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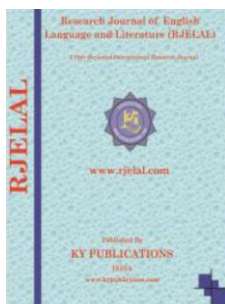
## ABSENTIA OF MOTHERLY CARE IN PAUL'S CASE: A STUDY IN TEMPERAMENT

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### ABSTRACT

Willa Cather writings have a special effect on the readers. The growth in her career is obviously shown in her writings. In her early writings Cather is more like Henry James. She is inspired by his writings and considers him as a mighty master of language. Her works always reflects the society. This short story, *Paul's Case: A Study in Temperament* reflects the psycho nature of a child in the absence of motherly care. This story may not be included in her matured writings, but it creates a new way for the readers to analyse her writings. It has a tragic end with the death of Paul. The description of his character in the opening and also after stealing the money helps us view the New York city man's life and common man's life. Sigmund Freud's theory is also used to analyse Paul's nature. This paper is an attempt to bring out the psycho problems of Paul and its effect in the life of Paul.

Key Words: Cather, absence of motherly care, psychological problems, Paul's feelings

*Paul's case: A Study in Temperament* is a short story of Paul, who has lost his parental care from his childhood. His mental design is woven by Willa Cather. Paul's Case is the story of a young man who struggled to live at home. In the opening, Willa Cather introduces Paul as a rough boy, who is not liked by his teachers. His mannerisms and his physical behaviours are complained by the teachers. Paul's personality is a composition of his childhood experience.

Several reports are discussing on childhood experience. These experiences play a vital role in shaping the nature of an individual's character. The experiences from birth to five years shape the children's long term emotional and psychological health. Willa Cather carefully blends this psychological problem of Paul in the story of *Paul's case: A Study in Temperament*. No one can explain Paul's behavior and his mannerisms. When the

teachers are gathered to come out with their difficult time, Paul sails on the barrage of criticism with his smiles. The teachers think that he is neglecting their concerns. This nature of disregard is dealt by Cather through Paul. This short story cannot be included in her usual perspectives. Its opening and the growth of this short story along with the performance of Paul is simply awesome.

Willa Cather, usually, brings out her childhood experiences in her novels. Her writings are pointed out for her concern over the environment. But this short story is completely different. Paul's feeling of depression and his repulsion by the commonness and ordinariness of his middle class neighbourhood is clearly depicted by the choice of words. Instead of working hard, Willa Cather casually operates with the character. She introduces Paul as a psychologically affected young man, astonishing all the readers.

Many readers and many critics explore that Paul suffers from mental illness. Sigmund Freud's theory of psychology is highly applicable to Paul. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory is amazing. Freud puts forth his idea as

His model divides the mind into three layers or regions:

- i) Conscious: This is where our current thoughts, feelings and focus live.
- ii) Pre Conscious: (sometimes called the Subconscious). This is the home of everything we can recall or retrieve from our memory.
- iii) Unconscious: At the deepest level resides a repository of the processes that drive our behavior, including primitive and instinctual desires.

Freud used the analogy of an iceberg to describe the three levels of the mind. On the surface is consciousness, which consists of those thoughts that are the focus of our attention now, and this is seen as the tip of the iceberg. The preconscious consists of all which can be retrieved from memory. The third and the most significant region is the unconscious. Here lie the processes that are the real cause of most behavior. Like an iceberg, the most important part of the mind is the part you cannot see.

Following the theory of Freud, Paul's mind is an iceberg. In his unconscious mind, he has a great attachment to his mother. His mother died when he was a child in Colorado. His father is not a supportive person to Paul. His lectures and his advice increase the aversion of Paul towards school life. Paul's father is strict and hardworking. But he cannot become the healer of Paul's mind.

From the beginning of this story, Paul is the reflection of his unconscious memories. The life in New York City and also the people in New York City spoil the mind of Paul. He is already a psychologically affected young man. So he cannot fit to his home and his living. To have a perfect way of living, he steals money and tries to be a richer and happier man. He loves music and art.

Basically Paul is a good young man but his unconscious mind provokes him and he begins to dream his life. To fulfill his new life, he steals money and buys an expensive wardrobe, rents a room at a Waldorf – Astoria Hotel and loiters around the city. For seven days, he lives a prosperous life, which is, his only hope and dream. It is very important to consider his early experiences. His bottled up emotions are found to be the base for the new insights of this imagination. Paul is regularly performing his jobs well. He cannot digest those people who are relaxing and enjoying. After stealing money from his job, he spends a lovely time for seven days. But after that, he realizes that his theft has been discovered and reported by the Pittsburg news papers.

Paul thinks that he cannot return back to his life. He doesn't want to face his father's anger. So he leaps in front of an upcoming train. His suicidal mind triggers many critics and many readers. Those who are reading and enjoying Willa Cather will definitely find a new track in this short story. Willa Cather writings are never serious. But Paul is always serious from the beginning. He hides his seriousness through his smiles at each and every situation.

