

Chapter III

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Delinquent Influences among Adolescents

Adolescence is the phase when teenagers move away from the shadow of their parents and create their own personality. During this period teenagers are more inclined to the opinions of others, especially peers. Peer groups may act as a model that influences the behaviour and attitude of an adolescent. This influence is seldom positive and chiefly negative. Young adults easily get influenced by negative influences such as recommending alcohol consumption and drug usage; making them accept violence; and even getting them adapted to criminal behaviours. These factors play a major role in developing uncongenial and unsympathetic behaviour while growing up and can result in criminal behaviour. Peers are so influential during adolescence that they become one of the predominant reasons behind many criminal activities by teenagers. Thus the objective of this chapter is to identify the delinquent factors which influence the adolescents towards crime.

This chapter focuses on the results of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) in adolescents; the stages of adolescence; the role of the family; the role of peers; developmental approach; risk and protective factors; Differential Association Theory; its significance; nine principles of Sutherland; application of DAT in the select novels of Strasser.

Adverse Childhood Experience faced by children in the select novels: *Angel Dust Blues*, *Give a Boy a Gun*, *Can't Get There from Here*, *If I Grow Up* and *Famous* has resulted in adolescents distancing themselves from their parents or abandoning their parents completely. The reason behind this is: emotional abuse by a parent, physical abuse by a parent, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, loss of a parent, domestic violence, household

member who abused alcohol or drugs, a family member experiencing mental illness or experiencing the incarceration of a household member. Such violent behaviour and abuses from the parents towards their children had left a scar in their future developments. As a result, the characters became rebellious, anti-social, numb to emotions, hated violence and became secretive. Adverse Childhood Experience affected these characters' normal social interaction. Due to the absence of parental affection, there is a high chance that these characters might grow up to be peer dependent during their adolescence.

There are three stages of adolescence. They are early adolescence, middle adolescence and late adolescence. Adolescence is the period to develop knowledge and skills and to learn to manage emotions. The transformation from childhood to adulthood takes place in adolescence. This phase of development takes place due to social transition along with biological, physical, psychological, neurological and behavioral changes. During this stage they develop their sense of self through self-identity, sexual identity and concerns on other's opinion. They seek more independence and responsibility in their decisions while disengaging from parental control. Adolescence is an age when tolerance is lower and peer dependency is higher. Adolescence falls under the age group between ten and twenty one. Early adolescence focuses on the age group from 10 to 13 years. Middle adolescence is between 14 and 16 years. Late adolescence is from 17 to 21 years.

Family plays a huge role in promoting character development during adolescence. An adolescent looks at the world differently depending on whether he or she lives in a supportive family or in an abusive family. However an individual responds to the same

situation differently depending on the experience predisposed on them which can define their current environment. Similarly this tendency results in social dependency and association towards friends.

The role of peers becomes highly influential during adolescence. They play a significant role in their growth by providing social reinforcement to an adolescent. These peers become an important source of social and emotional dependency to young adults. Strong peer relationships can help a teenager to develop his or her identity and a healthy academic result. These relationships help them to develop confidence through a feel of connectedness, a sense of belongingness and being valued. Peers influence an adolescent in shaping his or her behaviour and personality which could have a positive or a negative impact. Peer influence has a powerful impact in the development process of an adolescent's mind. To identify this process many theorists such as Jean Piaget, Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson and John Bowlby have used development approach in their theories.

Developmental approach analyses adolescent's risk and protective factors in order to identify the factors which could provoke criminal behaviour. The approach begins by examining the pathway, transition and turning point of a criminal behaviour process. The pathway to criminal behaviour is rooted in childhood, in which an individual is exposed to violence or becomes a victim of violence. The next step to criminality is the beginning of the transition process which takes place during the early adolescence where the adolescent relies on their peer's approval for every decision. At this stage the adolescent learns certain unlawful behaviour from his or her peers. This acts as a risk factor.

While growing up, peer influence can pose either a risk or a protective factor for an adolescent. It depends on the good or bad friendship with whom adolescents spend

most of their time. Peers have a direct influence in an adolescent's risk behaviour. The negative influence of the peers plays a huge deal in risk behaviour. The negative peer relationships such as bullying, can have psychological, social and emotional impact for both victim and the perpetrator. "As the youth approaches early adolescence... deviant peer associates become important and highly influential, and this often leads to persistent antisocial and violent behaviour" (C Bartol and A Bartol 53). The risk behaviour could also result in negative health conditions when exposed to homicide, under age alcoholic consumption, sexually transmitted disease, experimenting with substances and driving under the influence of alcohol. The most common risk behaviour is consumption of alcohol which takes place in the context of social events or to please their friends. Thus alcohol consumption can gradually increase and can result in health and behavioural problems in future.

School is where a person's interpersonal relations are developed through peers. These relationships with peers help in building personal and social development. Similarly without friends many become isolated or anti-social. On the other hand, with the wrong companion, an adolescent can be influenced to do unlawful things. The pathway to offending starts from familial impact on an individual in his or her childhood and further transition takes place with peer influence which is traced with the application of Differential Association Theory by Edwin Sutherland.

Differential Association Theory (DAT) states that people learn values, attitudes, techniques and motives for criminal behaviour through interactions with others. The theory is a learning theory of deviance that was initially developed by the sociologist Edwin Sutherland in 1939 and revised in 1947. Sutherland views crime as conflicting values of a society. Since then the theory has continued to be significant to the field of criminology. The term

differential association meant “the contents of the pattern presented in associates” (Williams and Marilyn 58).

The significance of Sutherland’s Differential Association Theory rose due to its role as a breakthrough in the field of criminal psychology. Initially, people considered biological factors as the principal reason for criminal behaviour. This led to the origin of the school of positivism, in this school an individual’s behaviour was determined by biology, or by one’s ancestors or by some natural, physical, social or cultural factor. Thus positivism dominated in the analysis of criminal behaviour from 1860s to 1970s. Later DAT has been used to analyse youth delinquency and gang culture for the past few decades. The theory argued that “...one of the strongest correlates of juvenile delinquency is criminal peers” (Haynie and Osgood 7). Sutherland has spoken about the idea of ‘self’ as a social construct which is continuously reconstructed through an adolescent’s interaction with others.

The concept of DAT has been applied to the fields of sociology, psychology, criminal justice and criminology to explain the way in which criminal values, ideas, techniques and expressions are transmitted from one individual to another. The theory proposes that criminal behavior is learned from association with other people through a process of symbolic interaction, which usually takes place in intimate groups. Learning is defined as “...habits and knowledge that develop as a result of the experiences of the individual in entering and adjusting to the environment” (Vold et al. 153). Similarly criminal behaviour is also learnt like any other behaviour. Sutherland proposed that his theory was not only an explanation for individual criminal behaviour, but was also suited for explaining the differences in group or societal crime rates.

Sutherland summarized the principles of differential association theory with nine propositions. In his first principle, he points out that all “criminal behaviour is learned” which clearly obliterates that criminal behaviour is imbibed, making it a behaviour learnt from others (Bosiakoh and Andoh 200). In his second principle, he elaborates saying that “*Criminal behaviour is learned in interactions with other persons in a process of communication*” (Sutherland 6). This communication is verbal in most of the cases but it can also be done through gestures. In his third principle, he stresses that “*The principal part of the learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate personal groups*” (Sutherland 6). Such close peer relationships and peer dependent acts can help in learning unlawful behaviour easily.

