

**A Reflection Of Nuclear Family Dejection From Incompatibility To
Bowen's Compatibility A Genogram Analysis In The Novel *The Songs Of
The Humpback Whale***

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Abstract:

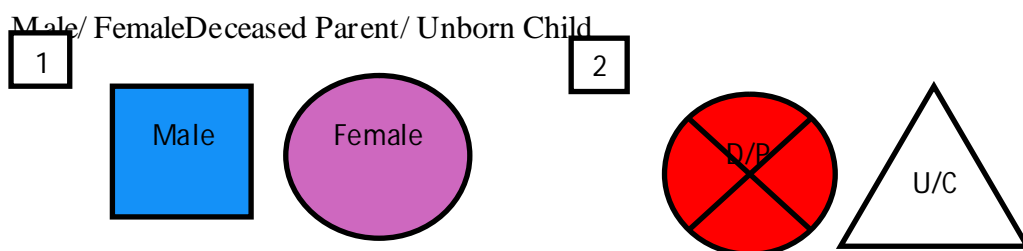
The Family or Bowen System theory is a genogram analysis that is evolved to be the best solution that can be practiced physically through consciousness and studied theoretically through application in resolving family relationship problems. In a realistic sense, Bowen's Genogram is more of a therapy, theory and solution established to study the nuances breakages a family experience through its existence be it between relationships, individual self's, society and environment. The real significance of Genogram ignites the researching of recorded family history and the ancestors' relation with the extended family. The Genogram

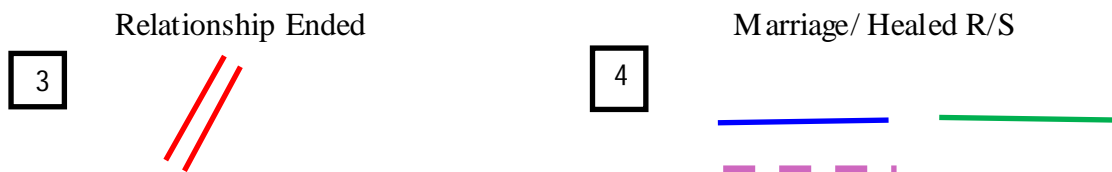
in specific is a methodology to identify and know what relationships were lived within a family and solve severe problems in discovering the emotional patterns evolved for years in every connection. A genogram “is a useful tool in exploring a family system and identifying patterned ways of relating to each member through a diagram of the family tree” (Genogram -Family Tree Tip Sheet.doc).

Keywords : Genogram, Consciousness, Individual Self, Society

The genogram analysis forms to be a manual systematic assessment focused mainly on Nuclear Families, and the disparity evolved within. One such nuclear family exposed under research foreshadows how a family from incompatible grounds destroys the very progeny of relationships. The genogram application varies from different symbols and relations to study the operating system from the past to the present life. Every geno understands the family only through its symbolized relationships, and it is here Murray Bowen, an American Psychiatrist, utilized genograms to know why the families of the world separate and end up with a loss of self psychologically, and loss of life physically. The presence of genograms spaces itself with significance only when represented through a family tree and a genial record of relationships. Listed below are the various genograms explained through Bowen's theory solving complex systems of the novel chosen for research in specific.

A Representation of Bowenian Genogram and its Interconnections with Families





The above representation indicates genogram signs and symbols to understand the functioning of a family during its stress and fusion found in different genres. One such kind is literature which reflects the day to day life and livelihood of families through the presence of family.

