doing social service she was deeply upset
to find that the priest himself was conservative, reactionary and orthodox. Ila
advised people to go to a doctor, but the priest would exhort them to stick to the
age old treatments which worsened their condition, and often killed them.

Ila Das ran into a trouble because she tried to stop the cruelty of child
marriages. This idea changed her fate to an ill one. Once, Ila Das tried to stop a
child’s marriage. Preet Singh a person in the village had planned to marry his
daughter to a rich landowner because he owned a quarter of an acre of land and two goats. Ila Das stood in between because, the land owner was an aged man. This made Preet Singh attack, as well as murder Ila Das.

The news of Ila’s death reached Nanda and she was unable to bare the depth and detail of the news. Ila died as a martyr. Nanda was unable to face the reality. Nanda thought that the main reason for the death of Ila Das was she herself. Nanda knew very well the condition of Ila Das and had resisted the temptation of inviting Ila over to Carignano because, it would ruin her existence in Carignano. She became an indirect cause for the death of Ila Das. Ironically her not offering protection to Ila itself became the root cause for the death of Ila. As Darshan Singh Main puts forth:

Though Nanda Kaul once again resents this new assault on her privacy, soon enough there wells up even in that withered frame a feeling of pity for this hapless, fugitive creator. But the curious murderous twist given to her fate towards the end borders almost on melodrama. Somehow the incident of her brutal rape and death is too suddenly sprung upon us, and doesn’t seem to fit into the psychoscope of the story. (133)
In Morrison, *Beloved*, the young woman psychologically affected the mind of Sethe, and once again she began to lead a miserable life. For Sethe, Beloved became a great intruder of her alienation. She reminded Sethe, many of her past memories.

A young woman raised from water, sat under a tree for a day and night. Then the next day she walked towards 124 Bluestone Road and waited outside. The arrival of Beloved is nothing but the symbolic return of Sethe’s past. Paul D chased out the ghost of the baby in the house. Now Beloved appeared as a young woman of twenty, the same age the Sethe’s baby would have been, if she had lived. The appearance of Beloved reminded Sethe of her past, as she had a close resemblance of her dead daughter. The woman drank more water. The young woman’s face was without any blemish except a scar in the forehead. The woman introduced herself as Beloved; when Sethe heard the name of the woman, she immediately felt tender towards her, because her name reminded Sethe of the word on her daughter’s gravestone. Sethe who lived a detached life began to get interest in the woman, Beloved. Denver was also excited with the company of Beloved.

Beloved admired Sethe, she always wanted to be with Sethe. One night, Sethe felt the touch of Beloved. She thought, her touch was loaded with desire. Beloved begged Sethe to tell her past stories. Though Sethe did not like to pull out her past, she obliged Beloved.
Sethe remembered her wedding. She liked to have a wedding ceremony, but her wish was denied by Mrs. Garner her mistress. Sethe had stolen some fabric and sewed them into a dress. Sethe had her honey moon in the cornfield. Mrs. Garner presented her a crystal earning as a wedding gift. Sethe was further questioned by Beloved to explain about her mother, Sethe told her that she herself did not know her mother. Sethe’s trauma started when she was separated from her mother.

The incidents Beloved remembered were also like Sethe’s, The incidents connected Sethe with her past too. Beloved with three incidents explained how Sethe left her alone. Beloved liked to be with Sethe but was alienated thrice. Once, she was left by her mother while plucking flowers from leaves. Due to the heavy cloud of smoke she missed her mother. Thus, Beloved remembered the capture of her mother by the whites. The slave traders separated her from her mother in the first incident.

The second time was in the ship. Beloved remembered the inhuman condition of the ship. In the ship many blacks were dead. The man who carried her was dead and during that time she saw her mother, she expected her mother to smile at her, but she went into the sea water. This time, her mother deliberately left her alone. Beloved obviously saw that all in the ship were allowed to leave except her because her beauty attracted one of the officers, and she became a prey to him. That time Beloved longed for her mother and
believed that her mother was below the bridge. If she were left by the vessel officer, she might be with her mother. But unfortunately, she lost her mother and saw her mother the last time, as a woman went into the sea. Automatically, Beloved associated water with her parent. She being a lonely girl longed for her mother’s company. She was even able to remember the man who took her on his back and the diamond earring he wore. Beloved was unable to identify the water under the bridge, and the creek of water near Sethe’s house. Beloved saw her face in the water and thought her own reflection as her mother’s. So she jumped into the river but she was unable to join her own reflection; she was disappointed and thought that her mother had left her for the third time.