In his fourth principle, Sutherland says that “*When criminal behaviour is learned, the learning includes (a) techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes very simple; (b) the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes*” (Sutherland 6). In his fifth principle, he points out “*The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favourable or unfavourable*” (Sutherland 6).

In Sutherland’s sixth principle, he emphasizes that “*A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of the law over definitions unfavourable to violation of law*” (Sutherland 6). Sutherland calls this as the “principle of differential association” because this refers to both criminal and noncriminal associates and its counteracting forces (Chiricos 93).

Sutherland’s seventh principle says all differential associations are not equal, they can “vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity” (Dow 224). Priority becomes the

first form of significance, while intensity covers prestige, pattern and emotional reactions related to the associates. Frequency and duration are models of associates. In his eighth principle, he points out that the “*process of learning criminal behaviour by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning*” (Sutherland 7). Learning of criminal behaviour is not a process of imitation but rather an ordinary learning process of any other behaviours.

In his ninth principle, he highlights “*While criminal behaviour is an expression of general need and values, it is not explained by those general needs and values since non-criminal behaviour is an expression of the same needs and values*” (Sutherland 7).

Sutherland’s theory of differential association was one of the first theories attempted to “normalise’ criminal behaviour” (Inciardi 107). Sutherland gives an example stating that “a Southerner does not pronounce “r” because other Southerner do not pronounce “r”” (Sutherland 6). Thus he concludes that criminal behaviour is considered normal because it was similar to learning any other noncriminal behaviour.

Some critics “treat the theory of differential association as one of the so-called American sociological theories of criminality” (Maloku 2), which is mainly because Sutherland was an American and the theory was linked to the American lifestyle of his time. The ‘differential’ in the theory’s name is associated with the cultural diversity and social construction of American society. Differential association theory suggests a chain of interrelationships and correlates it with a person’s associates and learning experiences. This made crime reasonable and understandable as a normal and logical behaviour. The theory simply explains crime in terms of broken homes, poverty, physical abnormalities or weather conditions.

Sutherland hypothesized that people learn delinquent behaviour through association with people who violate social norms. Criminal behaviour is a learning consequence of an individual who associates with members of delinquent groups, then as a result they adopt their delinquent habits. Through these associations an individual behaves in opposition with applicable social norms. As a common saying goes, “Whom you spend time with is who you become” is a simplification of this idea (Sophia). D. P. Farrington, a criminologist states, “Offending is versatile rather than specialized” (223-24). In some cases the associate is not required to be present in front of the learner rather, it is sufficient if the learner listens to a crime narration which is projected in a positive light. Even this can easily influence an adolescent towards transgression. Sutherland’s nine propositions are used in the novels *Angel Dust Blues*, *Give a Boy a Gun*, *Can’t Get There from Here*, *If I Grow Up* and *Famous* of Strasser to explain the intimate influences which promote criminal attitudes and behaviours to adolescents.

The first novel taken for study is *Angel Dust Blues (ADB)*. Alex was the protagonist, he was an excellent student and many admired him for his talent. Alex was a tennis prodigy and model student with good grades. He was passionate about tennis and enjoyed the sport. In his eighth grade he befriended a school drop-out named Michael. A few months later, Michael quitted school, Alex met Michael on the street and got to know that he took cocaine and sold them as well. Alex was intrigued by the profit made by Michael through selling drugs. Hence Michael influenced Alex into selling drugs.

Michael was the negative influence in Alex’s life. Michael was a bully at school. He dropped out of school, took narcotic drugs and alcohol, indulged in violent games, owned a gun and became a drug addict. These qualities qualify Michael to be a

delinquent peer. His influence on Alex's character change is identified. Through the application of Differential Association Theory adolescents' learning process of criminal behaviour is traced in the character Alex.

The first principle of DAT is that criminal behaviour is a learning process. In the novel Michael quitted school because of drugs and failing grades. Alex was also on the verge of quitting because of his poor performance in studies and in tennis during his senior year. This was because of drugs and his friendship with Michael. Michael displayed rude and abusive behaviour at school so he was labelled as a bully by the students at school. As Alex expressed: "...from the first day in school he created a reputation for himself as tough and rebellious and something of a bully" (Strasser, *ADB* 26). Michael also carried a small knife or a gun wherever he went. This is because of the insecurity he felt due to selling drugs. Carrying a weapon and bullying are considered as criminal activity which makes Michael a criminal. He followed the footsteps of Michael into consuming drugs and smoking cigarettes. Alex also learns to pack and weight the drugs which Michael bought. Alex learns: "... dividing it [drugs] up and weighting out ounces, wrapping each ounce in a plastic bag, and hiding all of them ... " (Strasser, *ADB* 37). Thus through Michael Alex learns to pack and dispose large quantities of drugs.

According to the second principle criminal behaviour is learned through interaction with other persons in a process of communication. Similarly through Michael's close interaction, Alex learns criminal behaviour. Strasser described the beginning of Alex and Michael's friendship as: "At first Michael was a curiosity to Alex as they got to know each other the summer after their junior year. He was exciting and seemingly dangerous and he stimulated Alex like a fast car or an exotic drug" (Strasser,

ADB 26). Alex's life as a model student was less interesting to him until he met Michael. Alex was drawn towards Michael due to Michael's rebellious nature and attitude as they were interesting in Alex's boring life. The author compares Michael to fast cars and exotic drugs, because teenagers are prone towards these things easily. In the same way Michael made Alex feel excited and dauntless just like a drug or a fast car. Alex had been confined to the ideas his parents had imposed on him all his life but when he met Michael he was attracted to the rebellious and lawless image he had created for him. Alex always wanted to break free from his parents control on his life so he befriends Michael as a means to learn the rebellious qualities. Thus marks the beginning of their friendship.

As the third principle of DAT states, that the principal part of learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate groups. Alex was also influenced by an intimate peer, Michael, who was Alex's intimate friend who quitted school and sold drugs. But Alex felt that Michael was his close friend because he got to see the true side of Michael "As Alex got to know Michael he began to see where the tough act ended and where the real person began. He soon realised that despite how ornery Michael could sometimes be, the kid really wanted Alex to be his friend" (Strasser, *ADB* 27). Through time they became close and spent most of their time together. According to the third principle Alex's intimate personal relationship with Michael has made him learn to consume and to sell drugs.

Sutherland's fourth principle states that an individual learns the techniques and motive for committing the crime. Michael would stand near the school's utility garage in the afternoon and sell drugs to the students. "Michael spent most of his time behind the utility garage at school, smoking grass or cigarettes with his old buddies" (Strasser, *ADB* 25). Alex also understood that, "For his entire high school career the smell of marijuana

smoke in the bathroom and behind the utility garage was as common as the smell of musk on girls” (Strasser, *ADB* 52). Thus he learns that when it comes to selling drugs the spot near the utility garage was the common spot for drug smokers. Selling drugs in that area would benefit him the most because no adult or teacher would come to that area. The motive behind Alex’s actions is he wanted attention and money similar to Michael. So Alex learnt the technique and the motive from Michael to sell drugs. Hence the fourth principle is seen as Alex learns the techniques of standing near the hidden spot behind utility garage for committing the act of crime with the motive of money.

