



Adolescent a Process of Becoming in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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As far as Adolescent Literature is concerned, as the name itself indicates, is all about Young Adult Children. The vast majority of young adult stories portray an adolescent as the protagonist rather than a child. The subject matter and story lines are typically consistent with the age and experiences of the main character. The themes in such stories often focus on the challenges of youth, so much so that the entire age category is sometimes referred to as problem novels or coming of age novels. Attitude of children is also projected very differently which is divided between goodness and badness. Sexual content as well as pessimism is also a dominant factor in adolescent literature. Such sorts of books are didactic and close to truth and promote social values of the day. Actually teenage books are anti-adult in case of parents. The protagonist of such novels wants to achieve independence.

Aristotle and Anna Freud have exhibited their notion regarding adolescent age. But Aristotle's views are very much different from that of Anna Freud. Anna talks of the intellectual maturity during adolescent age but Aristotle has different opinion. Aristotle characterizes adolescent age full of passions and advises the adolescents for self control. Adams asserts that Aristotle considers adolescents as being impulsive, moody and controlled by their passions. He stressed the need for adolescents to learn volitional self- control.

So far as adolescent psychology is concerned, Granville Stanley Hall (1844-1924) is acknowledged as father of adolescent psychology and is known for his theoretical contributions early in the twentieth century. Hall also identifies various major dimensions of adolescent development, physical and mental disease, adolescent crime and their anti-social behaviour. Lastly the major emphasis is placed on the premise that adolescence is universally an extraordinary turbulent and stressful period of life. The confusion and mental upheavals beautifully described by Sanford and Pinsky. They note in their book *Understanding Catcher in the Rye: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents* about the limbo



state of child. They described that the early marriage of children, compulsion of education and industrialization left among them a feeling of disbelief. They don't know what to do and how to do.

In the same aforementioned book, Hall asserts that humans are first born as members of the animal kingdom with selfish derives, needs and survival concerns. But during adolescence they were “reborn” as members of a civilized species concerned with social responsibility and the rights and welfare for the others. So, being altruistic and socially responsible sometime a person is required to sacrifice his/her personal wants and needs. According to Hall, this internal struggle between self-interest and social goodness results into an intensive period of storm and stress. Normal adolescence is seen to be characterized by emotional upheavals and extensive stress and turmoil. So, on account of identical views both Hall and Anna are on the same ground because both represent an adolescent in the form of a sacrificing image. They also talk about the rebirth process during adolescent which later on leads towards intellectualization according to Anna Freud.

In *Theories of Adolescence* written by Michael D. Berzonsky, there are various theories regarding adolescence that have created a major influence during that period are related to biological, cultural, psychoanalytic, psycho-social and cognitive views. In cultural theory during 1920s and 1930s a number of Anthropological studies revealed that Adolescent behaviour varied considerably from culture to culture. All Anthropologist including Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict and other find views regarding cultural relativism. Cultural relativism means the way Adolescents act and the problems they experience are related to the cultural circumstances in which they live and develop. So, there is not a single cultural theory of adolescents but there are multiple micro-theories for each culture.

Of course Psychoanalytic theory is more than an explanation of adolescent development but it is a comprehensive frame work that attempts to account for all aspects of human personality and behaviour. Classical Psychoanalytic Theory emphasize that few significant changes take place during adolescent period. Sigmund Freud's daughter Anna Freud has elaborated classical Psychoanalytic theoretical principles and has applied them on adolescents. She deliberately



applied these concepts and then observed the changes and developments that occur during Adolescence. In the same above enunciated book there is Freud's Structural Theory. According to Freud's Structural theory the mature personality is comprised of three structures- Id, Ego and Superego. And virtually all behaviour is an interactive product of three structures. Though through the concept of id, ego and superego, Freud generally speaks about everybody's mind state but the traits of id are more visible particularly in adolescent age. But Anna has subverted her own father's views. She states the fact that emotional turmoil which indicates the process of restructuring in the protagonist's character is desirable in adolescent age. This bildungroman sort of process flourishes on individual and personal level. Anna Freud puts two more prominent factors during the development of adolescent. She points out that asceticism and intellectualization are the major characteristics of adolescence. Asceticism means the restraint and self denial from unfamiliar thoughts and feelings. The second one that is intellectualization deals with some abstract philosophical thoughts and personal problems. These two virtues enable an adolescent's psychology to move towards realistic perspective and the practice of abstract thinking and hypothesis to intellectual thinking.

