BREAKING THE SILENCE, EASING THE PAIN: EFFORTS, CHALLENGES, AND HOPES OF FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS IN TURKEY AND INDIA WORKING WITH SURVIVORS OF INCEST

by

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: Incest, India, Organizations, Silence, Turkey,

In recent years, incest and child sexual abuse has been gaining increasing media and civil society interest in Turkey and India. Yet the voices of the many adult survivors, a lot of whom are women, continue to be lost and silenced in both these countries. The purpose of this ethnographic study is to analyze how three feminist organizations, *Mor Çatı* and KAMER in Turkey and RAHI in India, work within and against the existing media and legal discourses to break the silence surrounding incest and provide support to adult women survivors.

Most anthropological and sociological studies on incest are based on research in Europe and the United States. While it is becoming increasingly possible to find statistics of sexual abuse and other such "data" from countries of the Global South, academic analyses of the experience of incest and the struggle against it continue to be scarce.

This thesis first contextualizes issues such as the status of women, the discourses on the family, and the history of the feminist movements in Turkey and India; and then continues with an analysis of the media and legal discourses along with the existing legal provisions on child sexual abuse in Turkey and India, within and against which the three organizations function. Based on interviews with mental health professionals, lawyers, and activists, this thesis analyzes the ways in which dominant discourses on family sanctity, gender, survivorship and justice are challenged, and new methods and philosophies of struggle against incest are developed in Turkey and India.

This research shows that despite the differences between their organizational philosophies and methods, with *Mor Çatı* and KAMER being more involved in developing a feminist critique of the public discourse on incest and challenging existing laws on the issue, and RAHI focusing more on mental healing of survivors, all three organizations provide support for survivors and contribute to breaking the silence surrounding incest and sexual abuse in Turkey and India.

ÖZET

SESSİZLİĞİ BOZMAK, ACIYI HAFİFLETMEK: TÜRKİYE'DE VE HİNDİSTAN'DA ENSEST İLİŞKİ MAĞDURLARI İLE ÇALIŞAN FEMİNİST ÖRGÜTLERİ'NİN ÇABALARI, KARŞILAŞTIKLARI ZORLUKLAR VE UMUTLARI

Akanksha Misra

Kültürel Çalışmalar, Yüksek Lisans

Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ayşe Gül Altınay

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ensest, Hindistan, Örgütler, Sezsizlik, Türkiye,

Son yıllarda Türkiye ve Hindistan'da ensest ve çocukların cinsel istismarı konularına medya ve sivil toplum alanında artan bir ilgi söz konusudur. Buna karşın her iki ülkede istismara uğramış kişilerin—ki bunların büyük bir kısmı kadındır—sesleri kaybolmaya ve bastırılmaya devam etmektedir. Bu etnografik çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'den Mor Çatı ve KAMER, Hindistan'dan RAHİ olmak üzere üç farklı feminist örgütün, mevcut medya ve hukuki söylemlerle birlikte ya da onlara karşı kendilerini nasıl konumlandırdıklarını, bu konudaki sessizliği kırmak ve yetişkin kadın mağdurlara destek vermek için nasıl çalıştıklarını incelemektir.

Ensest ve çocukların cinsel istismarına yoğunlaşan antropolojik ve sosyolojik analizler ağırlıklı olarak Avrupa ve ABD'de yapılmış araştırmalara dayanmaktadırlar. Küresel Güney olarak adlandırılan ülkelerde cinsel istismara dair istatistiklere ve benzer "verilere" ulaşmak gittikçe daha mümkün olsa da, ensestin nasıl deneyimlendiği ve enseste karşı mücadelenin nasıl şekillendiğini inceleyen çalışmalar halen çok sınırlıdır. Bu tez, ilk olarak, Türkiye ve Hindistan'da kadınların konumuna, aileye dair söylemlere, ve feminist hareketlerin tarihine dair genel bir çerçeve çizdikten sonra; bu iki ülkedeki hakim medya ve hukuk söylemleriyle mevcut yasal düzenlemeleri incelemektedir. Tezin ikinci bölümü, psikiyatrlar, avukatlar ve aktivistlerle yapılan mülâkatlara dayanarak, Türkiye ve Hindistan'da ailenin kutsallığı, toplumsal cinsiyet, mağduriyet ve adalet söylemlerinin nasıl sorunsallaştırıldığını ve enseste karşı ne tür mücadele yöntemleri ve felsefeleri geliştirildiğini analiz etmektedir.

Bu araştırma göstermiştir ki, Mor Çatı ve KAMER enseste dair kamusal söylemlere yönelik feminist bir eleştiri geliştirmeye ve yasaları değiştirmeye yoğunlaşmaktayken, RAHİ'nin çalışmaları çocukken cinsel istismara uğramış kadınların tedavisi etrafında şekillenmektedir. Felsefeleri ve mücadele yöntemleri farklılık gösterse de, her üç kurum da mağdurların destek mekanizmaları geliştirmekte ve ensest ve cinsel istismara dair suskunluğun kurulmasına katkıda bulunmaktadırlar.

To all the brave people who have survived incest and are constantly striving to put their pasts behind them…

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Most importantly, this thesis is dedicated to my partner William and son Ruhan, who is my greatest achievement and a constant reminder that children have the right to a beautiful life, untouched by abuse; a life which should lead onto a wonderful and satisfying adulthood.

PREFACE

This is more than just a research on how feminist organizations in Turkey and India deal with adult women survivors of incest. This is also an attempt to show the staggering prevalence of the issue and the many social attitudes and discourses surrounding it. After all, it is *within* such attitudes and many times against them that organizations try to provide relief to abused women. As a researcher student myself, I received a myriad of "neutral" to openly negative reactions from the society—friends, colleagues and others— in both the countries, when I told them what I was studying. One male colleague of mine thought it was an "absurd" thing to study—why would anyone want to study a taboo topic; a topic that no one likes to talk about? Another colleague was just dumbstruck when I told him my research topic and hurriedly moved away from me on some pretext. Such reactions are understandable and make me wonder: Are these people avoiding the topic because it makes them uncomfortable to admit that their societies, their "pure" families may not be what they think? Have they themselves been victims or witnesses of abuse? Or are they abusing children as well?

Sometimes such reactions are hurtful, especially when they come from close friends. A very close friend of mine recently accused me of exaggerating the extent to which children are sexually abused at home. I have been accused of similar "exaggeration" whilst revealing incest statistics in Turkey and India to another Turkish student and acquaintance. In India, I have been confounded by equally dumb silences and accusations, not to mention the classic responses, common to both Turkish and Indian educated, "middle class" young people (20-40 years of age): "Yes. This (incest and child sexual abuse) is awful. It happens in slums and backward regions of our country all the time." For Turks, such backward regions are invariably "Southeast Turkey" and for Indians it's the slums and ghettos in the metropolitan cities and other rural areas.
The region is never urban, never one's own home. To consider the possibility even for a second of one's own home being a haven for abuse is one too horrific for any society to admit. And yet I believe that only by entertaining this possibility can people really be wary of incest and other forms of sexual abuse and take necessary measures to prevent them.

Of course it's not easy to break years of social conditioning that prevents all of us from imagining such heinous acts capable of being committed within our own homes. It is even more difficult to approach the topic of incest academically that I have endeavored to do in the following pages, for it involves not only confronting the demons within our own homes but also thinking and writing about them in an analytical, academic manner, without breaking down emotionally. I personally realized this difficulty only too well on the very first stay I began my ethnographic work.

Based in Turkey as an Indian student researcher, I was clearly an outsider as I began interviewing the feminist organizations *Mor Çatı* in Istanbul and KAMER in Diyarbakır. Yet being a woman and believing in the core principles of feminism myself was what made me feel connected to these organizations even before I entered their premises. Whether the feeling was mutual, I don't know. But with this connected feeling in my heart and yet with no less trepidation and anxiety, I remember walking down the back streets of Beyoğlu on a cold January afternoon to interview Fatma and

Feride at *Mor Çatı*. I remember feeling ill-prepared to question people about incest in spite of having read so much about it. It just felt *wrong*, approaching an interview about such a grave and painful issue in such a casual, cold, academic manner on a regular winter afternoon. I started questioning myself—why am I doing this? Am I the right person to do this? These women will just laugh at a novice like me with no background in any social work or psychology or law, wondering about an issue as serious as incest. Who will take a 30-something-year-old, mature Indian Masters student and a mother of one seriously? I was sure I would get the same perplexed looks that I usually get from people when I tell them that I studied engineering and am now studying incest. And to make matters worse, I was ill. And if someone is now expecting me to say that as soon as I entered *Mor Çatı* premises something magically changed—that didn't happen either. Everyone seemed too busy and I was ushered into a corner and asked to wait for someone to join me. A lovely German student volunteer woman got me a much needed glass of water at that point and we started chatting. Slowly I eased into the environment and by the time I started interviewing Fatma, I felt slightly more confident.

But not for long. Although I understood almost everything Fatma said to me in Turkish, my confidence started crumbling again as I heard my own cripplingly awful Turkish responses to her native-speaker like fluent Turkish statements. And yet something inside me pushed me on to push Fatma more and more; to search for more and more answers, for I had so many questions that I felt unable to articulate in Turkish and sometimes I felt I couldn't even formulate them in English if I had wanted to because I had no words for them. This was painfully evident when Fatma left and Feride took over for the second half of the interview. With Feride, I had the opportunity to converse in fluent English, and yet I just couldn't ask the questions—ask her to share with me the pain of the thousands of adult women incest survivors who had confided in her. Due to the ease of the language and the fact that Feride is a psychologist, my interview with her was more intimate, more about people and experiences than the organizational philosophy and work that I had already asked Fatma about; but the more intimate the conversation became, the more difficult and painful it got for me to ask her more and more questions…because I had so many. The German woman who had got me a glass of water stayed on for both the interviews and till this day I thank her for it because to me she represented a bulwark of support—an alien in a foreign country like me—and yet connected to me as woman—just as these women in *Mor Çatı* that I was interviewing. Without interrupting she just listened to the exchanges between Fatma and me and later on Feride and me. In many ways, when I think about it now, she sort of represented the unbiased listener, listening to an incest disclosure, with no interruptions, all sympathy.

For this trip to *Mor Çatı* was indeed something like an incest disclosure session, which I entered with much trepidation and left feeling mildly relieved and still confused. It's as if in asking questions I had excavated skeletons from my own past—dark rooms, giant double beds, hidden corners, the confusion mixed with pain, forbidden pleasures, the guilt and dirty feeling, the hate, that one plea—everything—was just swimming round and round my mind. In such a state, I went to Diyarbakır to interview Kamuran at KAMER and later on interviewed the founder Nebahat Akkoç as well, but in Istanbul, well after my fieldwork in India, by which time I was in a completely different frame of mind. Anyway, looking back at my trip to Diyarbakır, the interview was once again in Turkish, but after having immersed myself in the language for the purposes of the research, I think the questions and answers flowed more easily. But those same dark

demons in my mind kept on haunting me and just wouldn't let me relax or enjoy the city or even KAMER—the feelings of inadequacy in doing this research, self doubts, and pain—were all coming back.

And so a few weeks later after Diyarbakır when I met Feride again for a follow-up interview at the Starbucks in Etiler—a posh suburb of Istanbul and very close to her own private practice—it was with the aim of asking questions that I had in my nervousness missed previously, to achieve more clarity in language so that I could go to the heart of certain issues, and finally in talking to an experienced psychologist, to put my own haunting thoughts to rest. Based in a "neutral" setting, the interview did indeed help us relax and exchange a lot of information. However, once again, I struggled with words—words to express what I really felt and also wanted Feride to tell me; words with which I wanted to tell Feride something about myself. As the interview started drawing to an end, I started to panic, in spite of all the information I had received, I started feeling that nothing would be complete, nothing would be valid if I didn't find a way to say this—"Feride", I said finally, "I am a survivor myself".

I still heartily thank Feride for her response: "You are a very brave survivor. And we are all very impressed by and proud of what you are doing." I left Starbucks, this time knowing myself and knowing that from now on I need not have pre-interview worries—there will always be someone who understands, someone who listens. And so in all my subsequent interviews, my "positionality" as Donna Haraway would say (Haraway, 1988), in the objective/subjective "matrix" was that not only of a student, a researcher, a woman, a mother—but also an incest survivor—an incest survivor looking for answers as a researcher and as a person and most importantly as a woman. It is with this confidence then that I flew to India at the end of January this year to interview Anuja at RAHI in New Delhi.

The subsequent interview with Anuja at the little clinic she was temporarily renting for the purposes of individual therapy of incest survivors, my experiences in India, and the last few interviews that later followed in Istanbul and Ankara added further to all the insights that I had gained thus far and yet another twist to my "positionality". In other words, the "situated knowledges" (Haraway, 1988) that I gained in the process of this research were located within the dynamics of these complex interactions—within this subjective and objective, local and global, familiar and unfamiliar realms of knowing some cultures and not knowing some, speaking English and Hindi fluently and not being as fluent in Turkish, knowing the Indian context better than the Turkish and yet not knowing the workings of such organizations in both the countries and the politics of incest itself that they deal with. Going beyond the "knowledges" gained, this multi-sited ethnography involving organizations located in different countries and yet involving common issues, and the local and the global spaces within which they work (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997), also shaped my person as layers and layers of revelation hit me like waves at every subsequent step I took—but not like layers of an onion peel—a woman and then a mother and then a student and then a survivor…no. Layers all enmeshed into one that make me who I am, including an ethnographer who in spite of language and other restrictions tried her best to understand the efforts and challenges of these organizations in breaking the silence and easing the pain of incest.

Whether this will aid our general understanding of incest and provide everyone with the impetus to help adult survivors, I don't know. But this is what I have endeavored to do.

The following pages then are an attempt to reveal the workings of these feminist organizations in Turkey and India in their interactions with survivors of incest and their struggles against and within societal, media and legal discourses more specifically, and more generally the kind of social and media discourses surrounding incest in the two countries and the status of women in each. Most importantly, the following pages are also an attempt to make all of us: academics, activists and everyone else reflect on our own limitations—the limitations of our acceptance of incest as a rampant phenomenon that might be happening within our own homes; the limitation of our theories to adequately address the issue academically; the limitation of the law for adult survivors of incest; the limitations of resources for them; and finally, and most importantly, the limitation of our existing social structures that implicate both men and women and make all kinds of children, all across the world, susceptible to such a despicable abuse. This thesis may not answer these limitations or provide solutions, but it is an attempt to make us all at least think about how we may ourselves, individually and maybe perhaps by collaborating together, address our shortcomings that sacrifice people as children and as adult survivors for life.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Such is the power of childhood incest, and the deft trap it lays out for you. It moulds you with its swift fingers at an age when you haven't even begun to discover yourself…Its secret remains safe, you become what it wants you to become. (Anonymous, 1999a, p. 5).

> Incest is not a taboo. Talking about it is a taboo. (Bass and Davis, 1988, p. 441)

> Incest causes a fundamental change in children … it showed me that what is said and what is meant are different, what's real and what is stated are different and this dishonesty is no mistake. It's deliberate and is aimed at those who are less powerful. (Anonymous, 1999b, p. 101)

"…According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children are not just objects that need to be protected, but at the same time are subjects with special rights[1]." (Çocuklara Yönelik Cinsel İstismar, n.d.), says the brochure on child sexual abuse (henceforth CSA) on the website of one of Turkey's pioneer feminist organizations, *Mor Çatı,* based in Istanbul. The UNICEF convention on the Rights of the Child also mentions "the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life." (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2008). Yet children all across the world, as the diverse testimonies of adults abused as children above illustrate, continue to be abused, primarily by men, primarily by men they are taught to love and respect—fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, teachers, neighbors…almost anyone who can legitimize their presence in the child's apparent safest haven: his or her home.

Incest in the following pages will thus refer to such CSA: an abuse inflicted on a child by an adult family member or another person in the position of trust and with access to the child's home. Also by virtue of the severe psychological trauma of such incest abuse that children carry onto their adult lives, I would like to include a more comprehensive definition of the act itself which includes not only contact behaviors

[1] Tr. "...Çocuk Hakları Sözleşmesi'ne göre çocuklar yalnızca korunması gereken neseneler değil, aynı zamanda özel hakları olan öznelerdir."

such as touching of genital parts and even penetration, but also non-contact behaviors such as looking and talking in a sexual manner, all of which obviously provides sexual gratification to the adult perpetrator (Gilgun, 1995; Williams and Finkelhor, 1990) at the expense of a child who is not in the position and age[2] where he or she can willingly concede to such a demand .

In the summer of 2010, when I decided to listen to "voices" such as the ones above, the decision was both a personally motivated and an academic one. Emotionally and personally speaking, I wanted to hear these voices, most of them of women, all adult, and see if there are any mechanisms in place for these adults, especially women, who have survived CSA, specifically CSA at home, inflicted by a family member—incest—in order to provide them with emotional and psychological support. Academically, I was interested in studying not just the phenomenon of incest, the complex and dynamic discourses around the issue, but most importantly: how do organizations working in societies where family structures are very strong; where women and children have a strong connection to such structures; and where the confluences of more "traditional" ideas on family and individuality with the more global, neo-liberal notions of human rights, laws and individual freedom, handle an issue like incest? Most academic studies on incest that I came across, including statistical data on the issue and anthropological, sociological, and psychological analyses, along with the many testimonies of those abused, which are easily available, are from the United States and other countries from the Global North such as the UK. While it is easy these days to find statistics of sexual abuse and other such "data" from countries of the Global South, which includes websites of national and international conventions and agencies, it is still relatively rare to find much academic, political, social, and cultural analyses of the issue in such places.

I decided to focus on the countries of Turkey and India for this purpose. Being of Indian origin myself and a student at one of Turkey's prominent universities, my decision was also based on the way the two countries are interestingly situated in the world. They are two of the world's rapidly "developing" countries with vibrant democracies, boasting total populations of approximately 1.19 billion in 2011 (People:: India, 2011) and 74 million ("Nüfus", 2011) in 2010 respectively, that have emerged as

[2] For further discussion on the issue of adulthood and childhood, consent and non-consent, please refer to the Appendix.

modern, secular[3], nation states in the early twentieth century. When it comes to the status of children and women, both the countries are trying to improve the conditions of their children and women respectively in attempts to "develop" and join the ranks of "developed" nations in the world. For example, both Turkey and India are members of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (henceforth CEDAW) and ratified the treaty in 1985 and 1993 respectively (States Parties, 2000). Very recently and ironically on the celebratory occasion of "Children's Day" in Turkey, on 23rd April, academics and judges from Turkey, India and Germany met to discuss and propose solutions for abuse of children, including sexual abuse ("International child rights court needed", 2011). Turkey is also supposed to sign a new treaty on violence against women (Küçükkoşum, 2011). Also, both the countries boast strong feminist movements that have been active for many years now, struggling against the justice system to see more rights for women and children in the law. Feminism in general has had an interesting trajectory in the histories of the two nations, and women in particular have been indispensable to these histories and the subsequent modernization projects that both the countries have embarked on.

For the purposes of this study, I therefore decided to focus on the workings of three such feminist organizations in Turkey and India that deal with adult women survivors[4] of incest abuse. These organizations are *Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı*[5] (henceforth Mor Çatı) in Istanbul, *KA-MER* (*Kadın Merkezi*) *Vakfı* (henceforth KAMER) based in Diyarbakır but working in 23 provinces in southeastern Turkey, and RAHI: *Recovering And Healing from Incest* (henceforth RAHI) in New Delhi, India. I

[3] We have to remember that secularism in both countries has different meanings of course; it bearing the motto of "unity in diversity" in India with its myriad of religions and languages, while meaning religious separatism, militarism and establishment of a united "Turkish" identity in Turkey. In either case, as Tharu and Niranjana remind us, these "secular" perpectives are once again hegemonic male views (Tharu and Niranjana, 1999) driven by the founding *fathers* of the two nations: M.K. Gandhi (upper middle class, Hindu) and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Turkish military leader). These are again oppressive to women (John, 1996), especially women from minority groups.

[4] I am distinguishing between *victims* and *survivors* on the level of terminology here, making the following distinction: survivors are victims who have already redefined their relationship to their experience of incestuous abuse as opposed to being simply victims or subjects of abuse (Mitchell and Morse, 1998).

[5] Eng. Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation

conducted interviews with workers, organization leaders, and psychologists in Istanbul, Diyarbakır and New Delhi. From Mor Çatı, I was fortunate enough to talk to both Fatma, one of the longest serving workers at the organization, and Feride Yıldırım, an American trained psychologist who has had extensive experience working with women survivors of incest coming to Mor Çatı and her own private practice. From KAMER I interviewed Nebahat Akkoç, the founder of the organization and Kamuran, a worker with KAMER in Diyarbakır, who is very experienced in seeing cases of abused women and children. Finally, I also had the opportunity to conduct an in-depth interview with Anuja Gupta, the founder[6] and director of RAHI in New Delhi.

Apart from these people directly connected to the organizations, I was also fortunate enough to meet, interview, and learn from various other civil society actors, psychologists, and other legal and medical experts in the area of CSA in Istanbul and Ankara. These include Professor Dr. Şahika Yüksel, a leading psychiatrist from Istanbul University with years of experience working with adult women survivors of incest privately and also with Mor Çatı; Professor Dr. Ufuk Sezgin[7], formerly of the psychology department of Istanbul University, and presently working with its forensic department with adult women survivor survivors of sexual abuse who want to sue their perpetrators; Professor Dr. Figen Şahin, chairwoman of the *Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect*[8] and director of the *Child Protection Center* at Gazi University in Ankara; Esra Çanakçı, the Governance and Society Projects Manager from the British Council Ankara; and lawyer Hülya Gülbahar, working independently and with several women's organizations, including Mor Çatı and KAMER, in fighting for the rights of women and children victims/survivors of sexual abuse and other forms of domestic violence. I also conducted online interviews with Roger Bamber, a leading family lawyer based in Cambridge, England, and Apurv Tewari, a dynamic young lawyer based in New Delhi, India.

Based on all these interviews and study of the organizations' websites and literature generated on incest, viz. advertisements, books, plays, pamphlets, and newspaper announcements, in the next chapter I have tried to highlight how these

[6] Along with her partner Ashwini Ailawadi.

[7] She is also constantly called by feminist organizations such as Mor Çatı and KAMER to work with adult women survivors of incest.

[8] Tr. "Çocuk istismarını ve ihlalini önleme derneği"

organizations struggle with existing media, legal, social, and financial patriarchal discourses and attitudes towards incest while trying to provide support and healing care to adult women survivors and trying to break the silence around this topic which is in some ways tabooed in both the countries. Before engaging in the actual analyses of the organizations, through some examples of work being done against CSA and depiction of incest in popular and literary, contemporary media and culture, such as newspapers, internet sites, movies, and books, I have tried to sketch the context in which incest is happening and being talked about in both countries and finally, since law is the ultimate pre-legitimizing discourse on any issue (Menon, 1999) and also a major site of feminist struggles, I have also tried to present the legal stand towards incest in Turkey and India. These existing media, or more generally social, and legal discourses provide the backdrop against which each of these three organizations work.

Not surprisingly, what emerged from the study was not only the many layers of personal, public, legal, media, and political silencing of incest—which is to be expected—but also the *ways* in which this silencing is carried out and in which Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI, working in disparate locations and yet towards many similar goals, try to break these silence(s) while aiming to heal the women victims/survivors who come to them. Uniformly, in news article after news article, report after report—some better and some worse than others and some even international—what emerged was the need to recognize the sexual abuse of children, especially within their homes, but at the same time a silence around the many adult survivors of incest around the world who still bear the emotional scars from abuses incurred a long time ago. It is almost that in focusing on children, which is very important in its own right, the voices of adult survivors are completely ignored. This is true not just of media discourses that I analyzed which included news and other articles, films, and books, but also the legal discourse in both countries and even internationally. For most places in the world, including Turkey and India, I couldn't find a concrete legal provision for adult survivors of sexual abuse who wished to sue their abusers years after the actual act was committed. Although there have been recent legal reforms in both the countries regarding laws on CSA, there is no concrete law that deals with incest and adult survivors of incest.

Since I studied feminist organizations who mainly and, in the case of Mor Çatı and KAMER only, work with women and children, and since women as girls and as adults are more prone to all kinds of domestic violence, including incest, as shall be

shown later, it became even more necessary, during the course of my research to analyze the notion of family and its sanctity in cultures like Turkey and India—ideas that associate women and children with the sacred "family" and guarantee them love and protection in return. But in the case of incest, when both love and protection are violated, it became interesting to see that in all kinds of media and legal discourses, including the experiences of the organizations themselves, how the family ideal was still being upheld at the cost of the physical and emotional well being of women and children.

Only a victim's perspective can provide an insight to the kind of pain and emotional betrayal that abuses like incest entail, along with the physical violation of the body. And yet all the existing discourses focus on the victim's body instead of her[9] feelings and point fingers at the victim—the abused—instead of the abuser. In protecting the family, presenting victims in the media and in courtrooms as pitiable objects, and totally devaluing the emotional aspect of abuse, all the discourses have totally managed to silence the "voices" of the abused, which are constantly mediated by the "expert" lawyers, doctors, psychologists, news reporters, TV presenters, and so on.

In such an environment then, I found the three organizations struggling, financially and emotionally, to break the many silences surrounding incest, heal survivors, and also make their voices be heard. Although my research revealed that their principles, working methodologies, and viewed solutions were based on their own individual philosophies and orientations, which included more activist centered leanings of Mor Çatı and KAMER, who believe in challenging the Turkish State and laws and mental health focused ones of RAHI, who believes in survivor centered focus and therapy, they were all equally engaged in breaking the silence surrounding incest and helping survivors in their own ways. It is the workings of these organizations along with the many silences and some positive initiatives revealed by the discourses within which they work that in the concluding chapter will force me to delve deeper into these results and push for a move beyond family sanctity, survivorship, womanhood, and discourses on justice, ethics, and morality.

Before I proceed, however, in the next section I would like to briefly look at women's roles in the modern histories of Turkey and India and the beginnings of the

[9] I will henceforth prefer the use of the pronoun "her" over "him" to refer to an abused person. This is not to say that boys don't get abused at home. However, in studying feminist organizations, my focus mainly involves female victims of incestuous abuse.

feminist movements in each. In the subsequent sections, I will then look at incest more generally as a global problem—the statistics of prevalence and its impacts on adult (women) survivors; the issue of family sanctity and the many associations of women with family and purity; the need to go beyond statistics and existing theories of the incest taboo and to see it as a form of violence that needs to be viewed as a feminist concern; and finally a brief background of the three feminist organizations I shall be talking about in my fieldwork.

1.1. Women in Turkey and India: Markers of nation, of home

India broke free from British rule and became an independent nation on August, 15 1947 under the aegis of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress party led by him, which led to Jawaharlal Nehru becoming the first Prime Minister of the country. The Turkish republic, on the contrary, was established not against a foreign colonial power, but a dying Ottoman Empire by a group of Young Turks under the aegis of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on October, 29 1923.

Women played a significant role in both the nations' freedom struggles and the subsequent modernization projects that they embarked on. In Turkey, women were employed as the greatest tool to demonstrate the liberal reforms of the newly established Republican regime (Arat, 1997), where they were "emancipated" from the Ottoman era. By invoking nostalgic images of the original Turkic "warrior heroine", the hegemonic Turkish nationalist republic thus established, managed to shed women in the same light as men creating a homogenous "Turkish" identity—that of the Turkish warrior man and woman— equal in the public eye of the world, in the quest to establish a free, modern nation. Even before the establishment of the Republican regime, from the end of the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire, we can see a growing emphasis on the education of women from Muslim and other religious backgrounds (Burçak, 1977; Davis, 1986; Exertzoğlu, 2003; Simon, 2002; Somel, 2001; Young, 2001). Around the same time, we also see a growing emphasis on education amongst women in British India (Chatterjee, 1993, Jayawardena, 1986), and in both the regions education of women is emphasized for the need of creating not "loose" westernized women (Chatterjee, 1999; Exertzoğlu, 2003; Jayawardena, 1986), but well-informed mothers.

But these women were not mere pawns of modernization but also active agents in the establishment of modern Turkey and India and modern female identities therein. Both the countries had boasted of feminist movements and achievements from the end of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century—well into the establishment of the modern republics—at a time when lots of "western" countries couldn't claim something similar (Jayawardena, 1986; Nussbaum, 2009; Sirman, 1989). Yet, at the end of the day, women's struggles got subsumed under the larger nationalist agendas of both the countries (Jayawardena, 1986); their emancipation became the nation's marker of modernity[10] (Devji, 1994). While they were hailed as moving ahead in the public sphere, they became subjugated to male patriarchy again in the private sphere—the home and the family (Thakkar, 2005).

