

A child called it book review examples

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



\n[toc title="Table of Contents"]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Summary](#) \n \t
3. [Critical Assessment](#) \n \t
4. [Conclusion](#) \n \t
5. [Works Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

“ A Child called It: One Child's Courage to Survive” is first amongst the series of autobiographical writings by American author, humanitarian activist and entrepreneur David (Dave) Pelzer. Dave was born in 1960 in the Pelzer family, acquiring the place of third out of a total of five boys. His father Stephen Joseph Pelzer was a fireman at San Francisco, California. “ A Child called It” was published in the year 1995, when Dave was as young as 33. The book describes the horrible times of his childhood age from 4-12 with his emotionally unstable, alcoholic mother Catherine Pelzer, and tells about Dave’s courage and spirit to survive from her brutal treatment in any case. He ultimately succeeded in his attempts to survive through severe instances of starvation and games made by his mother that include severe physical torture. A mother who is considered to be the most loving one amongst family members was the sole and only demon character in Dave’s life. Dave describe in detail, his feelings, fears, cravings for food and the spirit to remain alive in these horrible circumstances, from which he was ultimately

rescued by some of his kind teachers in 1973 when Dave was almost 13 and then admitted into foster care, from where he eventually joined air force in 1979.

As a humanitarian worker against child abuse, Dave has been highly acclaimed all over US, as “ A Child called It” had been a number one New York Times Bestseller for more than six years and a number one International Best Seller. He has also been awarded as “ one of the Ten Outstanding Young Americans” in 1993 and “ the Outstanding Young Persons of the World” in 1994” which he does not share with any other American. However, critiques argue that he has exaggerated his childhood memories so as to recognize himself as a Child Abuse Activist, and has promoted his book in several of his lectures and seminars about Child Abuse. For this purpose, millions of the copies get sold instantly as the books arrive in market, and people who do not even take interest in reading books purchase a copy of Dave’s book. Also, the writing style is blamed for depicting severe torturous moments of starvation and physical abuse, which immediately get the attention of the reader and the sympathies too. For this reason, the author sometimes looks biased and one-sided in describing his mother’s attitude towards him while he was keep trying to make her happy and for the sake of food which she will give her in reward. Sometimes, it becomes difficult to imagine how a mother can keep such brutal attitude towards her own son. On the whole, the book is full of emotions and courage from the author himself to survive and live out of that abused life, and it shows a lightened path to every such victim as well as keeps the issuse of child abuse alive and burning. I will discuss the summary of the book in the next

section, followed by critical assessment and personal reviews about the book.

Summary

The book is composed of a total of seven chapters, an epilogue and an afterword. The entire book, except chapter two “ Good Times”, accounts on all the terrible memories and experiences Dave bore during 1965-1973. Even the first chapter starts with the brutal image of his mother stabbing and smashing his face for not doing the work as she wanted. As the chapter names “ The Rescue”, it describes that a school nurse who has known to Dave for some years called some social activists to rescue him from abuse that he faces at home, and in this way he was rescued and was sent to Foster homes. Dave recalls first the good times when his mother was kind, loving and caring for her children. But with the passage of time, Dave became the unwanted child for some unknown reason, and his mother’s attitude changed towards him only. Her style of giving punishments for Dave’s bad behavior changed from verbal to severe physical abuses. He was forced to live in the basement of the house, forced to work day and night with no or very less to eat; sometimes from the left over of his siblings and sometimes even his own vomit and his siblings shit. Not even this, sometimes when he tries to find food from trash his mother socked it with ammonia. She did not recognize him as her child; rather she used to call him as “ The Boy” and “ It”. As much as she became mentally sick, her torture on Dave exalted. She used to play psychological games with him such as forcing him to take ice-cold baths and by locking him in the bathroom with a bucket of ammonia. She used to beat him brutally, in his chest or on his face, not

even caring of his wounds and bleeding. Most of the times his father was not at home due to his travelling for the job requirements, but even when he was at home, he was used to saw all that quietly without saying a single word to his wife. Dave's condition at his school was not good at all; he was unsocial and isolated and students used to mock him. Some of the teachers and the school nurse were kind to him anyway. Dave finally came to realize that there is no God for him, and he is destined to this abused life. He made himself like a robot with no emotions and pride while receiving stabs from his mother. Then on May 5, 1973, he was eventually rescued by social workers and this was the end of one terrible era of his life. According to Dave, the only loving relationship he has in life is with his son and his pride at being a father.

Critical Assessment

There are many things to be admired for Dave Pelzer and his first ever book "A child called It". First of all, the book describes the emotions and sentiments of a child in the same way as a child of that particular age-group could feel, think and understand. This is made real by Pelzer as it is his own story, so it was not difficult for him to recall the huge lot of memories and to pile them in the shape of a book, however, it was certainly difficult for him to dwell each and every memory of that time, that was bad enough and aching as when it was fresh. For a child who had been continuously spoiled and abused for eight years; it is unimaginable to survive with a personality and self respect that enabled him to become what he is today; a successful entrepreneur and a hard working humanitarian activist, who has served his country and his people in the hour of need. A child who grew with psychotic

and alcoholic parents, with such a disastrous home environment; it is only a matter of human struggle and survival which led him to grab several awards and a huge set of accomplishments. Pelzer must be admired and saluted on this great struggle of him, to survive from almost the end, which was brought to him by none other than his own mother. The story is painful to read, of course not as much as it was painful to experience, but at least Pelzer has succeeded in what he wanted to portray and thus achieving best-seller for his first book and its sequels.

The thing I like most about this book is that it highlighted the issue of child abuse from a different perspective. Usually we counter the issue with cases that involve child abuse by any employer, some uncle or aunt or even by elder siblings. But the case is entirely different for Pelzer, since his own mother was brutal with him. She punished him with such an extreme that children and parents of today cannot even think of that. There have been regulations against child abuse, and even parents are restricted to punish their children brutally. While in the case of Pelzer, his mother escaped from any kind of legal activity since at that time there was no such rule against child abuse. Back in 1970s, the story is not only about human endurance, courage and the wish to survive; it is actually about fighting with emotions which were bubbling against Pelzer's own mother. The sentences in the book depict that state of mind of the author. " Ha! You didn't kill me this time, bitch, and you aren't going to kill me next time either!", such sentences usually occur to him when his mother eventually walked away from him, after having a session of cruelty and physical abuse. These sentences depict the motivation of a child who was not even in his teens, but understands well

the psychology of his problematic mother. Moreover, the book makes us realize that we are blessed of having those parents who love and care for us. Home is the safest place for everyone, and if home turns into hell, there are no other options left, particularly for a boy of 1970s who can do nothing except to bear all that for eight years.

Conclusion

The book “ A Child Called It” presents that face of child abuse that has rarely occur in our society, but there must be relative legislations so that no one could even think of doing such bad to his/her own children. The book is a good piece of literature as it presents human emotions and struggle with the eye of a boy who was the author himself. Although the book does not imply necessary literary tools, it is good for the readers who take interest in human psychology and behavior. Moreover, since it is based on a burning social issue, the students of social work can also take full benefit of it. The narrating style is simply descriptive that extract memories from the past in a series which the eventual end of author’s suffering and beginning of a new life, with so many of these accomplishments that one could not even think Pelzer as an abused personality for a period of eight years. Both the book and the author are admirable and splendid.

Works Cited

Pelzer, David J. A Child Called " it": One Child's Courage to Survive. Deerfield Beach, Fla: Health Communications, 1995. Internet resource.