

Transmittance of Alienation and Blissfulness in Childhood to Adulthood: A Study in the Light of Joyce Cary's Selected Novels

Nabil Awadh Yahya Farae



Joyce Cary 1888-1957

Abstract

Joyce Cary, the post-war British novelist who wrote many famous novels such as *Charley is my Darling*, *The Horse's Mouth*, and *To be a Pilgrim* envisaged that a happy childhood is a hallmark for a happy and successful adult. There is an undercurrent of psychological answer to the problems of adulthood which he unravels through Carl Jung, Freud, James Joyce, etc.

The study provides a solution using the works of Joyce Cary to the problems faced by the young men across the world.

Keywords: Adulthood, Alienation, Metamorphosis, Childhood

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Joyce Cary

Joyce Cary was born in Ireland in 1888, moved to England and settled in Oxford. He joined the war service and fought the Nigerian Regiment during world war II and was wounded and died in 1957. He was a prolific writer and wrote 17 novels in two trilogies. The most famous are *Herself surprised*, *To be a Pilgrim*, *The Horse's Mouth*, *Charley is My Darling*, *Not Honours More*, etc. His novel *A House of Children* won for him The James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1971 posthumously.

The other noted novelist James Joyce and Joyce Cary were the descendants of Thomas Joyce who was the founder of the Joyce Family in Ireland.

Joyce Cary was influenced by writers like Tolstoy, Sigmund Freud, C. G. Jung, D. H. Lawrence, Dostoevsky, etc. His novels are a glorification of childhood themes and in particular *A House of Children*, *Charley is My Darling* and *Mr. Johnson* remain a children's monument.

Joyce Cary states, "the child is a born creator. The actions of children are really experiment to learn." It is quite obvious that the personality of an adult can easily be fixed by the traces of his / her childhood.

Early Life

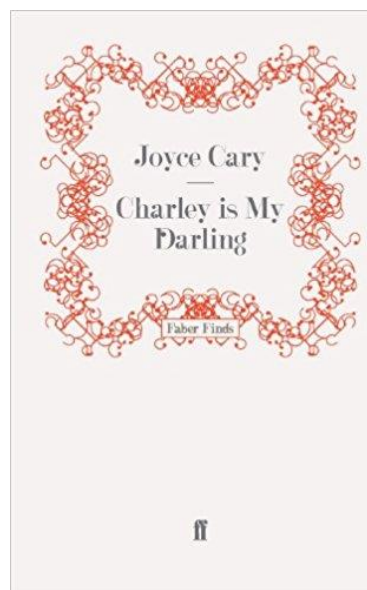
Cary, almost orphaned by the sudden death of his mother at his young age, traces, the factors and circumstances that molded him to the level of a writer. He explains by his own example that "the child learns anything so quickly that the adult metamorphosis is quite spontaneous". Cary was influenced by the noted psychologist, Carl Jung of what he said in 'Psychological' Reflections'. Jung says, "the little world of childhood with its familiar surroundings is a model of the greater world. The more intensively the family has shaped its characters earlier upon the child, the more it will tend to feel and its miniature world again in the bigger world of adult life"² As John Milton says, the childhood shows the man as the morning shows the day.

To Cary, "mother was the source of all hopes and strength and derived sustenance and rejuvenation just by clasping about her knees along with skirt which always remains to him a fortress".³ Cary ascribes his mental strength to his mother's religious outlook. He points out that it was his religious sense that made him look up to the life with an ease. He says that it is the prayer that makes him altruistic and he recalls that he always sought blessings for all.

It is testifying that children detest being cheated and have potential to interrogate the good and evil. Fantasy dominates the working of the mind of the children extensively.