The family thus remained, as in all modern democracies and not just Turkey and India, a place where patriarchal power could be applied unchecked and unharmed. Since Turkey and India had established themselves as free, modern countries against foreign enemies, yet were always to remain surrounded by them (Cockburn, 2004), the enemies/aggressors/abusers/perpetrators all became just that: foreign, external. The abusers within the very internal sphere, the home got ignored (Banerjee, 2006). Consequently there were beginnings of strong new feminist movements in the seventies and especially the eighties in both the countries (Purkayastha et al., 2003; Sirman, 1989), much in line with the feminist movements from the "west", that brought into the forefront this *private* domain of women and addressed not only globally uniform issues such as domestic violence, (Altınay & Arat, 2009) but also issues specific to the two countries, for instance dowry deaths in India (Purkayastha et al., 2003). Whereas Indian feminist movements had more political party-based beginnings than Turkish ones (Kumar, 1999), both movements shifted focus from the state to the personal, familial as sites of violence against women and children (John, 1996). These movements challenged and have been challenging the strong patriarchal structure still prevalent in the form of the old patriarchy in homes, and the new patriarchal order established earlier on in the twentieth century during the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and

[10] Gandhi's vision of the strong and self-sacrificing, pious woman moved a generation of women to fight for the cause of India's independence, just like Nehru's vision of the working woman ushered an era of educational and economic reforms for girls in newly independent India. Similarly, Atatürk's vision of a country free from Islam and more "European", had a direct impact on the way women (and men) started dressing in Republican Turkey (Jayawardena, 1986).

Independent India in the form of laws and rights supposed to "liberate" women in both the countries.

Sexual abuse of children within and outside of their homes has also become a recent area of lobbying for feminist organizations in both the countries, which include Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI. In the next section I shall briefly go over the glaring statistics of incest worldwide and specifically from Turkey and India as well as the impacts of this heinous abuse in the lives of adults, especially women that such feminist organizations cater to.

1.2. Incest: Prevalence and impacts in adulthood, womanhood

According to a study conducted by David Finkelhor, one of the leading researchers in the area of CSA, and Jennifer Dziuba-Leatherman (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994), involving 2000 children aged between 10-16 who were interviewed, it was revealed that at least one in five girls and one in ten to twenty boys are sexually abused in the United States, of which almost 20% are abused by family members. In a more comprehensive study in the same year by Finkelhor (Finkelhor, 1994) of 21 countries including the United States and Canada, 7% to 36% women and 3% to 29% men were sexually abused—these rates being comparable between the United States and the rest of the countries in the study. More recent statistics in the United Kingdom reveal that "One in nine young adults (11.3%) experienced contact sexual abuse during childhood" and "16,864 sexual crimes against children under 16 were recorded in England and Wales in 2009/10". (Sexual abuse statistics, 2011). The source also goes on to state that 80% of these crimes are committed by perpetrators[11] known to the children.

In Turkey and India as well, where the tendency is to constantly push incest to "backward" areas, the statistics indicate otherwise. Although there are not many reliable statistics in Turkey as yet on this issue (Çavlin-Bozbeyoğlu, 2009), according to Mor Çatı which is based in Istanbul and deals with women suffering from domestic violence—3 out of every 4 women according to their website (Yalçın, n.d.)— *one* out of

[11] I shall be using this word interchangeably with offenders, abusers, and aggressors (since my aim is to put incest within a framework of violence). All these basically refer to people, mainly men, who are the cause of the act.

every 4 such cases of domestic violence involves incest (Cinsel İstismar, 2010). This would be approximately 7-10% of the population. Once again, I am emphasizing *Istanbul* and *not* "Southeast" Turkey, for which statistics indicate something very similar ("Her dört evden birinde", 2009). Figen Şahin from Ankara, yet another big city, also emphasizes that all such statistics in Turkey are just the "tip of the iceberg" and the actual figures are much higher, across all socioeconomic structures and from all parts of the country (personal communication, February 23, 2011).

In India, several statistics have been gathered, especially since the late nineties on CSA and incest after RAHI's pioneering *Voices from the Silent Zone* ("RAHI", 1998), which showed that a whopping 76% of *urban* Indian women had been sexually abused, with 71% abused by relatives or someone they knew. These are not girls from the slums in Mumbai or from the remote villages of Uttar Pradesh—these are women that grew up in metropolitan cities, middle-to-upper-middle-class families across India. Even before RAHI's research, there were a couple of other small researches, such as the one by the *Tata Institute of Social Sciences* in 1985 that revealed that one out of three girls and one out of 10 boys had been sexually abused as a child and that 50% of CSA happens at home. Another one by *Samvada*, a Bangalore-based NGO in 1996 showed that 75% of sexual abusers were adult family (male) members (Chatterjee, 2009). More recently, a 2007 study by the *Ministry of Women and Child Development* (henceforth MWCD), the government of India, revealed that across the country 53.22% children were sexually abused and 50% of those abusers were people known to them (Kacker, Varadan, & Kumar, 2007). Most of these children never reported the matter to anyone and "the prevalence of sexual abuse in upper and middle class was found to be proportionately higher than in lower or in lower middle class" (Kacker, Varadan, & Kumar, 2007, p. 74). *Arpan*, a Mumbai-based organization fighting against CSA lists the major studies that have gathered statistics all over the country from the 1990s to the 2000s, *all* based in big cities (apart from the MWCD study mentioned above that was nationwide). Apart from the ones already mentioned, the study by Tulir-CPHCSA (*Centre for Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse*) based in Chennai conducted in 2006 amongst school going children reported that 42% were sexually abused, mainly by family members and a smaller survey of 350 school girls by New Delhi based *Sakshi* in 1997 which revealed that "63% had experienced CSA at the hands of family members" ("Statistics of prevalence", n.d.).

Moreover, there is an almost unanimous agreement in the belief that more girls than boys are victims of sexual abuse at home, incest, which is perpetrated mainly by men. According to a community survey conducted by David Finklehor, 71% of sexually abuse cases were female and 29% male (Finkelhor, 1986). In the same study, it was also established that girls are at a higher risk and abuse (especially incest) starts at an early age. This is confirmed by a review of other studies done by Andrea Nelson and Pamela Oliver, which also say that girls are more likely to be abused by family members (incest), are abused for longer, and are also susceptible to start being abused at a younger age than boys (Nelson and Oliver, 1998). In a study conducted by Nelson and Oliver themselves:

> ...the prevalence of experience with adult-child sexual contact for women was 1.6 times that of men. The interview data indicate that, when sexual contact occurred, it was of greater severity for girls than for boys. Of the girls' 11 episodes, 82 percent were repeated and 64 percent were incestuous (i.e., involved a close relative, generally a parent). By contrast, only 30 percent of the boys' 10 episodes were repeated and none was incestuous. (Nelson and Oliver, 1998, p. 563).

In addition to these statistics, that pretty clearly indicate the prevalence of incestuous abuse in the lives of girls, which is more than boys, Nelson and Oliver also say, "...the large majority of adult-child sexual contacts reported in the questionnaire were heterosexual: 98 percent of girls' contacts were with men (2 percent with both sexes)..." (Nelson and Oliver, 1998, p. 563). It doesn't take a genius to then put both the pieces of information together and conclude that girls are more sexually abused than boys, that most of their abuse experiences are incestuous, and the overwhelming majority of their abusers are adult men.

As children then, according to Finkelhor and Browne, these sexually abused victims, which include those suffering from incest, experience traumatic sexualization as they confuse sex and love; betrayal—not only from the abuser but also from other family members and people, especially if they don't believe her when she reveals the abuse; powerlessness against the power of the (male) abuser in the family; and finally social stigmatization by virtue of being "different" from other children in the society (Finkelhor and Browne, 1985). Several incest victims are thus so traumatized and confused by the experience that they just become shy and withdrawn from family and friends. One can only imagine the kind of impact these children carry on to their adult lives. The necessity to help *adult* women survivors then is a grave one. I refer to these once-victims of incest as survivors, which is an emphasis borne out of the women's

movement against violence to depict these women as agents of positive change instead of passive victims of abuse (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). It becomes extremely important to help survivors since incest is a kind of abuse that usually starts young and continues for a long time (La Fontaine, 1988), most of the time, as Feride Yıldırım claims, till the child reaches childbearing age or an age when she is able to stand up for herself (personal communication, January 10, 2011). According to psychological experts, the general long term impacts of CSA that can be even more severe in the case of incest on adults are:

> …fear, anxiety, depression, anger and hostility, aggression, and sexually inappropriate behavior. Frequently reported long-term effects include depression and self-destructive behavior, anxiety, feelings of isolation and stigma, poor self-esteem, difficulty in trusting others, a tendency toward revictimization, substance abuse, and sexual maladjustment. (Browne and Finkelhor, 1986, p. 66).

In addition to these impacts there are others such as suicidal thoughts and attempts, recurring abusive relationships, borderline personality disorders, certain kinds of phobias, confusing sexual and emotional needs (F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 10, 2011). These symptoms vary from adult to adult depending on the individual and the kind and length of abuse, but it would be safe to say from research and personal testimonies of survivors themselves (Armstrong, 1978; Barringer, 1992; Champagne, 1996; Ellen and Davis, 1988; Herman, 1981; Naples and Clark, 1996; Randall, 1987) that any adult experiencing incest as a child inevitably bears some trace of the trauma inflicted on her. Indeed, incest is a grave trauma induced by victimization of/on the less powerful, the child, by a trusted elder; a trauma that continues into adult life and affects one's sexuality, induces feelings of intense betrayal and powerlessness, and sometimes also causes a split in personality of the person—one that must exist in the society and the other that must suffer/has suffered the abuse of the aggressor (Des Rosiers, 1994).

Incestuous abuse also unleashes and manifests itself differently in girls and women as compared to boys and men. In a world where men and women are so clearly divided and defined in distinction to each other, where it is desirable to be a "man"—one who is *not* a "woman"—it is no surprise that the perceptions and effects of incest are felt differently and experienced more severely on the "woman" side of the

sex/gender divide[12]. Since *sexuality* itself is a highly gendered concept in social perception, where male sexuality is seen as dominant, desirable, natural, aggressive, heterosexual, and so on (Nelson and Oliver, 1998; Ramazanoğlu and Holland, 1993), and female sexuality as passive, unnatural, dangerous and something to be controlled, naturally women tend to interpret their experiences of sexual abuse as more "coerced and harmful" than men's experiences of the same, especially the ones involving male perpetrators, which is usually the case (Nelson and Oliver, 1998). The potency of the common and prevalent attitudes and constructs of male vis-à-vis female sexuality and identity, "provide most boys with potent self-images to counter the impotence they may have felt in victimization, even by a man, while passive feminine identities reinforced the sense of helplessness and victimization of the abuse experience." (Nelson and Oliver, 1998, p. 572). Indeed, sexual abuse of girls is like a double victimization and specifically incest a triple victimization—by the society, by the abuser, within one's home—robbed of everything, what *does* a girl do? How does she cope to survive into adulthood? And as an adult, for most girls do indeed survive with remarkable resiliency in the face of the society and incestuous abuse, how can we expect them not to bear the scars of this victimization?

It is not surprising, when Ufuk Sezgin and Raija-Leena Punamäki in their pilot study of the effectiveness of group psychotherapy among women with multiple traumatic life events in Southeast Turkey who came to KAMER, talk of sexual abuse, especially the one at home (incest) as a *sexual trauma*, and based on their research declare women "to be more vulnerable to mental health problems…particularly when facing traumatic experiences" and more prone to PTSD (*Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*) than men and "their PTSD symptoms are more often chronic…attributed to biological markers…*and to their social role as mothers…women's inferior social status also contributes to the accumulation of stressors and trauma, and to deprivation of social support and optimal trauma processing* [emphasis added]." (Sezgin and

[12] It would really be beyond the scope of this thesis to engage in a philosophical enquiry into what constitutes "woman" and man", a detailed discussion of essentialist, social constructionist, and other views along the lines of Judith Butler's Gender Trouble (Butler, 1990). Since this is a study of the practical handling of incest amongst women survivors by certain organizations, I am considering women in the most commonsensical way in which I am a woman and the way in which general society understands women and their femininity.

Punamäki, 2008, p. 558). The scars run deep, especially in the face of a social structure that is already naturally biased against women.

1.3. Family has the woman, but does the woman have a family?

The aforementioned emphasis on women's "social role as mothers" is an important one in the context of incest for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, incest is an act perpetrated in the family and the role of women, especially as mothers with respect to the integrity of the family unit is a crucial one. Secondly, as mothers and former daughters, women form a bridge across the generational propagation of incest, a form of violence that as we all know and that is not new but has been in existence since the dawn of mankind (Hooper, 1997). Why? Because as Carol Ann-Hooper reminds us, social conditions that support the occurrence of incest, which includes the social "role" of mothers, the domination of fathers, the sanctity of the family unit, etc. have remained the same across ages (Hooper, 1997). Both Carol Ann-Hooper in tracing the history of incest discourses from the end of the 19th century through 20th century England and Judith Herman in analyzing studies revealing the prevalence of incest in the United States across approximately the same period of time, reveal the consistency of the presence of incest in both societies and the discourses which have shaped attitudes towards this issue (Herman, 1981; Hooper 1997). According to Hooper, incest gained attention between the 1870s-1930s, with a brief resurgence in the 1950s, only to be "rediscovered" again from the 1970s onwards. Throughout this trajectory she shows how, in an attempt to protect the sacrosanctity of the "family", the control of girls' sexuality became pivotal to the cause of preventing incest, with an increasing emphasis on the role of "good" mothers who by not being promiscuous and by not neglecting their children could (and should) bear the onerous task of preventing incest (Hooper, 1997). Men, perpetrators, were not even implicated once according to her analyses.

In a similar vein but with a slightly different emphasis, Judith Herman talks about the various case studies and researches done from the time of Freud, who according to Herman was the first "patriarch" of psychology to suppress the truth of incest by shifting the blame from male perpetrators to female children, to the Kinsey report in the mid twentieth century that in spite of striking figures also denied the

cruelty of incest, to finally the extensive studies spanning several countries in the 1970s after the feminist movement discovered all kinds of abuses at home including incest that showed how indeed incest is a very "common occurrence" and an intense form of traumatic abuse (Herman, 1981). This highlights the widespread denial and un-acknowledgment of a problem spanning ages and the sacrifice of the voices of so many women (and men, although Herman focuses on father-daughter incest) victims to the altar of family preservation and protection of male reputation. In either case, it is women who emerge as the victims (daughters) and criminals (unfit mothers), the seduced and the "seductresses" (Des Rosiers, 1994; Herman, 1981; Hooper, 1997), the bearers of family unity and honor and the models of "good" mothers who are supposed to prevent incest by satisfying their husbands and setting virtuous examples for their daughters, irrespective of their own possible present problems and past abuse histories. This emphasis on family unity and mother-daughter relationships especially put and continues putting a lot of strain on women.

It is this kind of emphasis on families that has proliferated, as Rosaria Champagne points out, organizations such as *False Memory Syndrome Foundation* (henceforth FMSF) in the United States claiming to prevent the breakdown of "the family" and challenging the memories of incest survivors, accusing them of being false and fantasies, thereby reinstating the power of abusers—all in the name of "the family" (Champagne, 1996). It is also such attitudes that have led to the widespread denial, in countries worldwide and, in our specific case, countries like Turkey and India, where family structures are especially strong, to the reality of the "common occurrence" of incest that Herman, as mentioned earlier, talks about. J.S. La Fontaine makes a poignant point when she notes, "Associating sexual abuse of children with 'strangers' parallels the identification of incest as a practice among despised and distant communities. In both cases the reality is kept decently hidden from view." (La Fontaine, 1988, p. 10). This clearly equates the enclosed space of the family, the space of the power of the "private domain of patriarchy" (Ward, 1997), with a supposed "safe haven" where the sexual abuse of women and children can continue unhampered.

There is a growing body of academic and political literature that focuses on the perspectives and roles of women within this "family ideal". Several scholars have studied the implications of incest on mother-daughter relationships (Herman, 1981; Ward, 1997). As pointed out earlier, in Carol Ann-Hooper's analysis of changing incest discourses over the past hundred years or so in England—changing and yet always

regulating girls' and mothers' behavior and sexuality—constructions of womanhood and motherhood were constantly negotiated with incest being branded as a mother's neglect and problem in the mid 1930s to a mother's responsibility to protect children after the "rediscovery" of incest in the 1970s and beyond (Hooper, 1997). She also points out how mothers can themselves have mixed reactions towards incest ranging from believing and supporting their daughters to utter disbelief and even blaming their daughters for the act (Hooper, 1997). In a powerful chapter on "Child Abuse: a Problem for Feminist Theory", Marie Ashe and Naomi Cahn talk about how mothers fail to protect their sexually abused daughters (Ashe and Cahn, 1994). The daughters, on their side, feel a permanent suspension of emotions and division of loyalties where on the one side, due to social expectations and family structures they are primarily nurtured by their mothers and are expected to share a strong bond with them, and on the other, due their abuse by their fathers or uncles or grandfathers or whoever it may be, they feel simultaneously the need to reveal all to their mothers, unsure of how they might react but at the same time, because of their affection for the perpetrator (who is after all their family member and supposed "caregiver"), they also feel the need to protect him (Sells, 1994). In the case of abuse by a father or grandfather, a prominent male head of the family, this results in a gendered creation of empathy in an abused daughter where "The forced intimacy characteristic of incest perpetration separates the daughter from her mother, reinforcing the child's feelings of maternal betrayal and abandonment while intensifying her connection to the abusive father [or whoever the male in the family maybe]" (Jacobs, 1993, p. 133).

In societies like Turkey and India, where the "family ideal" is especially strong, the bond between women and family is even further tightened. In both countries, women remain closely tied to the "sacred family" (Kapur and Cossman, 1999) and stand as important signifiers of familial honor (Çavlin-Bozbeyoğlu, 2009; Gilligan & Akhtar, 2006). In fact, a woman's honor *is* the family's honor and of course the family's honor *cannot* be compromised (Banerjee, 2006; Çavlin-Bozbeyoğlu, 2009). As Richa Nagar points out in her poignant collaborative work *Playing with Fire* with eight rural women in the state of U.P., India, via the women's own autobiographical narratives, a family's "*izzat-aabroo*" or "respect-honor/reputation" is extremely important and borne by its women (Nagar, 2004, p. 62). It is such claims of honor and "respect of elders" that female children in both the countries grow up to revere and fear especially in situations like incest when these values are most at stake (Çavlin-Bozbeyoğlu, 2009).

Women, individuality and rights are all subsumed under the umbrella of family, duty, honor and obligation. During our conversation, Figen Şahin also pointed out how honor is very important to Turkish families and many parents bring their daughters to her, worried, if she is bleeding, most importantly to ensure that her hymen is intact (personal communication, February 23, 2011). Sex then, under such situations, becomes a *taboo,* especially for the female to engage in *outside* of the family, *outside* of marriage, because that would indicate a free, sexual woman, not attached to either her own family or the family of her husband, and that is unacceptable as a woman has to belong to one or the other, but who in actuality belongs to neither (Gabriele, 1992). A woman doesn't have a home. The home has her. She is the *a*sexual homemaker who may be educated and work in the public sphere, but still needs to respect "traditional values" at home (Banerjee, 2006).

And if knowledge of sex and women's sexuality is such a taboo in such an environment, knowledge of sexual abuse becomes a *double taboo* as Şahika Yüksel suggests (personal communication, March 23, 2011). As a matter of fact, admitting sexual abuse within a family, incest, according to me is a *triple taboo* that comes back to slap patriarchal family structures right in the face. In addition to breaking the taboos around sexuality and sexual abuse in general, incest challenges the "sanctity" of the home, where the men (as patriarchs) are situated as "protectors" and providers of women and children. Even though feminist movements in both Turkey and India have recently started working on sexual abuse of women and children in and out of homes, their impact is only slowly beginning to be felt, without shaking the foundational myth—the myth and taboo of sexuality and sexual abuse. The general public still justifies acts like incest by isolating sex and abuse to "other" segments of the society—outside the "nuclear" family ideals that emerged in both nascent India and Turkey (Jayawardena, 1986) to large, overcrowded, joint families; outside the "middle class" pious families (Donner, 2010; Chatterjee, 1993) to "poor" families; outside the realm of the virtuous "middle class, good woman" to the realm of the "fallen" or "poor" woman. The ideal of the clean, asexual, bourgeois family has to remain untouched, no matter what these feminists say—after all they are not *real* women in any case to begin with, for they are themselves defying norms (Kumar, 1999). Anuja Gupta passionately recalls how in working with women in HIV/AIDS activism, she felt the need to work with sexuality:

> So lot of us who are women who had started working on HIV AIDS which immediately required work on sexuality…and again if you are talking about early 90s...1990s...92-93— the word sexuality was not a concept. None of us ourselves had grown up…talking about our sexuality. Or talking about sex for that matter…So we felt that that was important if you are working on sexuality and telling people about how to use condoms and what the hell do we know about our own sexualities? Nothing and there is no space to talk about it. So why not set up a women's group?

That group as a matter of fact turned out be the place where incest was "revealed" to and by Anuja and other group members and formed the basis of her current organization RAHI aimed at helping survivors of incest.

This taboo against talking about (female) sexuality or sex in general is identified by experts as being a major hurdle in providing education about issues such as sexual abuse—both to experts such as psychologists, school counselors, etc. and the general public such as parents and children (Çavlin-Bozbeyoğlu, 2009; F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 26, 2011; U. Sezgin, personal communication, March 14, 2011). Also, the prime discourse of honor and shame and mothering and nurturing that connects women to families, which is so strong and prevalent in Turkey and India, is also the one that promises women familial support in exchange for their "work" of keeping the family together. Therefore, women are highly reluctant to leave their families to seek help such as shelters since they see their family as their ultimate refuge and support system—something that even Esra Çanakçı attested to in her years of experience in working with women subjected to domestic violence (Banerjee, 2006; E. Çanakçı, personal communication, February 23, 2011; Merry, 2006).

How does one talk about incest then, especially in the Turkish and Indian contexts? How does one challenge the mighty family to make the many "voices" that I have been talking about since the beginning be heard? I believe that it is only by having a feminist centered approach that goes *beyond* numbers on incest abuse and current theories on the incest taboo that one can even comprehend such an onerous task.

1.4. Beyond statistics and theories: The need for a feminist analysis of incest

I would like to refer back to a quote that features at the beginning of this chapter: "Incest is not a taboo. Talking about it is a taboo", by an incest survivor, Mary

McGarth, in the now legendary book for healing of CSA survivors *The Courage to Heal* by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis (Bass and Davis, 1988, p. 441). McGarth makes a very poignant point in this quote. Obviously, incest as an act of sexual relations is a taboo in most societies *because* of certain biological, social and moral reasons; but the fact that it is violated so rampantly at all levels of the society, goes to show that the very stringency of the taboo somehow remains with the verbal prohibition of the act instead of its performance. This challenges the basic premise of the anthropological theory of the *incest taboo* by highlighting the distinction between the act of incest itself and the talking about the act—it is *not* the act of incest that is a taboo, the act of (predominantly) male elders initiating sexual relations with children (both male and female). It is indeed the *revelation* of the act, the shame that hangs like a shroud around the *topic* of *incest* that prevents children and later on adult survivors of incest to talk about it that is the taboo.

J.S. La Fontaine, in studying the sexual abuse of children in their very homes, tries to resolve the practical reality and prevalence of incest as a form of CSA and the mere theoretical treatment it has received in the anthropological arena as a foundational, dominant taboo that lays at the base of virtually all families and societies (La Fontaine, 1988). In proposing a framework shift for analyzing the *problem* of incest, which as a "folk model for anthropological theories" (La Fontaine, 1988, p. 1) fails to see incest as a severe form of CSA, she gathers data from two sources: one is qualitative data gathered from a group of sexually abused children referred to a special unit in the department of psychological medicine in a children's hospital in London and the other is survey material collected by the BBC for the program Child Watch (La Fontaine, 1988). Based on her analyses, 88% of the cases from the hospital and about two thirds of the respondents to the BBC surveys reported being abused at their homes or within their "households" which consisted of either immediate family members or also extended to "trusted kin, friends and frequent visitors" to the household (La Fontaine, 1988, p. 9).

La Fontaine's study highlights an interesting attempt to challenge the legitimacy of anthropological, social and psychoanalytical studies of the incest taboo in cultures that undermines the damaging effects of the issue and reduces it to basically that—an issue—rather than a problem that is rampant and needs to be addressed. It is an issue, as La Fontaine and several others have endeavored to show, that needs to be divorced from exclusively "traditional" models of explanation, such as *social structural explanations*

as introduced by Lévi-Strauss (Lévi-Strauss, 1949/1969), *biosocial explanations* such as the ones proposed by Westermarck on the natural occurrence of the taboo against incest due to affinity experienced in family structures (Westermarck, 1891/1903), and in contrast the *psychoanalytical argument* proposed by Freud that assumes incest to be inherent in human nature (Freud, 1924/1961), and be thought of in combination with other psychological, feminist, and other theories (Meigs and Barlow, 2002). When viewed in combination with these theories and the statistics and facts pertaining to sexual abuse of children at home, no classical theoretical, anthropological, or social explanation of the incest taboo can fail to realize that the *incest taboo* is actually a concept being violated all the time as children all across the world continue to be abused, and unless we start challenging the basic "folk model of our kinship system" (La Fontaine, 1988, p. 15), our family structures themselves here, we shall remain blind to the horrors of this abuse. Incest is not just a taboo to be studied, a violation of kinship structures—incest is CSA in its most virulent, hurtful form that cuts closest to a child's heart for it happens at a place that is supposed to protect and nurture her—her home.

My aim then is to study incest as a form of abuse, CSA, and thus an act of violence and specifically gender-based violence. Lisa Price in her book *Feminist Frameworks* describes the interwoven intricacy of gender violence and sexual abuse as being because the latter is a creation of and in turn creates the former in a vicious circle that causes the more powerful, usually men, to use and abuse the less powerful, usually women and children, that they consider their property, which in turn enhances their power over them (Price, 2005). Viewed in this circle, incest abuse is then the ultimate exhibition of power by an elder (male), who physically, psychologically, and mentally takes over, rips apart and totally violates a younger member (very often female), a child, of the family. Incest is an abuse that scars children and later on adult victims/survivors indelibly. As children, victims of incest experience conflicting feelings of wanting to protect the perpetrator as he is an elder in a "care" taking position, but knowing and feeling "dirty", "guilty", and "shameful" about an act that is not even their fault. Many children tell, as various sources reveal, in their own ways, but need someone willing to hear and believe them which many times doesn't happen, forcing them into silence. Silence then becomes, on the child's part, an internalization of the power differential between her and the adult perpetrator, the impossibility to accept that a figure supposed to take care of her and protect her from all harm is actually harming her the most, and even an act of self-blame that puts the responsibility of the abuse on the child's

shoulders in her heartbreaking attempt to (ironically) protect the abuser whom she loves (Jacobs, 1993). For the perpetrator, an active *moral* agent who knowingly inflicts this pain on someone less powerful, the child's silence is a sign of acquiescence that he morally justifies to himself and the rest of the world (Gilgun, 1995). As Jane Gilgun points out while analyzing the results of her work with 11 incest perpetrators and the discourses generated by them to validate their acts:

> There is no magic in being able to do what we want with children. Not only are children raised to obey adults, they are aware of possible dire consequences if they disobey...Force...is more than physical and can arise from authority stemming from roles in the family, from *gender* [emphasis added], and from physical size." (Gilgun, 1995, p. 277).

Therefore, incest has to be seen as an act of sexual abuse; an act that *adult women* as *survivors* (since I am studying feminist organizations which mainly deal with women) experienced in their perceived childhoods and perceive it now either consciously or subconsciously (as reflected in their current physical and/or psychological problems) as a form of violation, of abuse. This is in no way to contest the arguments for or against "consensual" incest between adults, but more often than not, age and consent themselves are contentious issues that cannot be understood outside of the prism of power, patriarchy, and gender. And more often than not, incest is not consensual. Thus, incest has to be analyzed as a form of abuse within the framework of violence and power. It was after all the feminist movement in the 1970s in North America and Western Europe that brought out the reality of rape, wife battering, and incest, and shattered the myth of the family as a "safe haven" (Herman, 1981). A feminist analysis remains crucial in understanding why incest had to wait until the women's liberation movement to become really politicized; why every male from Freud to Kinsey and beyond tried to suppress its rampant existence and devastating effects on adults; why so many girls *and* boys get abused; why certain men—not "psychopaths" but "normal" men, men from all social and economic classes (Champagne, 1996), feel they can sexually and emotionally violate and tear apart the lives of not only children they abuse but also their wives and everyone else in their family. Why in spite of all this women still have to be "good" mothers and no one talks about "bad" fathers; why trauma manifests itself in different ways in girls *and* boys who are both abused; why the law still upholds the sanctity of the family; why many times wife beating and incest go together (Bowker, Arbitell, & McFerron, 1988); and so on. It is indeed "not possible to write dispassionately about incest" (Herman, 1981, p. 3) or to even start getting one's

head around incest without a feminist analysis that recognizes the grave inequalities in social power.

