

Juvenile Blues: Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn As a Psychological Novel on the Pangs of Neglected Childhood.

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This paper is an introspective journey is the psychological landscape of a child's mind who is neglected by his own father. Mark Twain's hero Huck is a victim of severe physical and mental torture by those who are bound to protect him. This in turn makes him either a rebel or an escapist. The paper is a psycho analytical study is discuss various issues of the hero and thus genuinely highlights the problems confronted by the growing children in the contemporary society considering the parental negligence as a major reason for it.

"Family means no one gets left behind or forgotten"

.... Ogden(2017)

In this world of turmoil and uncertainty, it is more important than ever to make the family, the centre of our concern and the top of our priorities. Parents are bound to look after their children in love and righteousness.

Father, the epitome of love just after mother, is for every child a protective wing, a soothing and consoling touch and a guiding star on whose finger do we cling in the path of life. According to the Indian concept, he occupies second position in the hierarchy of worship. It calls for a special and reverential treatment of the father figure.

But when the same figure becomes a nightmare and an incarnation of cruelty and callousness, the self same image breaks and shatters before the child's eyes. The child stands dumb bound when it demolishes into a hundred thousand flinders. As the archetype of protector is scattered, some become rebellious, some others run away

when they become so much troubled by the so called father and in his search for love and kindness which is father denied him he seeks for other substitutes in the outer world.

"Viewed from a psychoanalytical point Mark Twain's great novel, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Shakespeare's masterpiece Hamlet has one thing in common, that is the protagonists's revolt against their father"....Wilfred et.al (2005). Both of them deal with the hostile treatment of the father figure. In both works the father figure is finally slain and the knowledge of this death brings a curious sense of relief and release-for the the reader. From the psychoanalytic point of view, all rebellion is in essence a rejection of parental, especially paternal authority. Sociologically speaking, Huck revolts against the unjust inhumane restrictions of a society that condones slavery, hypocrisy and cruelty. However Mark Twain showed a remarkable pre-Freudian insight when he dramatized this theme of rebellion in the portrayal of Huck's detestable father as the lowest common denominator of social authority. The main plot of the novel is launched with Huck's escape from pap Finn, a flight that coincides with Jim's escape from Miss. Watson.

In this modern world, the younger generation suffers a severe blow in their moral and psychological field. In their detached mental landscape one seldom lends a helping hand. To a great extent one can point an accusing finger at parents or guardians, the so called protectors and preservers, who do not care to understand what he feels, thinks and hides. When these guardian angels pathetically fail in their mission, many lives are made unhappy, many hearts broken and many souls lost. In 'Huckleberry Finn' pap, Widow Douglas, Miss. Watson etc. belong to such a group of saviours who miss to become the loving and guiding pole stars.

Child abandonment is a serious

problem that has left these precious human beings damaged, tortured and tainted very likely for the rest of their lives.

Whether you are a child or an adult, being abandoned can do a lot to your self-worth. You feel that there is nothing about you that is worth staying for, and that makes you think that you are alone and no one will ever find a reason to be with you. If a child experiences this, he or she will grow up having difficulty relating to other people, especially once they meet potential romantic partners.

Of the damned human race which the novelist presents, our attention immediately focus on pap Finn, the father of the boy hero.

"He was most fifty, and looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no grey; so was is long, mixed up whiskers. There wasn't no colour in his face where his face showed; it was white not like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl a tree-toad white, a fish belly white"....Twain(1961).

Pap is presented almost as a ghost. The above description of comes from his own son who is himself not very good-looking and is always in rage. It is clear that there is hardly any affection between the father and the son. Pap is a confirmed drunkard and is not seen in the village for months. Where does he disappear no one knows. But Huck feels happy when pap is away, and he is frightened when he feels that his pap is likely to come back. The reader can sense how delicate a bond is that which connects the father and the son; a bond which Huck sincerely yearns to get rid of. Here the supposedly kind and loving father figure disappears and a callous tyrant reincarnates.

In the Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Huck was a vagabond, neglected by all, and would sleep in empty barrels outside the village tavern. Uncultured, illiterate and often dirty, Huck posed a serious threat to the conservative Calvinistic community, for his habits were likely to pollute the other young boys in whose company

he always moved about.

