

Family of Origin and the Significance of Self-growth in Educated: A Memoir

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Abstract

On the basis of definition and theories of family of origin, the thesis aims to analyze the author's family environment in *Educated: A Memoir* from positive and negative aspects, love and pain, and her more prominent childhood trauma can be found. The significance of education and communication as well as their roles played in Tara's story and teenagers' development are included. Meanwhile, in the stage of Tara's self-awareness, the incentives of social communication and interaction are further discussed. It makes a connection between the existing family atmosphere and guidance of education. Besides, it demonstrates the enlightenment benefits of education on detail. In last part, the analysis above is concluded and practical suggestions related to education are provided for contemporary university students.

Keywords

Family of Origin; Self-growth; Education; Communication.

1. Introduction

In previous studies relevant to family of origin in *Educated: A Memoir*, there are few dialectical and more systematic ones, lacking a thorough analysis for major principal contradiction in the author's family environment. In addition, when it comes to the inspirations for the her self-growth, most of researches only focus on "education" with less explorations in other aspects. Therefore, based on previous findings, the thesis analyzes the family of origin from perspectives of love and pain, grasping the key to the problem. It pays attention to the effect of communication besides education in arousing Tara's self-awareness, and eventually connect her family with self-development to draw a conclusion.

2. Organization of the Text

2.1. The Environment of Tara's Family of Origin

Family of origin is a sociological concept opposite to family of procreation. It refers to a family where children have not married yet and still live with their parents. In *What Life Should Mean to You*, Alfred Adler notes that "Fortunate people have their whole life protected and healed by their childhood, unfortunate people have to have their whole life protected and healing from their childhood" (2010: 102). Therefore, family background plays a considerable role in the whole life of a person.

Family is an emotional collective with different patterns, and there are differences between education and communication means that parents use to cultivate their children. For Tara Westover, the author of *Educated: A Memoir*, her emotions for her family of origin are intertwined with love and pain.

2.1.1. Pain

Ignorance, bigotry and violence accounts for most parts of Tara's growing environment and most childhood. Thus, even after many years, the influence of the native family is still rooted in

her heart. Every time her brother Shawn lashed out at her, only when she surrendered would he stop. Tara's accusation against him and their broken relationship contributed to her betrayal of almost the whole family. She states: "That night, with a heavily wrapped wrist, I scratch out a journal entry. I ask myself questions. Why didn't he stop when I begged him? It was like getting beaten by a zombie, I write. Like he couldn't hear me" (2018: 181).

Essentially, the real harm and pain is the attitude from Tara's father to the society. He is a Mormon fundamentalist, so his love for Tara is mixed with lots of paranoid cognitions. Growing up in such a native family, Tara constantly denied herself, and it is hard for her to have a correct perception for education.

2.1.2. Love

Love is the internal and existing element in family of origin. It is the essential property of family. Although there were so many wounds and irreversible mental trauma caused by families, Tara still remembers its warmth and gradually achieved self-awareness with its help.

When Tara would leave for England, her father stood at the checkpoint watching her walk away with the face of love, fear and loss. Concerning what he said, she writes: "If you're in America," he'd whispered, "we can come for you. Wherever you are. I've got a thousand gallons of fuel buried in the field. I can fetch you when The End comes, bring you home, make you safe. But if you cross the ocean..." (2018: 230).

However, in a so complicated family, when Tara pursued a new life, she still convinced herself that there was some dignity in surrendering her own perceptions of right and wrong, reality and sanity to earn the love of parents. Similarly, it can be denied that love still exists in absurdity and paranoia.

2.2. The Significance of Self-growth

For most teenagers, the far-reaching unalterable effect of original family resembles innate factors for their personal development. In this case, the endeavor of oneself weighs more. There are two impetuses of teenager's changes and growth, one is concentrated self-improvement, and the other is from opportunities and comprehension. However, their common premise is to know oneself. Only after the realization of ignorance and understanding of personal shortcomings and demands will they find the goal and direction. Tara's changed attitude to education and closer assimilation into the social groups that make her aim clear.

The key to Tara's life changes and growth lies in her cognitions to education and effortless strives. Meanwhile, during her study career, the knowledge in politics, morality, philosophy and female help her fulfill independence in personality and mind. Under such circumstances, education is still a crucial way to achieve self-awakening and growth. For 17-year-old Tara, the education on campus as well as communication and interaction with people expect her family, seem to be an opening a door to a completely new world.

2.2.1. Education

As Chinese version of the book title reads that "Flee as a Bird to Your Mountain", the inspiration from Bible contains two meanings, the first is "escape", and the second is "find new beliefs", which means the author seize her true target after continuous explorations in access to education.

More knowledge means less bigotry and various perspectives perceiving the world. In an interview of Forbes magazine, Tara said, "I would say to people: become educated but don't let your education petrify into arrogance. Education should always be an expansion of your mind, a deepening of your empathy, a broadening of your perspective. It should never harden your prejudices." No matter how educated we are, it's very tempting to think that our ideas and assertions are backed up by facts or "studies." For example, for certain conceited people lacking enough knowledge, global warm is unworthy to be anxious about, which reflects someone tend

to justify a thing depending on those exclusive cognitions without new acquirement. Moreover, for education, if it becomes something that elevates us above someone else, that's not education, but ignorance.

2.2.2. Communication

More communication means less egotism and more inclusiveness. When it comes to endless trifles in family, the suggestions from psychology will help people tackle them. First, it can be objectively analyzed that problems of both sides and figure out responsibilities. Second, they need to carry out self-reflection and empathy. Lastly, disparities and tolerance are expected to be embraced.

When we feel confused due to the complex problems and negative influence from our original family, education will enable us to get rid of the shackles and go further. Even if it is difficult to reach ideal conditions, we can at least reach a reconciliation with our parents and grow into a healthy self.

3. Literature References

3.1. Family-of-origin Influence on the Professional Self of Students

Becerra Michael Damon aimed to examine how a family of origin influenced the professional self of Colombian students pursuing a profession in family therapy. Few research studies have investigated the development of self among native Spanish speakers from Colombia. Two themes and four subthemes representing positive and negative aspects of influences of families of origin helped organize the findings. However, the analysis suffers from an overemphasis on methodological limitations. The theory is unable to make a concise and comprehensive explanation for the influence of family of origin on the students on in family therapy training.

3.2. Influence of Education and Training on Important Innovations

Tryson Yangailo attempted to include the variable of 'quality' as a contingency variable to determine if it influences this association considering that the 21st century is mainly centred on quality. The study's sample data were collected from some employees in TAZARA management and analysed using Jamovi. The results present that quality results completely mediate the association between education and training, and important innovations. The key problem with this explanation is that it is limited to the connection between education, innovation and training, covering no other aspects. And it provides no suggestion concerning it.

4. Conclusion

The environment of original family makes a decisive difference in the early growth of teenagers. Tara's childhood was constituted during the process of experiencing love and pain from her family, but the harm and shadow cannot be neglected. Such repressive and enclosed living background eventually urged her to find out the way of education. It endowed her with more complete knowledge, various perspectives and methods of viewing things, rational viewpoints of herself. More importantly, from the perspective of Freud's Personality Theory, the education helps her suppress her ego and find her true id. Hopefully, contemporary university students ought to imagine the meaning of education, cultivate independent and in-depth thinking ability to gain the comprehensive understanding of the world.

Acknowledgments

Throughout the writing of this thesis I have received a great deal of support and assistance.

I would like to thank my professor, Sainan Song, whose expertise was invaluable in formulating the research questions and methodology. Your insightful feedback pushed me to sharpen my thinking and brought my work to a higher level.

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