1.5. Feminism at work: Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI

Three different locations, three different organizations. One in Istanbul and borne directly out of the second wave feminist movement of the 1980s; one based in Diyarbakır, Southeast Turkey, and born in a war-torn region of the country as a voice against patriarchal oppression and general violence in the region (Cockburn, 2004); and one in New Delhi, the capital of India and established with the specific aim of fighting incest, CSA and helping adult (women) survivors of incest and CSA: *All* identifying themselves as feminist. It would be worth briefly looking at these organizations' histories and core principles and my own interactions with them, before moving onto the next chapter where I explain the ways they address incest and incest survivors.

Mor Çatı was established in 1990 in Istanbul as *Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı*. It was born directly out of the second wave feminist movement in Turkey that challenged the sphere of the "private" or family and brought out the issue of domestic violence aimed at women and children. Based in the central Beyoğlu district of Istanbul, Mor Çatı, since 2009, has been running an independent shelter project with the backing of Şişli Municipality, the European Commission Delegation of Turkey and with the help of friends, supporters and volunteers (Shelters, n.d.). Mor Çatı believes in *solidarity* connections and workings between its consultation center and shelters, and also offers training in feminist methodologies and strategies in struggles against violence to other NGOs and governmental organizations. As a matter of fact, when KAMER was in its nascent stages, it collaborated with Mor Çatı for projects (Özelkan, 2009; S. Yüksel, personal communication, March 23, 2011). Women coming to Mor Çatı are offered psychological and legal counseling at the center by expert and trained staff, who not only counsel these women but provide further training to other experts, staff members and volunteers (F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 26, 2011). Mor Çatı's shelters house women and their children who have been subjected to any kind of abuse, including sexual and at home. At the time when I conducted my interviews with them, there were 3 full-time volunteers and 2 interns working at the center and shelter. In my

interview with long-time volunteer/worker Fatma, she mentioned that Mor Çatı also collaborates with governmental institutions to the extent necessary. For instance, if they don't have enough space in their shelters, they send some children to the Social Services and Child Protection Agency or *SHÇEK*[13] . Although Mor Çatı has been wary over the years about financially collaborating with national and international organizations for funding in order to maintain their independence (Özelkan, 2009), their financial situation currently is pretty decent (Fatma, personal communication, January 10, 2011), and even after all these years Mor Çatı stands as a pioneer feminist organization in Turkey—an organization that keeps women at its core and believes in empowering and transforming them from within themselves (Özelkan, 2009).

Women's empowerment is also a central theme for KAMER, but with a slightly different twist. Established in 1997 as Ka-Mer (*Kadın Merkezi*) or Women's Center, an independent organization in the city of Diyarbakır in Southeast Turkey—a city with a vibrant mix of populations ranging from Turks to Kurds to Zazas to Arabs to Assyrians—but also a city at the center of the violent conflict between the Turkish military and the PKK[14] or the Kurdistan Workers' Party—KAMER emerged as a non-violent, unified voice of women against patriarchal domination in the middle of a violent civil war between two highly patriarchal institutions—the State and the workers' party. The women here were and are in many ways doubly oppressed—as women and as a "minority", notably Kurdish women[15], women from the East or as women from a politically "unstable" region of the country. Maybe it is for this reason that KAMER and its women prefer using the word *awareness*[16] instead of *empowerment* (Özelkan, 2009) because empowerment implies a hierarchical arrangement with power coming from the ("liberated" yet oppressed by patriarchy at large) women to the ("ignorant") women (and hence ones doubly oppressed). In spite of having been established barely 15 years ago, KAMER has grown significantly and now covers a total of 23 provinces in the East and Southeast of Turkey including major ones such as Batman, Gaziantep, Malatya, Mardin, and Van. One of the major reasons for their rapid growth and one that

[13] Tr. Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu

[14] Kurdish. Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan

[15] The majority of the population in Diyarbakır is Kurdish.

[16] Tr. Farkındalık

has also given a new meaning to individual and collective women's empowerment is their bottom-up strategy of consciousness-raising that is based on global thinking and local working (Özelkan, 2009). In their awareness groups that occur in every province twice a year, women meet once a week for 14 weeks to discuss issues pertaining to women's lives with a moderator, and those women who complete these groups can then become moderators after attending a workshop on "moderator training" (Özelkan, 2009). Thus, new volunteer women start their own groups and come up from the grassroots levels. Like Mor Çatı, KAMER provides psychological, legal, and other means of support to women and children and also shelter them in collaboration with *SHÇEK* and municipalities. They also have a 24 hour hotline and have been more open financially to sources of funding nationally and internationally. They have collaborated with numerous other organizations (including Mor Çatı), for projects, especially ones involving "honor killing[17]" crimes. Thanks to their grassroots activism, fund raising proficiency and strong media promotion, KAMER has grown to become *the* prominent voice of women in the Southeast of Turkey. In the words of its charismatic founder, Nebahat Akkoç, KAMER has thus far managed to save 15,000 women and 10,000 children from the hands of domestic violence and abuse (N. Akkoç, personal communication, March 30, 2011).

RAHI was established in 1996 in New Delhi, the capital of India, based on funds from the *McArthur Foundation Fellowship* and is the first organization of its kind in the country to make visible the issue of CSA, especially CSA at home or incest. RAHI mainly provides healing support and services to adult women[18] survivors of incest, provides training to other NGOs and individuals interested in setting up their own healing programs and works on creating awareness of the issue through media networks and generation of relevant literature, which also provides the impetus to constantly research the area of CSA and create new material (Programmes, 2009; A. Gupta, personal communication, February 01, 2011). Anuja, a survivor herself, doesn't come from any academic background related to psychology or social work, but was very

[17] Tr. Namus Cinayetleri

[18] Mainly women says Anuja Gupta, although she also added that they don't turn down male survivors who come to them.

active in the ABVA[19] movement that was started in the 1980s by her late brother Siddhartha, a famous AIDS activist based in New Delhi. It is through her brother and her managing his movement by herself after his death by cancer in 1992 that she was introduced to the vibrant field of feminist politics and movements active in the country at the time. So it was a few years after the grieving over her brother's death that she felt she needed to start something of her own—that combined with her restlessness in teaching French which she was doing at the time; her own experiences at a sexuality group she had started, as mentioned earlier, in which there was a disclosure of CSA by 5 out of 7 people, all incestuous, and of which only 2—an Indian girl based in America and an American girl—had ever talked about it, making it clear that such support systems were virtually non-existent in India; and finally the experience of her partner and co-founder of RAHI Ashwini who as an addictions counselor was coming across various cases of abuse and who also made her confront her own past history of incest abuse; all of which resulted in the creation of RAHI. 15 years on, in spite of struggling with financial issues and the need to constantly evolve in the field of CSA and incest where there are many organizations currently active, RAHI still stands as the pioneer of breaking the silence surrounding incest in India.

It was in interviewing Anuja that I realized that understanding her work and what RAHI does just on the basis of being a survivor wasn't enough. Here I was, talking to an incest survivor as well, but also to someone who had dedicated her life to helping other survivors and creating awareness of an extremely silent issue; something that in her own words she described as her "calling". I was talking to someone seriously dedicated to the issue that went beyond just claiming her own survivorship. She alluded to something similar when she talked about her motivation in starting the organization:

> So you cannot start just start an organization because you…It's not your own kick right? So you need to have a larger social vision around it. And you need to make certain connections about…why you want to do this work, what is the impact. You know, what do you think is gonna be the impact, why do you think it needs to be done…especially when nobody else was doing it and I had no statistics to say that it [incest] was happening widely in India.

Thus I too was forced to go beyond being a student, a "disinterested" researcher, a woman, a mother, and even an incest survivor—I had to also question my motivation for writing this thesis, understand the strength it requires by people like Anuja and Feride and everyone working with survivors, and realize that this struggle for justice

[19] Hindi. AIDS भेदभाव विरोधी आन्दोलन

doesn't end with a thesis or any one action—it is a result of constant endeavor and collaboration.

In the following chapter I would like to share how each of these organizations endeavor to ease the pain of survivors and break the silence surrounding incest in Turkey and India. But before I do that, I would like to contextualize these three organizations in the existing media, literary, and legal discourses about incest in both the countries, in order to really emphasize the kinds of odds and silences these organizations are up against when they work with adult women survivors of an abuse like incest.

CHAPTER 2

EFFORTS, CHALLENGES, AND HOPES: INCEST IN TURKEY AND INDIA AND THE WORK OF THREE FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE SURVIVORS OF INCEST

When I started working on my research, I decided to keep my exclusive focus on the three feminist organizations, Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI, and how they work in specifically healing adult women survivors and in generally breaking the silence around such a taboo topic (and not the act itself, I would like to emphasize again). However, the course of my research made it impossible for me to carry on my analysis *without* analyzing the general media, literary, (let me call them social) and legal discourses on incest in both the countries, not only because I found the organizations themselves referencing these discourses in their interviews, but also because they were themselves working within and very often against these discourses in their efforts to "break the silence" and "ease the pain". Also, it became important for me to think further about what kind of "silence" were these organizations trying to "break" and how was such silence(s) contributing to the pain that especially afflicted adult women survivors which these organizations recognized the need to "ease"?

I quickly realized that the two queries: a) the social and legal discourses on incest in both the countries and b) the meaning of the "silence" surrounding incest in both these countries which greatly implicated adult women survivors of incest, were not mutually exclusive. After all, silences *are* discourses themselves that not only create, shelter and reinforce power but at the same time, just like any other discourse, contain within them points of resistance (Foucault, 1976). Thus, a simple query transformed into an interesting quest to see if and how the various silences in the form of various social and legal discourses in Turkey and India in particular and, very briefly and generally in the world, led to the breaking of the taboo in talking about incest and, conversely, if and how these discourses themselves created new silences of their own on

this issue. The following two sections then are a part of my research efforts[20] to look at a).social discourses (including mainly news items, along with web sources, literature and films) and b). legal discourses in Turkey and India in an attempt to see them as a part of larger, global discourses that in talking about CSA and more specifically incest and *not* talking about certain things subvert some aspects of the taboo, but also create new silences that fail to adequately address incest and especially impact adult survivors of it. These sections then also provide the necessary background to understand the various discourses and silences that the organizations in question are up against in their struggle to ease the pain of these women survivors.

2.1. You don't have to experience it; Incest is everywhere[21]

> Poverty is so common in the city that these girls went to shop owners and acquiesced to the harassment in exchange for a single Turkish Lira or piece of gum. ("Poverty to blame for abuse", 2010).
>
> - Güldal Akşit, head of Turkish Parliament's Equal Opportunity Commission, on the sexual abuse of underage girls in the Southeastern province of Siirt

> One of the earliest cases that we dealt with concerned abuse of a three year old child by her paternal grandfather. Despite the mother's testimony, detailed medical report and report of the counselor, the judge refused to believe her terming it as an absurd and impossible allegation… Ignoring all international conventions of child rights, weekly access was granted to the grandfather. (Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse, 2007).
>
> - From "Landmark Cases", *Majlis* Mumbai

In both the cases—one in an interview with a Turkish minister as recent as 2010, and the other in an unspecified case file of a case that presumably occurred several years ago and was handled by the organization *Majlis* in Mumbai that fights for the legal rights of sexually abused children (amongst various other initiatives), it is very clear that the perspective of the abused is either completely ignored or acknowledged

[20] The list is by no means meant to be exhaustive but simply aimed to provide a general idea of the attitudes surrounding incest in the two countries.

[21] Tr. Yaşamanız gerekmez; ensest her yerde (Aşar, 2011)

only by associating it with other conditions such as poverty. The abuser is absolved of all crime and guilt.

What is also interesting to note is the sudden proliferation of a significant *number* of news and web articles like the ones above in both Turkey and India regarding incest and CSA. In Turkey, in less than a month, there have been two articles—one on CSA in general in the Turkish daily *Hürriyet*, reporting the findings of the researcher Tuncer Günay (Pakkan, 2011). According to Günay, 250,000 "minors" (assuming all under the age of 18; the legal age of consent in the country—although the article doesn't explicitly mentions this) in Turkey have been sexually abused in the past decade, with most of the abusers being either "first-degree relatives or other close of kin." (Pakkan, 2011, p. 1). It goes on to talk about the sexual abuse of street children, domestic violence, and child pornography statistics and highlights how only very few cases are actually reported to court and that most victims are women and children and most perpetrators men. The other article is specifically about incest (Ekinci, 2011). While focusing on the film that came out recently in Turkey called *Atlıkarınca* (merry-go-round) and an incest report released in 2009 by the *Population Association*[22] based in Ankara in collaboration with the *United Nations Population Fund* (UNFPA), the article clearly states the prevalence of incest in the country as a rampant issue that is "mostly swept under the rug". The article also clearly points the finger at male abusers who come from all income groups and emphasizes the mental trauma of the abuse as well, clearly stated in lawyer Seda Akço's comment: "…we don't have enough psychiatrists who specialize in adults, and the number of inpatient clinics is very few." (Ekinci, 2011). Thus, there is some mention of the need for establishing support centers not only for children, but for adult survivors of incest as well.

This seems to be a shift in a positive direction since it was and is more common for newspapers, organizations, legal frameworks, and human rights advocates worldwide to talk explicitly about incest in the case of children and within the umbrella of CSA, but less so in the case of women and the need to ease the pain of adult women survivors. When women are mentioned, their issues are lent more credibility if associated with children. For instance, Russell P. Dobash and Rebecca E. Dobash, while sketching a history of feminist movements against domestic violence in both the United States and the UK, clearly point out how the "Family Violence Prevention and

[22] Tr. Nüfusbilim Derneği

Services" act in the United States to protect women from domestic violence could finally become law in 1984, after years of lobbying, only by becoming an amendment to the "Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act" (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). This is not to say that focusing on children in order to stop CSA is not important—no way! But it is also equally important to understand the silence surrounding incest in the lives of *both* women and children and how women as well as children suffer from an abuse that usually starts from childhood and continues for a long period of time, leaving debilitating effects on adults even when they "survive" the abuse.

There also seems to be a gradual shift happening in which incest is being brought out more and more and at least some myths around it are being broken. For instance, 2 years ago, there was a "calling for research" into the matter of CSA in an article in Today's Zaman newspaper (Yavuz, 2008) that claimed that sexual abuse was on a rise in Turkey. Although none of the more recent articles make it clear either that CSA is not a new phenomena and has been happening in secrecy for years, at least in these articles there is more emphasis on the fact that CSA (and incest) can occur in "normal" families as well and that it is a regular problem and *not* an unusual anomaly. In India there has been a similar outburst of news reports on incest and CSA in recent years, emphasizing the rampancy of abuse in "normal" families. Moving from special and *general* news reports such as : "High incidence of incest in slums: Survey" from December 21, 2001 in one of India's leading English dailies, The Times of India ("High Incidence of Incest", 2001), based on a survey conducted in the city of Lucknow, the capital of India's most populated state, Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), situated in the North of the country, from a decade ago, one now sees a proliferation of *specific* news items along with general ones on incest and CSA that talk about sexual abuse as a phenomenon that cuts across all places and socio-economic classes.

Consider for instance, the highly publicized Mumbai incest case in 2009 (Ahmed, 2009), where the younger of two daughters from a regular, middle-class family in the outskirts of Mumbai accused their father and a family friend Godman[23] of raping her and her sister in collusion with their mother's support. This case became a news and media sensation, and following it lots of girls from various parts of the country, various backgrounds started exposing "respected" fathers and other relatives for incestuous abuse—for example the Punjab Incest case in 2009 (Kamal, 2009) where a politician

[23] Hindi. तांत्रिक

from the famous political party BJP (*Bharatiya Janata Party*) was accused by his daughter of raping her. However, one is forced to question whether these exposés have really brought any relief to the girls or have been mere media scandals that have shook the nation for some time and then subsided. The girls in all these news items are always seen with their faces covered, crying, as pathetic victims; and the parents or abusers, also with faces covered, are seen walking in and out of police stations, hospitals, vehemently denying their involvement in the abuse. Also, the "voices" that are being heard are not necessarily of the victims/survivors, but of news reporters, "expert" psychologists, and so on. What about the voices of the survivors themselves that are ultimately lost in these media discourses; voices that can really subvert the injustice of such patriarchal abuse and also lead to survivor healing?

In addition to this (lack of) survivor discourse unmediated by "expert" discourse, the huge media sensation surrounding these specific cases in news items shows that the lack of judicial support is also a big barrier to the healing and justice of incest and CSA survivors in India. One can cite yet another example—this time involving international abusers. Charity worker Duncan Grant who had set up the "Anchorage shelter" for street children in Colaba, Mumbai in 1995 and his friend a retired naval officer Allan Waters from the UK were accused of sexually and physically assaulting boys in the shelter in 2001 ("London man convicted", 2011). They were jailed in 2006 by a lower court, along with an Indian citizen William D'Souza who managed the shelter and was accused of aiding the men, but were acquitted in 2008 by the Mumbai High court "due to lack of evidence." (Cleared sex case Britons released, 2008). But recently, in March 2011, the Supreme Court of India overturned the High court's decision from 2008 and upheld the lower court's decision from 2006 in sentencing the men to six years in prision ("London man convicted", 2011). Although the decision of the Supreme Court is a positive step ahead, Kajal Mennon, executive director of the charity "Childline India Foundation" that had appealed against the High Court's earlier decision to acquit the men, highlighted the "culture of silence" in India surrounding CSA and also mentioned ambiguity and laxity of laws surrounding this issue that can be used by men in power to their advantage when accused of abusing children ("London man convicted", 2011).

Other sources such as cinema, literature, research reports, and internet blogs for instance are also helping in making visible this issue, or rather the "public acceptance" of an issue that is maybe *privately* accepted but vehemently refused in public (Aditi De,

2003), and the many problems and silences surrounding it. The recently released film *Atlıkarınca* or "merry-go-round" in Turkey (2011) that picked up two awards at the "International Antalya Golden Orange film Festival" is such an attempt. It portrays a "regular" nuclear family with a couple and two children, girl and boy, and the abuse of the children by the father and the way the abuse manifests itself in the lives of the children[24]. The film comes in light of all the reports on CSA and incest breaking loose in Turkey, including the most comprehensive study-to-date—the 2009 report on "Understanding the problem of incest in Turkey[25]" as mentioned earlier, prepared by the *Population Association* in Ankara and the UNFPA. The report is a pioneering work that brings together incest statistics; survivor testimonies; information on victims, abusers, and impacts of incest and the problems with the current legal and social system and attitudes in Turkey towards dealing with the problem (Çavlin-Bozbeyoğlu, 2009). This report is currently being widely cited in other studies, including some of the news articles mentioned earlier. A few years ago, in 2006, a year after the change to the Turkish criminal law to include provisions for incestuous abuse and CSA, Professor Dr. Oğuz Polat, head of the department of forensic medicine at the Marmara University in Istanbul, released an exclusive and extensive book on incest titled *Incest: Domestic Rape*[26] that covered topics like the new legal reforms to Turkish law regarding CSA, the definition of incest, the myths surrounding it, the reasons for it, its perpetrators, and so on (Polat, 2006).

In the case of India, literature and cinema have been thriving on the theme of incest for a few decades now. In her insightful article that analyzes the prominence of the theme, desire and relations of incest in a lot of postcolonial novels, especially ones by Indian authors or authors of Indian origin[27], Sibel Irzık points out how incest has been used as a "figure for the solitude and the sterility of a nation" (Irzık, n.d., p. 9); a "savage" nation colonized by the "civilized" other that it despises and yet strives to be—an "other" that ultimately hurts and betrays it and creates in it the incestuous

[24] For more details on the film please visit their website at http://atlikarincafilmi.com. I attempted to interview the film director couldn't get an appointment.

[25] Tr. Türkiye'de Ensest Sorununu Anlamak

[26] Tr. Ensest: Aile içi cinsel tecavüz

[27] Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) are two books amongst others that she talks of.

longing for one's own, one's mother(land). The colonized characters in postcolonial novels, according to Irzık, are like abused children, "children whose growth has been arrested by the experience of incest which disrupts the order and continuity of generations. They thus become figures of the societies whose histories are arrested by colonial violation or whose continuity is short circuited by nationalist ideologies of self-generation." (Irzık, n.d., p. 10). In cinema, especially in the last decade, incest has moved from such metaphor to reality and been constantly portrayed as a social issue in need of attention, from more mainstream movies such as Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) to documentary features such as *Colors Black* (2001) that also received the best film award at the 9th "Biennale de L'image en Mouvement" in Switzerland and *My children who should be running freely through the vast open spaces* (1999) that is a film based on a play of the same name . There have also been film collaborations across borders, for instance the South Asian lesbian writer Grace Poore's poignant portrayal of incest in the lives of South Asian girls—*The children we sacrifice* (2000)—shot in India, Sri Lanka, Canada, and the United States, and that "interweaving survivors' narratives, including the producer's own story, with interviews with South Asian mental health professionals, and with statistical information, as well as poetry and art…discloses the many layers of a subject traditionally shrouded in secrecy." (The Children We Sacrifice, 2005). Journalist and activist Pinki Virani's book *Bitter Chocolate* (Virani, 2000) is also a moving depiction of children shattered by incest and CSA and the inadequacy of the society and the law to deal with the problem and to comprehend the effect on adult survivors' lives.

So it is obvious that most of these social discourses aim to make visible the fact that incest happens in our societies, in Turkey and India, and we need to prevent it. For after all, when abused children grow up to be incest survivors, they experience the pain, the hurt, the flashbacks of abuse, the betrayal—all such *feelings*—and prevention of incest has to aim at the prevention of that hurt. Unfortunately, in the current discourses on incest, including the ones discussed above, such as the Mumbai and Punjab incest cases, the perspective is clearly not with the victim and not on feeling. One only has to see the UNFPA report on incest in Turkey that highlights the importance that the Turkish law lays on the *physical* bodies of abused children, and how these *bodies* are moved to special shelters, etc., but at the same time points out the lack of mental health professionals in Turkey to deal with the mental and emotional aspects of incest abuse (Çavlin-Bozbeyoğlu, 2009). Maureen Cain defines feeling as an "intransitive",

"primary" relation that is real even before it is uttered, identified, and belongs to what she calls the "extra-discursive" (Cain, 1993, p. 82). Just because this extra-discursive is not (yet) a part of a discourse doesn't mean that it doesn't exist and that it can't be felt—as pain, joy, hurt, or whatever the case may be. The extra-discursive feeling of pain that incest entails is either completely silenced even before it is uttered, or sentenced as "mad", "untrue", or even "incredible", for at the end of the day the extra-discursive concept of the "rapist father" (as opposed to the "loving father") is incomprehensible and unacceptable in regular social discourse (Alcoff and Gray, 1993).

After considering feelings, the next step is pointing the finger at the abuser and not the abused. And for that, pushing this problem to the remotest parts of the country or on the contrary blaming it on the heathen, unreligious people in big cities as the opinions on several newspaper articles on incest suggest (Checking child sexual abuse, 2010; Ekinci, 2011) is not the solution. It's time we look *in*wards instead of *out*wards, so that we look at the position of our own women and children in our family structures, at all the ideologies and myths surrounding childhood and womanhood, in order to really begin to grasp the true extent of this unacceptable, heinous, crime that has its roots in history. It's about time that we started considering women and children as individuals with needs and rights to bodily and emotional integrity.

Thus a study of Human Rights and Legal discourses also becomes important in seeing how they create silences around the issue of incest and how their reforms help in breaking of the silence and gaining liberties for women and children. Now while it is true that the human rights discourse and late global capitalism do go hand-in-hand in many ways[28] and work straight via the control of human bodies, and that the law working on gendered bodies is definitely not "neutral", and fails to represent the true, gendered perspectives of victims, thereby creating power differentials (Nelson and Oliver, 1998), these are the best discourses we have available. As Sawicki reminds us, "In the absence of alternatives…we must continue to appeal to the standards of rationality and justice that are available to us…" (Sawicki, 1991, p. 100). Moreover, women's attempts to speak out against incest and assert their rights and change the legal system can be very liberating for them (McNay, 1992) and transform them into active agents of their lives. Reforming the law can be extremely empowering, and in both the countries, women and feminist movements for years now have been struggling against

[28] Further elaboration of this topic is beyond the scope of this paper. For more details check out (Merry, 2006).

the justice system to see more rights for women and children in the law. Thus, in view of the feminist struggles with the law and the recent collaborations and developments in the legal and human rights systems of the two countries with regards to women, it becomes important to see in a bit more detail what the law in each country says about CSA in general and incest in particular. Moreover, does this law have any provisions for adult women survivors of incest abuse? Are the "voices" we have been claiming to hear since the beginning audible in this law?

2.2. Body vs. the Soul; Abusers vs. the abused: the Law vs. Survivors

> It's not only a legal thing…therefore the importance of a law is also not only the reprisal for the victim but also social recognition of the problem—I mean recognition of a social problem.
>
> - Anuja Gupta, RAHI.

> The health of the child's body and soul in this sexual abuse; this issue of the breaking of the health of the body and soul needs to be discussed a bit more in Turkey.
>
> - Hülya Gülbahar, Lawyer, Istanbul.

According to the current Turkish Penal Code[29], incest per se, i.e. relationship between relatives or kin is *not* a crime if it is consensual[30] (Turkish Civil Code[31] in any case discourages marriages between close of kin and such marriages can be dissolved). The age of consent in Turkey is considered to be over 15. In the case of *no* consent from one party, and if the person who refuses is an adult (over 15), then it is treated as sexual assault according to article 102 or sexual abuse/molestation according to article 105. In other words, depending on the nature or degree of *physical* attack or damage, the abuse is treated as a sexual crime just like rape, and the sentence can vary, just like rape, from

[29] Tr. Türk Ceza Kanunu

[30] I must thank Av. Hülya Gülbahar for providing me with all the legal information in Turkey and sharing with me her invaluable experiences working with women and children victims of sexual abuse.

[31] Tr. Türk Medeni Kanunu

7-12 years, according to the judge's discretion, plus one half times whatever the number is, because it is committed by a relative. Relatives are defined as people related to each other as far as 3 degrees of blood relation (for instance father, grandfather, cousin, etc.) or by marriage (for instance brother's wife, aunt's uncle, and so on). Under the age of 15 or even if the child has turned 15 but has not completed 15 years of age, *any* sexual contact, according to the Turkish Penal Code article number 103 is a punishable crime, and the question of consent doesn't even arise. It is considered as CSA and of course the crime is considered as molestation or less serious abuse or more serious sexual assault, depending on the degree of *physical*[32] violation, which could range from touching, exhibitionism, to actual penetrative assault. Since the abuse involves children, the punishment in article 103 is more than that in article 102 (for adults). The least punishment is 3-8 years, which can go up to 8-15 years for serious assaults. Also, just like incestuous adult abuse/rape, incestuous abuse of children, by relatives and kin, gains an extra one half of the penalty for being a crime committed against close kin. So for example, if a father rapes a daughter, he may get 10 years for the rape, plus another 5 years for raping his own daughter, so a total of 15 years.

All these provisions for incest and CSA were not present in the old Turkish Penal Code and are a result of feminist organizations' and women's movements' struggles that brought about a change to the code in 2005. So until very recently, sexual abuse of children was dealt with under general laws of sexual abuse. Similar struggles by women's organizations and NGOs in India led to the creation of the very recent draft bill on prevention of sexual offences against children (A. Gupta, personal communication, February 01, 2011) by the *National Commission for Protection of Child Rights* (NCPCR) in association with the Union Law Ministry of India, in which RAHI contributed as well. Although the bill still awaits its fate and transformation into a law in the Indian parliament, which has so far done nothing about it, many are hopeful that if passed, it will be a landmark law for children in a country where thus far, all sexual abuse cases against children, including incest, are treated as general sexual crimes such as rape under the Indian Penal Code (A. Tewari, personal communication, November 27, 2010). Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code also sets the age of consent as 16, although in the Indian legal system the age of consent varies according to

[32] I am repeatedly stressing the physical, the body in order to juxtapose it with the mental, the emotional, the soul a bit later, to show the equal violation of the latter and its neglect in law.

different laws defined for children (Venkatraman, 2007). Prior to this bill, there was a bill called "The Offences Against Children Bill" drafted in 2005 by the MWCD but it was rejected by the law ministry in 2007 on the grounds that the existing legislation was enough to protect the rights of children (Wadia, 2011). Apart from these efforts, although there have existed several special laws for the protection of children against special crimes, such as the "Juvenile Justice Act" and "The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act" that prevents children under 16 from being used for commercial sex (Wadia 2011), none of them have recognized the prevalence of child sexual abuse at all levels of the society, especially at home, and the legitimacy to protect the violation of children's bodies *and* minds beyond clauses such as "assault to outrage the modesty of a woman" under section 354 of the Indian Penal Code, applicable also to children (Venkatraman, 2007) and actions such as forced "penile penetration" as punishable crimes (Chatterjee, 2009) .

