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The Portrayal of the Father-Figure in Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father*

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Abstract:

This article examines the portrayal of the absent father-figure in African American autobiographies. In particular, the article discusses how Obama relies on memories and reflections to prop the image of his absent father in his autobiography, Dreams from my father. The article adopted an analytical research design. Content analysis was used to generate data. The data was then coded and analyzed according to the modes of characterization. Tenets of postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories aided in reading, analysis, and interpretation of the text. Findings reveal that through dreams and reflections, Obama constructs a father who is absent from his family against his wish. Despite the severe racial discrimination, Obama Senior struggles to create a united race. Knowledge and power are divulged as the ways through which racial discrimination is based. As a result, Obama resorts to fantasies and dreams to construct a wise prince for a father.

Keywords: Absent father-figure, memories, dreams, reflections, African American autobiography

1. Introduction

Autobiography is a favorite genre of literature in contemporary black culture. Its popularity is traceable to the traditional African society (Alabi, 1998). Autobiography has always been used as a counter discourse to the dominant discourses on slavery, racism, colonialism, sexism and classism in African American tradition (Alabi, 1998, p.1). Besides, because of the regular and historical loss of identity by the African Americans, Autobiography has provided grounds through which lost identities can be reclaimed.

Significantly, the father search has always dominated African-American's efforts to reclaim lost identities. The oppressive white culture has necessitated the father search because it has pushed men out of their families resulting in a state of 'fatherlessness' in many black African-American households. Max (2012) observes that the search for identity among African-Americans, to a great extent, is anchored on the pursuit of the absent father.

Absent father, therefore, remains one of the key thematic concerns in African American autobiographies. This area has attracted considerable scholarship. Anderson (1983), Terrell Church (1991), Karol (1993) and David (1996) have looked at the portrayal of the father-figure in African American society from a literary, sociological and anthropological prism. These studies portray African American fathers as absent and elusive. The findings attribute the absent father to slavery and enacted unfavorable laws that put American blacks in checks. While the article takes note of the importance of the physical presence of fathers in the lives of their children, it presumes that physical absence of a father does not mean that the father-child interaction is terminated. Through memories and reflections about the absent fathers, these children continue to engage them in silent discourses.

This article, thus, examines how the absent father has been portrayed in Obama's *Dreams from my father*. With the aid of psychoanalysis, the article focuses on the manner in which Obama relies on his memories and reflections to construct identities of the absent father. The postcolonial theory also aids in the analysis by providing a platform through which issues of identity are discussed.

2. Review of Literature

The concept of identity has attracted critical and scholarly attention in the literary discourse all over the world in the twenty-first century (Bharatender, 2014). Many literary works have tackled the problem of identity as a central theme. Thus, literature offers a ground for self-search and eventual discovery. In African American context, the concept of identity has been a recurrent literary theme. It has been sought through gaining an understanding of one's culture (Blair, 1995).

Unique in African American identity search is the absent father trope (Max, 2012). Scholars have attributed the American 'fatherless' status to some issues. These factors range from increased divorce rates (David, 1996; Ancona, 1998; Barber, 2000; Horn, 2002), children born out of wedlock (Ancona, 1998; Horn, 2002), child paternal neglect (Horn, 2002) to American enslavement of the black man (Peter, 1995). These scholars agree that father absence is a real problem.

Significantly, the portrayals of African-American fathers vary between the two races. The white Americans writing on African American fathers had stereotyped and portrayed them negatively. They represent African-American dads as visitors to their family, underemployed, inattentive to their children and as agents of delinquency (Harriette, McAdoo and John, 1997). Obama captures this negative portrayal of African American fathers in one of his key addresses during Father's Day:

- Of all the rocks upon which we build our lives, we are reminded today that family is the most important... But if we are honest with ourselves we'll also admit that too many fathers are missing from too many lives and too many homes. They have abandoned their responsibilities, acting like boys instead of men. And the foundations of our families are weaker because of it. (Obama cited in Tom, 2010, p.40).

In contrast to Obama's views, other scholars see African American fathers as victims of historical discrimination. In literature, they have been thematized as absent because of racial hegemony. (Fredrick (1845) and DuBois (1903) portray fathers who have been, in a systematic way, caged that they can no longer be responsible to their families.