It is when pap discovers that Huck has become rich, he 'turns up' from no where and lays claim to him. Huck had been neglected all through yet now that he has become rich, the father comes back and demands his custody. He yells at the Judge and the Widow who are responsible for the changes Huck has undergone. Pap invades the home of Huck's foster mother, the Widow Douglas, to insist that Huck has to stop going to school because,

"Your mother couldn't read, and she couldn't write, nuther, before she died. None of the family couldn't before they died. I can't; and here you're a-swelling yourself up like this."....Twain(1961).

Huck notes that he didn't want to go to before, "But I reckoned I'd go now to spite pap"....Twain(1961), even though he is "thrashed" ...Twain(1961) by pap by doing so.

It is when all his efforts fail, pap kidnaps Huck to a place across the river and imprisons him in a log cabin. There he beats Huck and abuses him, until he is compelled to enact the drama of mock self-murder and escape. The cruelty of a father towards his son can hardly be better witnessed than what we see here.

Naturally what the parents and significant adults tell or do to the children influences them deeply. Sometimes parents like pap, without feeling the impulse of the growing child, punishes him corporally and most of the time either the child turns against his father and makes himself free from his clutches as far as possible or destroys himself to spite him.

Historical facts lead us to the concentration camps where the fuming mind of a boy is left unnoticed by his father. It is none other than the arch-criminal of the world, Adolf Hitler. A glance at his earlier days will enable us to see the workings of this man's mind. Hitler's father demanded absolute obedience and beat him mercilessly with a hippopotamus whip. Once for cutting school Hitler was whipped by his father until the boy lost consciousness. There are stories that the father often beat the 'dog'(Adolf) until the dog would cringe and wet the floor.

Hitler told one of his secretaries that

as a young boy he had read in an adventure novel, it was a proof of courage to show no pain. If his father wanted him to come to him, he would whistle on two fingers as if calling a dog. His biographers note that Hitler did poorly in school adding that he did it to pay his father back, to teach daddy a lesson.

The King of Pop music, Michael Jackson was a victim of his father's illtreatment. During an interview with the US talk show queen Oprah Winfrey, Joe Jackson admitted hitting his children with a strap.

Michael Jackson's childhood was full of neglect and abuse. Instead of playing outside like other kids he was struck in the studio recording music or practicing for an upcoming show for hours. Meanwhile his father was standing no less than ten feet away from him with a belt in his hand. This was Michael Jackson's childhood. Day by day he would be abused by his father.

Before the band 'The Jackson 5' became successful they would play in small clubs and bars while the children were exposed to bar violence, nudity and alcohol. But their father didn't care. He would subject his children to anything good or bad, to achieve fame and fortune. Michael was known to throw up or faint when his father came near him. He also refused to comfort his children. They weren't allowed to hug him and they had to call him "Joseph" not dad or daddy like normal children.

Michael Jackson changed his appearance because his father called him ugly when he was a child. He hung around with kids because he never got to play with other kids when he was young. His childhood affected him so much and all he wanted to do was make up for lost time.

In Huckleberry Finn, being his father, pap lays claim to Huck. But ironically he does not have a single trait to justify the relationship except that he begot him. Various studies of parental rejection indicate clearly that the results are likely to be an aggressive, suspicious and destructive child and it is this relationship that serves as a prototype for the child's later relationships with industry, government, religion and other institutions. As far as Huck is concerned, one can draw the conclusion that it is pap who had made him "the pariah" ...Twain(1961)of the village.

Abandoned children may have issues

creating long lasting bonds with anyone they meet. They are very likely to not respond when being talked, to refuse to participate in different activities, and just appear cold, indifferent and uncaring. As a result of this, they will struggle to build relationships. They tend to do this to avoid getting hurt again if these new people leave them behind, just like what their parents did.

Huck is motherless. He is not fortunate enough to have her love and protection in his adolescent age when the world around him most perplexes him, he is left almost an orphan. Even though Huck is without his real mother, he is adopted by a surrogate mother after he becomes rich. Many families came forward to take him in. However it is the Widow Douglas who decides to adopt him and to civilize him.