Clearly outraging the modesty of a woman vis-à-vis a child has different implications and yet the same law is applied to both; hence obviously, laws meant to protect adults are inadequate in protecting children. For this reason the recent changes to the Turkish Penal Code in 2005 and the attempt by civil society actors in India to get a draft bill in place in hope of making it a law are positive attempts in the direction of child protection from sexual abuse, which includes incest or abuse at home. As Hülya Gülbahar points out, the new Turkish Penal Code recognizes a range of sexual abuses and not just penetration, materials such as even naked photographs of children, pornographic material and sexual advances, looks and touches in the possession of and by the alleged abuser as a basis for the *violation*[33] of the child's bodily integrity, and hence an abuse of a sexual nature (personal communication, January 18, 2011). Also, according to the new law, just the verbal accusation of the child or adult is enough to open a lawsuit and increasingly, as Gülbahar points out, there have been cases where in the absence of physical evidence, reports of psychological damage and verbal testimonies are being accepted. Such cases are few, but still, one can find them. Especially in the case of women, where social realities make it extremely difficult for women to admit incidents of sexual assault, it is important to listen to a woman who confesses being abused and whose confession follows a logical sequence of events

[33] Tr. İhlali

indicating to the likelihood of the abuse, and such cases are slowly also emerging in Turkey (personal communication, January 18, 2011).

In a similar vein, the proposed draft bill in India also covers a range of activities such as "...penetrative sexual assault, aggravated penetrative sexual assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, sexual harassment and use of child for child pornography" ("Draft bill fixes 16 yrs", 2011) that constitutes sexual abuse of children, and also proposes sentence "ranging from three years in prison for sexual harassment to life imprisonment for aggravated sexual assault" (Checking child sexual abuse, 2010). It also contains certain provisions which are currently lacking in the active law in Turkey and that during our interview Hülya Gülbahar also pointed out. One is that the onus of responsibility in proving the crime will shift from the abused to the abuser. In other words, the abuser will have to prove his innocence. Gülbahar mentions how currently in Turkey, because most CSA which is incest happens in secret, it is very difficult for the abused child/adult to prove its occurrence. Although this provision in the Indian bill that will assume the alleged abuser to be guilty until proven innocent is contrary to the principle of Indian justice that a person is innocent until proven otherwise, activists believe that this will ensure justice for the abused children (Wadia, 2011). The other issue currently in Turkey is that lawsuits based on allegations of CSA or incest once opened, take a long time to come to fruition, a problem that one of the provisions in the Indian bill hopes to resolve by designating timeframes in all states that should respond to claims of CSA as soon as possible (Wadia, 2011).

But once again: where are the adult women *survivors* of CSA or incest? Both the Turkish and (prospective) Indian laws address women and children who have been sexually abused inside and outside their homes, but neither *specifically* mentions provisions for women or adults in general who have emerged as survivors of long years of abuse as children and who now would like to sue their abusers. While these laws and bills are useful in stopping incest once caught in childhood, none of them consider the fact that there currently exist thousands, millions of adults who have already been abused and scarred and who would like to seek justice for the harm done to them. A lot of incest is usually realized later in life by survivors; usually in the form of psycho-somatic complaints or visits to therapists or troubled relationships, as even most of my interviews with these organizations and experts revealed. As Feride Yıldırım mentioned, women come to her when:

> …They are just feeling unhappy; they are having problems in their relationships; they are feeling they are at the crossroads they want to come to a decision about their lives but they are not sure what their options are; they are not sure actually what they are doing in therapy actually but they just want to come….sometimes they come about a current problem like a problem with their husbands or with their boyfriends but then we go back and work on their childhood lives….they are both related because how she [specific example of an abused woman provided by Yıldırım] dealt with her past abuse is influential in on how she is dealing with her current abuse. (personal communication, January 10, 2011).

In such cases, if a women wishes to sue, what can she do? Not much. In the case of Turkey, firstly, there is no clear clause in the law in place for post-suing of a sexual offender years after a crime has been committed, and secondly although there are ways of working through the system, there is no guarantee that justice shall be delivered to the abused person who sues (H. Gülbahar, personal communication, January 18, 2011). The situation is not just unique to Turkey, India and other "developing" countries. A look at UK law suggests something similar. According to one of Britain's leading family lawyers, although incest is mentioned as a specific crime (apart from CSA) under the "The Sexual Offences Act" of 2003, which also contains separate provisions for adult-child and adult-adult incest, there is no specific legal provision that takes into account claims of adults who report abuse years after its actual occurrence (R. Bamber, personal communication, May 17, 2011). At a more global or international level, as a part the United Nations/UNICEF's *Legislative Reform Initiative* (LRI) of 2009 (De Alwis, 2009) that targets special issues impacting *children*, incest makes several appearances (although not as a special topic), but once again as an issue that impacts children and *not* as something that leaves long-term, debilitating mental scars on *adults*, especially adult women. Thus the law focuses on the *present corporeal* abuse of *children* but fails to recognize the present and/or *past emotional* and *mental* violation of *adult* (women) survivors.

So ultimately incest is present and yet lost in law. It is lost in its failure to consider the millions of abused adult survivors. In its presence, it is subsumed as an appendage to general sexual abuse, both CSA and abuse of "adults": an appendage that guarantees a little extra punishment if the crime is committed by a family member[34]. As Ufuk Sezgin very passionately and poignantly mentioned to me during our interview:

[34] One must bear in mind that in certain groups of people in Turkey and India, marriage between cousins or uncles and nieces, etc. is considered perfectly acceptable. Hence also it is not so easy to talk of a law that punishes incest per se, such as the one existing in other countries in Europe, for example in Britain.

> First of all acceptance is important. In the law…we don't have incest law. We have sexual abuse law. But there is not [sic] incest law. Maybe some…sexual abuse law include those kind…incest kind of things but….if we have special…specific incest law [it]means *yes* [emphasis original]...we have incest…and we *accept* [emphasis original] this, we are going to find a way [for] this. (personal communication, March 14, 2011).

Nebahat Akkoç of KAMER mentioned something similar. If we don't accept incest as a rampant reality in all walks of life and a problem, we don't need a law. As a matter of fact, like any form of domestic violence (and maybe even more so because of the sexual taboo), incest is an abuse so rampant within the family that it is almost invisible (Özelkan, 2009). Incest is everywhere as the Radikal article claims, and yet nowhere. Thanks to the collective effort of the law and the society, incest is lost.

And so are the "voices" of the adult women survivors in Turkey and India that we have been attempting to hear lost as well? Have we collectively managed to silence them as well? The answer to the latter is *yes.* But the answer to the former may not be so. From the silence these voices do emerge and are emerging as we speak—voices in the form of pleas for help, cries of pain, or sometimes just requests to talk and share. And amongst some organizations that are helping to break the silence and reclaim incest and ease the pain of abused women are Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI. Let's look into the efforts of these brave, active, and very much needed organizations.

2.3. Fighting, Surviving, and Evolving: The burden of Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI

> It is heartbreaking to see these women, but it is also incredibly empowering to see them empowered.
>
> - Fatma, Mor Çatı

> You must have heard about a lot of [incest] cases these days from the Black sea region and the West of Turkey. Why? Only we [in the Southeast] are supposed to have it right? But we are working on it!
>
> - Nebahat Akkoç, KAMER

> But then the next step was to actually talk about the long term impact which is what the forte and raison d'être of RAHI is actually...to talk about what happens in the long term and what happens to the lives of women as a result of sexual abuse.

- Anuja Gupta, RAHI

So how do organizations like Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI working in their respective national and international contexts of legal, social and human rights discourses that aim to simultaneously make visible some aspects of incest and yet manage to silence the voices of the survivors and several other important aspects of the issue, manage to work on healing survivors and breaking these silence(s)? These are silences that oppress and silences that contain within them possibilities to subvert; silences that once broken also give rise to newer levels of silences that also need to be broken. Anuja Gupta of RAHI India, talked about the barriers she had to face while RAHI was still in its nascent stages around 15 years ago:

> …and people would tell us you know how people say that anything bad happens in America… *ये तो इंडिया में होता ही नहीं है*[35]…all of that…so we thought it was quite important to— or I thought it was quite important— to have that as part of our mandate in terms of how do you [break the silence]…one in order to convince people that look its happening here…

On the reality of the silence of CSA and incest in discourses in India at the present moment as well, she mentioned how things have changed in the past few years, from "people…saying CSA doesn't happen in India; it happens in America or it happens in slums" to "nobody says child sexual abuse doesn't happen [in India]"; however, she went on to add that:

> They may say it doesn't happen to my child or whatever…they don't know, there are lots of myths around it, they don't know the level of impact, they don't know the extent of…how pervasive this is…to how many people it happens…or what the statistics are…and certainly they do not know the long term impact.

So vehement denial or silence has sort of given way to reluctant acceptance and a new kind of silence that acknowledges the existence of incest but is still quiet about *why* it is a problem. Why it is *not* a sexual anomaly or a perversion of a few "sickos" but a regular perpetration by "normal" men across all socio-economic classes— "the most equal opportunity thing in the world" (F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 10, 2011), and why it must be acknowledged for the *un*acknowledged effects it causes survivors.

In discussing the attempts of these three organizations then to heal these survivors and to deal with the problem of the silencing of incest, in the following

[35] Eng. This doesn't happen in India at all.

sections I explore: what kind of support these organizations provide to adult women survivors of incest within, of course, the contexts they work in and how they provide that support—the actual philosophy and methodology that informs healing practices for survivors, their implementation and possible solutions each one sees to the problem; the materials (print and others) they have generated thus far in creating awareness of the issue or in breaking the silence; and finally their current/future planned projects and the funding issues faced by them.

2.3.1 Services and Solutions and of beliefs that inform

Women are the common factor for each of these three organizations and yet the kind of women that frequent them, and I am focusing specifically on women with a history or present situation of incest abuse, cannot be equated with each other and between the organizations on the basis of socioeconomic statuses[36], ethnicities and, obviously, nationalities! As Feride put it, women coming to Mor Çatı are usually "from middle and lower socioeconomic statuses because those who come from higher income groups have more resources they can go to." Note that she *doesn't* imply that incest doesn't happen in higher income groups, indeed she sees a lot of upper status women in her private practice and sometimes even at Mor Çatı. As she says, "We have some clients here who are University professors…some who are lawyers, doctors, bankers…so I mean sexual abuse and incest happens in all income levels…" But what she *is* saying is that precisely because rich women *can* afford to go to private therapists, the kind of population that comes to Mor Çatı center and shelters is usually from the mid-lower socioeconomic strata. On top of that, she adds that even these women represent a "biased population" since they are specifically women who suffer from violence at home. However, it's hardly surprising that over 80% of these women have suffered sexual abuse as a child (Fatma, personal communication, January 10, 2011),

[36] I am skeptical of the word "class" because as difficult as it is to define it in the Turkish context, it is much more difficult to conceptualize it in the Indian context, where it is obviously dependent on money, status, level of education and the kind of job one has for its definition but also on *caste*. Maybe one could equate the "new middle class" that Rutz and Balkan talk about in Istanbul with the (new) middle class in India, with its focus on education and its perceptions of itself as the progress marker of the nation (2009).

since as we all know, such abuse leaves one more susceptible to all forms of abuse as an adult—a fact that even Anuja Gupta eluded to in my interview with her when I mentioned the statistics from Mor Çatı. As Feride points out:

> So they [women] come because they need support in their current relationship or they are getting out of their relationship or they are thinking about getting out of their relationship and when you ask some personal history and some information on their childhood and if you ask the right question then they tell you. I am sure that there have been cases that I have missed but I see many many many cases where they…even though they have been in therapy for a long time, the matter is…incest has never been caught...I mean no one has ever asked them the questions or they've asked the questions, they have gotten the answer but they've put it aside saying you know this is someone else's expertise, were not going to work on this, we'll work on whatever problem you're presenting.

This also shows the denial in the psychological community regarding the issue. If Freud was the first one to discover and bury incest in psychology, future generations are ensuring that it remains so. Although things are changing a lot (U. Sezgin, personal communication, March 14, 2011; Ş. Yüksel, personal communication, March 23, 2011; A. Gupta, personal communication, February 01, 2011), organizations and women like Feride and Anuja still have to fight biases within the psychological community regarding incest. Anuja also talks about when she started working with incest survivors, and, unlike Feride, not being a trained psychologist either: "People in the mental health profession were very skeptical because I didn't have a mental health background. So other than the core group of supporters who were in fact colleagues of Ashwini's, the larger mental health community did not think this was an issue per se."

But it is an issue. Even as I was interviewing Fatma and Feride in Mor Çatı, a woman who was struggling with an abusive husband stepped in for counseling and it turned out, as Feride later revealed to me, that the woman had been sexually abused by her own father, along with her sister. However, such is the impact of incest that although she intensely hated him from one part of her being, as Feride told me, she also longed to see him and loved him from another part of herself. She hadn't seen him for ten years since their mother had moved out with the girls upon discovering that the father had been abusing them, and so she felt guilty for not seeing him, in spite of the fact that he had abused her. At the end of the day, she still considered him her father who, as Feride added, abused her and yet "loved" her, called her his "princess", and brought her presents. Such is the sad fate of an adult abused as a child at home—an adult who wants to hate but can't, who wants to forgive but can't. Such is the power of incest. Incest *is* an issue. And it is an *international* issue. As Feride also mentioned,

women from other countries, usually married to Turkish men, had also applied to Mor Çatı's center and shelters; women from such disparate locations such as Pakistan, Ukraine, and Germany; women who are incest survivors.

Both Kamuran and Nebahat Akkoç from KAMER, had similar things to say. They admitted that they might have more women from mid-lower socioeconomic strata applying, once again due to their lack of resources, but in their experience incest happens across all status and all sectarian lines, for in KAMER they truly deal with women coming from different ethnic and lingual backgrounds. As a matter of fact, in our interview, Nebahat Akkoç was especially keen to emphasize this point about the *kind* of women that experience incest. Quite indignantly she told me about a meeting that the Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had had with a group of women in Istanbul at the end of 2010 and how in response to one woman who asked him about the problem of incest and CSA in Southeast Turkey, he said that it is very sad that such things happen in "those parts" of the country. Akkoç emphasized throughout the interview that incest happens *everywhere* in the world, including Turkey, but because of the "tradition effect" (Koğacıoğlu, 2004) or bias that the Southeast of Turkey has always been subjected to—all the "disgraceful" things like honor killings, terrorism, sexual abuse, domestic violence, etc. are seen as occurring there only—KAMER has to and is working extra hard to fight this problem.

An interesting point of difference to note in the discourse of Feride, who deals with a lot of incest survivors coming to Mor Çatı, and Nebahat's discourse is the way they consider the *type* of family that contributes to incest. According to Feride, there is no such "type" because, as mentioned earlier, she truly believes incest is the most "equal opportunity" thing in the world and so although more "traditional" families may contribute more to the silencing of incest, the very *occurrence* of the abuse is irrespective of family background. As she says:

> …in more traditional families, it's harder to talk about to what's going on. Who are you going complain to, how are you going to complain, how are you going to get out of that system? Plus you are also brainwashed and trained to accept whatever your family gives you. Whatever hand you are dealt by with your family is what you get. So this idea that you as a human being have individual rights, that you have *human* [emphasis original] rights, that you can complain about the situation, is quite foreign when you've been in a very traditional, very restrictive family. I think it makes it harder for the stories to come out and for the victims to ask for help but…I mean that I don't think that it contributes to abuse. I mean of course for me to say this or anyone to say this conclusively extensive research would have to be done. Plus at Mor Çatı we usually see

> women from lower socio economic statuses— usually— because women who have come from a higher income, have more resources they can go to. But we also do see victims from vey well-to-do families, very respected, very liberal minded families and the patterns are always the same, there are no differences in the patterns.

Note that she does mention the need for further research to test her hypothesis. Nebahat Akkoç on the other hand believes that a certain type of family—a financially poor family—may contribute to the occurrence of such abuse itself. In our interview she mentioned that although of course rich families experience incest as well, if there is a poor family with many children sleeping in the same room and parents having sex just behind the curtains, then such an environment may be conducive for abuse, where for instance an adolescent boy may try "feeling up" his younger sister laying next to him, etc. Figen Şahin, who is an expert on CSA, mentioned something similar when I interviewed her at Gazi University, Ankara. She said that in her experience a lot of abuse was perpetuated by adolescent boys on younger siblings (boys and girls) due to sexual frustration:

> …especially in low socioeconomic status parts of Ankara, this is very common. Not in the higher socioeconomic parts. In those higher parts…the counselor, teachers and their families they give sexual education to their children. I don't know how they manage but they don't offend each other. And also after 14, 15 years of age they can flirt, date and so...I don't think they have big problem [sic] in that age.

While all these observations may have some truth, how does one still explain sexual abuse of girls, of children in all *kinds* of families, by fathers, uncles, servants, family friends, and other significantly elder males? Even if sexual exploration between siblings can be dismissed—and I mean siblings here of comparable age and equally consensual although that itself in practice is rarely the case—can one dismiss the rape of a daughter by her father or a niece by her uncle? Indeed such contemplations need further research and philosophical and ethical debates that cannot be engaged in at the moment.

Also, "traditional" has different connotations within Turkey and abroad, say in India. RAHI's focus group, which is mainly English speaking women from middle to upper middle class, in terms of "class" may represent many other things besides socioeconomic status such as certain education levels (in the urban Indian context these are all women with at least a Bachelors and usually Masters degrees), class "prestige", and caste status (which is nonexistent in Turkey but still very common in India). In terms of "tradition", these women are "modern" in the Indian context because they are

highly educated, work outside their homes, usually wear both Indian *and* western outfits, and so on, whereas women in villages or lower "classes" still don't do such things. However, perhaps in the Turkish context, where "westernization" in the form of clothes was one of the markers of modernity in the Republican history (Jayawardena, 1986), these women might still be considered "traditional". This is just one example. Since the modernity vs. tradition debate has different approaches in both countries due to their different histories, which I have briefly touched upon in chapter 1, terms that might be equally applicable to both countries become difficult to sketch. Thus even in our interview, in the Indian context, "tradition" wasn't so much of an issue since in a complex country like India where education and tradition and religion and types of families (joint or nuclear) and so on are so enmeshed that it is hard to draw such distinctions. The *class*, which also entails caste and education—huge markers of prestige and *honor* in the Indian society—stood out more, and just like the women at Mor Çatı and KAMER, Anuja also believed that incest happens everywhere. However, she also mentioned something more that even lawyer Hülya Gülbahar alluded to—but in a different context. According to Gülbahar, it is obviously harder for a rich girl waiting on her father's inheritance to declare that he abused her, vis-à-vis a poor girl who has no such thing at stake. For this reason, she says, "…every time in this women's struggle lower class women[37] have been ahead." (personal communication, January 18, 2011). Feride and Anuja mention that beyond money or the material wealth, the families' prestige and honor is also more at stake in the case of upper class, wealthy families. However, Anuja goes on to add that conversely, in the case of lower class[38] or poor or rural women *because* such things are not at stake, like Hülya Gülbahar mentioned earlier, such women are more active and in the fore front of seeking justice and advice:

> I find it more in the middle class there is a lot of denial but whenever I have been out in the villages there is no denial of this…because they know...they are living it on a day-to-day reality…they know…even women who have been sexually abused come out like this you know…there is nothing of shame you know…everything that this upper middle class, middle class women get caught up with you know trying protect the family...that level of shame and that level of denial. They are just simply out there and saying that yeah; that it's happening,

[37] Tr. Alt sınıfların kadınları

[38] In India you might be low class by being very low caste and yet not exactly poor in financial terms, although that obviously is a big marker of class as well. Hence the difficulty in defining "class" as mentioned earlier.

that happened to me and how do I stop it happening to my kids and that kind of a thing.

This just goes to show how oppression works into women's lives in different ways depending on their different statuses. It is indeed interesting to see how women considered more oppressed by society at large have no qualms in "coming out" even in issues such as incest, whereas women considered more privileged try even harder to maintain the facade of familial honor and dignity. But as Hülya Gülbahar says, one needs to study this further and then write about it (personal communication, January 18, 2011). Similarly, if one adds religious and other ethnic differences to this, the situation becomes even more interesting. Although all organizations claimed that there are no differences along sectarian lines when it comes to incest, can differences contribute, as in the point Feride made about more "traditional" families and all of them made about upper class families—can they contribute to more silencing around the topic because the honor of their minority identities is at stake? In the Indian context for instance, even Anuja had to pause when I asked her if she gets any Muslim or non-Hindu women survivors:

> Anuja: So a lot people who come to RAHI are actually from middle and upper middle class, English speaking backgrounds. For that particular reason...
> Me: Even the religious denominations vary or is it primarily Hindu…?
> Anuja: Yeah primarily Hindu. Not so much because…yeah primarily Hindu actually...primarily Hindu. So…
> Me: So you get…Hindu, educated...
> Anuja: Yeah...I mean people like me and you...

Now it would be unfair to blame this as oversight on the part of RAHI or Anuja since RAHI serves whoever comes to it and India is a country with 80% Hindus according to the 2001 population consensus[39]. However, it is definitely worth considering how it might be different for a Muslim woman from a "respectable" family vis-à-vis a Hindu one from a similar background to reveal incest. After all, women are also markers of religion, Islam included (Devji, 1994) and in the case of a country as diverse as India, they may remain more isolated, hidden and discriminated against as compared to their fellow men (Hasan, 1994). The sad and famous Shah Bano case of 1985 is an all too painful reminder of this reality, where a poor Muslim woman had to let go of her rightful alimony ordered to her from the Supreme Court of India by her husband who

[39] Retrieved May 01, 2011 from http://www.indiaonlinepages.com/population/religious-population-in-india.html

had divorced her, because political powers and religious patriarchs, by employing the *Muslim personal law*[40], defined it as an infringement of religious freedom (Hasan, 1994).

It is within such contexts that all the three organizations are trying to provide support to survivors of sexual abuse. Naturally, contexts also have a direct impact on and inform the nature of the services that each organization provides. Since there are a lot of women and children that come or are brought to Mor Çatı and KAMER that live under very real, very *present* threat of domestic violence, which includes sexual abuse, as Fatma, Feride, Kamuran, and Nebahat Akkoç all said: The priority is to first protect them. They first need to be sent to shelters, away from the abuser, and then action is taken according to their needs. They are provided the necessary psychological and legal support from the relevant experts. As a matter of fact, both Mor Çatı and KAMER provide extensive contacts between "victims" and lawyers since they deal with lots of cases where mainly children are currently experiencing sexual abuse including incest and the physical evidence, as discussed earlier, is still fresh and available. Mor Çatı in fact has had a dedicated program against CSA in place since around 2007 that publicizes this issue and they have in the past and are currently collaborating with school children and counselors as well to create more awareness about CSA (Fatma, personal communication, January 10, 2011; F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 26, 2011). KAMER also regularly sends sexually abused children to the government shelters mentioned earlier in the chapter and also gathers them together for a couple of days a year where they all play together, engage in various creative activities, and are provided education on this issue (N. Akkoç, personal communication, March 30, 2011). Due to this work with children and the immediate need for action to protect children from CSA, both the organizations regard the failure of the State to recognize the gravity of the problem and to build sufficient structures to prevent the same. Fatma from Mor Çatı, who emphasized working with police and the authorities more than any other State organ in order to curb CSA mentioned the biases that the officials themselves have when it comes to CSA or incest, which can make the child feel worse and really hinder any aim to protect him/her. Nebahat Akkoç also alludes to the lack of the State's recognition of the problem—even if it does, it pushes it to regions in the East of Turkey: "The State knows that one out of four kids is sexually abused and

[40] India maintains different personal laws for different religions that many identify as a colonial legacy (Merry, 2006).

most at home and yet does nothing. The State has to do a lot." (personal communication, March 30, 2011). Şahika Yüksel also mentions how there is no government support for children subjected to incest and CSA in general and how the conditions of shelters as well may be conducive to all kinds of abuse (personal communication, March 23, 2011).

Even though both Mor Çatı and KAMER may be active in helping victims, especially children, and in applying for lawsuits, winning lawsuits is another matter altogether. As Hülya Gülbahar also points out a lot of cases that are started are abandoned due to family pressure and other such reasons, which may also include the threat of the families and perpetrators to kill victims if they sue—threats that may not just be empty warnings. Indeed, not just Hülya Gülbahar, but also Kamuran from KAMER mentioned certain cases, although they both couldn't remember the specifics, where the revelation of incest cost victims their lives. But it should be noted that in such extreme cases, all the victims mentioned were adult women (which is not to say that this can't happen with children). Since my focus is adult survivors of incest, I specifically asked everyone from both the organizations in all my interviews about adult women filing lawsuits. Everyone mentioned how they support women who want to sue, but only Feride[41] decisively confirmed that a few of her clients were actually currently in the midst of legal proceedings. The court decisions are still pending and as Feride added: "…with many incest cases the incest has happened such a long time ago, it's very hard to go back and to take that to court because most of the [physical] evidence has disappeared." In other words, one can only hope for a positive decision for these women.

And that is precisely the issue with a lot of incest survivors—they are survivors precisely *because* they have suffered years of abuse and have survived. There are no physical scars or evidence left behind but a horde of emotional and mental issues. Even though there may be young women who are still being abused, most are women abused as children and then as adult survivors of abuse come to these organizations either to save themselves from abusive relationships, for general counseling, or sometimes even for specific incest related counseling. Although they may not represent an extreme or urgent or emergency scenario as a child being currently abused, and may not need immediate protection, they still *need* someone to hear them, to talk to them, to help

[41] It is not entirely clear though if these clients are from Mor Çatı or her own private practice. From what it sounded it may entirely be the latter.

them reclaim their lives. As Feride with her extensive experience with Mor Çatı and her own private practice says:

> ...sometimes they come here [Mor Çatı] knowing exactly what it is they want to get from here so they are very clear…they say I want to see a lawyer; I want to see a psychologist…they are very definite in therapy about what they want…what kind…sometimes they're not. They are just feeling unhappy; they are having problems in their relationships; they are feeling they are at the crossroads they want to come to a decision about their lives but they are not sure what their options are; they are not sure what they are doing in therapy actually but they just want to come.

She adds that a lot of women she sees are also those who *haven't* questioned the impact of incest in their lives; who have been in years of therapy for other problems, but, as mentioned earlier, their therapists never thought of questioning the incest in their lives. In many cases, women are also confused as to whether what happened to them was sexual abuse or not—naturally, since as a child you don't expect the person who is supposed to look after you to sexually abuse you. In such cases Feride says that she is very clear in defining what constitutes abuse and in putting the blame on the correct person—the abuser (personal communication, January 10, 2011). Similarly, the incest survivors coming to KAMER are also women who come with some other problems in their lives and as they talk about their lives, incest comes out, but "we don't ask them" Nebahat Akkoç insists—"they reveal on their own." (personal communication, March 30, 2011). Another way that adult women survivors "come out" according to Akkoç is when they bring their children who are currently being sexually abused—a lot of these mothers have been abused as well. Finally, in KAMER's *awareness raising* groups as well women reconnect with their feelings and confront their past sexual abuse(s) (Akkoç, personal communication, March 30, 2011). The psychological healing then after revelation takes the form of individual counseling with experienced psychologists such as Feride at Mor Çatı, and psychologists at Dicle University in Diyarbakır at KAMER. In KAMER, adult women survivors of incest are also put together in awareness raising groups which are conducted in all its 23 provinces. One group consists of 15 to 18 people that work together for 14 weeks, within which the topics of sexual violence and incest are discussed for 2 weeks (N. Akkoç, personal communication, March 30, 2011).

In other words, although incest in the lives of adult women is addressed by both the organizations, psychologically and legally, and therapy is offered individually and also in groups, this is all performed as a part of the larger umbrella of domestic

violence. There is no separate or systematic program in place for the healing of adult women survivors of incest—not just in Mor Çatı and KAMER—but generally in Turkey. As Feride explicitly stated in our interview:

> …we [Mor Çatı] usually do individual therapy, sometimes we have had group therapy in the past, support groups, but they are not very easy to arrange. But we do have that. In Turkey, as far as I know, there isn't a specialized continuing program; probably there have been temporary programs in the past like I know one program that took place at Istanbul University…and that was for about a few months but then it wasn't continued….so there are individual programs but there are…as far as I know there are no systematic, no continuing programs that has people who have had incest in their past.

In stark contrast, because RAHI *is* specifically a center for healing and recovery of adult incest survivors, along with being an "education, awareness and training center" (A. Gupta, personal communication, February 01, 2011), it by definition becomes a systematic, dedicated program catered to the psychological—mental and emotional—healing of incest survivors. Along with individual counseling and therapy that is mostly handled by Anuja herself, although she refers cases from outside Delhi to a broader network of professionals and psychiatrists that she works with, RAHI also has a support *group* called "Circle of Strength". It is a 12 week facilitated support group that offers 36 hours of therapeutic work:

> In this group women explore together the effects of abuse on their lives and honor what they did to survive. Through this process women are able to develop inner strengths, build healthier relationships, feel a greater sense of self and engage with their environment with renewed confidence, mastery and responsibility ("Support Services", 2009).