The point of convergence in these scholarships on the representation of absent African American fathers is that these fathers have been victims of American social hegemony. Consequently, some have gone missing or remained passive. In Obama's *Dreams from my father*, the absent father is an omnipresent character in the narrative despite absence (Max, 2012). According to Max, Obama has used an absent father as a literary theme to guide his story of the self-search, race problems and intellectual strife (2012, p.10).

Evident from this review is that various studies have been conducted on the absent African-American fathers in tandem with the problem of identity. However, not much focus has been paid on the portraits constructed of the absent fathers by their children. Hence, this article concentrates on the portrayal of the missing father-figure in Obama's *Dreams from my father*.

3. Methodology

The article was qualitative and was conducted through analytical research design. The choice of the design was so because the researcher analyzed the narrative as presented in the text and made the evaluation. The systematic research design is "a non-interactive document research that relies on the description and interpretation of the past from selected sources (Macmillian & Schumacher, 1997). As a genre, autobiography contains historical past of the protagonist hence the article treats it as an ideal non-interactive document. The design was instrumental in examining the portrayal of the absent father in the text.

3.1. Data Collection Techniques

The secondary data collected from the library informed the basis of this article. Content analysis was used to generate primary data from the text objectively. The qualitative content analytical method helped in the generation of both explicit and latent content of the primary data. In this article, reading and analysis of the literary text was done to establish the portrayal of the absent father in the book.

3.2. Data Analysis

The qualitative data was coded regarding modes of characterization of the father-figure. Psychoanalysis and postcolonial theories were used in the textual analysis to establish the identity of the absent father-figure.

4. The Father-Figure in *Dreams from My Father*

In *Dreams from my father*, Obama is presented as one of the vocal student leaders at Occidental College. Students look up to him for direction and on political issues. When given the opportunity to talk to a political gathering, Obama admits that he started remembering his father's visit to Miss Hefty's class. Students, before Obama Senior's visit, had treated Obama as primitive and lesser being. This attitude is seen in the way the class giggles and laughs at the mention of his name and the Luo tribe. The laughter brings out the contemptuous attitude towards the blacks. They are considered primitive and barbaric. Luo tribe is little known thus mysterious. These students' reaction, when viewed through the postcolonial lens, is in tandem with the prevailing notion of black inferiority in a society where whites are the superior race. The irony of the situation is that the supposedly primitive man ends up earning the admiration of the crowd through his oratory skills thus subverting the notion of black inferiority.

From a psychological point of view, Obama's memory of the incident particularly at the time he is about to address the rally brings out his unconscious perception of his father as a great man worthy of respect. The protagonist's memory about this incident exposes a father-figure, who as perceived by Obama is an individual of extraordinary qualities and wisdom that defy the racial boundaries. Through Obama Senior's knowledge, the perception of the class about Obama drastically changes that even the "ruddy-face boy" (p.70) in the class comments that Obama's father was cool. This turn of events dramatizes the intricacy of power relations that exist between the two races.

The giggles and laughter that the protagonist's name, Obama, attracts can be explained in the context of racial relations. European's representation of Africa and its descents has been negative and demeaning in the sense that blacks have continually been portrayed as inferior to the white man. Over the years, this discrimination has been perpetuated through education, anthropology, history and fiction (Ashcroft, Gareth & Hellen, 1995). The objective of this representation is meant to infiltrate the psyche of the black man making him feel inferior upon which the servant-master relationship is maintained. The girl in Obama's class, Coretta for example,

feels terrified and finds it difficult to relate positively with white children in school because this well-choreographed representation has made her feel less important. Before Obama Senior's address to the class, Obama admits that a part of him "felt trampled on, crushed" (p.62). Consequently, he took refuge in the life that his grandparents led (p.62). The protagonist's admission, viewed through the postcolonial lens, reveals the psychological dilemmas that face African Americans. Obama is spoilt for choice over which culture to embrace thus he feels caged. Interventions of Obama Senior that restore dignity and pride in Obama are ingrained in his mind. He has concretized a father-figure who has excellent skills in approaching the ongoing racial debate.

The protagonist suffers emotional dilemma over the identity he should embrace. These difficulties are seen in the way he is torn between living in the present and getting stuck in the past with his father's undefined image. In the preface, the protagonist regrets the death of his mother. He says:

- I think sometimes that had I known she would not survive her illness, I might have written a different book—less meditation on the absent parent, more a celebration of the one who was the single constant in my life (p. xii).