Widow tries to initiate Huck into a cultured world. The Widow clothes the boy, sends him to school and starts teaching him manners. The teaching includes many dos and don'ts and the boy finds the entire atmosphere at the Widow's home choking and thinks of enjoying himself like he used to earlier.

Being abandoned will definitely create a large gaping hole in the child. He will be confused and wonder what he did wrong. As a result, he will become a person who will find it difficult to trust others. Any new individual that he meets, will be as a temporary piece in his life that will come and go. So, creating long term loving and genuine relationships will really be tough and challenging.

In Widow's house hold Huck can establish no rapport with others. He is baffled, feels sick and lonely:

"Then I set down in a chair by the window, and tried to think of something cheerful but it wasn't no use. I felt so lonesome. I most wished I was dead."Twain(1961)

The essential loneliness of the individual, a recurrent theme in Twain's work is best symbolised in the boy. Miss. Watson who is also a figure in the garb of guardian, and who has to be a spiritual light house in the turbulent sea of the life of her ward, suffers from an acute short

circuit in her purpose. The first image of God that she inculcates into the mind of the boy is that of a terrifying and all powerful one. Miss. Watson used to remind Huck of the punishments that one will receive after death for his sins.

The morals of Miss. Watson who is the temple of Christian virtues is thrown to the winds when she agrees to sell Jim, a human being for eight hundred dollars. Anyhow Huck learns nothing from his guardian's imposed teachings. He is much disillusioned by their world that he even likes to go with his cruel father merely to escape from this suffocating world of formalities and manners where there is none to understand him. Miss. Watson is the worst of feminized civilization: hypocritical, self-righteous and repressed.

The Widow Douglas, kind and motherly but ultimately ineffectual, is both the one from whom Huck runs and the one whom he consistently reverse. Huck thus finds himself torn between his desire to draw near to the Widow and his rebellion against the enforced identity she and Miss. Watson propose for him.

At the Phelps farm Huck says he feels mean and ashamed of his bad behaviour at Aunt Sally's place; but at the same time the comedy of the last chapters hinges upon her overreactions to the boy's pranks. But when she voices her plan to adopt and civilize Huck, he heads for the Territory. A final mother figure is Aunt Polly who is severe to the boys, but tender to a fault in her concern for Tom.

Widow Douglas, Miss. Watson and Aunt Sally who take Huck under the greenery of their protective abode either control him or overpower him with their smothering love. But these motherly figures fail to understand an adolescent boy's inner mind, his emotions, feelings, his wild imaginations and dreams that wished to untie itself and fly into the unknown blue.

Parents should be good role models to their children. Through pap's death Mark Twain is showing the negative impact a bad role model has on a child. Huck's narration in matter of fact and violence is common place. What pap does is evil and in addition pap threatens Huck. The telling of this story and Huck's added thoughts demonstrates Twain's disappointment of abusive parents. This

also shows how children of abusive

households can become desensitized to violence due to their parents.

When love-the creative principle of life, the breath and soul of being alive-is denied to any human being he finds it difficult to move forth; especially when he is surrounded by the clouds of suffocating experience. His heart throbs to escape from such a situation and in his yearning for love he is able to discover it even if it appears wrapped in black garments or in ugliness. This is what exactly happens in Huck's case. Huck is running away not so much from the slavish behaviourism that prevails in the Widow's household but more in order to discover love which the society and his father have conspired to deny him. Pap shows lack of culture and human feelings. Against this background Jim, Miss. Watson's negro-slave, as important a character as Huck, takes Huck under his protection and provides his father's substitute. Jim's love for Huck contrasts with pap's:

"Goodness gracious, is dat you, Huck? En you ain't dead-you ain't drowned-you's back again? Its too good for true, honey, its too good for true. Lemme look at you, chile, lemme feel o'you. No, you ain't dead, you's back again, 'live en soun', jis de same ole Huck-de same ole Huck thanks to goodness!"...Twain(1961).

Jim enrolls himself to the vacancy of Huck's father and provides him with all the kindness, love and care of a father which is unknown to Huck. The negro-slave here surpasses all the limits of caste, colour, race, because of the innate goodness in him and his sympathy and love for all living beings. It is human love which drives a man to frantic raptures as well as madness.