Beloved reached 124 and she seemed to be exhausted. And when Sethe returned from the carnival, Beloved was waiting. Beloved who longed to see, her mother’s smiling face mistakenly thought that Sethe was her mother:

I AM BELOVED and she is mine, Sethe is the one that picked flowers, yellow flowers in the place before the crouching. ““Three times I lost her: once with the flowers because of the noisy clouds of smoke; once when she went into the sea instead of smiling at me; once under the bridge when I went in to join her and she came toward me but did not smile. She whispered to me, chewed me, and swam away. Now I have found her in this house. She smiled at me and it is my own face smiling. I will not lose her again. She is mine (254)
Sethe’s smile made her to think like that. In the latter part of the narration, she confirmed herself that Sethe was her mother. She used to say that Sethe was the woman who picked flowers, smiled at her when they were taken by the white men. Elizabeth B House, in her essay, argues that:

What finally emerges from combining Beloved’s thoughts and the rest of the novel is a story of two probable instances of mistaken identity. Beloved is haunted by the loss of her mother. Sethe longs for her dead daughter and is rather easily convinced that Beloved is the child she has lost. (286)

Sethe in the climax of the novel became more and more weak. And Beloved’s belly grows bigger and bigger. 124 became very quiet because of hunger. Sethe spend almost all her savings for Beloved and she had become out of mind as Denver believed. Denver decided to search for a job outside, in order to live. She knocked Bodwins and Lady Jones for help and got help. Through Janey, the black community came to know about the ghost in the house, 124. Thirty of the neighbourhood women, had armed themselves with amulets and with their Christian faith arrived at Sethe’s house and had driven the ghost away from the house. When the women entered the home, first, the girl standing on the porch was holding her mother Sethe’s hand. Then Sethe dropped the hand, ran towards the white man and group of black women. Now Beloved was shocked by the action of Sethe and was also disappointed. She
thought that once again her mother deserted her. Hence she ran away from the place.

Another character who was psychologically affected in the novel is Denver Suggs, the daughter of Sethe; she was a victim of a broken home like Raka. She was born in a boat between slavery and freedom. Denver, with her mother, led a lonely life. She was completely deprived of her mother’s love and attention because Sethe was so wounded by the past. As Shelby Larric the critic on *Beloved* pointed out that Sethe’s daughter, Denver, also suffered because of Sethe’s decisions. Denver had always been alone in the world as her older brothers had run away, and Beloved was killed at a young age. Because their house was haunted by the spirit of Beloved, no children even dared to seek closeness with Denver. Such solitude caused severe psychological damage, and Denver struggled to find a sense of meaning and purpose in her life.

Beloved’s arrival connected Denver with another. Denver believed that being attached with Beloved would pain Sethe. But Beloved’s attention was fully towards, Sethe. Since both Sethe and Halle were slaves, Denver was totally unaware of her father. Denver was always afraid and terrified with the murderous love of Sethe. During nights, she was unable to get sound sleep, and was afraid that at any moment Sethe would cut-off her head. Her father, Halle was incapable of playing a father’s role.
Like Beloved, Denver too craved for recognition. Denver longed for her mother’s affection. She lost her brothers and only sister. When she drank milk from her mother it was covered with Beloved, her sister’s blood.

In the third book Sethe became more and more weak. Thus it was time for Denver to redeem her mother from the suffering, pain and hunger. Denver found it clear that, it was time to step out of 124. She went to knock the door of the society. The women in the society were ready to help Denver. They even started a rally towards 124 Bluestone Road to help Sethe to get rid of the ghost. Denver only helped and nursed her mother after the great trauma. At her last conversation with Paul D, she proved herself an improved woman. She welcomed Paul D to 124. Denver paved a great role in the recovery of her mother.

In both the novels, sexual arrogance, psychologically affected the characters Nanda Kaul and Sethe. Sethe in the novel is directly affected by arrogance and she became a victim of molest. In the novel Fire on the Mountain, Nanda Kaul’s friend Ila Das was terribly molested by Preet Sing, and that caused a psychological shock for Nanda. Being molested, Sethe wanted to safeguard her children from such painful attacks. She wanted to rescue her children from future abuse hence she went to the extreme of murdering her own children. This act of Sethe is due to the psychological affectation of her past.
Nanda Kaul’s psyche was totally collapsed when she heard about the cruel death of Ila Das and it ultimately led to her death.

Anita Desai and Toni Morrison narrated the rape not merely as physical abuse but as mental ailment. In their novels they depict how the physical abuse affects the psyche of their protagonists. Though Nanda is not a direct victim of molest, the impact it made on her was deeper like Sethe’s. Like Nanda, Sethe is not dead due to the sexual abuse, but its impact killed her each and every day. Hence their psychological affection is very clear. In other words, both the novelists bring out the woes of women and how they confront problems in the male dominated society. Though Sethe suffered under the hands of slavery, the basic problem for her is the male dominated society.