Obama's feelings are the feelings of many African American children who have survived without concrete information about their fathers. These kids nurture unconscious desire to identify with the father-figure who in most cases only exists in memories and reflections. As an adult now, Obama finds himself immersed in the racial debate. It is a discussion that calls on him to take a stand, and this compels him to reflect on the information he gathered during his childhood. At the time of his father's marriage to Ann, the interracial relationship is considered "a felony in over half the states in the Union" (p.12). Despite the ongoing debate on the constitutionality of interracial relationships, Obama Senior meets "an awkward, shy American girl, only eighteen, and they fell in love" (p.9). This reflection emphasizes Obama Senior's courage and determination against the backdrop of a biased society. It further emphasizes his intent to erase the racial bar.

In Wakiki bar where Obama Senior had accompanied Obama's grandfather for a drink, a white man protests that he could not drink next to a nigger (p.11). Instead of retreating, Obama Senior confronts him and lectures him about "the folly of bigotry, the promise of the American dream and the universal rights of man" (p.11). The white man is ashamed and offers Obama Senior hundred dollars on the spot, pays for his drink and rent. This turn of events is dramatic. Within the prism of post colonialism, the white man's view that a black man is ignorant is challenged. When the man offers to dine with Obama Senior, it reveals that the problem of race is intertwined with so many other issues, among them, knowledge. Obama Senior demonstrate that despite his color, he has equal power of knowledge that has always given the white man an edge over the 'inferior' black race.

Obama's reflections about the past resonate well with his present emotional struggles. He regrets not realizing in time that he needed to have lived in the identity of his father (p.27). Hence, he resolves that though his parents were reclaimed by their dreams for a different world, he "occupied the place where their dreams had been" (p.27). Obama's admission indicates that these stories did not only serve to teach him history but also drew him towards his parent's identities. In Obama's mind, is a father-figure who uses his wits to defy the racial borders. He interprets his father's resolve to marry a white girl as a protest against racial discrimination. It is a message for both races to reconsider their position on race and embrace each other. The act of marrying a white girl suggests the postcolonial concern of hybridity as a possible solution to racial discrimination.

Consequently, Obama has constructed a bold and courageous father-figure, virtues that he should embrace to deal with his current problems. At the time of Obama Senior's marriage to Ann, the Supreme Court has appealed against a ruling that gives room for interracial marriages. Traditionally, institutions such as the judiciary have been used to propagate racial bigotry and suppress the black man. It, therefore, requires courage to rebel against an established system like his father did.

The marriage of Obama's parents signifies defiance and a push by the couple for racial equality. In the Wakiki bar, Obama's dad seeks not to take a stand that will further close positive racial relations. His lecture of the white man is meant to convince the person to embrace each other and cement positive relations. Through Obama Senior's marriage to Ann, Obama constructs a father who had the vision of creating a new transcultural form within the racial boundaries.

The environment in which Obama is growing up is traumatizing. His anxious attempts to construct a father-figure from the scanty stories emphasize the importance of a father in identity formation. Obama is threatened that even though his father had tried to erase racial discrimination, it is still a big problem in current times. The protagonist's attempts to create a father-figure through memories and reflections echoes the argument put forward by Levitov, Van der Gaag, Green, Kaufman, & Barker (2015). They contend that in any cultural context, the presence of a father "matters for children's emotions" (p.222). In one instance when Obama doubts the image of a father he has constructed, he struggles, through a letter, to implore his absent father to break the silence. His actions of trying to persuade his father reflect Obama's unconscious desire to associate and identify with his father. In this attempt, Obama admits having drafted several letters "crossing out lines, struggling for appropriate tone, resisting the impulse to explain too much" (p.114). The fight for appropriate tone indicates Obama's anxiety to get closer to his father.

Indeed, this absent father responds:

- I am fine and doing all those things which you know is expected of me in this country. I just came back from London where I was attending to Government business, negotiating finances, etc... You will be pleased to know that all your brothers and sisters here are fine, and send their greetings. Like me, they approve of your decision to come home after graduation. When you come, we shall, together, decide on how long you may wish to stay. Barry, even if it is only a few days, the important thing is that you know your people, and also that you know where you belong (p. 114).