According to the fifth principle an individual specific direction of motive is driven from being aware if the legal codes are favourable or unfavourable. Alex being the son of a politician was well aware of the consequence of selling drugs to school students. He knew if he gets caught by police he will be given a lesser sentence because he is a minor. But he prioritised selling drugs to gain attention.

As the DAT’s sixth principle states that an individual would find it more favourable to break the law than to follow. Alex grew up without parental attention so was unmonitored most of the days therefore he felt it was favourable for him to sell drugs and use drugs as a means of rebellion. Alex’s parents “were always too busy— his father in business and his mother in politics-working too late to eat dinner at home, often not coming home until after Alex was asleep. The weekends had been business and politics, too” (Strasser, *ADB* 19). Thus Alex’s busy parents always made Alex feel distant from them which made him act out through drugs. He found selling drugs as more favourable to gain money and attention from his classmates.

Sutherland's seventh principle states that the association with peers varies in frequency, duration, priority and intensity. Alex when compared to his other friends such as James he spent more time with Michael after school hours. They went on long drives and spent hours together talking about drugs and consuming alcohol. This shows the duration of their association together. Also Alex prioritised Michael over his other friends which marked the intensity of their friendship. Alex confessed that he performed poorly in a few tournaments because he spent the previous night with Michael smoking marijuana. "Sometimes he and Michael would stay up all night smoking cigarettes and joints,...Alex did poorly that summer in the few tennis tournaments he entered. After all, it was exhausting to stay up all night and then play two tennis matches the next day" (Strasser, *ADB* 27). If it had not been Michael's misdirection, "Alex could have joined Hell's Angels ..." (Strasser, *ADB* 27). Hell's Angels was a state level team and many in Alex's school believed that Alex would undoubtedly join the team with his talent. But Alex's only chance for joining the state team was shattered because of Michael, who influenced Alex to consume drugs the night before his important matches.

According to the eighth principle of DAT the process of learning criminal behaviour is done through association with criminals. Michael sold illegal drugs to school students and taught his drug business to Alex as well. Later at the end Michael became an addict to drugs and it affected his mental stability. He became thin and pale because of the narcotic drugs. The police caught him for selling drugs and sent him to rehab but he could not overcome his addiction problem. In the police report Michael was said to be severely multihabituated which is "addicted to a lot of drugs at once..." (Strasser, *ADB* 157). Also he was considered as a recidivist by the police because "...he's a criminal

repeater who probably can't be rehabilitated. That means he's probably going to spend most of his life in jail..." (Strasser, *ADB* 157). Thus making him a criminal with a lifetime jail sentence. Alex learnt to use drugs apart from selling them. This behaviour was learnt from Michael, who was a criminal influence.

As the ninth principle in the theory states, criminal behaviour is an expression of needs. Michael's need for money and Alex's need for affection from his parents became the driving factor for crime in the novel. Youth with the history of potential traumatic incidents or abuse in their childhood are more prone to use drugs in order to cope up with the past traumas. In the same way Michael and Alex are potential victims of household dysfunction. As Alex addresses his parents as "absentee parents" (Strasser, *ADB* 9) to denote their absence in his life. This was the reason behind the rebellious drug abuse phase they both experienced in the novel. The need for love and affection was important in a young adult's life. The absence of these paved the way to learn criminal behaviour.

Hence with the application of the nine principles of Differential Association theory in the novel the character Alex and the negative influences of his friend Michael was analysed. Thus Alex learnt criminal activities such as consumption of drugs and alcohol; selling of drugs from Michael; packing and weighing the drugs; the convenient place to sell drugs. Thus all these delinquent peer influences made Alex learn criminal activities which he uses in the future.

The second novel taken for the study is *Give a Boy a Gun (GBG)*. The novel centers around two absent characters Gary and Brendan. Gary was one of the brightest kids in class; he was teased in his school for his intelligence and for looking stout. He had a tough time growing up with a single protective mother. So it was hard for him to open up

about the problems in school. In spite of that Gary still found reasons to be happy till he met Brendan. Gary's friendship with Brendan had a negative influence on Gary's characteristics and attitude. Gradually Brendan manipulated Gary into doing dangerous things for the sake of revenge.

The first principle of Differential Association theory states that criminal behaviour is learnt. The learning process not only takes place between human beings but also between technology and human beings. Lately video games have become a vital part of teenager's lives. More than 70 % of video game players are teenagers. "Over 85% of video games nowadays contain at least some minor violence, and approximately half of video games include serious violent actions" (Kneifer 1), especially video games which promote killing, shooting and bombing the enemies. These games are based on military training of shooting and attacking the enemies. Youngsters are bewitched by these video games and are prone to their visual treats. Since many young people spend most of their time in these games it becomes an intimate company for them and they isolate themselves from proper human interaction into the virtual world of fantasy. When this becomes an addiction, teenagers slowly lose their sense of reality and they imagine themselves as their game's avatars. This affects their mental health.

Kids and young people, especially boys, chat about video games a lot. Similarly Gary and Ryan most of the time talk about "...video games and what we saw on TV" (Strasser, *GBG* 11). Brendan also plays video games a lot and got the demo of "doom" game (Strasser, *GBG* 22). The doom game was based on shooting and bombing the enemies. Brendan was so obsessed with the game that he played it continuously after school. Once Brendan's mother told him to turn off the game and go and play outside but in return he

snapped at her asking her to go away. His mother was shocked by this behaviour. This incident was a display of Brendan's obsession on the violent video game.

Children these days are exposed to violent contents in Televisions and games that make them believe that the holographic world is real. At the same time the violent and illicit contents are harmful for all the age group especially to boys. A study on "Television Violence and the Adolescent Boy" states that "...high exposure to television violence increased the degree to which boys engaged in serious violence" (Belson). Similarly Brendan and Gary were also prone towards violent visual contents in video games and televisions.

During lunch break Brendan made it a routine to put his arm on the table and stick his thumb up and point his finger at the kids he hated and utter "point and click, point and click. Die" (Strasser, *GBG* 80). He was behaving like this in front of Gary and Ryan and he developed this behaviour from playing video games. Just like the avatars in video games he too has imagined to point and kill his enemies which in this case his bullies. Brendan learned this behaviour, "after that school shooting in Idaho" (Strasser, *GBG* 81), which Brendan became aware of through news channels. That incident induced his idea of shooting his bullies with a gun. According to the first principle Brendan and Gary learnt many things and got many ideas from television and violent video games to carry out their criminal plan.

As the second principle of DAT states, criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with others in a process of communication. This communication process takes place not only among people but also through technology. Gary was an intelligent kid who was well aware of the technology and its usage. So at home he spends most of his

time on his computer either learning or playing games with his friends. Gary once read an article about a bombing incident in an abortion clinic; this gave him the idea that he too could build a bomb just as it is done in video games. A few days after the incident Gary asked Allison to take him to a public library to use the internet there because he does not want to be traced by the police. Allison does not understand the reason behind his statement. After a few minutes Gary came back from the library saying, “I found everything I need to know... about making a bomb” (Strasser, *GBG* 102). He learned how to build a bomb in the library and was proud of it. He got the idea for making a bomb through an incident where an ordinary person bombs a building. This incident gave him the confidence to build the bomb in future.

