

**A Bowen's Influence of Family Talks in Literature an Interface in the life of Jodi Picoult
and her Novel *The Perfect Match***

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Abstract:

The Influence and Interface play a significant role in the journey and genre of literary works and writers. Every writer and their work does get influenced by something simple, weird, remarkable, and even the unknown factors existing or have been living for years. An influencing process is a happening event that occurs every minute in the life of a literary person. The influencing art takes its name as Bowen's Family System Theory which forms an interface of literature in the presence of Jodi Picoult as a daughter, wife, mother and author. The dominant influence emphasizes Bowen Family Theory that has been the talk of Jodi as an author unconsciously picked from her own life and visibly observed as an interface in her novels. The author Jodi has been driven as a family persona since her past days and has undoubtedly interpreted the interplay of family life, its action and reaction through contemporary literature

and contexts. The very problem or hypothetical factor found in this research is, why and how literary authors like Jodi Picoult has been influenced by family talks, or what is the interface found in her novels even in the modern era.

Keywords: Interface, Unconsciously, Interplay, Family Life

To begin with, Bowen or family system theory is one of the most effective strategies that has been evolved to redefine the very life of an individual or society through its actual roleplay. It can also be found in literature and many other genres enacting itself through narrations, dialogues, characters, situations, relational connections, and framed behaviors. It carries within multiple meanings including the most significant skill of authoring and reading as one family. The influencing factor in the literature that connects an author to a reader, novel to the character, and story to the context is recreating family in a universal circle of literariness. These factors influence each other that form the artifact or very skill of an individual as an author or a layperson. In accordance, it interconnects the art of relationships that every person has experienced, lived or read since history-defining families within a family. This history of influences has captured the minds and hearts of many authors, and one in number chosen for research is an American author Jodi Picoult who is an inspiration to the contemporary folks through her very interface of family talks in most of her novels.

The identity of Jodi remade herself through the beginning point of family, and the value she gives to it is seen in the scripts of her novels. This analysis is being done by Bowen's Theory that has made known the unknown significance of family ties embedded unconsciously by Jodi in her select novels. On record and reading, the author has indirectly depicted the Art of Families and their moods through her writings and sketching of character role-play, that suit the survival

of a family in reality. One such vivid example of family influence in literature by an author is Leo Tolstoy who explains the evolution of an individual in a circle called family and its relationship with its members in society,

As, thanks to man's capacity to express thoughts by words, every man may know all that has been done for him in the realms of thought by all humanity before his day, and can in the present, thanks to this capacity to understand the thoughts of others, become a sharer in their activity and can himself hand on to his contemporaries and descendants the thoughts he has assimilated from others, as well as those which have arisen within himself; so, thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of family an art, all that is being lived through by his contemporaries is accessible to him, as well as the feelings experienced by people thousands of years ago, and he has also the possibility of transmitting his own feelings to others. (www.quora.com)

The analysis of the research focuses on family importance made available and broader through literary texts. Few literary texts that have spoken on families and illustrated realistic doings of family and its functions are classified in different genres such as poems, novels and plays where few examples of family inclusions are poems of Anne Bradstreet, *Upon My Daughter Hannah Wiggin Her Recovery From A Dangerous Fever*, William Wordsworth, *To My Sister*, Thomas Moore, *All in a Family Way*, and Maya Angelou's *Human Family*. An analysis of novels, family, is a unified entity, and nothing can arrive at meaning without its company. Few famous novels that have hiked in the spirit of family discipline and doctrines are Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*, Michelle Moran's *Rebel Queen* and the current 21st-century novels of Jodi Picoult, *The Perfect Match* and *My Sisters Keeper*. Under the critical study, two novels by Jodi

Picoult hold the simple attributes of a family and it resembles the relation with family theory. The influence of Bowen Theory in the author's life is evident with an interview with Joanna Moorhead *My Family Values* as she says,

I had a ridiculously happy childhood with my parents and little brother on Long Island. Gatherings have always been so important to us. We'd have Thanksgiving and Hanukah, and if someone couldn't make it then rather than go ahead without them, we'd simply move the feast so everyone could be there. I grew up knowing that the celebration times in life were meant to be with your family, and I've always held with that. My grandmother taught me how much you can fit into a life, and my mother taught me what you can achieve if you're organized.