The psychological technique that RAHI claims to use is "eclectic psychotherapeutic approaches[42] and experiential techniques with traditional healing methods to include psychodrama, bodywork, art and craft, meditation and massage." ("Support Services", 2009). Also, unlike Mor Çatı and KAMER, RAHI doesn't really involve itself with the legal aspect of things, since, as Anuja says, "we don't work with kids at all." (personal communication, February 01, 2011). So far the closest involvement of RAHI with the law has been drafting the proposed bill against CSA in India that I talked about earlier. Apart from that, when it comes to law, the most that RAHI does is work with the mothers whose husbands have sexually abused their

[42] Ufuk Sezgin who has dealt with a lot of incest survivors from Mor Çatı and KAMER also uses the eclectic therapy technique that combines various psychotherapy techniques including feminist empowerment techniques (U. Sezgin, personal communication, March 14, 2011).

daughters and who they have consequently taken to court. Thus, RAHI works on the trauma of the mother but does *not* involve itself with the legal case of daughter—"not as yet" as Anuja puts it. This probably leaves some room open in the organization to work with the legal aspect of incest in the future.

A big part of RAHI's work, since it is *the* pioneering organization in the field of incest and CSA, is training other individuals and groups as well those who wish to set up survivor groups in other parts of India. At the moment, Anuja admits that (just like Turkey), in India a lot is being done for children, but there are no adult women survivor groups:

> There is one incest survivor support group that started in Bangalore called ASKIOS and her founder had, also a survivor, had called me at that time she was starting out for some support. And in fact she had seen our play…and she wanted to start a survivor group in Bangalore, so we had helped her look at various group models. She wanted to not to set up an organization but to run a therapy support group…like a therapy session group—survivors coming together and talking. So I had helped her set up and work through her with various models…and supervise it in the first couple of years…so she ran it for a long time…

But it doesn't run any more. This woman that RAHI helped, Nazu Tonse, is now running an e-group on the internet with the same name—ASKIOS—which means *shadowless* in Greek. It is not a therapy group any more, but more like an information group with information about all kinds of sexual abuse[43]. Apart from helping interested people (doesn't look like very many) set up support groups around the country, RAHI also provides individual supervision to mental health practitioners and other NGOs on their incest/CSA cases (A.Gupta, personal communication, February 01, 2011). Being an urban organization in a country with a very active grassroots, rural activist movement, I specifically asked Anuja if they had branched out to the rural areas and collaborated with NGOs there to create awareness about the issue. As mentioned earlier, Anuja finds that poor rural women are already more open than middle-upper class urban women to talking about incest. Also she added:

> …earlier years we have done fair amount of works through other NGOs working in rural areas, so linking up with them…and training their staff…not direct intervention work in rural areas but training…other groups going through other groups—so either a particular group itself or a nodal group that would bring together other groups working in that district or in that area to get trained...on this...so mostly short term training but to the very simple purpose of

[43] For more information please visit: http://askios.tripod.com/. RAHI's website also has a link to the same.

> learning...you know feeling more confident because…people know this is happening… NGOs working in rural areas I mean they are doing such a great work…I have always found that if…you are doing good work anyway, all you need is a bit of confidence and a bit of knowledge of course on child sexual abuse because people tend to get a little scared of this. But actually they are doing a damn good job...they are doing a damn good job in their constituency any way in working with women and children or whatever in grass-root levels.

So instead of displaying any urban bias, Anuja actually gives credit to rural NGOs for doing a fabulous job with women and children and also instead of blaming them for ignorance, silence or denial surrounding incest and CSA, on the contrary, she actually claims that they "know this is happening". This combined with her earlier information on rural women, it looks like what becomes more important for Anuja, RAHI and other like-minded people is breaking the silence against incest in *big* cities in the country and dissociating middle and upper class honor and prestige that goes with the family by revealing the ugly side to it.

Such trainings and support services are not new to the Turkish context either, though there are certain differences. KAMER for instance has *asked* for expert support for the women that came to it in the past. As seen earlier, Ufuk Sezgin, an expert in this area, along with Raija-Leena Punamäki conducted a pilot study of the effectiveness of group psychotherapy among women coming to KAMER with multiple traumatic life events, 15% of which included survivors of sexual abuse inflicted by fathers and brothers (Sezgin and Punamäki, 2008). The study consisted of performing group therapy on these women and the results of the study were positive in alleviating the pain of these women and giving them more self-confidence. Now however, KAMER has grown so much as an organizations that it is planning to enter into a collaboration with the Dicle University in Diyarbakır to get special training on incest and CSA for psychologists from its 23 provinces from experts such as Sezgin, so that they can work in their respective regions with incest survivors (N. Akkoç, personal communication, March 30, 2011). So in the series of its evolution as an organization that many years ago was trained by pioneers such as Mor Çatı and continued having experts from Istanbul until very recently to provide support services, KAMER is on its way to becoming a kind of pioneer in the field of incest support itself by starting its own new collaborations and laying foundations for a support group and services for adult women survivors of incest.

Mor Çatı, already a pioneer women's organization, has experienced psychologists like Şahika Yüksel and Feride Yıldırım who have been training other

psychologists working at the organization as volunteers in the area of sexual abuse. Emphasizing once again that there are no special, systematic and organized programs in Istanbul and generally in the country to train psychologists or organizations on incest, Feride does mention that:

> There have been [in the past] some training programs for psychologists in Istanbul …one by the psychological association[44] on trauma— not sexual abuse specifically but on trauma. Şahika Hanım I think has conducted a few educational programs on family therapy and abuse but I mean I don't know of any ongoing programs [on incest or sexual abuse].

In addition to this, as mentioned earlier, because of Mor Çatı's emphasis on CSA and the CSA program started a few years ago, it is planning to collaborate with a private high school to train its students who will in turn create awareness about CSA amongst children going to State schools (F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 26, 2011).

These programs and practices reflect a certain basic philosophy and certain ways of thinking about incest by each of the organizations. During the interviews with Mor Çatı, both Fatma and Şahika Yüksel claimed that incest is not really something secret or hidden in the feminist circles, even though it might be a taboo talking about it in the society at large[45]. Fatma mentioned how women's organizations and psychologists from Istanbul University, such as the ones interviewed for this study—Şahika Yüksel and Ufuk Sezgin—have been trying since the late second wave feminist movement in Turkey, the late 80s, to work with survivors and create awareness on this issue. Şahika Yüksel herself told me about a conference at Mor Çatı in the early 90s when they had invited an expert from Germany to talk about incest and CSA. Thus Mor Çatı's belief basically remains in breaking the power nexus in the family by ending the abuse, ending the incest via empowerment. Since a lot of their systematic focus is on CSA and healing of adult incest survivors is just subsumed under the bigger umbrella of domestic violence against women, a lot of their systematic handling is of cases where mothers,

[44] PAT: http://www.psikiyatri.org.tr/English.aspx

[45] Fatma talked about psychologists at Istanbul University studying incest in the early 1990s. Interestingly, I found a reference to both Turkish and Indian psychologists' work on incest victims-survivors in an American anthropological article about the incest taboo (Meigs and Barlow, 2002), which further mentions a study at Istanbul University conducted on "Dissociative Identity Disorder" amongst victims of sexual/incestuous abuse in the bibliography: (Sar, Yargiç, & Tutkun, 1996). However, articles dealing with incest as a social issue were very few and hard to come by in both countries.

usually themselves being abused, bring their children who are victims of incest or CSA, and as Feride puts it: "…we support the mother's strength and the mother empowers so that she can support the child. That's the first priority." Both Feride and Fatma identified *power* or rather *power differential* as the main reason for any kind of domestic violence and abuse, including incest. A striking example that Feride gave me was about a man throwing a glass of water at his wife: "Will he ever do it with his boss?" she asked rhetorically, "No. Because he knows he can't." The implication here of course being that he *knows* he can do so with his wife because he knows he has more power. That is why perhaps in response to my question whether incest will or can end, Feride says:

> …maybe you can decrease the number of victims of incest but I doubt it that you can eliminate it…because when you look at the history of humanity from the beginning, it's always been there. So has domestic violence…I am sure Mor Çatı would agree too. They might go into political explanation saying if we could overcome this patriarchal society and create this new society then we would eliminate it...I am not sure because whatever type of society, there is always power, there's always someone who wants to be powerful and to feel powerful you need someone to dominate…I don't think you can eliminate incest.

Although the feminist discourse of power and patriarchy is also identified by KAMER as a cause for incest, Nebahat Akkoç's own experiences with the issue and with the common prejudices against the Southeast of Turkey, has forced her to think beyond it. For one, it has made her think of more systematic programs for adult incest women survivors, such as the one with Dicle University which will also be mentioned a bit later on. Her own exposure to incest was in the year 1996. Before that, she told me, she had no idea what exactly incest was. She had heard about something like sexual abuse that sometimes happened in some homes, but just like the general population, she believed it was something that occurred only in a few psychopathic families. An incident in 1996 really opened her eyes to the issue and its rampant occurrence. After that and the establishment of KAMER she consciously became more sensitive to and aware of incest survivors coming to KAMER and around her, even amongst her family and friends (personal communication, March 30, 2011). Since then she has been publicly trying to create more awareness of the issue; for instance just a few weeks before I interviewed her in March, she had appeared on CNN Türk, openly talking about incest and its prevalence in Turkey. If, as Feride from Mor Çatı said, more "traditional" family structures are indeed more conducive to maintaining the secrecy around incest, then working in the Southeast of Turkey with more "traditional" families

and where the issue of *honor* is clearly very important, must make it more challenging for KAMER in breaking the silence due to which they need to work hard on the issue and focus not just on power, but as mentioned earlier on poverty, overcrowding, State reluctance, adolescent urges, etc. as well as a cause for or factor in incest. Maybe for this reason Nebahat Akkoç believes that incest won't end—it can't end for hundreds of years because there are so many things involved—the only thing that can help is raising the awareness of victims/survivors and helping them cope with their loss and trauma (personal communication, March 30, 2011).

RAHI as a pioneer organization itself worked primarily on what it believes as breaking the silence and denial surrounding incest in the Indian society where families are considered sacred and childhood is surrounded by ideologies of innocence that mask abuses such as incest. In an attempt to do so, it not only started providing, and still provides, individual and group therapeutic services, but also training for other NGOs and groups and most importantly creating media awareness through television and newspapers and coming up with relevant literature in the Indian context, which will be delved into in more detail later. As Anuja explicitly laid out:

> the silence had to be broken…around the fact that it [incest] happens in India. The other thing is that we were very keen at that time to talk about the fact that it happens in middle class families. So a lot of RAHI's focus was on middle class families because right from the inception I wanted to try hard...I mean I wanted not to create this myth...or perpetuate the myth that it happens in poor families…So a lot people who come to RAHI are actually from middle and upper middle class, English speaking backgrounds.

As a part of its pioneering role, RAHI also feels the need to constantly evolve and keep on doing something new and expanding the horizons of their work in order to maintain their "niche" in the NGO sector, where many new organizations have sprung up focusing on CSA. In that sense RAHI is like a proper systematic organization working towards self sustenance and expansion.

> We are in a very different place and RAHI in every 2 years, we've felt that something has moved so we have had to revise our program and look at what else we have to offer. So having broken the path…Ok…so as pioneers you break the path ok then something happens so that now you respond…so you create the response and then you respond to the response…You know what I mean? So in colleges when we started our program with college girls who were very keen you know we have a lovely peer education program[46] now but with college girls when we started through lectures, it was first...first colleges would give us half

[46] RAHI's *Peer Education Program* (PEP). More information can be found at: http://www.rahifoundation.org/Student-Community-Education.html

> an hour…Then 2 years down the road or 3 years we started doing one day workshops because the needs also changed…people started coming in; girls started coming in with different kinds of questions because it was being talked about a little bit more socially. So they were learning a little bit more before coming in. So the nature of their questions changed. It was never— does it happen or not happen—but *how* [emphasis original] does it happen…what can we do? We have friends who have disclosed to us so what can we do? So then we started a one day disclosure workshop on how to handle disclosure from friend…then the psychology department called us to do a one day course with their students. Ok...so we started getting more recognition.

Another way in which RAHI is evolving currently is by trying to redefine itself. Although, just like Mor Çatı and KAMER, RAHI also identifies itself as a feminist organization, Anuja also stressed that they don't say no to male survivors (unlike Mor Çatı who made it very clear they were working only for women and children), and they are presently "in the throes of some sort of transition and looking at whether we need to redefine ourselves or how do we…you know…position ourselves. We went through that a couple of years back and now we are back to looking at how we want to position ourselves." (personal communication, February 01, 2011). This and the previous example of college *Peer Education Program* (PEP), along with RAHI's venture into the legal aspect of CSA by contributing to the proposed bill for CSA laws and its continuing efforts to breaking the silence not only around and with adult women survivors but also around CSA and current abuse of children is indicative of its multi-faceted approach to the issue and need to constantly evolve. As Anuja says about their work with children:

> …right from the beginning RAHI is defined as a survivor group or as a group for survivors…but we did a lot of work on child protection or raising awareness. Because you know when in a country where nothing is happening around child sexual abuse, if you want to talk about adult survivors, you have to talk about kids. You can't…it's not an isolated…you have to make those connections.

But in spite of working on creating CSA awareness, RAHI's core focus remains adult (women) survivors of incest. Anuja feels that even though Indian society is gradually accepting CSA and incest and admits that children are getting abused, the long term mental impact on adult survivors continues to be grossly underestimated. And so, in Anuja's own words,

> Now as women, feminist groups started sort of…none of them started with a mental health focus. They were more activist oriented, taking things to court...rather than focusing on the mental health aspect in a big way…whereas we started just the opposite…[focusing] on mental health and on survivors.

This is the big difference between the organizations in Turkey and RAHI. RAHI at its core—because of its focus on the mental health of adult survivors and probably partly also due to the personal background of Ashwini as an addictions counselor, and the background story that led to its establishment, viz. Ashwini and Anuja's increasing encounters with women survivors of abuse, and Anuja's own confrontation with her own abuse—RAHI is an organization focused on the mental, psychological healing of women survivors. It is this combination of its feminist beliefs and focus on the mental health aspect of the healing of incest survivors, not surprisingly, that determines what RAHI sees as the reasons for and solutions to incest. Just like Mor Çatı and KAMER, according to RAHI, patriarchy, power and the way men are trained around violence and women and children are subordinated and sexualized is a key set of what Anuja calls "conditions" that are responsible for incest. She refrains from calling all these things "reasons" because she doesn't claim to know the exact reason for incest, so instead she identifies some "conditions" that make it more conducive than others. Just like Feride, she admits that the issue of female perpetrators is a reality and that the fact is that not *all* men are perpetrators, even *if* they might get sexually turned on by kids. A lot of them know where to draw the line. Anuja brands this as an issue of "individual pathology", note again a psychological classification, which distinguishes men who don't abuse from men who do and finally from pedophiles who, according to Anuja, are a

> different category of people… there is a real pathology involved there as almost like a dysfunction or you know whatever they can't…pedophiles are known to have a…whatever you call it a…disorder…they simply cannot…so they have to be incarcerated otherwise they would continue to…they don't respond to treatment that well.

Whereas both Feride and Ufuk Sezgin refuse to distinguish between perpetrators as "sick" and "normal" people because they believe that such distinctions help perpetuate the belief that only "sick" men abuse[47] and ignores the majority of perpetrators who are "normal" family men, Anuja is more willing to make such psychological distinctions. However, just like KAMER and Mor Çatı she also shares the belief that as long as there are power differentials, incest can never be eradicated, and just like KAMER she thinks that working with survivors is the best solution—not just to empower them, as Nebahat Akkoç talks about—but also in the bigger picture as a strategy of, another psychological term, "postvention", in order to prevent the "intergenerational" perpetuation of abuse

[47] A belief similarly shared by the team of *Atlıkarınca*, the recent Turkish film on incest as discussed earlier, which portrays a "regular" Turkish family.

(when the absued becomes an abuser) and also to alleviate the *effects* of the abuse, which she feels are the worst and most grossly underrated (personal communication, February 01, 2011). In the broader social reality she realizes that no matter how much you educate everyone—abused, abusers, non-abused—incest will happen in any case—in spite of breaking the silence—but by focusing on survivors, at least we can focus on the pain *after* incest and alleviate their pain (personal communication, February 01, 2011).

Finally, what is also interesting to see in the philosophies of all three organizations, apart from their methodologies, practices and activist vs. mental health focuses, as a minor addendum, is their personal reasons for *what* makes incest an especially gross form of abuse and violation of human rights. According to Feride, incest is especially bad because:

> …it's a greater breach of trust. Especially when we are young…I mean how do we learn to trust people? We learn to trust through trusting the people who are taking care of us…I mean each time we cry we're fed; each time we we're picked up; each time we are hungry we're fed; each time we feel unloved we are loved; and then slowly slowly we develop this concept of trust you know. This is the world...I am an individual and there are people I can trust. If the people who are responsible for taking care of you and the people the whole society thinks is taking care of you, if they don't take care of you, if they harm you, by telling you on one hand they should trust you, and then on the one hand taking away that trust, you never get a chance to develop that trust, that's why it's so painful. Plus it also causes all these very conflicting feelings in an individual…

She goes on to talk about these "conflicting" feelings in survivors that I have talked about earlier—the hatred *and* the love they feel for their abusers. In that sense, according to Feride, incest is a severe trauma for adult women survivors because,

> Incest steals from you... steals from your childhood, it steals from your youth, it steals from your motherhood, it steals from every important area of your life and this can never be replaced. I mean you can never go back and be a child once again. It steals your innocence, it steals your trust, it steals your faith in the world…these are irreplaceable. I mean you can build new systems of trust but you can never have what you've lost.

What is evident here is the sense of a "lost" childhood and an "innocence" that needs to be protected, not to mention the many long term impacts on the adult woman's life. Anuja, while also talking about childhood, also emphasizes the importance of the space or *setting* in which incest takes place—the home. Nebahat Akkoç also alludes to the breaking of trust both in the case of the "trusted" person who breaks it (abuser) and the site where it is broken (home). However, Anuja elaborates on this second aspect by

saying that since the home in many ways for a child "is the last frontier…there is nowhere to go...and that has a very specific effect on the mind", any sexual abuse that happens within the walls of the house, including something not perpetuated by a family member per se but by a "trusted" person becomes incest:

> ...somebody is coming at home only because the parents trust that person or non offending adults or whatever are trusting that person to come in. So in many ways in the mind of the child it is like they can't tell…because this is someone the parents have allowed into the house...so it's very different from…teacher abusing…even though trust is there…and even though it may be very difficult for children to tell and children will never be telling any way regardless of who the abuser is…But they can still come back home and tell. Ok...whereas when it's happening at home it's all boxed in you know…like…and especially of course as we know most sexual abuse you know is…within the home.

This forces us to consider the whole dynamics of space, power, abuse, safety, domination, and liberation—all big, confusing and conflicting terms that Foucault also talks about when commenting on the importance and relevance of space to liberation (Foucault, 1993). Although this is not the place to develop a detailed thesis on the issue, I would still like to comment on it. According to Foucault, spaces are the loci of the exercise of power and domination and yet the same space(s) can be used as sites of counter-domination, resistance and "practices of liberty" (Foucault, 1993). One must remember that for Foucault no site or space or institution *guarantees* liberty—it is a *practice* that is achieved by action (Foucault, 1993). This raises interesting implications in the case of incest, so discriminately marked by the "home" as a site of abuse.

First of all, going with Anuja's metaphor of the "box", how does the home function simultaneously as a site of male domination, sexual abuse and "boxed up" frustration that just can't be released behind the *confines* of the four walls of a house, and also as a site of comfort and protection that marks the multiple discourses on home—"you are home now" or "there is no place like home" or "home sweet home", etc. According to Foucault it is the *interaction* between spaces and "life-practices, values, and discourses" (Foucault, 1993, p. 134) that determine the final result. And so the actual physical space of the home and the discourses generated around it need to be studied and if the same sites can act as sites of both control and liberation, then probably, resistance at home by women who are traditionally considered "home-*makers*" by challenging gender roles and so on can make a difference to the (abusive) practices of this home space. A Foucauldian analysis of space also forces us to ask if it is just enough to have organizations like Mor Çatı and KAMER and RAHI in breaking

the hegemony of silence around incest— i.e. to what extent are the *will* and liberating practices of survivors themselves necessary to do so?

Ultimately though what shouldn't be lost from sight, as is lost from law, is incest itself. And all the three organizations make it a point that isn't so. Due to their feminist core and emphasis on women and children, in a situation like incest, none of the people I interviewed believed in preserving the family unity and unit over the feelings and safety of the abused women and children. Feride put it very clearly when she said: "Just people live in a building you know, among four walls and because they carry titles that relate them to each other doesn't make them a family." (personal communication, January 26, 2011). So just the *space*, the home is not family. A family is based on mutual trust and love and when incest happens, that trust is broken and the family effectively dies. Mor Çatı does try to strengthen the rest of the family—the woman and her children—"financially, socially, emotionally, in every way" (F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 26, 2011) so that a new family can be created; one based on mutual love and trust. Anuja Gupta concurs as she repeatedly emphasizes the need to break the silence around incest to make the general public aware of what actually happens to many women and children in families.

> Cultures where families are so strong that the denial around it…you know...potential abusers around the child…are just so great. So families, big families don't mean protection of children you know…women and children are known to be most unsafe in families.

She refers to big families in the context of joint families in India that are still prevalent to some extent. The Indian "middle class", like Turkey's, mainly lives in nuclear families, but the occasions when families get together in both countries are so many that the risk of abuse of children increases by the same amount. None of the organizations also believed that women could "make up" histories of abuse that organizations such as FMSF claim. Feride very passionately responded to such false memory claims by saying:

> …it [incest revelation] is such a painful procedure and brings so little gains to the person who is going through that process that no way would people take the trouble to come up to make it up…no...I mean it's so painful and it brings additional pain too because once you start to talk about it you're stigmatized…you know some…you are isolated to a certain extent…many people don't want to be with you, many people think there's something wrong with you…you lose family, you lose friends, if you take it to court you are ridiculed, all your past history is dug up…so it's such a painful story that I mean why would anyone with their right mind come up and say that they've gone through this when they haven't?

Indeed. Although some false memories may be possible, why would anyone in their right mind blame someone if they weren't abused when they have so much to lose and so little to gain? By taking such stands against people who want to undermine incest and by siding with the abused, the survivors, the women and the children, Mor Çatı, KAMER and RAHI provide a platform where all voices can speak and are sure to be heard.

2.3.2 Talking and Writing Incest

> Lend your ears to this sound[48]! ("Bu sese", 2009).
>
> - Radikal Newspaper headline on Nebahat Akkoç's speech on incest delivered in Hakkari at the Kurdish Women's Congress.

> Incest is the worst form of violence[49]. (Gündüç, 2007).
>
> - Mor Çatı's statement on the event of a step-father raping his 10-year-old daughter in Samsun, Turkey.

> All this is paving the way for a new kind of woman to emerge: the incest survivor…"The House I Grew Up In" is about this woman. (Ailawadi, 1999, p. xiv).
>
> - Anuja Gupta in the Foreword to *The house I grew up in*.

The activist-centered approach of Mor Çatı and KAMER and the survivor centered mental health healing focus of RAHI are what primarily determine the *ways* in which these organizations talk about incest, create awareness of the issue, and challenge prevailing notions surrounding it. All three organizations have used the media extensively to talk "incest" but it is mainly RAHI, with its emphasis on adult women survivors and as a primary incest organization that has worked on writing and enacting incest as well, in the form of a book and a play.

Mor Çatı has always been big on politicizing issues. As Feride says:

> …Mor Çatı as an institution has a political background and is politically involved too in promoting...concepts, in raising the consciousness of women and public; they have publications towards this goal and they have TV programs,

[48] Tr. Bu sese kulak verin!

[49] Tr. Ensestin en ağır şiddet biçimi olduğunu

> they have radio shows, they have educational workshops and groups towards promoting this; they meet with other women organizations, they meet with government when necessary…with governmental institutions; they work on how to change the law...so they are a very politically active institution.

Needless to say, they haven't shied away from politicizing incest as well. As a part of their program on CSA, they have issued statements like "One out of every four children experiences sexual abuse[50]" that can be found on their website (Cinsel İstismar, 2010). They have also been very responsive to and highly critical of recent incest cases[51] in Turkey that have made it to the news, and have used such opportunities to *make visible* incest and talk about it—its prevalence and its long term impacts, along with, going with their strong legal and activist philosophy, the need to work on more comprehensive laws regarding incest. For instance, in response to the reduction of prison sentence of a man from Samsun, who in 2007 had raped his 10-year-old daughter, on the alleged grounds that she didn't suffer significant psychological distress (!), Mor Çatı seriously took up the issue by challenging the existing legal system and law authorities. They released a statement saying how the law itself is patriarchal and carries a male-bias that allows such preposterous decisions to be passed. Şahika Yüksel also mentioned the impossibility of little or no psychological trauma in a case like this and talked about how in any CSA, especially incest, the psychological effects usually appear in various, manifest forms later in adult life (Gündüç, 2007).

KAMER and RAHI similarly have regularly appeared in news headlines and TV programs while raising their voices on the issue of incest. Nebahat Akkoç's interview on CNN Türk has already been mentioned. She also appeared in the headlines of various Turkish dailies including *Hürriyet* and *Radikal* when she spoke about incest at the congress for Kurdish women in Hakkari in 2009 ("Her dört evden birinde", 2009). The headline titled "One out of every four houses experience incest! A scary reality

[50] Tr. Her 4 çocuktan 1'i cinsel istismara uğruyor

[51] An example would be the case of Hüseyin Üzmez which caused a national uproar in Turkey a couple of years ago. The *Vakit* newspaper columnist was accused of sexually abusing a 14-year-old girl with full consent from her mother and sentenced to prison, when a report saying that the girl was not psychologically traumatized was declared grounds enough for his release. More details can be found at: http://www.hurriyetdailyn Ews.com/n.php?n=former-vakit-columnist-released-from-prison-2011-03-09

from Nebahat Akkoç[52]!" features other experts from the talk at Hakkari University, including Şahika Yüksel, and contains some excerpts from Nebahat Akkoç's talk. She mentions how sad it is that people can't talk about incest because (talking about it) is such a taboo and how incest is a prevailing reality across all divides: rich and poor, educated and uneducated, all nations and states and areas—everywhere. She also mentions the biggest problem organizations like hers face in Southeast Turkey—honor killings—but stresses how such sexual crimes (including incest) are not just a reflection of the injustices against women such as virginity preservation, etc., but something deeper. It is about how women are made to *obey* their families to such an extent that anything they do—which includes the revelation of gross injustices against them such as incest—is perceived as a threat and they are also sometimes killed for going against familial honor. Feride from Mor Çatı also emphasizes something similar by talking about the need to look deeper for traumatic experiences that go beyond experiences that are "out of the ordinary" but are rather included in common experiences of everyday life that women experience, which includes incest amongst several others (Mor Çatı Bülten, 2010, p. 9).

RAHI focuses on exactly this aspect: the prevalence of incest as a traumatic experience in the lives of adult women even years after the abuse and the long term impacts of the abuse from the survivors' perspectives, in its labors to create social awareness of the issue in the media and the news. A list of all web articles featuring RAHI and newspaper headlines/articles that it has featured in can be found on their website (In News, News, 2009). All these web and news articles aim at presenting incest as a rampant reality in middle and upper classes in India, the statistics and denial surrounding it, ways in which awareness of this issue is being spread[53], and finally and most importantly the long term impacts on adult women survivors and their voices. Even as far back as 1998, when RAHI was barely two-years-old, it conducted a survey and published the findings in a booklet titled *Voices from the Silent Zone* (henceforth Voices…) in order to shatter the myths surrounding Indian society, including the ones perpetuated by the mental health experts and other professionals in the country at the

[52] Tr. Her dört evden birinde ensest ilişki yaşanıyor! Nebahat Akkoç'tan korkunç gerçek!

[53] One news article titled "Incest, sexual abuse: Pulling skeletons out of the closet" from 2005 talks about how college girls trained by RAHI's PEP discussed earlier are spreading awareness of the issue.

time that incest doesn't happen in India and even if it does, it happens only in the "backward" areas and is not so common. During our interview, as Anuja reminisced about the difficulties of conducting research in the days of limited computers and barely any internet access, she told me how she had to heavily rely on the literature mainly from the United States on incest since there was hardly anything available in India at the time[54]. In spite of these shortcomings, RAHI managed to create a fairly comprehensive survey questionnaire (a sample of which is also included in the booklet) and sent it out to English speaking middle and upper class women living in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, and Goa ("RAHI", 1998). The response was staggering. Although a small-scale survey which was preceded by yet another smaller scale survey in the mid nineties, as mentioned in the previous chapter, by the organization *Samvada*, RAHI's survey revealed, based on 600 questionnaire responses that a whopping 76% of the respondents had been subjected to some form of sexual abuse[55] of which 71% were incestuous (that included abuse by well known people) ("RAHI", 1998). What is also noteworthy about this survey is that it's not just a bunch of statistics and opinions from experts on the issue—in fact, apart from the acknowledgements to experts, Anuja's Foreword, an Introduction that presents psychological and common terminology of sexual abuse, and other such small sections describing the survey and analyzing the conclusion etc, the findings are exclusively "Dedicated to all of us"—incest survivors. True to one of the many purposes of the survey that include establishing incest as a middle and upper class Indian phenomenon, making available Indian statistics on the subject, etc., which is "To look at incest from a survivor's point of view…" ("RAHI", 1998, p. 10), Voices… is constantly punctuated by "voices" of survivors from the beginning to the end. There are voices that express anger, frustration, forgiveness, confusion, helplessness, pain…a whole myriad of emotions. But all voices express one uniform thing with certainty—that what they experienced was *wrong* and that it has affected their life in some form or the other with varying degrees of intensity. This survey was followed by a media explosion on the issue of incest in India both nationally and internationally, and RAHI was interviewed by such corporations as the BBC, NBC, etc. (A. Gupta, personal communication, February 01, 2011).