As the third principle stresses that the principal part of learning occurs within intimate personal groups. The intimate personal group of Gary consists of Brendan. The amount of Brendan’s influence on Gary was immense. Likewise for more than two years Gary spent most of his time with Brendan and as a result Gary started to demonstrate some of Brendan’s attitudes and characteristics through the course of time. Gary’s other friends were able to identify this difference only in the later part of his life. Allison once gave a statement that, “There was something dark in Brendan” (Strasser, *GBG* 35), she was expressing the sinister nature he possessed which was intense and unwelcoming that it felt something catastrophic. Allison was not able to address the exact cause of his malevolence but she was able to sense it as something dark. Emily, Brendan’s friend, had also given a statement saying, “Whatever that dark thing in Brendan was, it started to come out in Gary too” (Strasser, *GBG* 77). Not only Alison but Emily was also able to

identify Brendan's dark hatred growing in Gary. There are many students in school who recognized that Brendan was a bad influence on Gary. Thus Brendan was an intimate friend of Gary so the dark attitudes and harmful behaviours are seen in Gary as well.

According to the fourth principle of DAT when a criminal behaviour is learned the techniques and motives are also included in the process. Not just movies but even music plays a role in influencing a person. Listening to heavy rock music was acknowledged as appealing and trendy among youngsters. Many teenagers are addicted to rock music and many other songs which give a false interpretation of the society by focusing only on the dark emotions with explicit sexual references. Many parents had raised complaints against violent music. Gary loved an old Queen song, "he shot someone in the head and his life is ruined, but nothing really matters anyway" (Strasser, *GBG* 52). The lyrics of the song gave wrong ideas about death. The character projected in the song seems to be unsympathetic and lost that he did not seem to feel anything even after shooting someone. Eric Harris also used the same line in one of his conversations with his friend, telling them that it does not matter anymore. Harris said these lines because he felt hopeless and lost.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold are another form of influence on Brendan and Gary. These two high schoolers studied at Columbine High School in the year 1999. They were bullied and mistreated by their classmates. So as a revenge they brought guns to school and shot many of the students in their school and around thirteen died. Finally they committed suicide. This was one of the influences on Brendan and Gary to plan and commit a similar shoot out in the later part of the story.

There were times when Brendan supported Klebold and Harris' decision to shoot their classmates. Brendan said, "K&H didn't care"; "Nothing 2 care about. Nothing 2 believe in" (Strasser, *GBG* 82). He refers to Klebold and Harris as K&H and said they did not worry about anyone. Allison when she recollects these small messages by Brendan she realised that, "Looking back on it, I realize he just got weirder and more and more twisted. It was like he stopped caring" (Strasser, *GBG* 90). The loss of empathy was evident in many of Brendan's statements and he followed a negative role model. She regrets that she failed to notice these small comments and opinions which Brendan hinted before his outbreak at school shooting.

One of the school teachers had given a statement that the problem with Gary and Brendan was, "...the absence of real adult role models, violent television and video images have become the substitute role models. I think that's probably true" (Strasser, *GBG* 78). Through the many school shooting incidents portrayed in the television Gary and Brendan learn the techniques to carry out their criminal behaviour. Due to technological advancements they easily gathered the techniques for revenge.

The motive behind Gary and Brendan was to avenge the mistreatments they received from the football players at school. Gary and Brendan were bullied by the football players for many years and it affected their mental health. One of the football players named Sam Flach hit Brendan so hard that he bled so much. After this incident Brendan emails to Gary that, "Sam Flach will die slowly. I will shoot him in one knee ...then blow his friggin' brains out" (Strasser, *GBG* 41). He wants to hurt Sam the same way he had hurt him so he plans to shoot his knees so he would understand his pain. This was Brendan's motive for revenge.

The fifth principle of DAT emphasises that the specific direction of motives and drives are learned from the definition of legal codes as favourable or unfavourable. Gary and Brendan were well aware of the fact that they might end up in jail like Harris and Klebold if they attacked. So Brendan planned to follow Harris and Klebold into killing the people in school and finally killing themselves. As he expressed in one of his emails to Gary: “I will kill every friggin’ one of them. It’s gonna be Columbine all over again, only better. Harris and Klebold did it right. Blow the friggin’ school, then blow yourself away” (Strasser, *GBG* 71). Since they are aware of the fact that after attacking the students at school the police will charge them with attempted murder and they might end up in jail all their life, they plan to kill themselves in the end. So no one can take any action against them. Thus they are aware of the unfavourable condition of the law and so they plot a plan accordingly.

As the sixth principle stresses that a person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of law over definitions unfavourable to violation of law. The favourable condition for the plotting of revenge was because of the unfair treatment both Gary and Brendan received from the athletes at school. Gary and Brendan approached their revenge as a reformation of the society. They felt their mission as a noble cause but unaccepted by the law. In Gary’s suicide letter he mentioned that, “If I go this way, taking the people who made my life miserable with me, then maybe it will send a message” (Strasser, *GBG* 133). Gary and Brendan found it favourable to break the law since they underwent the assault for many years.

As the seventh principle states the differential association can vary in frequency, intensity, priority and duration of their time spent with the person who is ready to break

the law. Likewise Gary frequently met Brendan and they spent many hours together either going out or playing online games. Gary gave more priority to Brendan than his other friends. Ryan, who had been Gary's close friend from kindergarten, noticed that he was being kept out of some secrets only Brendan and Gary could share with themselves, he said "...but it was pretty obvious that I was just a visitor to whatever part of their private world they wanted me to see" (Strasser, *GBG* 30). Gary and Brendan were close enough to keep secrets and hide them from their other friends. This shows the intensity of their friendship, Gary prioritised Brendan over his other friends, and they both frequently visited each other and spent many hours together. All these qualities contribute to the growth of criminal behaviour through intimate relationships.

According to the eighth principle the process of learning criminal behaviour is done through association with a criminal. Brendan when he first came to Middletown High School he was nostalgic about his previous school. He found it hard to accept the new school's environment, especially the bullying. Soon he became a victim of bullying; he was bullied many times and his anger knew no bounds. It became worse. But Brendan himself was a bully too. His friends gave a statement about Brendan bullying a kid with B.O. condition, in which the body releases unpleasant body odour due to excessive sweat. He made jokes about the kid's condition in front of his friends. This incident was a manifestation of Brendan's evil side as a bully. Even though Brendan was a victim of bullying he never realised his mistake of bullying acts.

Once Brendan brought a gun to school and he told Gary that he got it from a school student. Gary too was curious to get a gun since Brendan had one. So Gary enquired his mother whether he too could get a gun but Gary's mother declined it. Gary's mother said

“Gary asked me if I would get him a gun. I said I didn’t believe in having guns” (Strasser, *GBG* 75). School students are not allowed to possess a weapon without safety measures because it is against law. Moreover students could be punished for it. Brendan was well aware of the fact but he still gets a gun without the knowledge of his parents. Gary too was inspired by his daring behaviour that he too wanted to own a gun. Not only in this incident but also in many other similar incidents Gary was ready to follow the bad influence of Brendan in violating the law. Thus Brendan’s bullying behaviour and illegal weapon possession are criminal acts and these ideas influenced Gary to learn criminal behaviour.