"We were all constructing a private and ideal world for ourselves, out of such material . . . we had seen or heard (AHC , p.55) The fact that children suffer a lot from loneliness is brought out in the character of Cathy in 'The House of Children'. Cathy lost her father at an early age and her mother married another man and had children. This made Cathy to alienate herself from others. Cary adds, "Small children are thought happy, but for most of the time they do not even live consciously, they exist , they drift through sensations as a pantomime fair passes through coloured veils and changing lights".⁴

Charley is My Darling



Charley, a small boy in *Charley is My Darling* is a prototype of any child who with an outrageous denial of self- esteem cares much for the dignity of his

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existence. His head is shaven for some reason. But he views it primitive and barbarous. The shaving of Charley's lousy head can almost be seen to have the impression of a symbolic deprivation of power. Charley puts on his hat "Hastily, with a guilty and nervous, gesture (C.D. P.35)

A House of Children

Cary exemplifies the evocation of mood. "the mood of childhood," as Enid Starkie called it,⁵ or "the sudden sense of glory which, however intermittently, illuminates every childhood at some time",⁶ to quote Walter Allen. This is very much manifest in *A House of Children*, where life defies 'any intellectual' meaning but evokes its full impact. Cary adds, "in our own tribe, among its ideas, its love and wars, and the tribes of other children", (AHC p5).

It is palpable that "Children enjoy the present which seldom happens to adults." "For children, life seems endless, and they don't know that a grief has no cure" (AHC, p 58) "Children love beauty but do not notice it" (AHC, P.188).

It is pertinent to encompass that both the novels of the same genre, 'A House of children' and 'Charley is My Darling' can be compared and contrasted with the note of tenderness of observation and a synthesis can be created to draw the dawn of moral consciousness in childhood.

Similarly in 'Mr. Johnson,' the adolescent boy Johnson proclaims for the welfare of women in general. As a boy, he pleads people to refrain from wife beating. He wants to keep his wife in good humour. He indulges in fantasy. As adult, he assures his wife, "You think I'm broken. You think that now I'm not a government clerk anymore and I can't give you good things. But now I'm going to be a trader, the richest in Fada. You shall have clothes like the queen of England (M.J, p.123)

Horse's Mouth

Cary has used Sigmund Freud's theory of Oedipus Complex in his novel *Horse's Mouth* which signifies the son's excessive love for mother and the jealousy of father. The central ideal being inferiority complex on the part of the young

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boy in his familial position against his father. 'Horses' Mouth' eulogizes mother child relationship in which the child's natural love for its mother is destroyed by his jealousy towards his father and the child's consequent fear and rivalry symbolized in little Johnson. He develops a repulsive image of horse's mouth whenever he looks up at his father's face.

In *Power in Man*, Cary declares, "The weakest child has power and will. Its acts are its own. ... It is an independent source of energy which grows with its life and ends only with death"¹⁷ In *Art and Reality*, Cary makes the child to prototype the adult man. "Initiations tend to be evanescent in adult life".⁸

Uneducated Man

The child in Cary's fiction stands for uneducated man, that is, man before he has acquired the codes of conduct and the models of thought which are parts of the established or traditional order of society. There is a persistent view of childhood in Cary's fiction which is related to his interest in the 'natural innocence' and the natural destructiveness of man.

Religious Upbringing of Children

Cary believed that the fundamental innocence of the child's will make it subsume the child's capacity for evil. From the novels of Joyce Cary, one can gauge that religious upbringing of children is one of the main Cary's viewpoints. He follows John Milton very sincerely and exhorts us to remain faithful to God forever. His view, 'Life is a Gift' is attributed to God's benevolent act.

"I look upon life as a gift from God. I did nothing to earn it. Now the time is coming to give it back. I have no right to complain"¹⁰ Cary spoke these words in Aug 1956, and they were quoted in his obituary notices around the world, seven months later.

Cary always maintains that 'we were lucky to be born, should be glad to have lived, and have no reason to expect rewards, punishments, or an extension of life, hereafter. But according to him, the completion and meaning of life depend on the "type of childhood each man passes' through. As George Eliot says, "In the man

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whose childhood has known caresses and kindness, there is always a fibre of memory that can be touched to gentle issued'

To Conclude

One can conclude that Joyce Cary returns to childhood not as an escape from the world of adulthood, but in recognition of the constancy of the prime element in the creative man.

Short Forms used for Novels

1. AHC - A House of Children
2. CD - Charley is My Darling
3. HM - Horse's Mouth

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