[54] A bibliography containing a few articles/researches done on CSA and incest in the 90s in India is available in *Voices from the Silent Zone* ("RAHI", 1998).

[55] All such details such as what defines sexual abuse, the technical terminologies and details of the questionnaire itself can be found in the booklet.

This emphasis on survivors' voices and the fact that all were abused as children, which shows that *even as children* victims know that what is happening is not right and as adults grow up to manifest some symptoms of that wrong done to us, is indicative of that power of the *wrong* and of people's *feelings*, even as children, of distinguishing right from wrong. As Feride also said in response to my question of to what degree can people internalize sexual abuse since a lot of women coming from very "traditional" families both in Turkey and India, where family honor is of pivotal importance are told to accept what happened to them and that what happened is "normal" as men do such things:

> …I think all women intuitively know it's not right, otherwise they won't be bringing it up. I mean you know we don't go around talking about how our mothers used to feed us when we were babies because I mean we've heard that, because this is what all mothers do so this is not an issue. So of course while you might believe that this is what all fathers do because that's what your father is telling you, it's probably what the grownups in the family will tell you if you [tell them]…the whole family tries to suppress this secret. But I don't think that women really accept that it's normal...I mean if they think they won't be there as far as I am concerned; the women who do accept it as a normal part of growing up are the ones who don't seek help. I don't think it's possible to accept that it's normal; you know that it's not normal…You can feel it when you're a child and then when you're a gown up you know that it's not normal.

Thus, the women who do seek help, the women that Feride and Anuja and Nebahat Akkoç and all these organizations they represent are talking about, the survivors, become very crucial in representing the cruelty of the reality that is incest and their voices assume the central part in reflecting and transmitting this reality to the rest of the society. And yet, neither Mor Çatı nor KAMER feature survivor stories, either in the form of written stories or interviews or videos on their websites, and also don't send actual women survivors to be interviewed by the media in TV shows. Feride mentioned some programs like Turkish *Oprah Winfrey* shows that "bring out" the issue of incest and also how Mor Çatı is constantly approached by the media to send incest survivors to be interviewed on television. But she remains hugely skeptical of these approaches. As she says:

> …media is very cruel; I mean they are always talking to victims to invite to their programs…they always ask us [Mor Çatı] to bring people…it's like a circus…and we always refuse…unless of course the woman we're working with wants to do this as part of her own healing journey…and sometimes a few women have spoken to reporters again because it has helped them heal you know...

RAHI in comparison has a section called "Survivor's Story" on its website that encourages people to share their experiences of sexual abuse in the form of written stories, paintings and/or pictures (Survivor's Story, 2009). Also the video gallery in the section "Media Center" which is still under construction in the "Support RAHI" website ("Video Gallery", n.d.) contains links to TV programs that feature not only Anuja talking about, ironically, the amount of stress a victim of abuse has to go through when she comes out in the media, but also actual women survivors talking about the incest in their childhoods. Once again, how empowering exactly is the kind of survivor discourse that makes survivors speak in the media to an audience of potentially thousands of people, under the scrutiny of a "neutral" TV host and maybe even a psychological "expert"? Can't such disclosures of victims/survivors (depending on how people viewing them judge them) be viewed, as Foucault would say, as "confessions" that might seem empowering but actually build into the existing hegemonic discourses of repression and prevent the disclosure of the actual injustice in a situation like incest (Foucault, 1976)? Are such media confessionals eliciting any true compassion and awareness on the issue and the urge to do something about it instead of just putting survivors as helpless victims in the center of an incestuous, sexual story plot providing cheap kicks to many in the audience and a providing a shallow condemnation of "those disgusting men" who perpetuate such heinous crimes—men who still remain far away from the ordinary, everyday lives of people? Such fine lines and tensions and slips between actually empowering, true, and political survivor discourse vis-à-vis a consumerist oriented "confessional" discourse are one of the many issues that will be discussed in the pages to come. It suffices to say now that with its survivor centered approach, RAHI has strategically worked with the media in bringing out incest and actual incest survivors to view[56].

To the same end, after the "RAHI findings" in the form of Voices… that revealed the rampancy of CSA in India, RAHI came out with the "RAHI Testimonies" of actual survivors who they had worked with in the form of a book called *The house I grew up in* (henceforth The House…). The house… once again referring to the *space*, the site of sexual abuse, incest, was first published in 1999 by Survivor Communications (A division of RAHI) and is a book about "Five Indian women's experiences of childhood incest and its impact on their lives." (Ailawadi, 1999, front

[56] In all this analysis though one must remember that RAHI is an organization dedicated *exclusively* to incest unlike Mor Çatı and KAMER.

cover). The book is edited by Anuja's partner and co-founder of RAHI, Ashwini Ailawadi, and just like Voices… is once again dedicated to women survivors; "to the girls we were…and the women we are" (Ailawadi, 1999, dedication). Apart from the acknowledgements and Anuja's foreword and the final appendix that once again, just like Voices… defines key sexual and psychological terminology (and also distinguishes between "healthy" and "incestuous" family systems (Ailawadi, 1999, p. 110)), the only voices we hear are of the five survivors, in the form of their own survival stories. One is blown away by the unbelievable amount of pain these women experienced—from their own uncles and brothers and fathers and family friends—it's just unbelievable. All the women chose to withhold their names but from their occupations and locations it is obvious that they are all urban, middle to upper class Indian women. Their ages range from 19 to 67 at the time of their testimonies, showing the existence of incest through history and not just something that is a recent phenomenon. As Nebahat Akkoç also commented in our interview session that it's not that incest is on the rise: "It's always there. It just moves and changes homes." (personal communication, March 30, 2011).

I remember tears streaming down my face as I read this book, page-by-page; a book made so poignant by the fact that the (Indian) context was so familiar to me; a book about strong women who as little, helpless children were given pain, betrayal, and robbed of all their trust mechanisms when all they should have received was unconditional love and trust. One can also see that this is a carefully handpicked selection of stories by RAHI which contains women ranging from young to old, from joint to nuclear families, from those who confronted the abuser to those who didn't, from those extremely "promiscuous" to those who abstained from sex, and so on, to show how incest seeps through every layer of the fabric of the society and the range of impacts it can have on those abused. Also, interestingly, there is a woman who honestly admits having abused a little girl herself (Anonymous, 1999b) because of her own abuse and also a woman who actually "enjoyed" the sexual act as a little girl and derived power through it because she could then use the abuser (her uncle) to buy her gifts in order not to reveal their "little secret" (Anonymous, 1999c). In spite of the "enjoyment" though what is important to see in her story is the heart-wrenching condition in which the abuse leaves her—she is subjected to further abuse by another uncle and throughout her life is unable to develop stable relationships and stick to stable jobs. It is only after the revelation to and support from her daughter that her recovery begins. This shows that even though a child may feel physical pleasure on being sexually stimulated, it *does*

not mean that she asked for it or that it is not harmful for her mental well-being. As to the abused woman further abusing a child, it is just another red signal for why incest is not just a horrendous but also a dangerous abuse.

Mor Çatı has also featured survivor stories, including incest, in *Narratives Against Violence: The Experiences of Survival and Solidarity*[57] by Mor Çatı publications, where sixteen women writers, academics, journalists, etc. interviewed and narrated the stories of fifteen women who went to Mor Çatı. In this book, one can read the story of *Nermin* who talks about the abuse she experienced by her own father (Koç, 2008). Note though that these are *not* firsthand narratives but recollection/narration of first hand survivor stories. KAMER has no special literature/printed material on incest or incest survivor stories, but if one looks deeply and carefully in some of their publications, for instance *We can stop this: KAMER Killings committed in the name of 'Honor' 2006 report*[58], incest can be found. In section II of this book that talks about KAMER since 2003 there is a reference to a workshop called "Women Look to the Future[59]" conducted in Ankara by KAMER in collaboration with the British Council Ankara from 29 September-1 October 2003. One of the issues that was highlighted in this project was "the failure to accept girls suffering from domestic sexual abuse [incest] into the shelters…" (KAMER, 2006, p. 175). Further, in section III of the book that looks at 73 applicant profiles of women applying to KAMER in 2006 in order to be saved from "Honor" killings by their families, approximately 20% of the cases (mostly directly and some indirectly) indicate incestuous abuse of a girl by a family member (KAMER, 2006). Incest is indeed everywhere and yet nowhere.

Apart from news and television appearances, links to most of which are present on the organizations' websites, and written material in the form of books and reports, these organizations also use other strategies to "spread the word" on incest. As mentioned earlier, Mor Çatı's program on CSA has been running for a few years now. As soon as I walked into one of the rooms at the organization to interview Fatma, a huge poster against CSA on the wall, which can also be found on their website (Çocuklara Yönelik Cinsel İstismar, n.d.), greeted me. The poster consists of a child's nursery/bedroom cordoned off by a yellow tape indicating a scene of crime—a *space* of

[57] Tr. Şiddete Karşı Anlatılar: Ayakta Kalma ve Dayanışma Deneyimleri

[58] Tr. İstersek Biter: KAMER "Namus" Adına İşlenen Cinayetler 2006 Raporu

[59] Tr. Kadınlar Geleceğe Bakıyor

abuse—a space that should be full of love and protection—and warns us that one out of four kids experience CSA, and mostly incest. I was also handed a brochure on the same topic, which is also available on the Mor Çatı website, that contains facts about CSA and incest, the fact that children are individuals with human rights, the legal clauses against CSA, signs displayed by children experiencing sexual abuse, myths surrounding sexual abuse, what must be done if one spots an abused child, and the like (Çocuklara Yönelik Cinsel İstismar, n.d.). This brochure is a good example of both the legal/activist leanings of Mor Çatı and also the psychological support they provide to children (in this case) and also women survivors of incest. Apart from this CSA program, Mor Çatı also talks about CSA and incest via education and training. Feride revealed during our interview that all training programs at Mor Çatı for volunteers involve a section on CSA and incest. But *education* on the issue, according to Feride, goes beyond trainings and awareness creation. It has to begin with the society, at the school level, and even then it is a special kind of education about power, patriarchy, domestic violence, and abuse that needs to be imparted to children:

> …when we talk about education in domestic violence and sexual abuse, it is very hard to differentiate because they are just different types of the same thing…we are not talking about academic education actually, I mean when I look back on my own education actually, I mean I am doing my Ph.D. now, never in any of my classes have we ever talked about violence or what it means or that we shouldn't be violent...except in Ph.D. and Masters classes you know, sometimes we have group discussions but it's never part of the curriculum. So were talking about something else. When we mean people need to be educated about these issues we are not talking about school or academic performance, we are talking about something else, we are talking about being trained and educated in gender specific issues or being specifically trained about them. If we think of children, nowhere there are educational programs directed towards teaching children to use non violent ways to solve problems or non violent conflict resolution or…peaceful solutions to problems. I mean some schools have individual programs but these are not generalized. So were talking about something else actually.

RAHI would concur. PEP that I mentioned earlier, is an example of this "different" kind of education that Feride is referring to; one that includes college girls and educates them on incest and disclosure and how to handle the same—and these girls of course then further educate more groups of students, which helps in "spreading the word". RAHI's perspective on education is also interesting. When talking about the way they train rural NGOs on CSA and incest, Anuja said:

> …the kind of training we do…we are just coming in [to the NGOs] with some info and [tell them] can you do it you know; can you just keep it in mind. They

> have to come up with their own strategies. No way sitting in Delhi at RAHI I can decide what strategy; I don't know damn…about their reality but they do. My job is to facilitate that; help them feel confident that they do know actually because they come and think they don't know; our job is to say look you know but now you know more because we have just… you know we have just added that information.

She admitted that there are still a lot of prejudices around sexuality and sexual abuse in these areas, but totally believes that the NGOs and even the people living in rural areas (like the women mentioned earlier) are not ignorant about abuse and want to solve the problem. So instead of thinking about RAHI as an urban, more knowledgeable, superior organization imparting education to the less knowledgeable NGOs, Anuja thinks of RAHI more as a *facilitator* of knowledge and awareness regarding incest that can help rural NGOs to be more sensitive to the signs of abuse, and also as a mode of empowerment for these NGOs by telling them that they can combat CSA and incest on their own if they just looked out for the signs, became more observant, and go with their instincts.

Finally, in all this communication *strategy* has been key for RAHI and also for its success in promoting incest awareness. The key difference between the communication strategies of all three organizations is also noteworthy. While Mor Çatı and KAMER as feminist activist organizations have done much in talking about incest in an attempt to break the silence and win more legal rights for abused women and children, they have done so in an open, political way via direct statements and interviews. RAHI on the other hand, which defines itself as a mental-health focus feminist organization, has prioritized tactics over openness and timing over spontaneity in their communication. In a way, since it is already explicitly an incest healing and awareness creation center unlike Mor Çatı and KAMER, it doesn't have to push its agenda out there to the public. Instead, having already established itself as the organization that it is, it spent a lot of the initial years of its establishment in efforts to create literature in the Indian context such as Voices… and The House…; literature that "survivors need…in their own cultural context as well", because as Anuja says:

> …survivors across the world are the same. Everything is the same except the cultural context. That does differ. So it helps to read stories with Indian names, and you know, Indian sort of family backgrounds, so it makes it more real for people here.

Creating new literature in the Indian context continues to be a large part of RAHI's mandate. Another communication strategy adopted by RAHI was the play "30

days in September" that they commissioned the famous playwright Mahesh Dattani to do in 2000 (Dattani, 2002). The play was also part of a *larger* communication strategy of *timing*. It must be noted that the play followed both the RAHI findings and RAHI testimonies and while RAHI was in the process of steadily releasing information in the news and television media, thanks to Ashwini who used to be a journalist himself. The play then signified a new twist—a leap in RAHI's attempts to advertise incest and to keep the issue alive—via news reports, television appearances, survivor testimonials, and ultimately a play. As Anuja says:

> … you can't be too rabid...you know…in your love for bringing this issue out…you have to recognize that it's going to ruffle feathers. So how do you actually work around that? Yet not couch the issue, yet say as it is, but not frighten people off…so when we decided to do the play, ok, it was quite crucial to us. When we felt that it was ready...time; it was you know time was right for us to bring in this…so book is one thing, but then to see it on stage has another level of visibility and power.

This statement also reveals the RAHI strategy of gauging how much is enough. The play followed only after several other forms of communication such as the survey, news headlines, interviews, etc. because RAHI was well aware of the reach of a play and the difference "viewing" incest can make rather than just "reading" about it or watching an "expert" speak about it in the newspaper or television. Anuja kept on emphasizing, even when talking about RAHI's work with rural NGOs that incest should not be made a "huge deal" so as to scare people off. Only when they felt that the Indian public was ready to handle a play on incest, in spite of having decided back in 1997, when Dattani was an up and coming playwright that one day they'll work with him, only in 2000 did they actually decide to go ahead with it. They worked extensively with Dattani, who interviewed actual survivors coming to RAHI and wrote the script that RAHI collaborated in reading and revising before the final version was acceptable to all. Lillete Dubey, the famous Indian film and theater personality who also appeared a year later in the film *Monsoon Wedding* which also contains an incest survivor, came in as the director of the play, along with playing the mother of the abused character, *Mala*.

Although, unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to see the play which is still running in Mumbai when I was in Delhi to interview Anuja, I did get a chance to read the script. Even from the script and also from Anuja's description of the amount of time and work RAHI put into working with the actors in the play, it was evident that *what* was said and *how* it was said on stage was very important to RAHI: the *nuances*, as Anuja put it, were very important because in a sensitive issue like that RAHI, while not

wanting to scare its audiences away, also wanted to get their message through. The message was that we experience incest in every fiber of our society; incest has debilitating long term impacts; and finally that survivors are not alone:

> ..it is also a way to reach out to survivors whether they get in touch with us or not…to say that hey it's not only you…there is an organization working on this...so we would leave our address behind and people would you know get in touch. Even today I meet people and now the play has what been running for 10 years...somebody who saw the play and said this is...you know kind of was very good...(A. Gupta, personal communication, February 01, 2011).

Getting the nuances right was also a part of RAHI's strategy of not scaring people away while communicating on an issue that is "naturally threatening" for the society and "too horrific" for any society to confront (A. Gupta, personal communication, February 01, 2011). That is the reason why the poster of the play declares it as "A gripping tale of love and betrayal" (*not* incest). That is also the reason why in spite of even having considered portraying father-daughter incest in the play, RAHI decided to opt for uncle-niece and brother-sister incest instead. According to Anuja, Indian society then was just not ready for seeing father-daughter incest and as she says, …"you have to be 5 steps ahead of what people know and people think…because you want to push them to think in a certain way...but you can't be 10 steps ahead because then they will back off…".

The final play that emerged as a result of this strategic timing, planning, writing, and performing was a success. Apart from famous and established Indian theater personalities such as Lillete Dubey, RAHI managed to procure Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen's daughter, actress Nandana Sen, who was then just making her debut in India after having worked in the States, to play the lead role of *Mala* in the play. Both *Mala* (Nandana Sen's character) and her mother (Lillete Dubey's character) are victims of abuse by the same abuser—*Mala*'s uncle—the mother's brother. The abuse scars the women in different ways. While *Mala*'s mother becomes a subdued, timid and extremely devout woman abstaining from sex, *Mala* turns out to be a "promiscuous" girl who is unable to sustain a single relationship beyond 30 days. It is only through the sustained love and efforts of one of her boyfriends and her confrontation with her uncle is she able to experience closure and we learn the reason behind her fixation with "30 days"—it was the poem she was made to recite while being abused by her uncle. While *Mala* is angry throughout the play with her mother for not protecting her even though she knew about the abuse—although this reason doesn't explicitly surface until the disclosure of the incest towards the end—we also finally learn that the mother was *also*

abused by the same man, her brother, as a little girl, which traumatized her to such an extent that she normalized such an abuse and was desensitized to it and hence failed to protect her own daughter. The play ends with the disclosure of both the mother and daughter's abuse and a scene with the mother deep in prayer—has she resolved the incest in her life? Is she at *real* peace now instead of covering up the turmoil in her mind with superficial religious devotion? Has she still not found the voice to truly express the pain she has been through? We don't know. But what we do see is a relieved *Mala* hugging and clinging on to this praying figure of her mother, saying, "Please, tell me that you've forgiven me for blaming you. Please tell me that." Finally, she rests her head on her mother's lap and says with satisfaction, "I know you will, mother. I know you have", while the mother remains engrossed in her devotion (Dattani, 2002, p. 72-73).

The play has been performed at various locations, with various actors, and has also been translated into Hindi. Even to this day it remains as powerful as it was over ten years ago. RAHI, so impressed with Nandana Sen's performance who so convincingly portrayed *Mala* without judging her "promiscuity" (A. Gupta, personal communication, February 01,2011), have worked with her ever since in promoting their cause of preventing CSA and incest in India and in 2009 signed her on as their cause "ambassador". They are still working with her in deciding specific things they can do to together to promote their cause, but in the meantime their website features Nandana as their ambassador ("Nandana Sen", n.d.) and provides a link to her personal website as well. Nandana Sen herself has been active in talking about RAHI and CSA on various media and news websites and sites and has been writing blogs about the same[60]. Even before collaborating with RAHI as an ambassador, she had worked in films such as *Chuppee* (2009)[61] that aimed to break the silence around CSA. Throughout the country she is currently well known for her cause in supporting activities against CSA and her collaboration with RAHI.

Once again, one must not forget that RAHI dedicates and has been able to dedicate such time and efforts towards the media and literature promotional awareness

[60] Check out this blog written by Sen in April of this year in the event of CSA awareness month: http://csaawarenessmonth.wordpress.com/2011/04/29/and-will-the-flowers-die-by-nandana-sen/

[61] Eng. Silence. This short feature was sponsored by UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

of incest and CSA since it is exclusively dedicated to this issue, whereas Mor Çatı and KAMER deal with many, many other issues and aspects of domestic violence and injustices against women and children, of which incest is a part. But in order to dedicate *any* amount of time and attention to such promotions and more generally to even work with incest victims and survivors, requires something more than just good will and people who are willing to help. It requires finances. What do these organizations do about financially sustaining their respective efforts towards supporting incest victims/survivors? We shall see that now in the final section of this chapter.

2.3.3 One needs to be resourceful to get Resources

> …to have a specific program that will deal with educating the community on incest you know…raising consciousness and awareness about incest, providing support for incest victims, having more psychologists working with them, having more support groups, are all a matter of money. I mean if we have money and resources why not?
>
> - Feride Yıldırım

> So I've always had problems with funding...always having to make links between incest and sexual and reproductive health or incest as adult violence or incest as violence but not incest as incest.
>
> - Anuja Gupta

> Hopefully the funding comes through in 2012. Even if it doesn't, we will work on these issues.
>
> - Nebahat Akkoç

Money is of prime importance in delineating the scope and limits of the amount of work one can do in any area. What one actually does with the money and most importantly, *how* important one perceives money to be in actually achieving something is another issue altogether. The financial situation of each of the three organizations and their own role in acquiring funds and defining the necessity of funds clearly indicates this.

Fulya Kama Özelkan in her study of the "politics of women's empowerment" in both Mor Çatı and KAMER, points out how "economic sustainability" is one of the things that distinguishes the two organizations from each other (Özelkan, 2009, p. 49). Something similar can be seen in their respective responses to my question of whether

they are planning to expand services provided to incest women survivors[62]. While both Feride from Mor Çatı and Nebahat Akkoç from KAMER admitted that raising money to raise awareness and provide support to adult survivors was crucial, Feride felt that economic and financial issues were almost insurmountable, especially with regards to funding on an issue for incest. For Feride, Mor Çatı is an organization working with women subjected to domestic violence of which at least 30% are incest survivors and as much as Mor Çatı would love to work with incest survivors, getting funding for them is almost impossible. The following exchange illustrates this:

> Me: Do you think this [incest] is the kind of thing that sponsors will be willing to take up?
> Feride: No.
> Me: No. Why's that?
> Feride: I mean it's still such a big *taboo* [emphasis original]…I mean people are still so afraid of becoming involved with domestic violence let alone incest…people are very...it's a taboo…people are afraid of having their names associated with it…you know maybe they feel somehow that it'll imply that either they themselves are victims of incest or they are perpetrators or that they have guilt on their conscience or something...?

She goes on to add that for corporate funding, it is necessary for the corporation to have some "personal connection" with the issue in order for it to provide funds for it. For instance, she cites the example of "The Body Shop" whose sale proceedings go to support organizations working on domestic violence worldwide, because the owner of the store was herself a victim of domestic violence. Most importantly though, she feels that incest is such a big taboo, such a big thing for anybody to admit, that no one will be willing to support a program meant to support incest survivors. According to Feride, even for "regular" victims of domestic violence, people are more willing to donate money when they think they are helping "victims"—those "poor, helpless women and children", who have been rendered homeless. However, no one wants to know why they have been rendered homeless because no one wants to confront the fact that women and children experience the cruelest form of violence at home:

> Even with Mor Çatı, with Mor Çatı's twentieth anniversary [2010] we had the big auction on the 8th of November and the our main selling point was that we needed money to build a new shelter. But what we refrained from saying was…what sort of women came to that shelter or why we need the shelter because just the idea that we need a bigger shelter is socially acceptable,

[62] Please note that in this section I am highlighting funding endeavors and beliefs of Mor Çatı and KAMER only with regards to specific programs for adult women survivors of incest. A good explanation of their general funding strategies and efforts can be found in (Özelkan, 2009).

> bearable, it's tolerable. But if you go into relative details then it wouldn't be possible.

If such is indeed the case then why would people willingly confront an abuse as horrific as incest that happens regularly in homes and support seemingly non-"victim" looking adult women in order for them to heal from invisible scars inflicted from the abuse? For Mor Çatı, funding for such a taboo issue in a society where most donors and donating institutions are inherently patriarchal and male dominant would be just unacceptable and "negative advertising from a company's point of view." (F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 26, 2011).

Nebahat Akkoç on the other hand, while admitting the patriarchal bias of the Turkish state in not recognizing the intensity and gravity of incest and CSA and of sponsoring organizations in failing to fund the same, already had a plan to surmount sponsorship difficulties when I interviewed her. She informed me that KAMER was looking to start more systematic efforts towards programs to support women survivors of sexual abuse within the home, viz. incest and marital rape. They had applied for funding to the European Union Commission on these issues, which they expected to see come to fruition by next year, 2012. Once they acquire the funding, the plan is to collect all of KAMER's psychologists from its different provinces at Dicle University, whose Rector has already granted permission, for them to be trained by expert psychologists such as Ufuk Sezgin, so that they can then perform individual and group counseling and therapy with the women coming to their respective provinces (N. Akkoç, personal communication, March 30, 2011). What is the most striking about all this is when I asked Nebahat Akkoç whether KAMER had requested funding specifically for incest as a problem in itself—as "incest", as a violation of a person's body and soul—or incest as something that *causes* other problems such as violence, sexual problems etc., she responded: "No. Incest as incest; we have clearly pointed to 'incest' as the main problem in our application."

This is very interesting and commendable because Mor Çatı is not the only one to express skepticism on funding incest as a problem in itself. Anuja from RAHI said exactly the same thing when I questioned her about the *McArthur Foundation Fellowship* with which she and Ashwini had initially started RAHI. Although, claims Anuja, the panel that had decided on the fellowship consisted of very progressive people looking for women with "innovative" ideas, their framework was "sexuality and reproductive health" and *not* incest, and Anuja had to justify the validity of setting up a

support center for incest survivors within the framework of sexual and reproductive health. This remains a problem even now for RAHI, who like any and many other organizations working on women's issues, is always struggling for money. As she says, "I had to talk about child sexual abuse within that framework…and that is still an issue actually. There is no funding agency that funds work with adult survivors of child sexual abuse…there are lots of funding issues that we are constantly facing." (personal communication, February 01, 2011).

But in spite of these "funding issues", RAHI is also constantly trying to raise money for its cause by coming up with innovative ideas and as mentioned earlier, what is typical to RAHI—*strategies*. RAHI is on Facebook, where it constantly posts information on CSA and incest; advertises its events; informs public about activities, such as "twitter sessions" with Anuja online at certain times where people can log on and discuss sexual abuse with her; etc. Thus it basically puts itself "out there", encouraging people to understand, talk and donate to causes against incest and CSA. They accept all kinds of individual donations and also volunteers to work with them. People, groups or organizations willing to sponsor RAHI activities can also directly email or call them. They are also a part of Ria Enjolie's *iBuyiHelp* program where certain proceedings from what shoppers buy online goes to RAHI (iBuyiHelp Program, 2009).

Although the websites of all the three organizations contain links to sponsors and donations, I was surprised when I found a little something extra on the RAHI website in relation to financial support. A click on the image "Support RAHI's run at the Marathon '10" on the homepage of their website revealed not only the fact that RAHI has been running the *Delhi half marathon* for the past two years (2009 and 2010) in order to raise money for its work and services, but also that all this information and more can be found on a separate website itself called "Support RAHI" (Support RAHI Foundation, n.d.). This website provides information on and encourages people to participate in the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon in which RAHI collaborated with the charity *Concern India Foundation* in three categories (I-pledge, Dream Maker, and Corporate Challenge) where individuals and corporations could raise money for RAHI ranging from meager to huge amounts. But most importantly, the website lays out the menace of CSA and incest in India, the country's "worst kept secret" and provides amongst a host of other information, information on *how* the money from the 2009 *Delhi half Marathon* was used: in framing the CSA draft bill, in creating media

awareness of the issue, in training NGOs and other actors working in this area, and finally in counseling survivors and families of incest. It also lists *why* one should donate and *what* donations will achieve—the *number(s)* of people that will be reached in promoting awareness on the issue and the RAHI activities (already talked about earlier) where they will be utilized. Finally the website also contains a "Media Centre" section under construction that promises to contain features such as audio, video, and blogs in the future. Maybe this addendum website reflects RAHI's special efforts to find financial support for the organization. Maybe it is a website that reflects the pioneering organization's new, evolved, better and more broadly defined *avatar*, for it seems to contain much more and much newer information on RAHI's work as compared to the older website and also talks about CSA (focusing on children) as well as incest. In any case, it can be viewed as an attractive marketing *strategy* to attract potential donors in aiding the organization on a very serious, very dangerous, and very current, always present issue.