The ninth principle of DAT states that criminal behaviour is an expression of needs and values. Thus Gary’s need to be treated fair was his motive and all the bullying made him feel miserable. In his suicide letter he mentioned that after his death, “Maybe something will change, and some other miserable kid like me somewhere will get treated better and maybe find a reason to live” (Strasser, *GBG* 133-34). Through his death and the death of the bullies he tries to gain equity in the society. His deep agony of being mistreated for years was intense that he felt only through revenge his needs will be fulfilled in the future. Hence his plot to avenge the football players was an expression of needs.

Differential Association Theory proposes that the characters are aware of the motive, consequences of their behaviour and the method to commit the crime. Through the influence of Brendan, internet, television and violent video games Gary was able to learn all the methods for committing a crime. This learning of criminal behaviour through close interaction with intimate peers could result in the negative effect in the future. Thus through learning criminal behaviour, there is a high chance that the characters might implement whatever they have learnt from their peers in future.

The third novel taken for analysis is *Can't Get There from Here (CGTH)*. Maybe is the protagonist and she lives on the street with a group of youngsters. At the age of fourteen she left her house because of her mother's abuse and lived on the streets of New York. Most of the time, Maybe was with the company of Maggot, 2moro, Rainbow, Tears, Jewel, Country Club and OG. She considered these people as her close group of friends and named the group as asphalt tribe.

The first principle of Differential Association Theory states that criminal behaviour is a learning process. Maybe was naive and innocent and most of the time she was victimised by her family members. She did not understand that their actions were selfish deeds. There were many instances in the novel where Maybe's friends consume alcohol, indulge in prostitution, go clubbing and use drugs. Since they did not have any proper adults to monitor them, they misbehaved. Maybe got used to watching Rainbow, OG, Jewel, 2moro and Maggot consume alcohol and drugs. Indirectly she was exposed to drugs and alcohol at a young age. Later she finds it acceptable to consume alcohol. Once 2moro took Maybe and Tears to clubbing Maybe said, "2moro got us free passes to The Cradle tonight" (Strasser, *CGTH* 83). The Cradle was one of the famous clubs in New York so Maybe was happy to follow 2moro to the club. However Maybe was twelve years old so she was not allowed to go to clubs and it is illegal, but she learnt that since her friends are going she too wanted to join them. Thus she learns criminal behaviour.

According to the second principle criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication. Similarly the characters in *Can't Get There from Here* learn to sell drugs and to steal by watching other people on the street who do the same thing to survive. All of Maybe's friends are a risk factor for her mental

growth. They make her do unlawful things in the name of survival. Sometimes they wanted her hard earned money for buying drugs and she too obliges. Once Rainbow manipulates Maybe to have some ginger ale for her stomach ache and to hand over Maybe's money to her. Rainbow said "“Know what my mom used to do when I had a stomach ache?” Rainbow said. “Gave me ginger ale. It always made me feel better”.... “You ought to try it,” Rainbow said. “Maybe you could keep enough for the ginger ale and give the rest to me, huh?”” (Strasser, *CGTH* 43). Through this interaction Rainbow misleads Maybe by telling her that ginger ale could be consumed for stomach ache which was a deceptive idea incorporated by Rainbow. She made Maybe believe in the false remedy and made her consume alcohol at the age of twelve, which was a criminal activity.

As the third principle of DAT states, that the major part of learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate groups. Maybe's intimate group members are Rainbow, 2moro and Maggot. They were drug dealers, prostitutes and drug addicts. Rainbow was close to Maybe. Moreover she had a huge influence on Maybe. Rainbow at the age of fourteen was diagnosed with OCD, depression and was suffering from suicidal thoughts. She was arrested for “loitering, trespassing, and possession of narcotics” (Strasser, *CGTH* 152). She was put up in a juvenile correction facility for six months. 2moro on the other hand was arrested for “...loitering, prostitution, possession of narcotics, resisting arrest” (Strasser, *CGTH* 109). Maggot was another member of the asphalt tribe who was of the same age as Maybe. He cleverly sold baking powder as cocaine to foreigners every day. Thus Maybe's close associate has a reputation for committing illegal activities and ended up in Juvenile centres many times. Through these intimate associates Maybe learns criminal behaviours.

Sutherland's fourth principle states that an individual learns the techniques and motive for committing the crime. These techniques and motives can be learnt from an adult or from peers. Maybe had an abusive mother, who chased Maybe away from home at the age of twelve. Maybe was motivated by her mother's behaviour when she was asked to consume alcohol. Maybe says, "She [mother] drank up all the food money" (Strasser, *CGTH* 24). This proves that she meant her mother was an alcoholic. This was one of the reasons, when Rainbow offers alcohol to Maybe, she did not find it strange or illegal. She had witnessed her mother consuming alcohol so she knew the technique of consuming alcohol.

According to the fifth principle an individual specific direction of motive is driven from being aware of whether the legal codes are favourable or unfavourable. The characters in the novel find it easy to indulge in crime than to work hard and earn. This is because of their unfavourable circumstances in which they are exposed to crime at a very young age. So they sell drugs or do prostitution. To an extent they are calculative because they know the consequences of their acts. They clearly know where the police will take them, if they get caught. In spite of it, they were left with no choice other than satisfying their needs. Maybe and her tribe were aware of the fact that police will take them to the Youth Housing Project (YHP) when they find them living on the street. When a person from Youth Housing Project approaches these kids, they argue that it is unfavourable to them because they are not given enough freedom. "You'll give us food and a bed, but only if we live by your rules" (Strasser, *CGTH* 33). The tribe members' opinion on the youth housing project was subjective. These members create a wrong impression about Youth Housing Project and did not let their tribe members understand the true meaning of freedom and security

the government could provide them. Since they were not allowed to commit any illegal activities there they find the legal codes in YHP as unfavourable.

As the DAT's sixth principle states that an individual would find it more favourable to break the law than to follow. Just like Maybe and her friends, many teenagers were stranded on the streets of New York, begging or stealing to survive in the cold weather. Since New York is an expensive city and getting a decent job and a place to stay is hard for these teenagers without parental support. So these kids live on the streets and are exposed to the dark side of the city that makes them accept their fate and live a life doing illegal things. So they find it favourable to break the law for survival than to follow them. There was an instance when 2moro and Maggot tries to mug a person. The novel opens with 2moro, Rainbow, Jewel, OG, Maggot, Tears and Maybe sitting on the street of New York during a New Year's Eve and talking. They saw a drunken man "...stumbled along, not yet aware of us. When he passed under a streetlight, something gold glinted on his wrist" (Strasser, *CGTH* 3). 2moro and Maggot tried to mug from that man but in the end they get beaten up by him. The first instinct 2moro and Maggot had when they saw a drunken man alone on the street was to steal from him. Moreover, Rainbow and Jewel supported this act. This was the proof that they were detrimental teenagers who find harming others favourable for their survival.

Sutherland's seventh principle states that the association with peers varies in frequency, duration, priority and intensity. The asphalt tribe members spend most of their time together on the street. So Maybe felt close to them as a family. As she addressed their relationship as: "...we started hanging together. And now it was winter, and we were sort of like a family, or maybe a tribe. An asphalt tribe that roamed the streets

searching for food and shelter. We watched out for each other, cared about each other. Country Club was gone but the rest of us struck together” (Strasser, *CGTH* 45-46). These lines were a reflection on the priority that Maybe gave her friends. The duration they spent together was high. The intensity of their relationship is seen when Maybe addresses them as her family. She felt close to them like a family so she spent most of the time together with them.