(www.theguardian.com)

The phase of Bowen Theory has been a theory which is history repeating itself from its development and cause to free the problems and sufferings of the families during World War II. It was present in the realm of human hearts but was made an initiative through subtle writings of family narratives, themes, and stories that are now called the Family System Theory which details eight concepts that can study and identify emotional problems in a family and its symptoms in life. In concern to symptoms, similar family drawbacks are figured in the novels of Jodi Picoult and the first novel under research that highlights family dynamics is *Perfect Match* (2002) which illustrates the family persona of 'motherhood' through the character and mother Nina that represents Jodi's personality aptly placed within. This very character Nina is the author's counterpart that has helped her penning it from her three children, Kyle, Samantha and Jake Van Leer as she says,

I know how lucky we are and I think the reason I write about the dark stuff in family life is partly because I have this belief where I think: if I've written about it, it's not going to happen to us. We talk about anything and everything in our family, often linked to what I'm writing about. When my daughter was eight, we were discussing date rape around the kitchen table. The important thing is for your kids to know they can discuss anything. (www.jodipicoult.com)

The similar idea of Motherhood is portrayed in character Nina who as a mother, tries to put her child to priority at first even before her profession of a District Attorney. The novel *Perfect Match* is an unconscious reflection of explaining how a family can function with balanced emotions in any relationship we live in life. The relationship observed at a peak is motherhood where the author narrates Nina's motherhood to hers while saying, "As a mother of a child, putting your child's wellbeing before your own is the first sign of living a mother and the last possible thing a mother can do before dying" (www.thenewdaily.com.au). Jodi in Nina has represented the seed of family nurturing when she in the name of love does all the right things for all the wrong reasons only for her child Nathaniel who has been sexually assaulted and raped at the age of five, and who by fate is mentally affected with dumbness and null hearing. Nina's role as a mother stems up to its highest line, where she thinks of nothing, except her son Nathaniel and begins to seek justice for his despair. The evident dullness of a family written by Jodi through Bowen Theory explaining how a family reaches its gloom if not balanced is revealed through Nina and Nathaniel in the novel as,

Pinching together his thumb and his forefinger, Nathaniel drags them across his neck, as if he is cutting his own throat. He wants to kill himself. No Nathaniel, I say, shaking my head. No, baby, no. Tears are running down his cheeks, and he

holds fast to my shirt. I take my son's shaking hands, and I kiss the fingertips.

Now, I have all the time in the world, Nathaniel, I say, I'm listening. (Picoult 95)

The above symptom of family talks is revealed through the author Jodi, raveled and transmitted to her character Nina that has set the tone of motherhood very vigorously. Every instance and situation in the novel certainly assembles the opinion and perspectives of Bowen family theory that the author unconsciously knitted through Nina who chooses Motherhood than her self. Nina as a mother, carries within all the concepts of Bowen theory starting from Triangulation between her husband Caleb and son Nathaniel fighting to save the family peace. The concepts of Nuclear and Family Projection surrounds the very plot and setting of the novel, where the author has narrated the whole novel based on family living and the regulations each member faces within relationships. The family of Nina undergoes family stress and pressure that the author captures through the incident where Nina finally takes revenge on the rapist who is a priest Father Szyszynski and murders him with the satisfaction that she has fought for her child and freed her family emotional anxiety through the concept of Self-Differentiation by being different from the rest at home and all the mothers in the novel. Followed by Nina gets emotionally cut-off and commits a mistake of killing the wrong person as she says,

Oh, my God, I have killed a man. I did it for all the right reasons; I did it for Nathaniel; but I did it. My body starts shaking uncontrollably, and this time, it is no act. It is one thing to seem insane for the sake of the witness that will be called to testify against me; it is another thing entirely to sift through my own mind and realize what I have been capable of all along. (153)

The whole novel narrates how a family can create a differentiated self or destroy a balanced self if, emotional anxiety is not managed at every action and reaction in a relationship.

The author Jodi, throws glimpse on each character from Nina to Nathaniel and the extended society who accompanies her to save her identity and her family from getting fused. It is here, Bowen Theory comes within the life of Nina where, the author Jodi has lived through as she states, “When I started thinking like a mom, I became too sympathetic to Nina. When I stopped thinking like a mom, I wanted to lock her up for life” (398).

The novel *Perfect Match* stands a living example of family literariness where the Influence of Bowen Theory has been rightly discussed, and family communication has formed the Interface connecting family studies to literature, history creating history within the family of writing. The whole research clearly advances to be a real Influence of Family system or Bowen theory’s communication made consciously rare through the author Jodi Picoult bridging family dynamics to be a part of her life and now a part of literature to the world of families globally. Through this research, Family Talks or family system has indeed brought out the very logos of why and how family theories silently module every person in any stream of life. It is a regressive process that takes place through unsettled emotions and stress, but through this research it is very much prudent that Bowenian Families is definitely an occurring Interface and an Influence to the future families of the genres of the world. It is a rapid process to develop and change distorted literary families to system understanding and attain even relational goals that can produce sound knowledge of hidden meanings behind literary devices, and works. Every work produced in literature forms a story of family, and Jodi Picoult has succinctly described the definition of family forming the match of perfection in two factors, ‘Influence and Interface’ which through this analysis is the real perfect match of the novel *Perfect Match*.

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