While the ever-absent father writes to justify the silence that has characterized his relationship with his son, the letter creates in Obama's mind a new image of his father. Its message is a reinforcement of the figure he had constructed earlier. He says:

- I imagined my father sitting at his desk in Nairobi, a big man in government, with clerks and secretaries bringing him papers to sign, a minister calling him for advice, a loving wife and children waiting at home, his own father's village only a day's drive away (p.115).

For Obama, his father is no less than self-accomplished man, and he cannot understand why such a great man had left him to suffer. This figure he constructs makes him "vaguely angry" (p.115) and he admit having tried to set it aside. The feelings of anger at the supposedly accomplished father-figure are reflective of the psychological struggles and impulsiveness Obama is going through. He feels that his father should be available to protect him from the ongoing racial intolerance and to help him feel attached and institute in himself a sense of belonging. Obama's attempts to shut away such thoughts from his mind are indications of deliberate attempts to alleviate pain from the overbearing father-figure through dissociation. The constant threatening environment, however, cannot allow him to 'kill' and 'bury' the absent father. This father-figure keeps returning to him as persistent as his heart beat (p.115).

Evidently, the persistence with which this image bothers Obama implies that he is immersed in the identity debate. The father-figure, therefore, reoccurs all the time like his heart beat because he cannot entirely be at peace with the questions and doubts surrounding his existence. Hence, Obama needs to dig deep and unearth information regarding his father's personality, a process that will possibly put to an end his traumas, or at most, help him construct his identity.

The tone and the message in Obama Senior's letter to his son reflect earlier images of inclusivity that Obama had previously created of him. Obama Senior's petition for his son to know his African family echoes his previous intentions of marrying Ann, a white girl. The face of the family that Obama's father longs for, as expressed in this letter, is that of mixed race with no concerns about the color of the skin.

In the same letter, however, Obama's father appears to suffer indecisiveness that characterizes the problem of identity. The unconscious attempt to implore Obama to know where he belongs is contradictory to his reconciliatory tone that is meant to erase racial binarity. This contradicting message portrays Obama Senior as a man trapped in his soul. Like most African American populace, he feels the doubleness of identity and the uncertainty of his course of achieving racial tranquility.

In this struggle for identity anchorage, Obama seems to harbor mixed feelings regarding his father's absence. Like any fatherless child, Obama's feelings are triggered by his anxiety to be affiliated to a father-figure. He conceptualizes his father as a great man who has suffered the tragedy of racial contempt. Most of the stories he is told about the absent father are so captivating that he reconstructs a superhuman father. Therefore, in Obama's mind are cherished fantasies and illusions.

Consequently, when Obama's name attracts laughter in class, he uses constructed fantasies and dreams about his father as a defense mechanism. His stories to the class are modified versions of the numerous stories regarding his father and genealogy. For example, the dialogue between him and his classmates is strategically meant to reverse his classmates' attitude towards his genealogy. He says:

- "My grandfather, see, he's a chief. It's sort of like the king of the tribe, you know...like Indians. So, that makes my father a prince. He'll take over when my grandfather dies."
- "What about after that?" one of my friends asked... "I mean, will you go back and be a prince?"
- "Well...if I want to, I could. It's sort of complicated, see, cause the tribe is full of warriors. Like, Obama... that means 'Burning Spear'..." (p. 63).

The dialogue not only changes his peers' perception of his roots but also constructs the father-figure that Obama has concretized from his informants' numerous stories. It is reflective of the intrigues in his unconscious. Besides, the dialogue gives perspective into power relations that exist between the two races. The fact that these children's perception can change on learning that Obama comes from a lineage of chiefs and kings reveal that discrimination is not limited to the skin color but rather it is extended to the perception of inferiority that accompanies such color distinctions. Seen in the way the class embraces Obama upon constructing images akin to material might and masculinity, there would be a total change in racial relations. At least he wins in this war.

However, the announcement that his father was coming to see him makes him apprehensive and extremely anxious. He fears being confronted by the contrary image of a prince and a chief that he has epitomized from the numerous stories. In this anxiety, he admits that:

- As the words tumbled out of my mouth, and I felt the boys readjust to me...a part of me began to believe the story. But another part of me knew that what I was telling them was a lie, something I'd constructed from the scraps of information I'd picked up from my mother (p. 63).