According to the eighth principle of DAT, the process of learning criminal behaviour is done through association with criminals. The associates of Maybe are committing unlawful activities such as selling drugs and smoking at a young age. Maybe learns that her friend, Maggot sold Ecstasy, at that time Tears asked “Is it against law?” (Strasser, *CGTH* 47) Maybe replies “Yeah” (Strasser, *CGTH* 47). So Maybe was aware of the activities done by her friends and those activities are against the law. She also learnt that selling ecstasy could fetch her good money. Maybe’s another associate, 2moro smokes cigarettes a lot. Maybe said “She was smoking cigarettes. Most days she spent more money on cigarettes than on food” (Strasser, *CGTH* 19). Maybe had frequently witnessed 2moro smoking rather than having food. 2moro smoking at the age of fifteen was considered as an unlawful behaviour. Thus Maybe through 2moro and Maggot understands that smoking and selling drugs as acceptable behaviours on the streets.

As the ninth principle of the theory states, criminal behaviour is an expression of needs. When Maybe came to live on the street, she was alone and longed for affection. Then she met the seven teenagers going through a similar situation so she immediately accepted them as her family. She even expresses that as: “we were sort of like a family, or maybe a tribe” (Strasser, *CGTH* 45). Maybe left her mother at a young age so she

longed for familial affection and love. So she accepts these criminal strangers as her family because of her need for a family.

The tribe members, 2moro, Rainbow, Jewel, Country Club and OG have a history of juvenile sentences and a bad reputation for breaking the law. Even though they were a bad influence on her she befriends them. These tribe members have also suffered many physical and mental abuses from their family members which in turn made them numb to transgression. Maybe considered them as her only family because she thinks that they are the only people who would understand her sufferings.

The theory proposes that the characters learn criminal behaviour through criminal accomplice. Similarly, Maybe was influenced by the teenagers on the street and learns criminal activities such as selling drugs, attending night clubs, accepting drugs and alcohol consumption. Since she was alone and these teenagers are close to her, she starts to believe that illegal acts are a part of their life and she should also accept and follow those acts.

The fourth novel taken for study is *If I Grow Up (IIGU)*. The novel revolves around an African-American boy named DeShawn who lived during the intercity Projects of Chicago. The people in the Projects are mostly poor and underprivileged. Most of the teenage boys there, make a living by selling drugs. At a very young age kids in this region are exposed to guns and drugs. Due to this most of the teenagers do not live beyond twenty five years.

The first principle of Differential Association Theory states that criminal behaviour is a learning process. Marcus was a drug gang's leader and he was one of the most influential people in DeShawn's life. Since DeShawn did not have a father, he looked at Marcus as a

fatherly figure. DeShawn always imagines himself growing up like Marcus in the future. At the age of thirteen DeShawn got into an argument with his classmate and instead of responding to the classmate's statement he said, "I gave him the steely look I imagined Marcus would use" (Strasser, *IIGU* 26). DeShawn imagines himself to be Marcus and behaves in the manner Marcus would in a similar situation. Though Marcus was a drug dealer and had killed many people, DeShawn and many teenagers in the neighbourhood looked up to Marcus as a hero. DeShawn learnt to stare like Marcus. This was DeShawn's beginning of learning the criminal attitudes from Marcus.

According to the second principle, criminal behaviour is learned through interaction with other persons in a process of communication. DeShawn's close friend, Terrell was Marcus' cousin who admired Marcus a lot. Terrell made many comments on Marcus' lifestyle and wealth, which indirectly made DeShawn admire Marcus' wealth. Terrell wanted to join the Douglas gang because he wanted to make money. Terrell dreamt that his future would be like Marcus' and he wished, "If I grow up. I'm gonna have a ride like Marcus's ... and chain and bling like you wouldn't believe" (Strasser, *IIGU* 13). The cravings for money and materialistic things at a young age made Terrell pursue illegal methods to gain money. So he insisted on joining the gang to live a rich life like Marcus. Similarly Terrell gave many comments about Marcus which are engraved in DeShawn's heart.

The third principle of DAT states that the principal part of learning criminal behaviour occurs within intimate groups. Terrell falls under the intimate group of DeShawn. Terrell and DeShawn grew up in the Projects together. Though Terrell and DeShawn were close since childhood and attended the same school, they had different opinions on certain matters. Terrell believed that attending school was futile and spent most of his time

becoming a part of a drug dealer group. DeShawn on the other hand believed that school could make his future bright and he detested the gang activities in the Project. Later DeShawn's opinions are changed because of Terrell's influence. DeShawn also started questioning the education system and its importance for survival and concluded that, "May be he [Terrell] was right" (Strasser, *IIGU* 142). This shows that because of Terrell, DeShawn was misdirected from academics.

Marcus was also one of DeShawn's intimate groups. DeShawn admired Marcus as the hero of the Project. Once there was an incident where the Gangsta members attacked the funeral of Marcus' cousin. At that time Marcus started shooting back. DeShawn, who stood and watched what happened, described that Marcus with a gun was looking like a "...TV hero who wasn't afraid of anyone or anything" (Strasser, *IIGU* 41). DeShawn was well aware of Marcus' crimes but still idolised him and confessed: "Marcus was a gang leader and drug dealer, almost surely a murderer, and as brutal and hard as anyone I'd ever met. But he was the only hero we knew" (Strasser, *IIGU* 79). Thus as the third principle states, intimate personal peer groups and relationships have a huge impact in developing criminal behaviour.

Sutherland's fourth principle states that an individual learns the techniques and gets motives for committing the crime. Once Terrell threatened some kids who had cheated on him while gambling. He suddenly took a gun from his pocket and pointed it at the kids. DeShawn was startled by the gun and his fear knew no bounds. Terrell acted tough with the gun and even shot the foot of a boy. DeShawn was shocked by this behaviour and felt that his best friend whom he had known all his life became unpredictable when he held a gun. This incident made DeShawn question the attitude and the change in

character which he just witnessed in Terrell after joining the gang. Terrell's behavioural change was an influence of violent video games and the deleterious environment with the gang members.

DeShawn had seen Terrell and many others in the Project holding a gun before. So when he got a chance to pick up Terrell's gun which fell on the floor, he took it. He held Terrell's gun for the first time and he confessed "with the gun in my hand, I began to feel powerful in a way I'd never felt before" (Strasser, *IIGU* 114). DeShawn felt himself drawn towards the power of the gun which brings pride to its beholder. He also learnt the techniques of using a gun to threaten and his motive was to show others that he is tough. Terrell had been a close friend of DeShawn for years and his influence on him was more intense than anyone else. So this made DeShawn vulnerable to many illegal activities while growing up.

According to the fifth principle an individual's specific direction of motive is driven from being aware of whether the legal codes are favourable or unfavourable. Marcus was well aware of his illegal business and its consequences. Marcus also knew that Terrell might end up being shot dead or in jail for selling drugs. Marcus said that even Terrell was aware of the consequences of his choices. DeShawn was also quite aware of the trouble they would end up in if they were caught by the police. So DeShawn once said to Terrell that "You get with the gangbangers, and all you're gonna do is wind up in jail" (Strasser, *IIGU* 55). Terrell was also aware of it but still proceeded with a gangster's life and sold drugs because of his age. Since Terrell was below thirteen he knew he would be sent to a juvenile correction centre for a few years and would be free, in case if he got caught. He would not be punished with any serious or capital punishments. So they find

the law favourable for their illegal activities. As the fifth principle states Marcus, Terrell and DeShawn practice criminal behaviour and are well aware of the consequences and these consequences outweigh the profit made out of criminal behaviour.

