

Poverty and child abandonment

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Child abandonment is the process of surrendering interests and claims over one's child(ren) with the goal of never another time resuming or reasserting it. There are a lot of causes to child abandonment and they may include social and cultural factors. Poverty has been mentioned time and again as the root cause of child abandonment. People living in cultures with poor social welfare systems and are financially incapable of taking care of their child(ren) are more likely than not to abandon (Bourdieu, 5).

The socio-economic factors and relationships also contribute to the abandoning of children. Other factors that in one way or another contribute to this misfortune include political conditions, such as complicated adoption proceedings, the lack of organizations such as orphanages, to take in children have been abandoned. Social groups with strong structures and liberal laws on adoption are likely to have lower rates of child abandonment. Poverty is described as the lack of basic human needs, these include but not limited to clean water, food, medical care, clothing, shelter and education. This is mainly caused by the inability to afford them because of meager financial resources or their unavailability." *Aguantando*" is a Spanish word that denotes holding on.

It can be loosely translated to "barely surviving" depicting a life full of misery. The story is set in the Dominican Republic and we can easily tell that the conditions the family lives in are that of absolute poverty. This is due to the fact that the only person monetarily upholding the family is the mother and who is unable to provide for the family. The small boy, Yunior, throughout the whole story bemoans how poor they were "We didn't eat rocks but we didn't eat meat or beans either. Almost everything on our

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plates was boiled: boiled yuca, boiled platano, maybe with a piece of cheese or a shred of bacalao.” (Diaz 70).

For a long time now, the Dominican Republic has been recognized as a major producer of yucca and banana [platano] the world over. It is very cheap to get it from the local market but due to the conditions of its handling, they become unsafe as well unhygienic with the consequences being the “ annual case of worms” (Diaz 71). The story plays out in a sequence of happenings that come to be associated around the central issue of the missing father. The speaker notes at the commencement that he hasn’t had a father for many years, yet the idea of the father clearly affects him greatly. Many fathers have abandoned their families and children, when the responsibilities of life and parenting become too much for them. Reasons for abandonment include: their own abandonment issues from childhood, problems with the children’s mothers that is their wives, addictions, among many other issues. (Lamb, 19). This always leaves the families worse off than when they were there and hence brings a lot of suffering especially to their children who in most instances do not understand why their beloved fathers could abandon them. In the story, the narrator explains how he has lived without a father for the first nine years of his early life. Most of this story is told from a child’s point of view and not that of an adolescent like in the former stories. It is stipulated that the boy does not really know his father but generally from the faded sepia pictures which has scalloped edges.

It is an evident fact that the boy does not have any memories of his own dad. They remain dry in a home with a leaky roof, where everything else is wet,

only because they are encased in a plastic bag. The father left when the child was four, but since the boy cannot remember the father at all, he feels he grew up without a father. Effects of abandonment to children Some children may over-identify with the absent parent and develop a set of fantasies about him or her which although may provide temporary comfort are in essence not based on reality. In the story, Yuniors longs for the day his father will return hoping that his return will herald good economic times and in effect end their suffering.

This in most instances is not true. Children with experiences of being abandoned by their parents may be likely to develop poor self-esteem and a sense of embarrassment encircling the parent's absence. They may even wonder whether they could have been the contributors to the dearth, whether they in some way are worthy to be abandoned, or whether the missing parent believes he is content without the yoke of a child. (Wolfe, 23). This in essence leads to the stagnation of the child.

In the story, Yuniors wants so badly, to know what letter was delivered and what was in the letter, he seems to suspect even before he is told that the letter comes from his father. The family appears to be stagnant in time to a certain level, waiting for the return of the father. They are unable to move any step forward until he hopefully does. Helping the Child Deal with Abandonment When a parent absconds, care should be started so as to help the cope with the loss much better. The earlier this remedying starts the better for the child's growth.

Children need to understand that parents are human. And that the decision to abandon the family was not caused by them (children). Pain should not be instilled on them especially by reminding them how good life was before the father left. Instead, they should be encouraged to carry on with life and make it better. Professional counsel if needed should be sought. However, this could be impractical in circumstances of poverty and thus the need to maintain open communications with your child(ren).

(Park, 34). Participation in Social activities could also be of great help, this has along way impact on the upbringing of the children and ensuring they are part and parcel of te society. The installation of the moral code of conduct also governs the relationship that exists. Father Child relations are important especially in molding children into social beings. Their absence especially when the child knows that the parent abandoned them leaves a him/her with a lot of questions and developmental problems.

Parents ought to be there for their children even if not physically (Furstenberg, 29). Despite the fact that poverty is the root cause of child abandonment, it has been noted in developing economies that more and more children are being brought up by single parents due to separation and divorce. Therefore, as much as social systems should ensure provision of basic needs to its members, much effort should be put in education and the importance of both parents in the upbringing of their children.