Willa Cather's novels are filled with environmental care, usually it has great influence in her own experience, and her writings can be taken as a biographical note. When analyzing her writings deeply, this Paul is completely different from her usual protagonist. When the story moves on, one can think that Paul is facing his life boldly and energetically. But his suicidal end to his life makes us feel for his feelings. His psychological problem highly affects us.

Cather introduces Paul as a young boy. But his mannerisms do not fit along with the environment. He wants to be a rich man, and he loves to spend his time and life lavishing. While he has money, he has spent seven days in a rich hotel and he lives as he wishes. As he has tasted that joyful life, he doesn't want to come back to his real life in Pittsburg.

Willa Cather presents both the luxurious New York life and the other side of New York

people's life. Paul is a great example of poor boy who is longing for that rich life. Cather succeeds in showing the difference of life. But Paul cannot have the difference and cannot find him in the midst of the ways he actually has in his life. While describing the personality, in the website of *very well mind*, it talks about five traits of personality. They are i) Openness ii) Conscientiousness iii) Extraversion iv) agreeableness v) Neuroticism. However these traits of personality are being featured in Paul's character. Paul's personality can be categorized under Neuroticism. He is bounded with sadness, moodiness and emotional instability. His personality which has neuroticism opens up highly in the beginning of the novel. Paul's childhood experiences are the iceberg moulds which shape his personality. In the conscious level, he behaves as if he can handle everything easily. But he struggles to bounce back to the situation.

Paul steals from Denny & Carson, and he spends his life as he imagined earlier. His theft has been detected, but his father has paid off his debt. Paul has no desire to return to his street life. Cather's characters usually have the nature of surviving. In her novels, her characters, Antonia, Thea survive with all the odds. Cather's characters struggle to live and strive hard to adjust their situation. But her short story, *Paul's Case* is completely different. Paul, who is the protagonist of this story, does not want to live his life. He wants to be a rich man; he desires to live a luxurious life of New York. But he falls in front of the train and it is a tragic end of the story.

This point of character should be analyzed. This happened because of his childhood experience. As he has lost his parental care, he has no will power to stand and face his life. Paul's mind development is organized by Cather. She can understand the power of motherly care. Paul's nature is shaped from his childhood experience. Willa Cather didn't focus on his childhood experience and his childhood days. But by the attitude of Paul, one can find that he is longing for care. To hide himself from his problem, he is rude and harsh, and to live away from his loneliness, he wants to spend his life luxuriously.

From the very beginning of a child's life, its mother is the most important figure of attachment. The lack of mother figure can have major consequences. Some are:

**Negative feelings:** The child may experience feelings of loneliness or worthlessness, given that they don't receive the care and affection they need. This, in turn, can lead to anger or frustration.

**Poor Behaviour:** This includes not responding for instructions, making unreasonable demands as hurting themselves or others. In more general terms, the child may seem to be constantly in a bad mood. These are common responses to the absence or loss of a parent or similar figure. Patience and affection are vital when it comes to helping children go through this phase.

**Problems with social relationships:** Along the same lines, the child's other social relationships may also suffer. Whether due to lack of trust or because they have not learnt the necessary social skills, children with an absent mother figure tend to have trouble connecting with others. They may also develop a dependency on the people who are there for them.

**Emotional Imbalance:** This means irritability low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, lack of motivation and more.

**Health Issue:** Faced with the loss or absence of their mother some children may lose their appetite, coupled with the emotional issues described above, this can lead to problems with the child's physical health.

The above discussions are made in the website of <https://youaremom.com/children/absent-mother-affects-children/>, in this website, it is strongly discussed the feelings of a child in the absence of motherly care. And it also says how to deal and handle such child or to overcome the feelings.

Paul is an affected child, but he tries to hide it through his odd behaviours. Cather clearly depicts and she pictures the anger of Paul in the society and his feeling of abandonment. This is her great success. In this short story, one can easily fix

Sigmund Freud's theory. His theory emphasises on the hidden feelings. These burst out hidden feelings can be seen obviously by the people. Paul is also coloured and drawn by Cather by his emotional attachment. While reading the story, everyone can enjoy and feel for Paul.

When one deeply moves into the story, it can be realised that Paul is made to show how the childhood experiences affect the life of a young man. Cather succeeds in drawing his character. Early Cather is more like Henry James. She is highly influenced by his writings. Being an earlier work, *Paul's Case* is not more accountable with Cather's writing style. She is said to be as "Modern". In *Paul's Case*, Cather shows her immaturity level in her writing style.

In *Paul's Case*, readers can find Cather's relationship with the society. Its influences are well familiar with the setting of the story. She represents the busy New York City through the eyes of Paul. Paul does not fall from the quality. Paul has a strength and individuality. Though the story came to an end with the suicide of Paul, it promises to be in the heart of the readers.

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