In the sixth principle Sutherland points out that an individual would find it more favourable to break the law than to follow. DeShawn's geographical environment also acted as a stimulator for him to join the gang in the future. In the beginning of the novel DeShawn tells the readers about the bullet holes in his wall as, "The curtains already had two bullet holes the size of bottle caps. There were bullet holes on the walls, too" (Strasser, *IIGU* 2). It shows that the geographical area where he lived had witnessed many gun shootings and killings. There was a time when he said, "May be we were all so used to hearing gunfire that at first it didn't mean anything" (Strasser, *IIGU* 41). Gun sounds had become common phenomena in the Projects.

In the novel many white people feared to enter the Projects because they were afraid of getting attacked or shot. Police and ambulance fear to enter the Projects because of the gun fights that take place. This was one of the reasons that the gang sold drugs out in the open at the entrance of the Project building. It was an advantage to the Gangsta people because they could get away with murder if they did not get caught and it gave hope to young people that if they were smart they would not end up in jail. Such a condition was favourable for any drug dealer in the Project because no police would dare to enter the place without proper security. Thus this makes DeShawn and many drug dealers find it favourable to break the law than to follow it. The theory states that the person who was about to commit a crime would think about both the pros and cons and would make sure that the criminal activity outweighs the disadvantageous scenario such as jail sentences.

Sutherland's seventh principle states that the association with peers varies in frequency, duration, priority and intensity. DeShawn spent most of his time with Terrell that he was aware of his activities. Terrell's duty as a drug dealer was to sit on the bench outside the Project building and wait for people to approach him for drugs. Then he must collect the money and sell the drugs from the gangsters inside the Project. Terrell was DeShawn's close friend from childhood and they attended the same class and same school. Even after school hours they spent time together. DeShawn said "I hung around the bench with Terrell" (Strasser, *IIGU* 94). Terrell sat on the bench to sell drugs and DeShawn accompanied him every day after school hours. This shows the duration, frequency, priority and intensity of DeShawn and Terrell's friendship.

According to the eighth principle of DAT the process of learning criminal behaviour is done through association with criminals. Terrell was one of the criminal peers in DeShawn's life. Throughout the novel, it is observed that Terrell stole from his own mother, sold illegal CDs, quit school, played violent video games, sold drugs and committed murder. Terrell led DeShawn astray from his moral beliefs and instituted crime as DeShawn's best choice for survival. Further Terrell lured DeShawn into smoking at the age of fifteen, which was an illegal act. DeShawn expressed it as, "He took out a pinner, lit it, and offered me some...I took a hit" (Strasser, *IIGU* 142). Terrell was a drug dealer who smoked and carried a gun thus making him a criminal and he taught DeShawn to smoke at a young age.

The ninth principle in the theory states that criminal behaviour is an expression of needs. DeShawn while going to school was exposed to Terrell's day-to-day activities such as drinking, smoking, selling drugs and gambling. Many families in the Project made very

little income and this made the children in the household to quit school and to go to work at a young age. Such incidents made DeShawn question the importance of the school and education system while many people in the Project strive to survive each day. As a result DeShawn became disinterested in school. At one point because of Terrell's influences DeShawn says, "May be he [Terrell] was right... All of us were stuck here, just trying to survive" (Strasser, *IIGU* 142). Here DeShawn talked about the school's ineffectiveness to teach them anything useful for surviving in poverty. When the need for money was not met many teenagers turned to criminal activities in the Projects. DeShawn was also driven by the need to provide the basic needs for his family.

According to DAT a person learns criminal behaviour through intimate people around them. Similarly DeShawn was influenced by his close friends, Terrell and Marcus. Terrell made DeShawn prone to many illegal things while growing up. The Douglas gang leader, Marcus had also played a huge role in influencing DeShawn to learn criminal behaviour. Every day DeShawn witnessed kids selling drugs outside his apartment and teenagers carrying guns to school. These things had become a part of his routine life. Unconsciously he was influenced by these factors that he started questioning the purpose of education. His poor living condition was also an important factor which made him accept crime and learn criminal behaviour from his friend.

The fifth novel taken for the study is *Famous*. Jamie is the protagonist, who at the age of fourteen becomes popular by taking a mishap picture of an actress. After that incident she tried to take many shots of celebrity's embarrassing moments and popular shots which could spring her to the star light and fetch her more money but all her pictures did not

reach the stardom as her first picture. Jamie wanted a big break in her career as a paparazzo but it was hard for her to reach great heights in a brief time.

The first principle of Differential Association Theory states that criminal behaviour is a learning process. Avy was Jamie's close friend from a young age. They both went to the same school in New York till the age of fourteen. After a while Avy without his parent's consent moved to Los Angeles with the dream of becoming a movie star. In Los Angeles he joined a drug dealing group for money, as he thought it was the easiest way to earn more money. Avy lived in an apartment full of weed smokers, so he too started to smoke. Jamie recollects the kind of person Avy was when he was in New York and his idea of smoking which had changed since he moved to Los Angeles; she says "Back in New York, he never smoked. He said it was a gross, disgusting habit" (Strasser, *Famous* 219). But in LA she says, "Avy's a mess of jitters and tics. The fingers of his right hand are yellow with nicotine, and his fingernails have been chewed into stubs. *What's happened to him?*" (Strasser, *Famous* 220). This shows that Avy's idea of smoking was different when he was in school with a good company of friends but later when he moved to Los Angeles he was influenced by the lifestyle of the city. Jamie saw Avy in a bad condition which disturbed her in the beginning but later she came to understand that the life of Los Angeles required smoking and drinking habits. Jamie wanted to blend in with the city's culture of smoking and learned to smoke from Avy at the age of fifteen.

According to the second principle criminal behaviour is learned through interaction with other persons in a process of communication. Avy was one of the reasons Jamie tried so hard to be a paparazzo. In the novel, Jamie and Avy gossiped about celebrities and their lives. When Jamie's picture was featured in a famous magazine's front cover

Avy was excited and at the same time his true intention to reach fame was expressed when he said, "...the most famous high school student in all of New York! So now we can be famous together! You and me!" (Strasser, *Famous* 28). Avy indirectly encouraged Jamie into believing that being famous was everything. He also mentioned in many places that immense measures can be taken to attain popularity, which was a wrong motto that Jamie followed. Later this idea turned Jamie into committing an act of crime.

The third principle of DAT states that the principal part of learning criminal behaviour occurs within intimate groups. Avy was a close friend of Jamie from kindergarten and both spent most of the time together. Avy in one of his interviews said, "...all I ever wanted was to be famous" (Strasser, *Famous* 124). The unhealthy ambition for acting has led Avy in a trouble filled situation. Avy in many instances had influenced Jamie, that fame and money are the essentials for living. Fame, power and money are the driving factors among many teenagers and Avy and Jamie were no different. Jamie, while comparing other photographic careers such as wildlife, landscape or commercial, finds celebrity photography as a means to gain recognition from the public. Avy was the key reason behind this and he made her build a career as a celebrity photographer. He also influenced her into thinking that becoming popular is important. Avy took extreme measures to become famous such as getting plastic surgeries done, smoking and selling drugs. Seeing her friend who does everything to become popular, she too was inspired to follow his footsteps. Avy instilled the wrong idea in Jamie that photography was done for money and fame instead of passion. This led her to violate a person's privacy by taking pictures of them without their consent.