Hence, fearing the ultimate reality, Obama prefers his father's continued absence as he admits that he preferred his distant image (p.63). His father's continued absence will give him the opportunity to uphold the image of a prince he has long held. The looming threat is reinforced with more psychological fantasies as Obama tries to reflect upon what he had read and heard about the Luo. He had personally read about the burning spear from a book about Jomo Kenyatta (p.64) and that his mother had told him that Luos, a sub-tribe of Nilotes, came along the great River Nile. These impulses are also seen in his vision of "ancient Egypt, the great Kingdom...pyramids and Pharaoh's, Nefertiti and Cleopatra" (p.64). Fearing the validity of his long-held illusions about his father, Obama goes to the library to reinforce the images he has constructed. He wants some assurance from authentic historical sources that indeed his father comes from a royal tribe. The warranty will give him the confidence to face his father who is for ones coming to visit him. Contrary to his expectations, in a book about East Africa, Obama recalls:

- There was no mention of pyramids. In fact, the Luos merited only a short paragraph. Nilote, it turned out, described some nomadic tribes that had originated in the Sudan along the White Nile, far South of Egyptian empires. The Luos raised cattle and lived in mud huts and ate corn meal and yams and something called millet. Their traditional costume was a leather thong across the crotch (p.64).

These representations scramble the portraiture of Prince Obama has long upheld of his father. The findings almost reaffirm his first-day encounter at Punahou School when his name, Barack, for his classmates, was synonymous with barbarity. Obama's reactions following these revelations demonstrate his attempts to continue living in denial thereby clinging to his constructed images. He feels that the representation was unfair hence, without talking to the librarian; he walks out in protest living the book open-faced on the table (p.64). Within the prism of postcolonial studies, Obama sees the librarian as a white man's agent with the responsibility of spreading false information about Africans through her library services. In Obama's mind, the image of a superhero that he has conceptualized of his father is supreme. Any contrary portrayal is thus an unjust to his roots.

Until he meets his father, Obama's illusions of a prince, a chief and a king of the tribe remain intact. This father-figure remains to be a man of royal lineage full of mighty warriors. The metaphorical image of "Burning Spear," in Obama's illusions is a recap on his might, leadership, and complete greatness. The information from the library, however, has shaken his faith that as he leaves Miss Hefty's class to go and meet his father, he feels like a condemned man (p.64). Eventually, he meets his father, a sharp contrast to his expectations. Obama says that he watched his father carefully and realized that he was much thinner than he had expected (p.65). Obama's realization is the first big blow to his ego as he had earlier prepared a psychological marking scheme that he thought would stand the test of time.

Later, several years after he came into contact with his absent father, Obama meets his half-sister, Auma, who has much more unexpected revelations. Auma had the privilege to grow closer to their father, and therefore she stood a chance of confirming or dismantling the portrait that Obama has constructed. To the best of Auma's knowledge, their father's weaknesses surpassed his strengths. He was a careless drunkard, a womanizer and an irresponsible husband (pp. 112-118). The revelations are unpleasant, and Obama feels regretful. The regrets expose his psychological fantasy as he admits:

- All my life, I had carried a single image of my father, one that I had never questioned, one that I had later tried to take as my own. The brilliant scholar, the generous friend, the upstanding leader—my father had been all those things. All those things and more... (p.220).

The emotional bouts herein relate to Freud's assertion that the most idealized figure by a boy is the father (Freud, quoted in Giang, 2014). A boy idealizes his father in his presence or absence to construct a positive of him. Borrowing from Freud, Obama has relied on adult informants who knew his father to form admirable qualities of him. Freud explains that the more the boy grows, the more he begins to look at things differently, and he gets dissatisfied as he realizes that "his father is no longer the mightiest, wisest and richest of beings (Freud, 2001, p. 244). From the boy's new perception of his father, he begins to criticize his father and judge him harshly for any disappointments (Freud, 2001, p. 244). Obama feels bitter and emotional as he reflects that "it was into my father's image, the black man, son of Africa, that I'd packed all the attributes I sought into myself, the attributes of Martin and Malcolm, DuBois and Mandela" (p.220).

The personalities; Martin, Malcolm, DuBois and Mandela that Obama compares to his father's personality have built significant legacies for themselves. The history of the black man, for example, cannot be told without their mention. Auma's emotional reflections henceforth crush and betray Obama's idealized father-figure. As a result, he becomes judgmental replacing the positive images with puzzling questions "a bitter drunk? An abusive husband? A defeated, lonely bureaucrat? Nothing more than a ghost!" (p.220).