The most positive figure in the novel, the runaway slave Jim is a happily married man who in the end is to be reunited with his family. Jim's tenderness and care of Huck seem to be the book's most positive feminine traits, almost entirely absent from any of the other men Huck encounters. Jim makes fires, washes pots, shows hospitality to guests and generally mothers and protects Huck, whose father Jim knows to have been murdered. Through him Nancy Walker has noted, Huck begins to develop the virtues of" honesty,

compassion, a sense of duty".....Wilfred et.al 2005) which are defined in the novel as "female virtues"Wilfred et.al(2005) about which the Widow and Ms. Watson lecture Huck without much effect for in the end Huck must identify with a man instead of a woman.

Jim's emotions, desires and fellow feelings enable us to see him in a human context. The novelist carefully contrasts his protective love for the boy with pap's cruel treatment. His flight from Ms. Watson was forced by his fears that he would be separated from his wife and children. His regretfully remembering his deaf and dumb daughter who he slapped unknowingly exposes the cruelties of the white rogues who victimise the poor, innocent and orphaned daughters of late Peter Wilks. As against this, Jim on learning that Huck's father was dead, provides him a fatherly substitute, and does not reveal the truth till the end.

Psychoanalytical conditions, stages and symptoms pervade the seemingly simplistic narration of a child narrator, Huck Finn. Such Freudian psychoanalytical ideas as "Thanatos" ...Clifford(1986), "repressed desires" ...Clifford(1986) and how they seek their way back through dream work; through "parapraxis" ...Clifford(1986), can all find examples in this fiction. Besides, Lacanian concept of the unconscious as the "nucleus of our being" ...Berk(2001), as "orderly network" ...Berk(2001), as well as his famous theory the "mirror stage"...Berk(2001) can be applied to this novel as whole as well.

Lacan states that the unconscious, "the kernel of our being" ...Berk(2001), is "an orderly network", like the structure of a language; this statement can be found true in "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn". In this particular picaresque of Huck's adventures, episodes are ostensibly unrelated to each other just as most picaresque novels are. Huck Finn however in the unconscious of the text follows a family pattern in which families come eventually to destruction.

Yet one might wonder why Huck's journey unconsciously focuses on family ties. According to Lacan, "all subjectivity is based on loss, absence and failure"...Gorden(1961) To Huck, it is the lack of a family, the failure of family that construct his subjectivity. Since the

unconscious is where the selfhood lies, it is understandable that why Huck's narration, under the operation of his unconscious mind, follow a family pattern with most families headed towards disruption.

A new study from UCLA suggests that a loving parental figure may alter neural circuits in children that could influence health throughout a lifespan. On the flip side the negative impact of childhood abuse or lack of parental affection take a mental or physical toll can also last a life time. Childhood neglect increases adult risk for morbidity and mortality.

In September 2013 study, titled "Childhood Abuse, Parental Warmth and Adult Multisystem Biological Risk Development in Young Adults Study" is published online by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. In this study the researchers have examined the effects of abuse and lack of parental affection across the human body's entire regulatory system and found a strong biological link between negative early life experiences and poor health later in life.

Many previous reports on childhood abuse or neglect have found a link between a child's psychological and physical well being. For example toxic childhood stress has been linked to elevated cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome and other physical conditions posing a significant health risk. The researchers suggest that toxic childhood stress alters neural responses to stress, boosting the emotional and physical arousal to threat and making it more difficult for that reaction to be shut off.

"Home sweet home" is a myth for many children today. Family violence claims the lives of four children under the age of fourteen each day in the European Region-over 1300 every year-according to World Health Organization(WHO) data. This is only the tip of the iceberg with many thousands more enduring years of violence and abuse for every child that dies. A UNICEF youth poll in 2001 found that 60% of children in Europe and Central Asia say they face violent or aggressive behaviour at home from parents and caregivers.

The deep wide Mississippi is flowing quiet and smooth. Up there the sky is "speckled with stars" (Twain98) winking and smiling. As the fresh,

cool and sweet breeze springs up from the woods dark and thick, let the raft move along with Huck and Jim to a world where the childhood is celestial and never forsaken.

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