Sutherland's fourth principle states that an individual learns the techniques and motive for committing the crime. Jamie's motive was to attain fame and to earn money. So she went to the extent of violating a person's privacy to achieve her goal. She compromised her moral values and ran away with a pregnancy picture of a celebrity to attain popularity. The technique she carried out here was to get the confidential data of the celebrity's visit to the doctor's office. She got the information through a fifth grade student in her school. Jamie made a ten year old boy as a spy for her and gathered information. This shows her determination for getting that picture. Even though she violated the celebrity's privacy by taking her picture she also was happy to sell that picture. This was remarked as Jamie says, "we'd sold my first cover shot to People magazine. And my first year of college was probably paid for" (Strasser, *Famous* 88). Thus Jamie's motive was money and she schemed to get that private shot of the celebrity by plotting a smart plan.

According to the fifth principle an individual's specific direction of motive is driven from being aware of favourable or unfavourable legal codes. Jamie is aware that taking pictures of a person in a public place is legal. So she takes many shots of celebrities and she calls them "the money shot" because they could fetch her good money (Strasser, *Famous* 87). Many top magazines were ready to pay good money for celebrity's pictures. So she sold her picture to the highest bidder. Hence Jamie took pictures and sold them since she found them favourable by the law.

As the DAT's sixth principle states that an individual would find it more favourable to break the law than to follow it. She was ready to disturb a person's privacy to earn good money and become famous. Once when she was on a stakeout to take a celebrity's private picture she said, "For better or worse I was committed to this plan. The damage

was done. I'd left school without permission and was bound to get grief for it. All I could do is wait and hope this gamble paid off" (Strasser, *Famous* 85). Jamie bunked school without the knowledge of the authorities or her parents to take a picture of a celebrity. This incident was an example of her determination to break the law.

Sutherland's seventh principle states that the association with peers varies in frequency, duration, priority and intensity. Jamie and Avy were friends from a very young age. They were so close that they talked about celebrities all the time in school. Even Avy's mother once addressed Jamie, "You were his closest friend" (Strasser, *Famous* 14). But there were times when Jamie was influenced by Avy that she was ready to move to Los Angeles because of him and also planned to discontinue her studies.

Avy argued with his parents, "Hey, Mom, Dad, how many times have I told you I don't give a crap about college? Do you have any idea how few famous actors went to college?" (Strasser, *Famous* 103). Here Avy compared his life to the life of famous celebrities. The hope and ambition to become famous blurred his reasoning and he dwelt in the dream that one day he would also become famous. He does not have a college degree to support him. Avy had also influenced Jamie to rethink the idea of going to college. After selling a picture to a famous magazine Jamie thinks that "I was seriously wondering, why bother with college?" (Strasser, *Famous* 88), because Avy preferred not to join college after completing his school. So Jamie also thinks that it is futile to attend college while she can make money by selling pictures. They both believed that if a person becomes famous and earns good money they did not need a college education. The idea of not going to college but starting a career had been the dream of both Jamie and Avy. As sixteen year old adults, they solely bet their future on luck, speculation and chances than on education.

They both followed their dreams but did not reach great heights. Thus Avy's influence was more on Jamie because they spend most of their time together.

According to the eighth principle of DAT the process of learning criminal behaviour is done through association with criminals. Avy followed a technique to smuggle his drugs, he tied kilograms of cocaine in bundles around his waist and took a cheap train to the delivery spot so that he would not be suspected of carrying any luggage. Once he delivered the product he would receive a huge sum which he could use for his surgery and return the rest of the money to the respective people. Avy had been smuggling drugs for more than six months as "a drug smuggler's mule" (Strasser, *Famous* 57). Avy was influenced by his fellow roommate named Dan, who sold drugs for a living. Avy's passion to achieve fame drove him to commit illegal acts, thus making Avy a criminal associate of Jamie.

The ninth principle in the theory states that criminal behaviour is an expression of needs. Jamie was passionate about photography. At the age of fifteen she dreamt that she could make a career as a celebrity photographer. Jamie's true intention behind this dream was to earn money and to reach popularity. The need to be recognised was seen in Jamie when she says "To be honest, it felt fabulous. Can you imagine? People all over the city. Thousands. Maybe even millions. People I didn't even know. All of them knew who I was" (Strasser, *Famous* 29). This craving for recognition became an addiction and obsession in the later part of the novel, which in turn led to her criminal behaviour.

As DAT states, a person can have the idea, motive, values and techniques for criminal activity through one or many influences. Similarly in the novel, Avy was one of the delinquent influences in Jamie's life who gave her wrong ideas about popularity. Avy's

idea of fame as an ideal answer to riches and popularity was a narrow outlook on life. Jamie also followed his idea and learnt to smoke and violate a person's privacy to become popular. Even though Jamie learnt criminal behaviour through Avy, there are high chances that she might commit crime in the future.

The pathway to offending begins with familial adversity, an individual experience in their childhood leading to further transition period which takes place with peer influence. These influential factors are traced with the application of Differential Association Theory. As the theory implies, criminal behaviour is learnt through influences of intimate association. In recent times there were numerous developments and advancements in many sectors which could distract or influence teenagers easily. Similarly the characters in the select novels of Todd Strasser were influenced by many delinquent factors which act as a stepping stone towards criminal behaviour.

In Strasser's select novels the void left by the characters' parents are filled by peers. Many adolescents try to gain the approval of their friends through pleasing them or by accepting their wrong deeds. Thus they learn delinquent behaviour from their friends. "Young people who have friendship with criminals are more likely to engage in crime themselves", leading to many behavioural problems in the future (Walklate 8).

In the novel *Angel Dust Blues*, Alex felt alienated from his parents which made him seek friendship with a drug dealer. In *Give a Boy a Gun*, Gary's friendship with Brendan and the media's influence made him learn violent behaviour and plot to kill his bullies. The friends of Maybe in *Can't Get There from Here* were doing illegal activities to survive and this influenced her to learn certain illegal behaviours. In *If I Grow Up*

DeShawn's close company was a drug supplier who taught him to sell drugs. In the novel *Famous*, Jamie was encouraged to attain popularity by her close friend Avy and he taught her that she could take any measures to achieve her goal.

Sutherland states that his nine points can define a young adult's reasons for learning a criminal act. The characters go through an unfair situation which makes them vulnerable to any kind of influence. Their intimate companies, especially friends make an easy negative influence on their lives. Finally it leads them to become a criminal through their unlawful violent acts against the public. Sutherland further reinstates that both a criminal and a non-criminal are driven by the same need. The need to be accepted and loved has been a driving factor among these characters in Strasser's select novels.

If the peers are criminals, they become a negative influence on the protagonists' lives but when these influences are predominant they are more likely to act as criminals when they face a tough situation. The next chapter focuses on the criminal acts occurred due to situational factors, which is a result of delinquent peer influences on adolescents. Thus transition towards crime is further discussed with situational factors.