The *Song of the Humpback Whale*, published in 1992 by Jodi Picoult, is a novel that highlight's the story of a family that is an indirect concept of Bowen's Nuclear family Process and Family Projection System. The author narrates the story through the traits of projection and nuclear relationships experienced in families for real. The question here is, what is Marriage, and how far marital conflicts can be solved through the Bowen Theory and in what channel. Is it only emotions that destroy a relationship, or even the individual member stands responsible to embrace anxiety and over-dependence when it comes to spouses in marriages, and to be parents in the future? As read and critically watched, many literature texts have also depicted the significance of families in emotional moods and anxiety marriages that either break an individual self in a family or constructs the whole family with specific balanced forces. One such literature text is the novel by Jodi Picoult

The story herein exhibits a genogram reflection of Bowen's theory through exposing a nuclear family and its projection process from one family member to another. The author, Jodi, has explained the relations of the family through an indirect mode of breakage and problems of real-life family drooping. The entire novel discloses how family dynamics are shattered without constant compatibility and balanced relationships. The tone of the story proposes the imbalance knots each member bares with another through an imbalance of low

emotional selves. The novel highlights the pathetic dyad of how the very meaning of family is shattered after marriage and parenthood. The essence of family is lived through the characters especially Oliver, Janes and Rebecca who are connected by fate as a couple, parent and child. The very title of the novel, *The Songs of the Humpback Whale*, reveals the relationship of replacement that Oliver Jones an oceanographer at the Ocean of San Diego, has on the blue whales and their differentiated talents of singing songs. As a husband and father, his only focus stands firm on his research of which whales sing and don't. His role as a family husband and father weakens paying more attention to his profession as Jane says,

It has always been Oliver's career's first. He moved us to California to take a job with San Diego for Coastal Studies, only to find out East Coast humpbacks were his true passion. The minute I got to San Diego, I wanted to leave, but I didn't tell Oliver that. I'm not taking his phone call. I'm not taking this again, period. (Picoult 8)

The above quote explains the real condition of a couple after marriage vows who replace their self's either in work or in other commitments of life. The same is observed in the novel, where the character wife Jane confesses her dejected expectation from her husband Oliver. From marriage, they switch themselves to another step of distortion called parenthood that brings their daughter Rebecca to life. The author showcases how an imbalanced marital connection leads to parenthood without a proper solution and understanding of couples with emotions, anxieties, stress, and disorder. The relationship between Oliver and Jane fade away, turning their relationship with incompatibility and anxieties stress. This is an inevitable fact which every couple in the world faces and reasons out to drift into many second relationships of replacements. As observed in the novel, Oliver and Jane fail to live up their self's to balanced marital cords but unconsciously grow the same anxiety to becoming

parents. The author depicts how a loosely attached couple try solving their past dejections through a step of parenthood.

The step of parenting focuses on the transmission of a couple to a nuclear family status where, Oliver, Jane and Rebecca fall in unconsciously as life has in save for them. The time flashes up, projecting the same stress that Oliver and Jane lived as a couple in the past to an added incompatibility in the present. It is here Jane decides a fatal move to leave Oliver forever with the torture of being receptive and secretive of sharing her feelings with Oliver. She passes by a day of disgust, replacing the very definition of marriage to parenthood. Wife to a mother on her mind, heart and existence. This nuclear family projection reflected in the novel needles Jane and Oliver very sarcastically saying,

This is your daughter. Even if we have grown so far apart that we don't recognize each other when we pass, we have this life, this block of time, and what do you think about that? One reason I keep my mouth shut is Rebecca's accident. It was the result of a fight with Oliver, and I 've been doing my best to keep something like that from happening again. (Picoult 8-9)

The relation of a nuclear family deems in the tension that is aptly observed through the novel and it also perceives the future problems the Jones family faces with their egoistic bonds. This nuclear fusion and projection are pictured from reality and captured virtually thatshakesthe very logos of family circled at nuclear mode.Nuclear families and their emotions are caught on screen and found as a replica of real life. Such movies that hold exact significance to Triangle of Anxiety and Relationships are, *Coyote Ugly*, *Honey I shrunk the kids*, *The Parent Trap*, *Treasure Island*, *The Answer*, *Helicopter Eela*, *Father of the Bride*, and *Almost Christmas*(m.timesofindia.com).The best movie that matches Songs of the

Humpback Whale is the movie *Every Emotion Costs* that explicates anxiety relationships of reservedness, society and death of relationship selves in company of returning home for the doubted family that still existed without any mother in life.

