

PRESENCE OF OPERANT CONDITIONING AND SOCIAL INHIBITION IN JANE HARRISON'S *STOLEN*

Shelonitta.P

Punjab Association Anna Adarsh
College for Women University of
Madras ,Tamilnadu,India

Abstract:

The research paper titled, *Presence of Operant Conditioning and Social Inhibition in Jane Harrison's Stolen* brings the mental picture of the stolen generation kids. Kids are said to be afflicted by mental traumas on a higher note than adults. Childhood traumas are the bigfoot talk in several tables for discussions and in the improvement of child welfare. In Harrison's *Stolen* five children from different backdrop are made to face the psychological stress by the societal setup. Operant Conditioning is a learning concept which believes in positive or negative reinforcement by means of reward system. Social Inhibition is the act of withdrawal from the societal pressures. This research tries to work on Operant Conditioning and Social Inhibition.

Keywords: Operant Conditioning, Social Inhibition, Kids, Trauma, Psychology.

The world of a child functions around the words used by the adults. Autosuggestions, frequently used words, repetitive verbs, cycle of adjectives are enough to create a child's reality. *Stolen* is a play by Australian playwright Jane Harrison. It is based upon the lives of five indigenous people who dealt with the issues of forceful removal by the Australian government. According to a research about the impact of meditation on kids, the subconscious wiring takes place between seven to ten. It is advised for parents to instill small practices that can create a successful lifestyle.

Operative Conditioning is a method which revolves around the concept of rewards and punishment for behavior. This can be seen as a socially constructed module to manifest a sense of fear and obedience in kids. It is clearly visible in the character of Anne, who is addressed as the chosen one in the aboriginal generation. Anne accepts that she was conditioned by her parents. They made her believe that she is the chosen one as they chose her. They installed the concept around her mind that she has received a privileged lifestyle

due to their choice, a sense of we chose you so you are special. This gets imprinted in her thought process, from the commencement to the curtailing section one could check in.

Father: We didn't have you ,Princess, we chose you. Do you think we made a good choice?

Mother: Oh yes, she was by far the best (7).

They made sure she was aware of the faces who took care of her. They started to familiarize her by the usage of the toys she had. They gave her a doll with white hair. In the upbringing one can spot the British tradition being forced in an Australian kid in normalcy. Parents of Anne do their promises in bringing in a better world for the child. They assure that they will provide her a better education, a sense of security and a good bringing. Even they address her as a 'princess', a British tongue and culture is seen.

After revealing her aboriginal identity, she is blamed for behaving on a rugged manner to her foster mother. This is a key concept of Operational Conditioning which is to blame the victim and make them feel the guilt. Anne is confused by the sudden shift presented by her foster parents. They bring the best of privileges she has received from them to feel the guilt on a strong base. Even when she is prepped to meet her mother, her foster parents reassure that she is one among them. They bring in their focus on her sense of belonging as a British and not as the one with any other racial identity. And the black voices try to emphasize that she is their kid, and she does belong to the black community.

Anne questions the audience, she questions the black community and the white community. She asks whether the white family want her to be with them by reconciliation. She asks whether the blacks feel the same? But she does feel confused about her stance, where she stood? But at the end she comes to a decision that she loves them both equally.

Anne is shown to be the girl who has faced Operant Conditioning on a wide base. It is visible both her white parents and her black parents expect her to reciprocate the amount of love she is anticipated to give them. They force her, try to sprout guilt in her, emotional manipulation is carried further.

Social inhibition is a conscious or subconscious act of avoiding a situation or running away from it. With the higher level of social inhibition, situations are avoided because of the possibility of others disapproving of their expressions or feelings. Sandy is showcased as a person who faces the lack of belonging in the societal setup. He is always on the run. He is shown as a person who is in search of something , finally gets in the idea that the person is searching for a home. When the story commences we can find Sandy to be the only kid who carries a suitcase with him. Suitcase can be taken as a sense of rush ,

to be hidden, or someone in a hurry, or something which is seen as a taboo probably.

In Shikha Kaul's *Hidden Husband*, Suitcase did the prominent role of changing the entire storyline. Sandy admits that he is a person who carries home with him. One of the exclusive chapters which is written for Sandy is titled as 'Hiding Sandy'.

The adjective which comes before Sandy is 'Hiding' in the chapter 'Hiding Sandy' this shows the level of depth in the character of Sandy. When he enquires his mother about his fish, one of his belongings he is made to believe that nothing does belong to him. His mother says that if he demands something he is a bad boy. His mother makes him run away from the scenario. This creates a loaded amount of panic in the child.

In the Aunt's narration it is keenly noted that the boy was always kept in the hiding from the welfare associates and the associations. He is first shown to be hiding in Jake's Kennel.

Sandy: Always on the run. But I don't want to go. Can't I stay here? I haven't done nothing wrong. I wanna stay. I don't wanna go.

Chorus: Run Sandy!