But still one is forced to pause and ask: why all the strategies? Why all the efforts to get money for a cause so genuine—a cause against a form of abuse so horrific? Why all the necessity to play with words in an effort to procure funding not just for incest survivors, but for survivors of domestic violence in general as Feride indicated? Shouldn't people be all geared up to help and donate for an issue that is being so publicized and criticized by so many social service organizations these days, including feminist ones such as Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI? Why still the State and social reluctance to acknowledge something that people like the ones working in these organizations have been screaming and hollering about? Feride nails it on the head when she says:

> …what is Mor Çatı compared to the general population or what are the women organizations considered in the general population; I mean how are women's organizations perceived in the general population? All around the world…I don't think they are very high among the hierarchy, I don't think they are very prestigious...I mean they are prestigious to us—we are proud of them, you are proud of them—but the general public, you know it's very easy to dismiss them as the work of "feminists". So they don't have very high credibility in the general population so it's…not very highly credible institutions talking about not very highly credible topics [incest]. It's going to take a long long long long time…

"…long long long long time" says Feride, before there is complete acceptance of the reality and widespread nature of incest and the willingness to help—which includes the willingness to volunteer and financially donate to causes helping adult incest

survivors to heal. One of the problems is indeed this problematic divide between "feminists"—those crazy women who keep on asking for more than they "deserve"—and "real" women who follow the (male) norms and accept whatever they get. But there are also several other issues at stake here, some coming out directly from this ethnographic fieldwork and some more general, that can be read as findings in our way to helping and healing adult incest survivors and even preventing CSA to begin with. Such issues and questions will be the focus of the concluding chapter and epilogue of this study.

CHAPTER 3

BREAKING THE SILENCE, EASING THE PAIN: BEYOND FAMILY, SURVIVORSHIP, WOMANHOOD, AND DISCOURSE

> After the stage of survivor comes the 'thriver'. Someone who has conquered the ill feelings connected to being abused. (Chandran, 2003).
>
> - A report on Anuja Gupta and RAHI

> A female drama teacher who groomed a 13-year-old girl for sex at a Lancashire school, has been jailed for three years. (Sex case drama teacher sentenced, 2011).
>
> - BBC News article

> Certain sexual experiences have reality prior to legal discourses…(Menon,1999, p. 282).
>
> - Nivedita Menon on *Gender and Politics in India*

The lessons I have learned from my fieldwork and the changes that I have personally undergone in the process are manifold. To do true justice to each one of them would be too onerous a task. However, I would like to share key insights and findings that have emerged from this research that attempt to move *beyond* the sanctity of the family, breaking the silence, healing of adult women survivors, and the moral discourse on incest, which I shall discuss presently, and towards creating a meaningful *practice* of transnational feminist collaboration and praxis providing concrete goals for future research, which shall form the epilogue of this study.

3.1. Women, children, and the "family"

To begin with, there is clearly no systematic program in Turkey that deals with the emotional and mental healing of adult survivors of incest. Although organizations like Mor Çatı and KAMER do provide to their best abilities services for women survivors of incest and CSA, their politicization of the issue of incest and breaking the

silence around it has been mainly in the form of contesting the law and having experts talk about it in the media. RAHI on the other hand is an organization exclusively dedicated to the mental healing of adult incest survivors and is constantly trying to break the silence surrounding incest mainly by *strategically* talking about it in all forms of media and also encouraging survivors themselves to present their stories in the same. They haven't really involved themselves with the legal aspect of the issue until very recently with the formulation of the draft bill that they have been involved in.

However, what has truly come out of all the interviews with all three organizations irrespective of their focus and the general, current interest surrounding incest and CSA in both the countries is that the *sanctity* of the family is being increasingly questioned. But has this sanctity been shaken? All the people I interviewed, in both countries, told me that in the difficulties involved in the disclosure of incest, the preservation of the family and its honor was one of the most, if not *the* most common reason. Esra Çanakçı, who has been a part of a three-way collaboration between the British Council Ankara; *Human Rights Agenda* (henceforth HRA), an Ankara based NGO[63]; and the *Child Protection Center* at Gazi University in Ankara headed by Figen Şahin, that has written a proposal to the European Commission for funding on a project on incest and CSA that will provide training and guidance to the necessary social service personnel, mainly education counselors, told me that they had to word their report as a violation of "human rights" (note: *not* incest) and not "family violation" (personal communication, February 23, 2011). As seen in the previous chapter, all three organizations have also had problems of talking about incest as "incest", especially in gaining funding, because incest as incest is an issue that hits at the heart of the "family".

The family remains in many ways the sacrosanct, almost autonomous unit that it has always been, founded on the incest taboo, a law that should not be violated for this "unit" to function properly. Yet the family is also part of a wider network of social relations (in which new alliances and families are formed) and whether viewed internally or externally in its relation this network, incest is not just a taboo but a real *abuse* of children (La Fontaine, 1988). Children keep on being sexually abused and families remain the final arbiters of truth (Champagne, 1996). In her article against the preservation of the family unit in response to the 1993 decision of the Clinton administration to spend $1.4 billion on keeping abused children with their biological

[63] Esra informed me that the *SHÇEK* had also been invited by them to participate in the project.

(abusive) parents, Lucy Berliner, although underestimating the negative effects of foster care, still goes on to make a strong case against all policies that are "family" centric instead of "child" centric. She sees the reasons for government and social investment in the preservation of sanctity of the family not only as a moral, ethical stance but also an economic strategy of "cost effectiveness" that will in the long run alleviate the State burden of protecting abused children (Berliner, 1993).

If children are sacrificed at the cost of social and legal values that uphold the family, then women are almost doubly sacrificed. In this study of the three organizations as well as the social and legal discourses around incest in both the countries (and also globally) it is clear that women's agendas have been subordinated to those of children. More specifically in the Turkish and Indian contexts, women have stood as markers of the nation and the family, while at the same time being cheated off their rights in both. The other day, I was trying to think of a suitable analogy to the current situation in both the countries where quite some activity around the issue of CSA has been going on in the recent years but the thousands of adult survivors, women *and* men are still not being even thought of. In thinking like this, I happened to read Meltem Ahıska's article "Occidentalism: The historical fantasy of the modern" and couldn't help comparing what she says about how Turkey in trying to leave its past in order to attain a more "modern", "European" future ends up ignoring the very real problems of the present (Ahıska, 2003), to the situation of women. Turkey, India and the world in trying to "progress" into the future have at least taken some steps in the protection of children (though by no means adequate), but the adult women survivors in the present, who were brutally abused in the past by the people they loved and trusted and still face all the many prejudices in the society that only we as women know in the present, have been totally forgotten.

We need to realize that it takes mutual love, care and most importantly, trust for people—women, children, *and* men—who can come together in any possible combination and way—to form a family. It is not some mythical ideal of a "family" that binds people, especially women and children to it, in spite of abuse. We need to challenge, in the case of children, ideologies that extol childhood and its innocence such as the ones so commonly seen especially in Turkish and Indian cinema, that divert attention away from the actual oppression of children; ideologies aimed at "protecting" children by teaching them to say "no" in a situation like incest for instance where they really *can't* to a person they love and fear; romantic ideas that want to retain children's

innocence and protect them instead of empowering them (Kitzinger, 1988). In the case of women, we need to challenge these constant ideas that associate women with family, honor, and motherhood; women need to be seen first and foremost as humans that can and should speak out in order to reveal the universal nature of all kinds of abuse and in order to raise themselves from just token symbols of (patriarchal) families and (masculine) cultures to members of the broader, human rights community.

Thus the first step always remains breaking the silence in order to ease the pain of these women, in their own voices, making them agents of their own healing and celebrators of their own wills to survive. Only after the silence has been broken and the pain eased, though not erased, can one move beyond. But in coming out of this study one must ask: why speak incest, how to speak it and what of it?

3.2. Speaking, Surviving, and Thriving

First of all, since so much of this thesis has focused on breaking the silence around incest in Turkey and India, and although I have every now and then alluded to legal and human rights based silences globally, I would like to briefly emphasize that within every national context, even in more "developed" countries, incest is not a very widely spoken issue. Most of the early literature (academic and otherwise) that was developed on incest, coming straight out of the feminist movements against domestic violence from the 1970s onwards that was used by me as well for my research, is from the United States and also some from the United Kingdom. All this literature is full of the silence surrounding incest and the need to "break the silence[64]" (Armstrong, 1978; Bass and Davis, 1988; Champagne, 1996; Chew, 1998; Herman, 1981; Naples and Clark, 1996; Randall, 1987; Russell, 1986; Rush, 1980; Ward, 1997).

What about the current situation? As Kamala Visweswaran aptly points out, the statistics in the United States regarding violence against women are quite staggering, in spite of the fact that "developed" countries like the United States very easily tend to blame "patriarchal societies" in South Asia for oppression of women. According to

[64] For more details on efforts to break the silence that have been of paramount importance to for healing of survivors of sexual trauma, especially incest, please refer to (Alcoff and Gray, 1993).

Visweswaran, in the United States, “Between 1995 and 1996, more than 670,000 women were the victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault. Yet for that same year, it was estimated that only 31 percent of rapes and sexual assault were reported, less than one in every three.” (Visweswaran, 2004, p. 507). In a more recent statistic by the Human Rights Watch, as a part of a review based on the film “The Woodsman” that portrays the life and travails of a child sex offender, it was stated that “The plethora of abuse is not mere cinematic exaggeration: Experts estimate that more than 300,000 children are sexually abused in the United States each year, and at least 25 percent of women and 10 percent of men experienced some form of sexual abuse during childhood.” (“Film Takes Close Look”, 2005). It goes on to add that “90 percent of sexual offenses are perpetrated against children by family members or acquaintances, not strangers...” – exactly—incest. Writing as late as the early 1990s, almost 20 years after the feminist wave that exposed domestic violence in the United States, Linda Alcoff and Laura Gray in their landmark article on “Survivor Discourse”, dealing primarily with the possible dangers and strengths of speaking out of incest survivors, remind us once again about the silence surrounding incest and the *reluctance* of people to accept victims’ testimonies and the barriers in the path of “breaking the silence” (Alcoff and Gray, 1993).

But speaking incest, about incest is not a matter of just saying that one was abused or raped or molested or whatever the word maybe—after all even speech is an act in the symbolic, the language of the patriarch (Butler, 1990; Champagne, 1996) and sometimes words are just not enough to express the pain, the hurt, and the betrayal that lies in the realm of the extra-discursive. According to Maureen Cain, the entire depth and meaning of a feeling can never be captured in discourse in any case (Cain, 1993). Is silence then preferable to speaking about incest? Absolutely not. When Cain talks about the impossibility of capturing the essence of feeling in discourse, she doesn’t dismiss discourse—language, speaking, and writing—as a tool for knowledge creation (Cain, 1993). As a matter of fact, what she sees as an essential task of an intellectual is clearing the “road blocks” so to speak; the obstacles to speaking which can let suppressed knowledges emerge (Cain, 1993, p. 88).

In the case of incest, which is in most cases not even spoken about because the people who experience it have “no language for” it *or* even the language in which they do speak about it is “rendered illegitimate [mad, untrue, incredible] by dominant discourses.” (Cain, 1993, p.84), it becomes even more important to first *utter* the

unspeakable and once uttered, to talk about it in ways that cannot be dismissed. Of course any amount of speaking cannot erase the pain and trauma of a lost childhood, but it *can* make the survivor feel relieved (Cain, 1993), "courageous and transgressive", and "empowered politically" (Alcoff and Gray, 1993, p. 269). Just talking about one's experiences can make a victim feel like a survivor and move her from the position of an abused object, to the master of her own discourse. When a survivor *does* speak she in a way challenges patriarchal language, steals it, uses it and twists it to express in the best possible way what she experienced—the abuse—alienated in body but not in mind—just like language whose words are difficult to utter because of their lack and yet the feelings that they trying to express still strong in her mind and soul. Speaking in the language of the patriarch, the powerful, she shatters a silence that she had thus far adopted out of fear, out of love for her family, out of the lack of words to express what she had felt as a child now as an adult, out of the fear of knowing that no one would listen, and out of the need to ensure her own survival and the need to move on with her life (Barringer, 1992).

Moreover, breaking the silence on the path to self healing is just the first step. Healing then goes beyond the self when the survivor realizes that she is not alone. In releasing the cat out of the bag so to speak, ironically and somewhat lightheartedly, she finds herself in the midst of many voices also claiming the violation of their bodies and minds. One of the RAHI survivors speaking on television[65] narrates something similar. Around the time she decided to "come out" with the abuse, she read Pinki Virani's book *Bitter Chocolate* about CSA in India and other victims' voices and she found the strength to talk about her abuse as well as reading the book cover to cover, realizing that she must speak, she must say that whatever happened *wasn't* her fault, she *wasn't* the kind of girl who attracted men to abuse her—it was the men who *had* abused her who should be feeling the guilt that she had been experiencing all this while.

Richa Nagar also says about her groundbreaking work *Playing with Fire*, that when women decide to write and talk about their lives with their fellow workers, juxtaposing their life stories with each other, and with a willingness to engage in collective thinking about the society, it enables them to see the overarching context of social inequalities in which they all grew up in (Nagar, 2004). Similarly, in talking

[65] The video link to this TV series episode can be accessed by going to http://www.supportrahi.com/vids.html and clicking on the video "Zingagi [sic] Live—Part 2: Feature continued".

and/or writing about incest and reading the stories of other survivors with a willingness to speak, listen, and comprehend their pain and the existing social structures that sustain such abuse, incest survivors can see the extent to which incest is rampant in the society and gain comfort in the fact that they are not alone and even be motivated to do something about the issue. In my interview with Nebahat Akkoç as well, she stressed the need to get survivors together in awareness groups to embolden them and to show them that there are many others like them who have been hurt by the people they loved the most (personal communication, March 30, 2011). Like Richa Nagar says, "The strong bond that moved us from ink to tears" in writing and sharing painful life stories, "has today brought us all the way from tears to dreams." (Nagar, 2004, p. 131). Such is the power of these dreams according to Nagar, dreams of freedom from silence, from abuse that dominated the lives of all survivors as children and still affects them as adults, that through the medium of language and speech—the language of childhood and pain that it bore witness to—it can touch the lives of survivors across the world. My own experience in talking about my abuse a few years ago, reading other survivors stories, and finally working on this very project and feeling once again the pain of millions of survivor voices, albeit indirectly in the work that these organizations do , has made me feel connected to women survivors all across the world. "Through the language of childhood" says Nagar, "struggle travels from one soul to another, from one person to another, from one world to another." (Nagar, 2010, p. 24).

Speaking also creates awareness not just amongst sister survivors such as us, but amongst the public at large and breaks or at least loosens the grip of denial surrounding the issue, which may help diffuse the power of incest by making people more alert to it, so that they can watch out for it, prevent it (Gilgun, 1995) and it also serves as a forewarning to potential perpetrators (F. Yıldırım, personal communication, January 26, 2011). Of course there are risks involved. The murder of some women in Turkey that Kamuran, Nebahat Akkoç, and Hülya Gülbahar alluded to in the interviews, women who did decide to come out in public and speak of their abuse and point their fingers at the ones truly guilty, shows how unprepared our societies still are in hearing and facing the reality of incest. In speaking from "risky places" (Sawicki, 1991, p. 107), women stand the risk of themselves being isolated from the rest of their families and communities (Banerjee, 2006; Merry, 2006) and worse still—being killed by them. The crushing tale of the murder of vivacious Maya in rural India who decided to break norms by leading her life by her own standards, a member of the workers' group

SKMS[66] that was a result of the collective journey of writing and sharing life stories in *Playing with Fire* is only one of the many glaring examples of this reality (Nagar, 2010).

Yet we must speak, when at best people actually consider us humans and hear our voices, at worst our lives are at stake, and usually all that happens is a ripple created in stagnant water. Even for creating that one stir, that ripple, we must speak. But how do we speak? Is it just about describing what happened—the actual sexual acts and the current "symptoms" we experience? Aren't we just re-victimizing ourselves in front of our friends, families, well-wishers and the public at large by portraying our "sob story"? Carroll Barringer, in discussing the literary works of several women incest survivors defines speaking as an act of not just "talking about" the incest but "talking through" it (Barringer, 1992, p. 15). Speaking is not a linear progression but a spiral movement in which the survivor speaks and stops, goes back and forth, confronts her childhood and adulthood, gives voice to the trauma that she couldn't name as a child and brings it to the conscious surface "until the toxicity of the abusive experience has been released…and the mind opens up the possibility for re-evaluation, self-forgiveness, and change based on conscious choice." (Barringer, 1992, p.15).

However, survivor discourse has been under attack for some time now; at least in the United States where shows like *Oprah Winfrey* have created something like a media circus of survivor experiences (Alcoff and Gray, 1993). Louise Armstrong, one of the first women to speak out on incest in the mainstream media in the United States in her groundbreaking work *Kiss Daddy Goodnight*, comments in her article "Who stole incest?" about the de-politicization of incest from the feminist political agenda of making the "private" "public" in the 70s, a movement of which she very much was a part of, to a more therapy centered approach that treats incest as a problem, the *victims* of which need "treatment" (Armstrong, 1997). She is sharply critical of the "mental health" approach to the issue that brands abused women and children as victims who need "expert" intervention. Incest, according to Armstrong and others, a "private" affair, is now "public" in very different way from what they had envisaged (Armstrong, 1997; Naples, 2003). It is public not in the political sense that the agenda of feminism set out to encounter in the form of activism, blaming the accusers, changing general power structures in the society, and working on legal and social reforms on the issue;

[66] Hindi. संगतिन किसान मजदूर संगठन

instead, incest has become a media and public spectacle that has taken the power out of "breaking the silence" on the issue and further victimized the already abused with hardly any consequence for the abusers. As incest survivors sit in talk shows across the world either openly or with their faces covered, with the host probing them for sordid and emotionally re-traumatizing details and more than often an "expert" psychologist speaking on their behalf about their behaviors and giving justifications for the same, how are these survivors supposed to break out of the incest barrier? Their subjectivity gets re-defined within the "incest" paradigm and it's almost like they step back from being survivors before they had spoken and were "moving on" with their lives to now becoming "victims" in front of everyone. As seen in the media representation of Mumbai and Punjab incest cases in India, in many ways, the survivors' mode of speaking becomes that of the confessional that Foucault talks about in *The History of Sexuality: Volume One, The Will to Knowledge* (1976) in which one divulges one's "dirty secrets" to an "expert" priest (or psychologist), that results in recuperation or healing of the individual *within* the existing patriarchal discourses instead of subverting or *transgressing* them and creating a counter-discourse to existing patriarchy that is empowering (Alcoff and Gray, 1993).

This is not to say that any speaking out against incest in public or the media is automatically non-transformative. But as Alcoff and Gray point out, the *how* of speaking becomes important and so does the necessity to transform some of our epistemological categories (Alcoff and Gray, 1993). To begin with the survivor should be the owner, speaker and interpreter of her *own* experiences which should not be non-hierarchical and unmediated by a necessary "expert". Also, the survivor's story must be viewed as an entire narrative embedded in the context of existing social injustices instead of a mere report on sexual assault. In other words, the mere "naming" of survivors' experiences cannot occur without the embedding of those experiences within the backdrop of discourses that mediate life and create power differentials in the society. Only then do survivor discourses emerge as political tools of subversion (Champagne, 1996; Ward 1997). Finally, according to Alcoff and Gray, we need to think of the "personal" and "political" not as distinct entities but as the personal or individual embedded *in* the political, and *how* individual empowerment through consciousness/awareness raising (CR) or even therapy can be employed as a political tool *without* even necessarily looking beyond the confessional, but rather looking *within*

it for possible disruptions and as Foucault would say, sites of subversion (Alcoff and Gray, 1993).

In the light of these discussions then, how does one comment on the distinct difference in strategies of Mor Çatı, KAMER, and RAHI in terms of survivor discourse? KAMER heavily leans on awareness-raising as the prime strategy of moving from victimization to survivorship, while RAHI also conducts group therapy sessions, and such groups can definitely be seen as examples of how women in speaking out to other survivors can engage in collective reflection of their lives and abuses and transform into "theorist[s]" of their "own experience[s]" (Alcoff and Gray, 1992, p. 283). However, RAHI with its clear mental-health leanings has been more involved in getting survivor voices out into the media than either of the other two organizations, who have been more engaged in politicizing the issue and fighting for legal reforms and have employed the media to this end. Mor Çatı, as a matter of fact is extremely critical of survivors on air, and both Şahika Yüksel and Ufuk Sezgin who have worked with both Mor Çatı and KAMER, in my interviews with them, commented on the "Americanization" of incest referring to the proliferation of such survivor discourses that create media sensations but fail to respect the emotions and privacy of survivors. Also, key theorists on violence against women have viewed more "therapeutic" interventions to women's healing, that go beyond counseling to treating the mental health of women as problematic, saying that such approaches, similar to what has been said earlier, undermine the political action against social inequalities and reduce injustices such as violence to psychological, "treatable" phenomena that can be cured and prevented from spreading from one generation to the next (Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

Can one then be critical of RAHI's mental health focus and argue against its practices such as, for instance, having survivors speak out on national television or distinguishing between "healthy" and "incestuous" family systems in its literature (Ailawadi, 1999, p. 110), while organizations in Turkey are repeatedly stressing that incest can happen in *any* family and one of the major challenges is to change the public opinion that incest is the act of psychopaths? The answer is not a simple case of "yes" and "no". To begin with, since the *hows* and *whys* of survivor discourse are equally important, one cannot simply judge the RAHI survivors speaking on national TV, albeit with their faces covered, as re-victimizing themselves to public spectacle. May be they did this as a part of their own conscious choice and decision to heal, and as Anuja says,

"From finishing therapy and coming on TV of course has also been a journey for them, anchored by RAHI. We work with survivors who have been through therapy with us to bring them to this point. Giving their story is healing and empowering for them..." (A. Gupta, personal communication, May 18, 2011). The fact that their faces were covered during this interview can also be seen as a way of preventing their persons being subjected to victimizing glances by the Indian society and transferring the emphasis to their voices, their stories, instead, which can be the stories of *any* number of middle class Indian families. So criticism is not so simple. Also, in focusing on mental health, RAHI is at least taking the first steps towards thinking about adult women survivors in a country where no one cares about them, and although focused on this aspect, it is also working in bringing about legal reforms in the form of the proposed CSA draft bill—a fact that cannot be ignored. On the flip side though, does an organization like RAHI run the risk of gradually becoming a part of the mental health-recuperation focused-survivor discourse industry? On the other hand, while Mor Çatı and KAMER are really raising awareness of incest by talking about it in public and fighting for legal reforms as well, do they also conversely run the risk of ignoring survivor voices all together, and in their zeal to ignore any psychopathological causes for abuse refuse to entertain even a (real) possibility of the same? These are difficult questions and probably, strategically speaking, a middle ground that emphasizes both political and legal activism and individual voices, for ultimately the individual *is* a political agent immersed in discourses, is the best way forward.

Ultimately, what is the free, female self? For sure speaking about the incest in our lives has made us connect with ourselves as people, as women more than before and has helped us see to what extent our adult lives and personalities have been shaped by the experience of abuse. Some of us have indeed gone beyond speaking to action in order to seriously challenge legal and social attitudes about the problem. But what has it meant to speak—has it truly made us free? I believe in the Foucauldian subject, very useful for feminism as well, as an individual that creates and is simultaneously a product of discourses (Sawicki, 1991). In that sense one is never completely free and yet never completely enslaved and speaking about injustices, amongst many other ways, can help create awareness of this reality and help us find means of resistance. Of course this speaking should happen at a time when a survivor is ready and *never* happen without her knowing the repercussions of speaking (Naples and Clark, 1995). It doesn't even need to happen on a "grand" public scale—just talking to a friend, a family

member who understands, or a small group of other women survivors can be incredibly empowering and move one from being a once victim to a survivor and finally a "thriver": one who has not just survived incest but has moved beyond it to be whoever she wants to be. After all, healing should not re-categorize "victims" as "survivors", but help them attain their true potentials and not overlook other aspects of their lives that also make them who they are (Chew, 1998).

This move beyond survivorship, also forces us to question the importance of being a survivor in aiding survivor healing. My fieldwork brought me contact with both survivors and non-survivors who are fighting the battle against incest and CSA; but at the same time it is also hard to ignore the fact that Anuja comments on:

> across the world…any work on—with— incest has always been…started by women survivors of child sexual abuse who brought forward the issue of child sexual abuse and perhaps with their own personal stories whether stated or not openly…but mostly that is how organizations in the world have started looking at child sexual abuse.

But this is in no way to say that people who haven't experienced abuse can't learn from and feel for the experiences of those who have (Naples and Clark, 1995).This also begs the question about whether one needs to be a woman to really experience and/or feel and /or work on the issue. Although almost all the people I interviewed were women, naturally, since they are working in feminist organizations, I also happened to learn about and in a couple of cases talk to men who are actively involved in the area of CSA and incest[67]. Does this signal a time for feminist efforts surrounding incest survivors to look beyond women and womanhood, whatever it signifies, in general?

3.3. Woman is to Man as Adam is to Eve?

[67] Hakan Ataman from the HRA, along with Esra Çanakçı, wrote the proposal submitted to the European Commission that I talked about earlier. Also, I spoke to Orhan Kemal Cengiz, the director of HRA and a prominent Turkish journalist writing for the daily *Today's Zaman* about my research. Richard Wood, working as an adviser to the Turkish Ministry of Interior on behalf of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concentrates on groups in need of special protection which includes children, and has been very active in the area of CSA, providing me with kind support, excellent resources and very insightful feedback on my research.

There is no denying that the society implicates women and men differently, and that the former bear its brunt. Nebahat Akkoç, in the same article where she cries out the need to focus on incest as a problem of epic proportions in Turkey ("Her dört evden birinde", 2009), vehemently opposes the social discourses that alleviate "motherhood" as a woman's ultimate goal, and promote values such as "let mothers not cry[68]"—as if mothers are the only ones deserving love and respect and as if women in all their other "roles" don't face any reasons to cry and gain support. Women as mothers, daughters, sisters, workers, bosses, wives, friends…everyone—are constantly reminded of being women. There is also no denying that in the case of incest and CSA in general, men are the usual perpetrators and these are men who know their crime very well (Gilgun, 1995) and yet commit them. This entails the twin dilemma and problems of treating these men either as "normal" people who can be shown their "mistakes" upon help (they already *know* their mistake) or even as psychopaths for whom it is natural to abuse (in which case they wouldn't be justifying their acts as those of love and justice) (Berliner, 1993). This is also the reason why the numerous statistics for male perpetrators can also not been relied upon for any one of them can abuse, and depending on the country and culture in question, some kinds of abuses may be more reported than others. This study has also cited several statistics, globally and in the Turkish and Indian contexts, but as the lawyer Hülya Gülbahar pointed out in my interview with her, statistics are not reliable because apart from the obvious reluctance to report an abuse like incest, some forms of incest which are considered more gross or vulgar or problematic might end up getting reported more over other forms. For instance, she herself deals with a lot of cases of father-child incest, but that might be the case, according to her, because such an act by a father is more unacceptable than by an uncle or a brother and thus consequently people are more willing to report it (personal communication, January 18, 2011). But the bottom line is that most abusers are male, and as Esra Çanakçı also pointed out in an anecdote that she related to me about training policemen on wife battering that it was a difficult task because so many of them might be perpetrators of the same abuse themselves (personal communication, February 23, 2011).

But for the very same reasons above—the unreliability of statistics, the fixing of gender stereotypes of what defines "women" and "men", and the exercise of power by male abusers over women and children, one must look *beyond* victims and survivors of

[68] Tr. Analar ağlamasın

incest as solely women. As early as 1981, while reviewing the statistics on incestuous abuse, Judith Herman pointed out that while most of the victims are female, boys are abused too although even in this case their abusers are overwhelmingly male (Herman, 1981). She also mentions that after the feminist wave of the 1970s in the United States, based on extensive studies that include the States and other countries, there are very, very few, but there are cases involving mother-son (and in extremely rare cases mother-daughter) incest (Herman, 1981). In the context of the present study, while I was interviewing Figen Şahin, she also said: "…boys…little boys are easier targets for the offenders…almost 50% of our cases in child protection center are males…like 8, 7 to 8 year old males. And their offenders are usually still children, like 14, 15 year old adolescents." (personal communication, February 23, 2011). Apparently, as Dr. Şahin further pointed out, these adolescent, male, perpetrators are teenagers who have no sexual outlet and since Turkish families keep their girls under control in order to protect their honor[69] and don't let them mingle with males outside of their homes, young boys form easier targets of abuse.

