

# THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF INCOMPLETE FAMILY IN JOHN IRVING'S "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP"

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper deals with the positive and negative impacts of Incomplete Family in American writer John Irving's novel "The World According to Garp". The characters in his novels often grow up without either one or both the parents and they are facing certain impacts because of that. In "The World According to Garp", the hero is raised without his father and is struggling a lot in his life. In the changing culture of America, Single Parent Family has become a common thing. There arises a major behavioral difference between children from Nuclear family to children from Single parent family. Irving dealt with such social issues and has given a lot of works in this theme. This paper entirely focuses on the effects of Garp, being raised by his single mother in "The World According to Garp".

**KEYWORDS:** Impacts, Nuclear family, Single parent family, Behavioral changes, Social issues

## I. INTRODUCTION

American culture is one of the most varied cultures in the world. From food, religion and language to how one behaves, it is entirely different from other cultures. Most of the populations in United States are immigrants from different countries. There is always a new immigrant in the country. So, American culture is considered to be a mix of American, European and Asian cultures. Yet, American culture is considered as the most prevailing cultures in the world. It is high time most of the writers have started to write about the issues of common men as their main theme. Among them is the talented writer named John Irving who is known for his writings on ordinary families. His works being read everywhere around the world, many of his works are considered as classics of the American literature. He is not only a great novelist but also a wonderful Short Story writer, an essayist and an excellent screenwriter. A Complete family is a family set up consisting of both the parents and their children (one or more). It is the most primary social unit of the world. Nuclear family or complete family usually focuses on a married duo. The family can have any number of kids. There are differences in opinion among people that some say only birth children that are full siblings, but others accept step-parents and any mix of children who are dependant including step-children and adopted children. John Irving has been publishing his works in the period in which the structure, values and functions of a family is undergoing several important changes mainly because of massive social changes. The family setting has been totally changed as there were an enormous amount of divorce rates which leads to the increase in single parent households and some other substitute forms of family like remarried parents, adoptive parents, step parents and step siblings. And, the current study focuses on the consequences of single parent family in John Irving's The World According to Garp.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Irving on his another work "The Hotel New Hampshire" talks about the absurdity of scare tactics in the line: "A group of New York divorcees has successfully evoked the fear of victimization among the people of New Hampshire" (342). Umberto Eco talks about the authors who renounce psychology because they want their characters to the level of a purposeful structural scheme. Eco sees many of these types of writers in

contemporary period where the writer shifts from psychological method to formalistic ones. As Robert Scholes predicted, Eco also feels that the main objective of this new form of fiction will hit in different aspect. He compares *The World According to Garp* and Robert Coover's *The Universal Baseball Association*, as both provides no character point of reference. Both of these works are connected neither by its plot nor by its deliberate disclosure of flat characters but by its structural association of game and formal procedure and eventual makeover of one character into another.(Eco) *The Positive and Negative impacts of Incomplete Family: The fourth novel of John Irving, The World According to Garp*, has its hero named Garp who was born to a women's activist chief Jenny Fields, who then later grows up to be an author. The novel was published in 1978 and it had been the smash hit for countless years. Steve Tesich wrote the screenplay for the movie version of the novel which was released in 1982 starred Robin Williams. *The Word According to Garp* analyzes a wide scope of issues, including family dealings, sexual orientation jobs, women's liberation, and demise while concentrating specifically on the connection among sex and brutality just as fiction and reality. The novel was a finalist for the National Book Award for Fiction in 1979, and its initial soft cover version won the Award the next year. The novel is for the most part viewed as a family adventure because of its impressive length, dealing of three ages inside a solitary family, and accentuation on family and conjugal connections. A conventional family arrangement without a father may not be considered as an essential loss compared to an absent mother, even though it has many consequences. The reason behind this may be because the mother spends most of her time with the children giving them emotional security. The father gives safe and sound relationship to the children which make them free from over reliance on the mother. The connection between the child and the mother may misshape without a father especially when they are boys. The hero of the novel Garp grows up without the father and he has to face several problematic situations because of that even though he doesn't think that as a difficulty. In this novel, the family is incomplete without a father and is considered as a single parent family because it is being run with only mother. According to M. J. Campion, mothers like Jennie Fields raise the child totally different from other families that have single mothers. "These types of single mothers, because of their loneliness, never accept the man who gave birth to their child as a partner" (Sobotkova 171). The novel doesn't have the regular family circumstances and it resembles the strange setting of John Irving which is seen in the novel when Garp's mother decided to have him for a man in emergency clinic who previously lost his life. She did so because she wanted Garp to be raised without a man. Jenny Fields never attempted to give Garp, a father. A child being raised without the father gets direct influence over the human behavior and personality development in childhood and adolescence. It was because of the lack of care from a father; Garp was being looked as a weird kid and was grown up to be an odd youngster. He was more like his mother, quiet and consistent, who never attempted to know anything about his father. J. M. Campion on dealing with family circumstances in Psychological literature cases that such parents make another method of parenthood, which delivers an increasingly transparent family. A mother, who is really concerned about her children, will always take care of them and is very supportive in all aspects of life including organizing a good set of connections of people for them. They will always help and support them in everything. Some other arguments tends to support this kind of motherhood as the children don't have to experience any shocks like the divorce of their parents, sudden widowhood or lose of a parent. Therefore, it won't be in a deprived situation for the children. Jenny Fields is impeccably ready to furnish her youngster with a domain like this. Concerning the models of a gentleman conduct, when there isn't the form of the dad present, there are a lot of them: Garp and his mom live in a school, with male instructors and male employees around, a professional decision Jenny has formerly made for the most part hence, when she interfered with all contacts with her family and in this manner precluded Garp the chance from securing contact with his granddad. Garp is affected generally by ladies all through his life and two men, one of them is educator Tinch, his abstract mentor, the other one is his wrestling trainer Ernie Holm, who is his father in law in future, an individual who takes after the most part of a dad, in spite of the fact that it isn't actually explicated in the narrative. When Ernie Holm kicks the bucket, Garp assumes control over his activity and keeps on working with grapplers, which is a conventional activity for a child after his dad's demise: to proceed with his effort and to go by on what he has been instructed. Notwithstanding the customary and typically legitimate presuppositions, the absent dad doesn't need to fundamentally imply any impediment: it is just one blow in human life, the one that can hypothesize about, what the individual's life would look like if the individual had a dad. If one attempts to think Garp with a father, the significance of a family life would have directly influenced his adulthood, his way of thinking, his behavior and personality and the way he handles the life. Garp is an individual without any issues in human correspondence or communal associations. He goes to class; he is in touch with different understudies and furthermore with Helen and Cushie Percy, the young lady with whom Garp encounters his first sexual experiences. Unlike the sons of single mothers, Garp was never dependant on his mother. He grows up with no friends and he led a solitary life like his mother. Soon after in his adult life, he befriends Roberta Muldoon and also liked to meet Helen's friends, the Fletchers. But, he never had many friends in his life. He enjoyed being in home just with his family. Both Jenny and Garp led independent lives. Garp grows up to be a sensitive, cold and unfriendly person. But, one cannot say that it was because of his father's absence. His mom, Jenny obviously tried to give him enough love as it is considered as the basic

