

# The Impact of Unheroic Father Archetype on His Child in Robertson Davies' *The Manticore*

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## ABSTRACT

*Father is a hero archetype to every child. Not conforming to one's own archetype brings fatal consequence not only to himself as well as to the children. When the father does not meet up with his hero archetype, the child is disappointed towards its father that fetches the child an unfulfilled life. Boy Staunton, father of David in Robertson Davies' *Manticore*, though looks heroic at his social stand, miserably fails to set moral values for himself and for his children that makes him commit suicide and leaves his children depressed throughout their life being unable to accept the unheroic father. This article presents Boy Staunton as an unheroic father which brings David his depressed son to Zurich to meet with psychiatrist in order see some remedy for his discontent soul.*

**Keywords:** Jung's Analytical Psychology, Father Archetype and Individuation.

Every father is a first hero to his child. Every child looks at his father as an ideal man to be imbibed in all the ways possible throughout his/her life. The role of a father archetype is not only to protect his children, but also give him values to live in. Jung, the Swiss Psychiatrist, believed that archetypes were ideal forms of people, behaviours or personalities. The father archetype protects, directs, disciplines and gives conditional love to his children. He is impersonal and always acts in consort with Loving Mother's unconditional love. The father is the giver of life. The child seeks to understand from his father how things work. The child wants to master all things from its father.

David, son of Boy Staunton, comes to Zurich to get appointment with a psychiatrist for he is unable lead a peaceful life without knowing the cause for the suicide of his father, an ideal image, he created to sustain his life. He is unable to believe that his father, who is a hero figure, not only for himself but also for whole of Deptford, who is known to be a successful business man and politician can end his own life in such a pathetic way. David, being a successful lawyer himself, looks for logical and rational causes for the death of his father. Being unable to find the cause, and unconvinced of the reasons told by others and the media, becomes depressed and leads an unhappy life. He spends his time drinking liquor and going sleepless in the night. He finds himself abnormal and wishes that he turns back to courtship actively. But then, without having his problem solved, it is impossible for him to concentrate on anything that has anything to do with day to day activities.

David, as suggested by his friends, moves to Zurich unwillingly to get counseling from a psychiatrist. Even though David has dislike for counselling, he decides to seek out some treatment. Unlike his father, David decides to confront his problem, not ignore or run away from it. He is pessimistic toward counseling for he does not want to face the truth of his own life or of his father's death. He is afraid of getting to know of his unknown world of unconscious, which may hurt him. David thinks that seeking help from a psychiatrist shows his inefficiency in dealing with his personal life. He wishes to prove the psychiatrist that an intelligent man can take care of himself. Thus, he allows the psychiatrist to manipulate him into seeing mythic patterns in his life. However, the stage is set for the slow and painful recognition and evaluation of his life.

David, being influenced by his father Boy Staunton, believes in rational thinking and distrusts feeling. He lives in isolation to suppress his emotions. He suffers from number of projections: that his father was an ideal man and Judy Wolff was good woman, and that Pargetter was a faultless mentor. He does not look at the human side of any these personalities. David is convinced that his father was a great man who deserves his son's love and reverence, a charming and dignified man who had no reason whatsoever to commit suicide. On the other hand, David's intuition sometimes sees the truth of the matter. Early in his talks with Dr. von Haller, he recounts details of Boys' funeral and how Denyse insisted that the Staunton arms be illegally used.

He emotionally returns to his childhood state of admiration for his dashing and powerful father. As a child, David believes that his father loves him very much and is eager to please him. David, being an

admirer of his father, wishes to learn and please his father. But it ends hopeless because David never understands his father's charming exterior masks an unfeeling and inconsiderate interior. It is impossible for David to please his father for Boy expects his son to have two contradictory traits – independence and imitation.

His own idealization of himself and others and attempts to maintain those projections allows him to live in the world of illusion. Dr. von Haller helps David to recognize his emotional part of his psyche and name those emotions he has being ignorant of in order to make him a free person. But then the process is not a simple task. David builds his own barrier for his inner happiness. He considers himself a self-made man. The first sentence of his Zurich Notebook denotes the problem he encounters in accomplishing his goal: "IT IS NOT EASY to be the son of a very rich man" (75). He wishes people to recognize him as a success of his own account. The primordial image of the Father is the archetype which most troubles David.

The journey of finding the truth is traumatic, and at one point David is unable to continue. Liesl suggests him to look for strength in his ancestors since he has no God, enables him to continue. David's lack of religious feeling made the process still tougher for himself and for the psychiatrist. Liesl wants to fill David with awe at the heroism of our human ancestors. But he is unable to believe that prehistoric men who worshipped animals, found meaning in something greater than his age.

Boy Staunton always wants to appear as masculine as possible, and he later cruel to his child David when the boy displays indifference in behaviour. The artistic problem in *The Manticore* is David's lifelessness. Boy, who never associates pleasure with morality, hits to his son David that an affair had been arranged. Boy thinks that this was the proper introduction to sex which he enjoyed being an accomplished amorist. David still refuses to suspect his father conspiracy. He clings to the image of his father as the wise and loving parent. He unconsciously reacts to his father by never engaging any love affair with anyone. This incident leads David doubts about his father's integrity.

David suffers from the sins of his father: he is unable to engage in sexual relations, even though his father is a sexual athlete. He knows that his father knew Mrs. Martindale before his mother's death. David has rather a moralistic attitude toward adultery. David refuses to believe that Boy might have committed adultery. David's adoration of Boy is now flawed with doubts. He no longer wants to be like Boy. Even with the evidence right in front of David, he is unable to condemn his father. The son refuses to look beyond his father's exterior. David still believes that he must show himself worthy of his father's love even though he comes to know that his father is responsible for Leola's death.

Dr. von Haller comments upon Boy's second marriage, Leola's possible murder, and the children's dislike of Boy's new wife. She suggests David that he is ruled by his intellect, has undeveloped feeling. To be a fully developed human being, one has not only understand his life intellectually but also from spiritual and mythical perspective. "The modern hero is the man who conquers in the inner struggle" (295). David comes to terms with his past by recognizing the limiting elements of the false motives primarily inspired by the faulty image of his father. This journey freed David from his particular mythic pattern – that of suffering for the sins of the father.

David comes under the spell of a new father figure – Pargetter – his father in art at Oxford. With this decision, David renounces Boy and his values. He will always have an influence on David, but the spell has been broken when David narrates, "I loved him (Boy) and feared him, but I had spied tiny chinks in his armour. He too was a manipulator (215). Pargetter turns David into a disciple of the law: these new values make David's life very different from his biological father's.

Pargetter is David's most important chosen father. He inspires David into becoming a worthy man and a most proficient lawyer. By assuming Pargetter as an archetypal father figure, David frees himself from Boy's influence and control. Ramsay, in the later part of the novel, affirms that "the natural father is not always the most important and that the chosen father are the significant ones (289). It shows the archetypal father figure is so mandatory in everyone's life to an extent that if one does not have, he creates it artificially someone he knows from the society.

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