When we have a discussion about psychology of adolescent, theory of Erikson dominates the Adolescent genre. Erikson's Theory deals with developmental changes that occur after adolescence. Erikson calls adolescence age as establishing identity. He also has given his statement for adolescent development in the book *Children & Books* by Zena Sutherland Dianne L. Monson May Hill Arbuthnot. He is very much concerned about the identity and diffusion. Erickson considers the stage of adolescence from eleven and upwards. The focal point of Erickson's theory is search for identity. Erikson also displays the sharp contrast between cultural identity linked with the society and the individual identity which is personal. There is clash between inner and outer demands which leads to instability and diffusion. In spite of having a deep attachment with their parents, they find themselves in haphazard situation at the same time that who they are and what they shall become. But apart from close association with their parents they are also in search of some other attachments and associations for the sake of yearning their own identity. But their parents still want to control upon them and



obviously this creates a friction between the parents and adolescents. So, it becomes a role playing and experimentation. It is role playing because the parents want that their children should follow the norms of society but the children want freedom and a separate identity of their own. So, the society experiments with the attitude and behaviour of the young adults and judge their responses. And this response is often portrayed in the fiction which includes realistic views. This realistic fiction gives adolescents a chance to interact with other adolescents who are also searching for identity. Through the character portrayal of adolescent protagonist, the extreme fears and joys are depicted throughout the entire fiction for which the adolescents always crave and they attain success through various experiences. Through the aid of Erickson's psychological development, he defines the gradual maturity from emotional upheavals, identity and freedom crisis. Erickson sees maturation as a series of psychosocial conflicts, each level of conflict must be resolved before the child can move to the next level.

Strive for strong friendship and to achieve love and companionship is the major concern of adolescents according to Erickson's psychological development state. In the novel, the main protagonist is adolescent with a difference. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* the main adolescent protagonist is a lad Huck. Gradual development as well as attitude towards society is portrayed and in the end his self sacrificing image has been projected. On the onset of the novel at the initial stage Huck's reaction towards society is quite innocent and ignorant type but when he faces several incidents and accidents in his life span then maturity, asceticism and intellectualization are on peak. In Identity vs. Role confusion, child's craving whether (she or he) for social, personal and cultural identity has been displayed beautifully.

During the course of novel, in all the incidents, Huck allows his own logic to realize what is good and bad, rather than blindly following his elders' teachings. At the beginning of the novel, Huck shows his skepticism of the values that society imposes when Widow Douglas attempts to civilize him. Huck describes his life while living with Widow Douglas as regular and decent. She dresses him in starchy clothes while sending him to school to learn maths and literature. But after some time when Huck does not like to be civilize anymore, he again returns to his old ways of living. When Huck is unable to take the restriction of life anymore, he simply releases himself and goes back to what he feels is right and what makes him happy.



Huck distrusts the morals and precepts of the society that labels him an outcast because he thinks that the morality of this society is nothing but all absurdity. As a young adult he is in his revolution age and do not ready to follow the rules and conventions of society. At this stage we can say that Huck is still in raw stage of maturity. He is not able to understand the things in deeper level. He simply takes action when he does not like anything. But with the course of time and incidents, Huck understands the nature of the things and society's strata. By staging his own murder, Huck kills himself to society's influences and enables his own uninhibited personal growth.

Free of society' rules and standards, Huck is fortunate enough to have a friend like Jim for companionship. Jim erases the loneliness that has been prevented by society in his early life. Their friendship at the initial level is corrupted by the influence of society on Huck. Fortunately, free of society's rules and standards, Huck begins to undo his misperceptions of slaves, and begins to realize that Jim is a human being like he is. Huck realizes that Jim has feeling and is not a piece of property. Jim becomes a surrogate father, as well as a friend, to Huck. Jim is the only real adult in the novel and the only one who provides a positive, respectable example for Huck to follow.

With the sale of Jim, Huck is left to himself; to come to terms with his own values, as opposed to the values of society in which he finds himself. When he goes deeper in to himself, he realizes the real worth of Jim. When Huck says that he is prepared to go to hell, it means that he can go to the extreme limits to set Jim free. At this juncture we can say that Huck finally sacrificed all his assets for the sake of Jim and in true sense fits himself in accordance with Anna's statement.



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