Ila’s molest was a disturbing event, but a grater disturbance was the death of Nanda Kaul who died a psychological death as a consequence of Ila’s rape. Ila being educated, wanted to reform the uneducated society but was futile in her attempt. She wanted to stop child marriage; Preet Singh wished to marry his seven year old daughter to an old widower with six children because “he owns a quarter of an acre of land and two goats”. Ila tried to stop the marriage by threatening Preet Singh. The rape is elaborated as:

She staggered under its weight a gasp that ripped through her chest. It had her by the throat, she struggled, chocking, trying to stretch and stretch that gasp till it became a shout, a shout that the villagers would
hear, ... Her eyes still swivelled in their sockets, two alarmed marbles of black and white, and quickly he left the end of the scarf, tore at her clothes, tore them off her, in long, screeching rips, till he came to her, to the dry, shrivelled, starved stick inside the wrappings, and raped her, pinned her down into the dust and the goat droppings, and raped her. Crushed back, crushed down into the earth, she lay raped, broken, still and finished. Now it was dark. (155-156)

Preet Singh, who wanted to revenge Ila Das, successfully completed his idea by raping her. Preet Singh completely failed to win Ila in anyway, so he had restored to his terrible act of abuse. Only through sexual attack, Preet Singh could win over and could show his power. Ila Das was “dry, shrivelled, starved stick”, but Preet Singh raped her. He wanted to suppress her ego and rape implies the highest injury and insult to a woman. It destroyed; Ila’s complete being as a woman. Evil dominated the good here. Ila’s self respect and womanhood was demolished. Ila Das’s death was inevitable. Ila was broken completely by the rape and hence her death alone could relieve her from the pain. Nanda became sensitive at the news. Nanda was psychologically affected and about her psychic condition, Ujwala Patil putsforth:

Nanda’s death, as much as Ila’s rape-murder points to the process of disintegration - social - economical - political - emotional - psychological - ethical - spiritual disintegration women suffers in a male
dominated society. Nanda suffers the psychological shock of rape, and feels like Ila, her womanhood refiled her selfhood insulted and realizes the difficulty of woman’s situation in a world which has become accustomed to expecting compromises from woman. (63)

Ila’s death stung the conscience of Nanda because she lived a self-deceptive life. Nanda wanted to avoid Ila Das and this brought horror in the life of Ila Das. Nanda realised that; she could have helped Ila Das but had not. The departure of Ila Das, some what relaxed Nanda Kaul. The major reason for her betrayal was her desire to be left alone.

The news of Ila Das’ death was informed through phone. During the last moments of her life Nanda Kaul realised that her negligence of Ila had become a reason for her death. Nanda had the view that her life was a complete waste. “She did not live here alone by choice - she lived here alone because that was what she was forced to do, reduced to doing” (158). The shocking news psychologically affected the mind of Nanda Kaul. Unable to bear the shock Nanda falls dead:

No, no, it is a lie! No, it cannot be. It was a lie! No, it cannot be. It was a lie-Ila was not raped, not dead. It was all a lie, all…

No, she wanted to tell the man on the phone, No, she wanted to cry, but could not make a sound. Instead, it chocked and swelled inside her
throat. She twisted her head, then hung it down, down, let it hang. (158-159)

Like Nanda Kaul, Sethe, the protagonist of Beloved has lived a life full of pain and suffering. Most of the characters are dealt on the psychological repression of their pasts. In the past, women are generally used by men as a mere pleasure giving machines in the system of slavery. In the novel, Sethe believed that death was a kinder alternative to rape. Though the rape is not exactly described in the novel, its impact is clearly described in many parts of the novel. It affected the psyche of Sethe and in many places, she showed this psychological imbalance. Sethe from her early days had been psychologically affected because of sexual arrogance.

Sethe’s mother was a victim of such arrogance and it depressed her. The traumas are not elaborated in the novel Beloved; but in one or two sentences it is described deeply and showed its depth and pain. A description of Sethe’s mother’s condition, offers an opportunity to understand, Sethe’s later act of murdering her own child. Nan, the woman with Sethe’s mother told her that they were taken up many times by the crew. Gang rape not only spoiled the body of the women but also the mind of the women. Sethe’s mother gave birth to a child due to the result of “taken up”, and “taken up” implied rape. Nan and Sethe’s mother were repeatedly used for the sexual gratification of the crew and
this became a major cause for her mother’s abandonment of her child. Sethe’s mother’s abandonment psychologically disturbed Sethe and was recorded in the mind of Sethe.

Sethe, being a slave under Mr. Garner, was left unmolested by him. She was given an opportunity to select one from the six young men in the plantation as her husband. But her fate changed, when a school teacher had taken over the farm. Later, Sethe described the sexual attack to Paul D. The school teacher’s nephews, two young white boys whipped her back when she was pregnant with Denver. The beating was deadly horrible. Then Sethe was violated by the boys. She repeatedly said that “they took my milk” to describe the violation. Sethe’s husband, Halle witnessed the scene but he was unable to do anything against the arrogance. He was broken hearted. The theft of Sethe’s milk made her to think that she was robbed of her essence or of her most precious substance. She suffered mentally rather than physically. Her concentration was fully upon the milk so that she repressed her complete trauma of rape by the white boys. Though it is not explained by her, it is understood. She felt it was too painful to remember. Sethe was deeply influenced by the violence.
The trauma she experienced in her life made her to repress the memories, but when the school teacher came to 124 Bluestone Road to take back her children to Sweet Home, she killed her daughter so that no “gang of whites would invade her daughter’s private parts, soil her daughter’s thighs” (251). In order to relieve her daughter from the pain of slavery, she did an unimaginable thing. She broke the neck of Beloved and killed her. This act of Sethe killed her own self. But still she hoped that, death was better than sexual molest.