The rhetoric emphasizes Obama's psychological battle. His judgment reflects a kind of indecisiveness to whether or not take Auma's word as absolute truth. He feels like laughing out loudly to this effect except for Auma's presence (p.221), signaling his defiance. In some sense, the image he has always constructed of his absent father is that of might. Hence, Auma's revelations are inconsequential. Thus, he resolves to dismiss Auma's recollections when he says "for what man, if not my father, has the power to tell me otherwise" (p. 221). Obama knows that his father is dead and there is no possibility of ever meeting him so that he could confirm or deny Auma's recollections. He would, therefore, prefer to remain in transcendental longing for the absent father rather than accepting the new identity that Auma has constructed.

The outrageous way with which Obama rejects Auma's constructs of the absent father exposes further his psychological wishes. Obama desires a more distant image, an illusion for that matter. Accepting the inferior image is not an option for it is a threat to his well-being in the American society. Prior, Obama had discovered through his classmates that there was more that defined racial relations than the color of the skin. Racial attitudes, other than the color itself, are established by evidence of power and uniqueness in heritage or lack of it. Obama thus feels safe to continue holding an elusive image as he irrationally waits for his father to provide evidence that will uphold his delusions.

These delusions are further reflected in Obama's dream (p.128). In dreams, Obama walks into the cell where his father is held. He opens the padlock and "sets it carefully on a window ledge" (p. 128). This dream reflects Obama's unconscious desires regarding the American social system. The cell is symbolic of oppression, a cage in which African American's dreams and ambitions has been betrayed. The biased system cut-short his father's dreams. In this dream, therefore, Obama is cutting off chains of oppression. According to Frederick (1957), in dreams, wishes that have been suppressed because of social norms seep out of the unconscious and are latently displayed. Therefore, Obama's vision reveals his desires and feelings that the system was unfair to his father. In the cell, Obama meets a Gandhian image "with only a cloth wrapped around his waist; he was very thin, with his large head and slender frame, his hairless arms and chest" (p.128). The manifestations of the dream reveal Obama's long held unconscious wishes. These manifestations demonstrate that dreams are expressions of memory from childhood wishes which are repressed in the unconscious. Through childhood memories, Obama has constructed a father-figure who only matches the personality of Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi is a famous Indian politician who successfully fought British imperialism.

Obama has condensed stories into one single image of Gandhi. The image he constructs relates to Jung's (1971) assertion that fantasies of the mind are always reflected in dreams through pictorials and metaphors. These fantasies reflect Obama's mental

struggles to form one single image points to his problem of identity. Growing up fatherless and in a discriminating environment, Obama is looking for an ally through whom he can define his identity. His struggles are therefore emphatic of the significant role that fathers play in the lives of their children.

4.1. Conclusion

Findings reveal that African American children rely on memories and reflections about the absent fathers to construct identities. When these memories become inadequate in their struggles, they resort to dreams and fantasies and end up constructing and reconstructing identities. In these constructions, absent father-figures are portrayed as absent against their wishes to be closer to their families. However, despite succumbing to intense racial discrimination, they are portrayed to have struggled to create entirely different societies. In *Dreams from my father* Obama Senior is opposed to racial discrimination. He thus advocates change from the norm. He leads by example when he marries a white girl amidst protest from the white race. The courts, in particular, have appealed against a case that allows interracial marriages. Obama Senior is constructed as an advocate for an equal society as a means through which negative racial attitudes can be subverted.

The article also reveals that Obama relies on dream and fantasies to overturn racial attitudes that are formed on the premise of perceptions. That is, discrimination is based on the belief that one comes from the inferior race and vice versa. However, this inferiority, based on how Obama's classmates react when his father delivers an enriching lecture to his class, is grounded in knowledge and power. To fit in this environment, Obama resorts to fantasies in ways that make him a favorable kid in the class. In Obama's fantasies is a father who is destined for greatness by the standards of his people. He is intended to become a chief and a prince of the tribe. Obama's desires are further revealed in his dreams. In dreams, Obama appears to have assembled all his memories and wishes into a single image of Mahatma Gandhi, a renowned Indian leader.

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