A similar interpretation is given by the author in the novel, who feeds breath to her characters by stating, “Sometimes finding your voice is a matter of listening to the heart...” (goodreads.com). The above quote exemplifies the emotional strings every marriage weave in between couples and knots them to understand why this weaving is necessary for life. Such knitting and stitching are carried out with three main characters, namely, Jane Jones, Mother, and Wife of Rebecca and Oliver Jones. To add on, their clothed designation is an unsatisfied wife, a low differentiated escapist mother followed by Oliver an efficient oceanographer of San Diego who flags himself as a controlling husband in the sea of the Jones family.

The novel opens with a description of being colonized by Oliver as a wife bringing the ignorant quality of the past life, which Jane swallowed with abandonment of her mother and physical abuse by her father. The relation of the past holds the genial tree of chronic anxiety lived and still carried over innocently to the present state of Janes unconsciously with her daughter Rebecca as she escorts because of marital fusions and lack of compatibility with her husband, Oliver Jones. This pattern, through the impression of Bowen Theory’s Individuality and Togetherness, discover Low differentiation, Reciprocal Functioning, and Symbiotic Confusions in marital attachments that lead to impartiality in the basin of life.

The novel *The Songs of the Humpback Whale* is a story woven from a child named Janes Jones, who has a genial record tree of misery and abusive childhood. This amiable record takes its hood from her dysfunctional and emotionally harmful parents who were blamed for Jane's lost self in the family. It is more of a Nuclear Process that is being carried over from generations to the next generation ignorantly and innocently within the mind and

heart. To observe keenly, every family undergoes specific patterns that may be passively emotional, destroying the family bonds, while the other actively creating new relationships that stick on the grounds of Compassion, Trust, and Forgiveness.

Under critical analysis and from the point of studying a relationship, one should understand a relationship that springs up from three minds, Rational, Wise, and Emotional mind. The rational mind ignores emotions and makes decisions based on logic and facts which we call a practical mind in general, but in Bowen's term it is the concept of Self-Differentiation or Highly balanced self-Following the greatest notch, the novel swings back to the main center of the Jones family, 'Rebecca' who at a young age experiences and lives her mother's life as her reflection. To Rebecca, the whole family was just a painting of emotional designs that lasted until the paint was fresh (the triangle of Oliver, Jane and herself before fifteen years) but faded once it dried (After fifteen years). Rebecca as an individual realized the want of family when she was battling with pneumonia and could not wait to grab hold of her parents based on confession as she says,

I did not know where my parents were, and all I wanted was to see them. It took a while, but they came. They came in together, I remember. They were holding each other's hands, and that made me so happy. But it was what had to be done. It brought my parents together again. (45)

The above analysis bridges through the lens of Bowen's theory crafting the science of family relationships by bringing together the unlikely, complex attractions and interactions hidden behind the individuals in a family. The author, Jodi Picoult, has unconsciously knitted *The Songs of the Humpback Whale* as a novel of Emotional Reactivity and Family Realization with family patterns that assemble how Jones's family transforms from

Incompatibility to compatibility through the genogram analysis and application. According to Kerr and Bowen in his book, *Family Evaluation An Approach Based on Bowen Theory* states,

Patterns of emotional functioning in a nuclear family are a product of the undifferentiation between family members. Each pattern is intensified by anxiety and, at a sufficient level of intensity, the nuclear family transforms to dysfunctions. Three categories of dysfunctional stress occur in nuclear families: illnesses spouse, marital conflict, impairment of one or more children. (163)