As adult incest survivors as well then, because of the huge stigma attached to homophobia and the general mechanisms by which society constructs gender such that women and men view sex and sexual experiences in a different way (Nelson and Oliver, 1998), men might be less inclined to come out as incest survivors and might indeed even view their victimization as consensual and experimental—especially if it involves an older woman: yes—for there are indeed women who abuse as well—as headlines such as the one at the beginning of this chapter reveal[70]. Also, during the interviews, as mentioned earlier, both Feride and Anuja conceded that there are female perpetrators as well, once again perhaps under reported, and Anuja went on to say that there is a "denial" in the feminist community with respect to this issue.

There has been a long standing criticism in the feminist circle for some time now about essentializing fixed categories of "women" and "men" instead of considering "gender" as a category that constructs such disparate identities (Butler, 1990), and that is itself a result of various historical, social, economic, and political forces in constant interaction with each other (Scott, 1986). Maybe then, in the case of adult survivors of

[69] Tr. Namus

[70] An English woman by the name of Caroline French "was convicted for three indecent assaults and one count of indecency with a child, all between January and April 2004, when her victim was 15." (Sex case drama teacher sentenced, 2011).

incest at least, it is really time to focus on both men and women and study the *gendered* constructions of their victimizations and varied discourses on survivorship. Such efforts may have been proliferated in the United States and Western Europe, but countries like Turkey and India have a long way to go and a lot to say about their male survivors of incest, let alone provide support services to them. And they *do* need support. Whether or not they go on to perpetuate abuse on other children[71], they need support and be heard just like any other woman survivor. If we as feminists are constantly battling the male dominated discourses of care and justice that are constantly being manipulated against us women, in favor of human rights discourses emphasizing individual rights and feelings, then such rights by definition have to be extended to all humans—women *and* men. This is also yet another reason why feminism once again becomes such an indispensable tool in analyzing and fighting incest. This is also the reason why, not surprisingly, a feminist analysis such as this and feminist organizations such as RAHI can even entertain the possibility of addressing men as victims/survivors themselves.

3.4. Looking beyond existing discourses on incest

Equally, if feminism is to stay crucial to addressing issues like incest, we need to focus on one very poignant and very obvious lesson that has emerged from this study, especially the study of the social and legal discourses surrounding incest in the two countries and the fact that there are no organizations providing support exclusively to adult survivors of incest abuse (except RAHI) in both. That lesson is the sheer inadequacy of (man-made) discourses on incest that problematize it by fixing on the physical bodies of victims (usually children), and that by undermining the emotional abuse and feelings of adults abused in the past, and in emphasizing morality, ethics, and justice that promises equality to both men and women, invariably tip the power axis even more towards those who abuse. The very discourses of "care" and "justice" that are used to stereotype women as mothers and wives and protect everyone "equally" respectively, are used by perpetrators to justify their heinous, abusive acts as love, "educating" children on sex, and protecting them from future abuse, etc. (Gilgun, 1995).

[71] Both statistics and my own interviews with experts reflect inconsistencies in this.

The existing laws in both countries and generally worldwide, emphasize the physical, the body as the site for abuse. To begin with, the very fact that adult women survivors are not even in the picture when it comes to framing laws on CSA and incest is indicative of the importance placed on the immediate corporeality of abuse instead of the long term psychological problems that it might (and does!) entail and that simply *cannot* be gauged at the time of the abuse, which usually happens in childhood. Since incest more than any other kind of CSA is an act of extreme betrayal and psychological and emotional damage, the mental should be given as much importance as the physical (Çavlin-Bozbeyoğlu, 2009). Once again, this situation is not unique to Turkey and India. As Nathalie Des Rosiers mentions in her analysis of civil remedies for CSA in Canada, the law concerns itself only with the concurrency of abuse of children and at best awards damages to adult survivors suffering "significant" psychological distress after years of abuse (Des Rosiers, 1994). The system fails to see the psychological, mental, and emotional impact of an abuse like incest that goes *beyond* the physical self.

Plus who defines "significant distress" in case of psychological problems? Figen Şahin in my interview with her in Ankara also pointed out that according to the new CSA law in Turkey, the penalty is higher "if the child is mentally affected"; however, who decides what mental affliction is and as if, as Şahin says, it is possible to identify children who are *not* mentally affected since every CSA leaves a child mentally afflicted to some degree or the other (personal communication, February 23, 2011)—an affliction that continues well into adulthood and manifests itself in insidious ways. Hülya Gülbahar goes a step beyond to claim this as affliction of the soul[72]. CSA according to her is an issue not just of the violation of the body, but also of the soul, and now 6 years after the change in the Turkish Penal Code of 2005, she stresses the importance of another debate that needs to recognize the affect of CSA on the health of both the body and the soul[73] and that incorporates the necessary amendments to the existing law (personal communication, January 18, 2011).

But even if the law recognizes these drawbacks, these injustices and makes necessary provisions, certain challenges still remain, such as: a) whether justice will be delivered when law is viewed through the prism of patriarchy and b) if society in general would endeavor to protect children and sympathize with both women and

[72] Tr. Ruh

[73] Tr. Ruh ve beden sağlığı

children survivors instead of continuing to view the other holy domain of patriarchy, the family, as inviolable and elder males of family as "respectable" citizens instead of abusers. The highly disturbing case in 1996 of the Indian under-secretary Satish Mehra, who was accused for constantly abusing his own daughter, including raping her at the age of three, was dismissed by the Supreme Court as "seemingly incredulous" who went on to accuse the girl's mother instead for seeking "revenge on her husband for an unhappy marriage." (Narula, 1999) is a case in point.

This is just one example. Another example could be judges' demands that still require the child to present a testimony in person in court or certain court decisions that ignore the weight of a child's testimony in order to protect the "innocent" person being accused, as reflected by many public opinions (including the FMSF). In spite of having provisions in the law that protect the abused child's identity and allow the child's testimony to be per-recorded in a special room (Checking child sexual abuse, 2010), for instance the kind now being pioneered by the *Turkish Ministry of Health*[74] in the form of *Child Monitoring Center*[75] in Ankara and some other places such as the *Child Protection Center* at Gazi University (again in Ankara), where the child will be separated by a screen and interviewed by an expert and won't be able to see anyone beyond the screen such as lawyers, social service people etc. who would be able to see and hear her (Figen Şahin, personal communication, February 23, 2011), such instances are not very unusual. Public opinion itself instead of being focused on issues of promoting such laws and improving them to make them more holistic and inclusive of physical *and* mental abuse and adult survivors, chooses instead to focus on trivializing the issue or conversely sensationalizing certain aspects of the law, for instance the recent media leak of the proposed CSA draft bill in India that caused a public uproar for "regarding the decriminalising of non-penetrative sexual exploration between children older than 12" (Wadia, 2011). While such a clause maybe a cause for concern, the undue focus on it totally diminishes the weight of other beneficial clauses in the bill. As a matter of fact, I was in New Delhi, India around the time this "leak" happened in early February 2011, interviewing Anuja Gupta, who also informed me of it and the ridiculousness of media exaggeration and focus. A couple of friends then, on learning my thesis topic and true to public perception commented on how appalling it is for the

[74] Tr. T.C. Sağlık Bakanlığı

[75] Tr. Çocuk İzlem Merkezi

proposed bill to have such a clause. Appalling indeed. But the fact that over half the children in India are sexually abused (remember: just the "tip of the iceberg") is obviously not appalling…enough. Considering that most of this CSA is incest, in the family, as famous activist and lawyer Flavia Agnes working at *Majlis* Mumbai indicates in her years of work fighting for rights of women and children: "The tight-knit family structure, the domineering role of the fathers and uncles, the submissiveness of women who are mute witnesses to gross injustice and the ingrained tendency not to allow 'family shame' to be exposed whatever the cost, are factors that help the abusers get away with it all." (Agnes as cited in Chatterjee, 2009).

Outside of the family, I would like to add, is the afore-described myopia of the law and the society in general to not look beyond the sanctity of the family and to generate agency to dig beyond what the family silences and to really hear the voices of the ones who matter—the abused—women and children—during and long after abuse. What the we focus instead is on the trivial, titillating aspects of reforms and engage in *reverse* ethical debates—debates that question the ethics of persecuting "innocent" victims as alleged abusers. Ufuk Sezgin provided an example of this. In Turkey there is the current debate around the possibility of sentencing sex offenders to *chemical castration*[76] as is done in certain countries in Europe (personal communication, March 14, 2011). Now while this is a valid ethical debate on "humanitarian" grounds, one could also equally argue the ethics of abuse to begin with—did these people, these men who abuse think of the impact of their actions on their victims? While such ethical issues are beyond the scope of this study, nonetheless the point is that if the society is willing to engage in such ethical debates from the perspective of the abuser, why don't we see more ethical debates on the ethics of leaving out the importance of psychological trauma in law or the failure to consider the impacts of incest in the lives of adult survivors?

This brings into question the whole issue of ethics and the "morality" of incest itself because in talking about the law and rights, we are automatically protecting the abused and accusing the abuser. If the family is the seat of incest abuse and families have existed since time immemorial, and so has incest, why the present outcry to view incest as a fundamental "wrong" and to protect the fundamental "rights" of the abused? In her essay "Bio-Politics and the Spectre of Incest: Sexuality and/in the Family", Vikki

[76] For more details please read: http://www.todayszaman.com/news-235242-turkey-considers-chemical-castration-for-sex-offenders.html

Bell talks about how family is the hotbed of sexual tension itself; a unit which is not only the focus of the "Deployment of Sexuality" (DoS), a discourse that from the 18th century onwards put sexual relations and physical bodies (and thus life) in the center of truth-knowledge production (Foucault, 1976) and thus consequently increased parental concern and surveillance of children's sexuality, but it also remains a part of the "Deployment of Alliance" (DoA), the discourse that DoS had supposedly replaced, but not quite, that focused on blood relations and the laws that govern them and other aspects of human life (including death) (Bell, 1995; Foucault, 1976). Whereas the DoS entailed an explosion of confessional discourses on sex and sexual pleasures, the DoA was driven by the need to regulate relations by application of laws and prohibitions (Foucault, 1976).

Bell sees these current activities to "moralize" incest as an attempt to curb the prevalence of incest in an age of DoS when sexual relations and sex itself (which Foucault emphasizes as a *creation* of DoS and *not* vice-versa) became a focus. Since family was immersed and in fact a focus of this DoS that also coincided with the emergence of a modern form of *government* focused on bodies and population and family was key to regulating the same, but yet something that couldn't extricate itself completely from the relations of blood and marriages (DoA), there emerged a *morality* of incest—a need to theorize incest as a taboo—that a) didn't ruin the important unit of governmental and social control, the family and that b) at the same time, continued talking about the sexual act itself (via the taboo and silence) and increased surveillance on children's sexuality (Bell, 1995; Foucault, 1976). Viewed in this scenario, the very aura of the moral discourse surrounding incest becomes problematic, along with the impossibility of resolving the issue all together because it is constantly caught in the flux between the DoS and DoA and can be viewed either as a sexual discourse aiming to talk about the act ad infinitum or a prohibition to ensure the preservation of the familial unit, respectively. Also, because of the DoS's constant need to probe into sexual relations by creating an almost confession like spectacle of people's *desires* (something that replaced *pleasure* according to Foucault), there started a tendency to categorize and stigmatize people: "the neurotic", "the hysterical woman", "the masturbating child", and "the pervert" (Foucault, 1976). Isn't our modern discourse on CSA and incest doing precisely that by branding innocent "victims", "survivors", and the cruel "abusers" (note the debate on chemical castration above)? Especially by locating the "abuser" and fighting for the "rights" of victims (for Foucault the language

of *rights* is very much a result of the DoS and the emphasis on individual bodies), are we not creating a form of discrimination, a bias, against the former in the name of the latter?

The answer is clearly no. What is happening in all these analyses from Foucault to Bell and further is that they don't go beyond the impossibility of "discourses" that are a result of the Foucauldian (male) emphasis on the literal *body*, which we have already seen becomes problematic in the analysis of an issue like incest, in the case of both the problems cited above: the impossibility of discussing the morality of incest and the risk of ostracizing certain groups of people. First of all, even on the level of the body, the body remains essentially a *male* body for Foucault, who by overlooking forms of subjection that are especially directed to the female body (incest being one of them), helps in perpetuating the silence regarding these issues and the powerlessness of the female body (McNay, 1992). Secondly, staying still in the realm of the body, Foucault also fails to look at the victim's body. When one shifts one's gaze to the victim instead of the perpetrator, to the object instead of the subject, incest emerges not as a topic caught between mere discourses such as the DoS and DoA whose "morality" becomes an impossibility (and consequently an unnecessary thing) to decide, but as a concrete act that enforces the abusers "will to pleasure" at the cost of violating the victim's pleasure.

This necessitates not only a need for feminist analysis of incest that I have been emphasizing since the beginning of this thesis, but the very need for feminist analysis and feminists or people with feminist curiosities to philosophically question the very structure of existing patriarchal discourses on ethics, morality, law, justice, and care, in order to take into account the emotional content, the feelings that are violated when incest happens to a girl—or a boy—and when sadly the only way that child as an adult can heal is not by turning to the law or family or the society, but only by gaining the strength from within to break the silence…and ease the pain.

EPILOGUE

SELF REFLECTION, INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS, AND RESULTING "DIS" LOCATIONS

> Locating our projects and investments in a wider world of collectives and collaborations can liberate us from the tendency to idealize a model of collaboration based only on the ideals of closeness, proximity, and intimacy and make us more open to the ways in which collaborations may differ from project to project and how the terms of collaboration must be rethought as circumstances change…(Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis Contributors, 2010, p. 211).
>
> - Contributors, *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*

A research of this intensity has been both professionally and personally a very challenging task for me, but engaging in this feminist endeavor has helped me confront my own comforts and discomforts with the field and relive the incest of my own past. It is inevitable when you work with women, for women and around women, says Kamuran from KAMER, that you question the injustices in your own life, the incest in your life (personal communication, January 20, 2011). When one participates in awareness groups and talks about issues like incest, she invariably begins realizing things like: "...this man at that time held me like that or did something like that, this means that that was incest…" (Kamuran, personal communication, January 20, 2011). Even if you haven't experienced incest, as Feride says, you experience the "disgust" against men while working with incest survivors and begin questioning every man's intentions when you start working, until after many years of experience you realize that the key is to stay away from either extremes: cynicism and naivety, and focus on improving general power structures in the society that support such heinous acts as incest (personal communication, January 10, 2011).

In confronting these unequal power relations then, feminism also confronts the many limitations of the system it is up against and also its own limitations. All the three organizations I interviewed did not see any final "solution" to incest and preferred instead to talk about creating awareness and supporting incest victims and survivors.

The RAHI website simply talks about the "dream" of building an abuse-free India, implicitly reflecting the realization that in reality such a situation is just not possible. But the efforts of such feminist organizations must go on, in spite of all the obstacles in their way, not to mention one of the most significant obstacles—finances or money. We have already seen the financial issues faced by these organizations and it is clear that while all three have to work hard to gather financial resources, in the case of incest, KAMER and RAHI have more concrete plans of acquiring funding for programs to support adult women survivors. However, to what extent have they had to and will they have to compromise on their feminist principles in order to acquire funding from donor agencies, be they the EU or UNIFEM or what have you? In a neo-liberal era with a global market policy, what kind of projects are funders from Europe and America willing to invest in, in rapidly growing economies of Turkey and India, and will something like incest be on their agenda? We have already seen the difficulties that RAHI has had to face with in wording their project proposals because no one is willing to sponsor a program on adult women survivors. In that respect KAMER's wording of the incest issue as "incest" is noteworthy. Linda Peake and Karen De Souza talk about other such challenges of feminism in an era of globalization and transnational collaborations that has automatically entailed an NGOization of feminism, which they see as problematic (Peake and De Souza, 2010). Unfortunately, this is not the place to delve into this issue any further.

But what we must pause and consider is this phenomenon of transnational feminism, an instance of which can be seen in this research as well. The transnational is clearly linked to neoliberal economics and globalization (Alexander and Mohanty, 2010). Even though feminists were working across borders even in the 1970s and much before—there are numerous instances of Turkish and Indian feminists deeply involved with the "independence" movements as well, traveling to foreign countries (Edib, 1937/2002; Nussbaum, 2009), and more recently for instance the work of the American sociologist Gail Omvedt who moved to India in the 1970s to work with the untouchables in the western part of the country—it is clearly only after the global neo-liberalization beginning in the 1980s and especially since the 1990s that such cross-border collaborations have really kicked off. In the countries of the Global South, they have more than often involved collaborations between feminist academicians from the universities of the Global North with activists, workers, and academicians in the Global South. These "northern" feminists have usually been "white, western" ones (Gedalof,

1999) or women from the Global South with academic credentials from top American and European universities. For example, the Indian feminist Mary John on visiting her home country as an American educated academician, talks about the potential benefits of importing "western" (in her case American) ideas on feminism into an Indian context, but is also simultaneously wary of the overarching hegemony of northern academia and the many prejudices in general against countries, people, and feminisms of the Global South (John, 1999).

Her point is well taken; in the 2000s more than ever due to the even greater intensity of transnational collaboration. And yet the prejudices that demarcate the northern academia and feminism from those of the south remain. The southern feminist subject, the "woman" still tends to be perceived as a homogenous entity (Mohanty, 1988). This very study itself is admittedly guilty of not delving deeper into the relation between religious and ethnic differences amongst women in Turkey and India and incest[77]. Although this study can be viewed as a South-South feminist endeavor, where an academic researcher from one country in the South, studying in the academia in another Southern country, tries to bring the feminist efforts of both countries together, the study is still very much a part of an *academic* instance coming out of one of the top universities of Turkey that instructs in English and is itself based on an American model of instruction and contains mainly American and European educated academics. The transnational "tensions" then that Peake and De Souza talk about (Peake and De Souza, 2010), are evident in this case as in any other where a top university educated academic wishes to work with and talk to activists and feminists working on the ground. How can I as a graduate student speak for all incest survivors or even the feminist activists as the ones I interviewed? To cite a specific example, since incest and sexuality are inextricably linked, how does one educated about sexuality in the northern academic context such as myself apply it to notions of the same as prevalent in countries like Turkey and India? What sexuality might mean to me educated in a northern feminist context might be very different from what it means for an abused woman from Mumbai, India or Kars, Turkey, and in the way organizations such as RAHI and KAMER for instance interpret it and apply it for the healing of these survivors. Also, what does it mean to be talking about incest as a violation of the body, mind, and soul, and such a violation under the paradigm of "Human Rights" discourse that has its roots in the

[77] In no way meant as a defense, one of the reasons for the same is the fact that I focused only on the organizations and their work instead of individual women.

moral philosophy of liberal humanism going back to the age of Enlightenment in Europe (Surber, 1998)? Can't applying such European ideas be viewed as neo-colonialism by countries such as India and Turkey? Although some scholars will deny so and delineate the differences between Human Rights and Colonial discourses, they cannot deny the difficulties of translating and *appropriating* such discourses from the Global North to the South (Merry, 2006).

Such appropriations are the challenges also faced by the three organizations studied as they try to defend women's rights against patriarchal structures specific to their respective countries. Of course feminists in both the countries have been immensely successful in appropriating and winning tremendous battles for women, especially in the past couple of decades, showing the strength of southern, global feminisms. But the problems haven't disappeared as this study has also revealed. Feride from Mor Çatı talked to me about the difficulties of taking healing programs from countries like the United States and using them support groups in Turkey:

> …the dynamics of the support group…the boundaries are more clear in certain cultures, they're more unclear in other countries. The way you talk about the topic maybe…some of the exercises you do like some American type exercises, warming up exercises or team work exercises are very foreign to Turkish culture…I mean they don't fit at *all* [emphasis original]…you know they are fake. It's very hard for group members to internalize them so you can change a bit about those. Some cultures are not accustomed to talking their feelings or identifying their feelings as easily as other cultures...of course there are educational differences here too plus class differences plus individual differences but there are also cultural differences.

Anuja from RAHI also reported something similar when saying how people had to read survivor testimonials in the Indian context in order to truly identify themselves with the survivors, and how difficult it was for her to start working on incest in India at a time when all the resources were really just available from the United States.

Yet the need to collaborate remains as strong as ever, as well as the need to see each collaboration as a part of a bigger project. As Rachel Silvey says when contemplating on what the practical advantages of such collaborations might be:

> …none of us sees transnational feminist praxis as a panacea or an ultimate solution to any of the struggles in which we are differently engaged. Rather, I view transnational feminist praxis as offering a set of politically reflexive lenses that can help us continue to engage the haunting, impossible challenges thrown up in the face of working for justice across difference. (Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis Contributors, 2010, p. 214-215).

In this sense then feminism is politics itself; the politics of questioning issues such as gender and identity and who speaks for whom, and consequently an episteme or a knowledge body of such representations (John, 1999). Plus, this feminist politics and collaboration needs to be seen as a part of a larger global project—one which creates and dissolves many collaborations and within which collaborations must be prepared to negotiate and change (Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis Contributors, 2010). This very project then can be seen as an effort to collaborate and bring together practices of feminist organizations in Turkey and India that help in healing adult women survivors of incest. But it also needs to be seen in the light of other interesting developments and collaborations happening between the two countries on a more political and economic scale. Very recently, Indian and Turkish militaries have decided to cooperate (Kart, 2011) in a similar "vision for Asia", while there have also been reciprocal trade deals between the two nations ("Turkish minister looking", 2011). Even within the field of CSA and incest, I learned of several collaborations between the two countries during the course of my fieldwork. Richard Wood, one of the two men I spoke to about this issue and who works for the Turkish Ministry of Interior on behalf of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also has worked extensively in India prior to Turkey in combating CSA. Anuja from RAHI will be coming to Istanbul for a workshop on sexuality in the middle of June this year, a part of which will surely deal with the issue of CSA. Figen Şahin from Gazi University as well will be attending a conference in India later this year to discuss the issue of CSA. Throughout our interview, she also kept on emphasizing the need to collaborate both nationally and internationally in order to protect children from abuse and to alleviate the mental side-effects, because "when we are together we are more powerful" (personal communication, February 23, 2011).

So the questions that arise are: what is the significance of such increasing ties between the countries and within this context what is the relevance of a study like this? Does it even make sense to talk about just adult *women* survivors and their relation to incest instead of going beyond to look at issues of race, caste, ethnicity, language, and so on that intersect not only with women but also interact with each other in a way that affects the very experience of incest itself? Maybe it's time to look beyond distinct "fields" to borrow Bourdieu's terminology, fields where both women and men are subjected to hardships and oppressions, the field of NGOs that seek to empower them, and finally the academic "field" where papers and theses such as this are written as "critical discourses about such processes." (Sangtin Writers, 2010, p. 126-127). Maybe

it's time to collapse them into one and see the dialogical and dialectical relationship between them. Maybe it's time to move beyond focusing on reflexivity and positionality of the researcher. As one myself, after the beginning of this research, I have stopped trying to locate myself towards the end of this journey and have accepted my various "dislocations" (John, 1999)—India, Turkey, USA, home, University, mother, student, researcher…and (m)any more. I am now trying to combine theory and practice in a way that the knowledge that has been produced *located* in the Global South but very much within the northern academic standards can really be applied to the organizations working with adult incest survivors in both Turkey and India. Language becomes a key issue here—a handicap that I started out acknowledging even on my part at the beginning of my fieldwork. Additionally, how accessible is this work to feminists and women's groups in Turkey, most of who are not fluent in English? How will the language barrier in general be overcome if one were to bring these three organizations together in dialogue?

It is with such burning questions that I envision a kind of transnational feminist praxis between the two countries that focuses on, in Richa Nagar's words:

> (a) conceptualising and implementing collaborative efforts that insist on crossing multiple and difficult borders; (b) the sites, strategies and skills deployed to produce such collaborations; and (c) the specific processes through which such collaborations can find their form, content and meaning. (Nagar, 2003, p. 2).

To this end this thesis is just the beginning. The abused child within me and the survivor without has many more promises to keep—and miles to go before I sleep.

APPENDIX

How do we define a child and the *age of consent* that separates a child from an adult and that can be considered acceptable age limit for a person to be able to consent to sexual relationships instead of being physically, emotionally, psychologically coerced into them? This question of age is a problematic concept even in the research and literature that I have analyzed thus far and even in the more practical and legal realm of national and state laws and human rights discourse. For instance, the UNICEF convention on the rights of the child explicitly says on its website that the heterosexual[78] age of consent varies from country-to-country and also depends on the gender and that there are no international laws to fix a specific age applicable to all human beings alike ("Are you old enough?", n.d.). It also goes on to add: "No one, no matter how old, should ever feel under pressure to have sex. And the age of consent, whatever it may be in your country, certainly doesn't mean you should be having sex at that age." In other words, having sex is entirely an individual's own prerogative, and the contention is that only beyond a certain age *can* you apply that choice and even then you don't have to—at no age can one be forced into sex—hence the idea of rape for instance as a gross injustice and violation of human rights. Hence the idea of incest along the same lines as well and worse, because incest is very rarely between two people around or above the acceptable "consensual" age. It is usually perpetrated by people of more advanced years over children way below any accepted age of consent.

However, this still doesn't resolve the problem of age and consent. Carol Ann-Hooper shows how the notion of *adolescence*—something between childhood and adulthood, the grey area of *consent*—itself emerges in the beginning of the twentieth century England in legal and medical discourses, each aimed at defining limits of girlhood and motherhood and improving the quality of women's off-springs respectively (Hooper, 1997). She explains how conceptually diverse notions such as the age of criminal responsibility in law and the medical conception of adolescence collapse to form a unitary age of *consent*, highlighting its contentiousness from the point of its very emergence (Hooper, 1997). Nivedita Menon also challenges the legal definition of

[78] It goes on to add that "there are also different ages of consent...for gay men and lesbians, though in many countries gay and lesbian sex remains illegal." ("Are you old enough?", n.d.).

the age of consent in context of sexual experiences (Menon, 1999). Moving away from legal discourses to more moral and ethical premises of the debate, Jane Gilgun argues that:

> Given the inequalities that characterize families, children cannot give informed consent to sexual relations, except perhaps in cases of mutually agreed-upon explorations between generational equals. Their status as children and their lack of understanding of the nature and consequences of sexual behaviors preclude informed consent. Their freedom of choice is further compromised and the probability of covert coercions is present because of the authority and physical size of the older person. (Gilgun, 1995, p. 268).

But once again, within her research, she fails to mention what age for her is constitutive of childhood and also in asserting that "mutually agreed-upon explorations between generational equals" can be viewed outside the paradigm of sexual abuse, she leaves out a very big area of possibilities when relationships do indeed start out as "explorations" but end up being abusive even if there are only a couple of years between "generational equals" but when one person is able to exert force over another by virtue of his role and status in the family (for instance older brother-younger sister incest).

Hence any analysis of consent once again cannot ignore the power differentials in relationships—sexual relationships in the case of incest. Law only considers the age of consent from the perspective of a criminal or that of a crime committed by the perpetrator, but ignores the perspective of the victim (Des Rosiers, 1994). Andrea Nelson and Pamela Oliver in their study of how gender influences the experience of CSA and the perception of consent among adult survivors, also say that "the legal category of sexual abuse does not map onto a unitary subjective category of abusive experience" (Nelson and Oliver, 1998, p. 566), which varies depending on gender and on each individual's subjective experience. The age of consent for the purposes of their own study is 16, but also in analyzing what they call "marginal" cases, where some age criteria are met, with the exception of one girl, *all* the other girls reported their experiences as abusive (Nelson and Oliver, 1998). Even within cases that were not adult-child (but adult-adult), subjective perceptions of abuse changed from person-to-person and gender-to-gender, which ranged from: consensual relationships between siblings of the opposite sex that later were perceived as abusive by the girl, a case that could be categorized as "rape" but was viewed as consensual by the female victim, a relationship between a little boy and his female nanny that he as an adult viewed as consensual, and so on (Nelson and Oliver, 1998). These examples once again illustrate

that even within adult relationships, let alone adult-child contact, and even within the range of adult subjective experiences, we need "to recognize the shifting and problematic nature of the subjective experience of consent in unequal [power] relationships" (Nelson and Oliver, 1998, p. 567).

Moral dimensions aside, again even within law, relationships can be considered as mutual or consensual when people involved are from equal statuses or if there are differences, the implications of these differences are considered (Gilgun, 1995). In the case of incest where the status variable is usually tipped in favor of the elder person, the perpetrator, and the implications of the differences are themselves subjective when the difference in age between the "elder" and the "younger" is not too large or if the younger is an adolescent of debatable adulthood, the matter of consent becomes quite problematic. Thus the controversy and discussion surrounding the cases of Woody Allen and his adopted daughter Soon-Yi Previn and Kathryn Harrison's affair with her estranged but biological father, both examples of consensual adult incest, that Nancy Fischer analyses in an attempt to delineate the moral boundaries of incest (Fischer, 2003). Thus also the general discomfort a lot of people generally experience towards certain cultural practices that endorse incest via marriage between cousins, between uncles and nieces, and so on[79].

[79] India and Turkey both have certain communities and regions respectively where close of blood kin can enter matrimonial relationships.

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