He runs around the room as if pursued until he collapses panting on his bed (4). Sandy is not aware of the simple concept of a home. This can be spotted in the conversation he takes place with the other kids. He asks whether one can be made to stay in a home forever? He questions whether one will be given good food over the rotten foods in home. In the act titled 'Sandy's life on the Road' one gets to know that he has not spent two Christmas on a row in a particular town. Homecoming is such an integral part of the western tradition. Thus it shows the amount of social restraint the boy faces. He later explains the welfare homes for children and his journey in the places. He addresses the home with numbers than names making the lady feel sorry. She leaves a twenty dollar note for the boy which makes him amusing.

When the act moves towards the end, he finds his roots. His red deserts, he feels it's calling him his home. The sense of uprooted temperament leaves him and he does feel a sense of harmony which he shares with Jimmy.

Shirley was taken as a child and grows up to see her own children taken from her, personifying the cycle of stolen generation. Shirley is shown as an excited grandmother. She does feel it is her responsibility to showcase her boulder of love, care and support to her grandchild. She acknowledges that her unfortunate circumstances. Her regret to have not raised her kids Kate and Lionel is addressed. But this does not cease her from anticipating a better future for her 'self'. She is the only person who gives hope and plants the seed of expectation among the lot of stolen generation.

Shirley recalls the memory of knitting wool sweaters for her grandchildren and kids. She hopefully believes her kids are alive and they do carry their offspring. As a sign of hope, she knits sweaters made of wool. Her hope brings her a powerful win. She is determined to find her children. She does make frequent calls in the process of her enquiry sessions. When the voice says let us put you on hold, she laughs and says you've put us on hold for twenty-seven years.

Ruby is abused and beaten as a young girl, before being trained as a domestic and eventually suffers from mental sickness. When Ruby is introduced by her episode, she says she does want a home of her own. This is due to the reason that she is already running with so many responsibilities in running a home, doing chores and running behind a hectic lifestyle. She is portrayed to be a character who desires for the warmth of her mother. And about her unspoken abuse, she is afraid to share it to the world.

When the Kids enquire where she went, she reverts by saying to the park. She says she had chips and fish. When they ask what did he provide you? She says a 'doll'. What else did he do, here she says it is a secret she cannot share. Here we can sort out the concept of Operant Conditioning being performed by the abuser. Later on she brings in the trauma created by the abuser by the portrayal of emotions over the doll.

Even domestic work does affect her childhood. She is picked as a maid. She is provided with a mop and a bucket to do the chores or menial jobs. After her sister comes to pick her up from the camp she is reluctant. Her dad Len and her sister Joanie were not able to provide the amount of warmth she got in her mother. The anxiety of domestic work is reflected by Ruby. She says she has got so many things to do so she will not be able to come with them.

Jimmy is a vibrant boy who rebels against the system, is beaten and takes his own life in jail. He is introduced as a boy who is excited to meet his mother. Jimmy is the one who is shown as an observer and an instant doer. His episode with the rooster and Ruby's secret which her felt unsure were the known examples. Though he is shown to be a physically masculine person, he does not shy to show his emotions. He does show his need to go home. He does express his emotions by means of tears. His sense of observation and analytics is presumably on a peak. He rechecks with Ruby about her secret, even he does not believe on the death of his mother Nancy Wajjuri.

Jimmy's thinking was shown to right. His mother does explain Jimmy's fathers' financial discipline. And his work under Mr. Jacob but the welfare camp did not do justice for Jimmy. After realizing even his own name was not his identity and the anxiety of abandonment he feels pangs of pain.

Dear Mum, forgive me. I have sinned. I've been a thug and a thief- but I've never stolen anyone's soul....Oh , Mum, why couldn't you have lived a bit longer just so I could have met you? (34).

Jimmy's end is pathetic yet strong showcases the spirit of the stolen generation kids. The term "Stolen Generations" is employed for Aboriginal people forcefully removed (stolen) from their families between the 1890s and 1970s, many to never to ascertain their parents, siblings or relatives again. Because the amount covers many decades we speak of "generations" (plural) instead of "generation". Aboriginal children who were removed also fed the insatiable demand for station workers and domestic servants. Without these cheap, and sometimes unpaid, labourers white Australians wouldn't are ready to build the wealth and infrastructure that helped them prosper. this is often where the Stolen Generations and therefore the stolen wages become one story. Often babies were stolen at birth, and their mother given no chance of seeing them for the primary time. They were called 'Blanket Babies' because nurses covered them with a blanket to cover them from their mothers. The stolen children were raised on missions or by foster parents, totally stop from their Aboriginality. Many were stripped of their names and called by variety. They were severely punished when caught talking their Aboriginal language. Some children never learned anything traditional and received little or no education. Instead the women were trained to be domestic servants, the boys to be stockmen. Many of the stolen girls and boys were physically, emotionally and sexually abused.

Many babies born to girls raped by white men were also taken away from them, sometimes as soon as they were born.

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