quality of a mother. After his marriage with Helen, he cherished the people around him especially his kids. It was Garp who persuaded Helen to have kids at that age by promising that he will take care of them. The non existence of a father in Garp's life hasn't affected him in a negative way only. In words according to the proponent of attachment theory, "The initial relationships created by children with their caregivers will have a remarkable change that will continue all over their life. When a child is closely attached to its mother, the survival ratio of the child drastically increases. These types of mothers provide a sense of security by always being available for their children. The child then establishes a secured feeling with their mother and thinks that they are dependable and that helps them explore the world" (Van Wagner). Garp got this sense of security from his mother which helped him establish his future connections with the world and that he learned to live a happy and satisfying life.

### III. CONCLUSION

The repeated absence of nuclear family in John Irving's novel has resulted in both positive and negative aspects. Family being the main part of a human's life helps in the development of character and personality of an individual. A person's identity is most likely decided by their family members. Families teach the children how to behave in a society, how to lead a social life and how to interact with others. Families give emotional, financial and informational security to the children. The family atmosphere gives everyone harmonious relations and a sense of security. Socialization being the main influence in human environment, the womb-to-tomb method of social life affects the temperament and the skill to live happily in a society. This type of influences that comes directly from the family deeply affects the person's behaviour, personality, attitude, morals and values when there is an absence of a family member. The children learn everything from their parents through imitating and observing what they do. Therefore, when a parent is being missing in a family, they have to learn everything from someone who is not their family and there arises a huge gap for the children to fulfil their potential needs. Being raised with elders, the children will get enough sense of security and confidence to face the world. But, when there is an absence of a family member, it directly affects the way the child behaves with others and affects their overall depiction on themselves. The children at that age couldn't even realize why such things happened and they blame themselves for whatever happened. They have to lead their life with deep confusion. Moreover, when a parent moves out of the family, there occurs the absence of important male or female roles in their life. When the child misses their parent of same sex, they will never get to know how to behave with the people in their adult age. In case the child is missing opposite sex parent, they will be unaware of how to approach people of opposite sex. These kinds of situations will lead to create certain problems in their future relationships. The continuous absence of family members in John Irving's works has confronted several results. He uniquely created every character, away from reiteration. The only similar attribute that his characters got is the absence of one or both the parents. Garp is also one such character who was brought up without his father. Because Garp knows that his father is dead and because of his mother Jenny's solid character, he led a life that hasn't impacted much of this father's absence.

### IV. REFERENCES

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