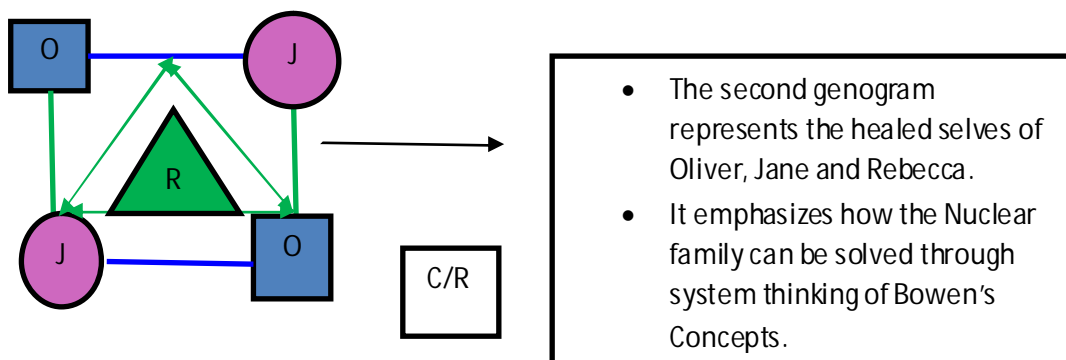
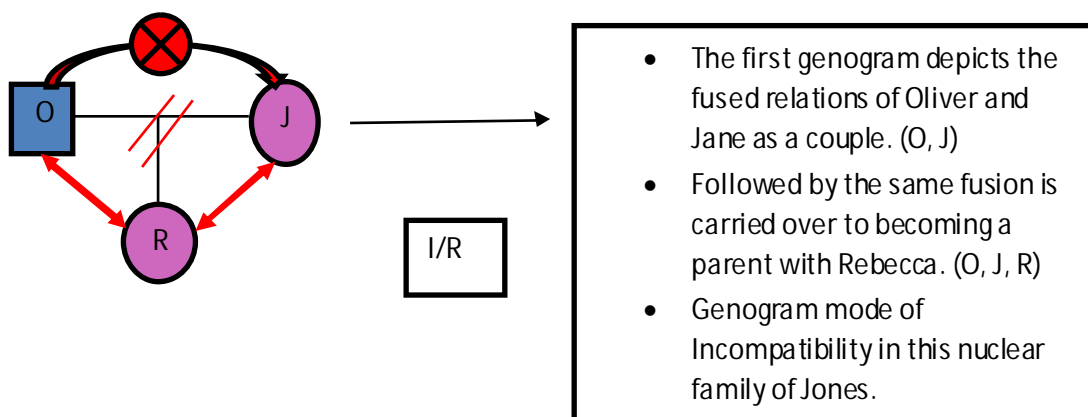
The application of Bowen's Theory on the novel of Jodi Picoult had explained how a nuclear family of Jane and Oliver has been projected in chaos before the application and understood the distortion faced by them due to over anxiety and low self-esteem. One example from the parent-child relationship is between Jane and Rebecca, who began with deep anxiety of fear and attached herself to Rebecca. As Michael Kerr in his book, *One Family's Story – A Primer on Bowen Theory* a family theorist analysis,

Children inherit many types of problems through their parents, but the problems they inherit the most affect their lives are relationship sensitivities such as heightened needs for attention and approval, difficulty dealing with expectations, the tendency to blame oneself or others, feeling responsible for the happiness of others or others responsible for one's own happiness, and acting impulsively to relieve the anxiety of the moment rather than tolerating anxiety and acting thoughtfully. If the projection process is fair, the child develops stronger relationship than the parents.(90)

The whole novel studied from Bowen’s Nuclear, and Family Projection has identified the problems and low differentiated relations Oliver, Jane, Rebecca share in specific. Every situation analyzed through Genogram has clearly defined how fused relationships with the triangle tree of Jones family has consciously leveled the incompatible ego mass to compatible moods. It is a treatment of emotional selves being healed from all the projections of nuclear family stress through Bowen’s Genogram Analysis.

A Genogram Study of the Jones Family from Incompatibility to Compatibility:

A Bowenian Application



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