
Portrayal of Child Life in the Contemporary Indian Writing

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Abstract

The work is based on the famous novels of contemporary Indian writers. I have described the most prominent novels of famous novelists like Anita Desai, Arundhati Ray , V.S. Naipaul and Mulk Raj Anand. In each and every work a different kind of child attitude and child life can be seen explaining the black and white of the life of a child. In Anita Desai's 'Fire on Mountain' we meet Raka, a strange isolated child whose own wish for solitude is as intense as the old woman's. While in Anita Desai's village by the sea we meet lively and joyous Bela and Kamal and their brother Hari whose childhood is passing through struggles. Hari's condition is somehow only a part of Munoo's pathetic life in Mulk Raj Anand's Coolie.

Keywords: Child attitude, Isolated child life, Pathetic child life, Comparing child life, Introduction, Shocking Child life

Introduction

Anita Desai is one of the eminent and prolific Indian English novelists and short story writers of contemporary Indian literature in English. Desai was born on 24 June 1937. As a writer she has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times. She received a Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, from the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters.

She happens to be the leading voice in Indian English literature. Anita Desai writes about deception of child life in contemporary Indian writing. She is very conscious about child life. She looks at Indian culture differently and has her own voice which is distinct and unique in her own ways. In the writing of Anita Desai, a depiction of child life is revealed into the psychological probing of the title 'life', so as to unravel their inner world. The research paper depicted Child Psychology in the selected works of Anita Desai. 'Fire on the Mountain' and in them depiction of 'Child life psychology'.

Anita Desai's Fire on the Mountain

Raka is a child character in Anita Desai's 'Fire in the mountain'. She is in true sense, the central figure of the novel. Her great-grandmother Nanda Kaul is an old lady who long ago was queen as the Vice Chancellor's wife. Now she lives alone in her Villa in Shimla Hills, looking across to the snows of distant Himalayas, down to the hot, dusty plane below. She treasures her solitude, free at last from the claims and demands of family, servants' position, but to interrupt her summer peace comes Raka, her great granddaughter, a strange isolated child whose own wish for solitude is as intense as the old woman's .

Through the long summer months, hidden dependence and possessive needs emerge, old wounds are uncovered. There is a feeling of impending tragedy, as real as the ever-present threat of fire in the Hillside surrounding the Villa.

Raka as a Strange Child

Rakha comes to Carignano in the second part of the novel. Raka means moon but the child is not calm around faced or radiant. She is slim and so structured that Nanda Kaul thought that “she looked like one of those dark crickets that leap us in freight but do not sing or a mosquito, minute and fine, on thin, precarious legs”, she is not like common children wanting anything, demanding lullaby or any person to play with her for asking anyone's company.

She is strong enough to find and search out the world by her own method and view. Her mind is the key holder of her desolate activities. When she was left to herself in the afternoon, Raka felt as if she was caged. “She walked about as the newly caged, then newly tamed wild ones do, sliding from wall to wall on silent investigating pads. She patted a cheek of wood here, smoothed a ridge plaster there. She met a spider that groomed its pair in a corner, saw's lizard's eye blinking out of a dark groove. She probed the depth of dust on shelves and ledges licked a window pane to cool her tongue tip”.

Raka: An isolated child

When Raka's great-grandmother started taking interest in her, it was irksome for Raka. As, Raka used to live like Nanda Kaul and loved this kind of life for herself so she felt like a rabbit conferred up by a magician-drawn unwillingly out of the magic hat, flashing past Nanda Kaul and then vanishing in the dark of a bagful of tricks.

But Rakha ignored her. She ignored her so calmly, so totally that it made Nanda Kaul breathless. She eyed the child with apprehension now, wondering at this total rejection, so natural, instinctive and effortless when compared with her own planned and willful rejection of the child. Nanda Kaul saw that she was finished; a perfected model of what Nanda Kaul herself was merely a brave, flawed experiment. She has to admit Raka was not like any other child she had known, not like her own children and grandchildren. Amongst them she appeared a freak by virtue of never maling, a demand. She appeared to have no needs.

Like an insect burrowing sandy loam and pine need less of the hillsides like her own great grandmother, Raka wanted only one thing to be left alone and pursue her own secret life among the secret life amongst the rocks and pines of Kasauli.

Mulk Raj Anand's Coolie

Mulk Raj Anand (1905 and 2004) is one of the greatest novelists in Indian writing in English. He is also attributed to constitute the much talked about and referred to 'trio' in Indian writing in English. The other two being RK Narayan and Raja Rao. Indian literature including that in English indulged before the advent of Munshi Premchand in Hindi.

Munoo

Munoo is one of the important characters in Indo-Anglian fiction. He is the central character in Coolie. When the novel opens he is a poor orphan boy of 14 and he is hardly 16 when he dies at the end of the novel. In the course of the two years which Monu spends at

various places, he undergoes many experiences most of which are unpleasant, disagreeable and dispersing his studies of school, but his desire is thwarted by a decision of his uncle and accent to send him to town to take up a job. “ He is a universal kind of figure. He is a passion not only for India but a passive eviction victim of society . He emerges finally as a tragic character in which the potentialities of good are destroyed by the social and economic exploit to which he is subjected.

One of the most sticking trails of Munoo’s character in his zest for life. The hardship and misfortune which he faces at every stage in the course of his brief career, he never loses his jest for life he has every reason to be sad and depressed but is always spirited and eager to enjoy life he has a natural capacity quickly to recover from the effects of a scolding or beating or any other unkindness ill treatment or set-back in life. His physical body exuded continual warmth, The living vitality that reached out in a wild frenzy of that reached out in a wild frenzy of movements to every object. He laughed, sang, danced and shouted. It is his zest for life monkey dance for the entertainment of Shiela and others with such disastrous consequences for himself

Munoo does not act but is acted upon by the society. He passively suffers his lot, not because of Anand’s faith in fate but because an underdog’s wits are powerless of economic and religious oppression. In the circumstances observes stop nerim stop

The character of Munno is convincing and credible. He has been drawn, after one of the early playmates of the novelist. Besides, Anand has a rare gift. The gift of looking at the world through the eyes of a child and this makes his portrait of Munoo so real and life-like. Anand has a remarkable capacity to enter childhood, the capacity for wonder. Mulk Raj Anand’s portraits of children are remarkable for their euthenics for he is able to describe the life of a child from within from the child’s point of view. This gift is best seen in the character of Munoo.

In this respect it may be said that no development in Moono’s character was intended by the author because Munnu has not been endowed with any special talent. He is only shown as reacting to every event which occurs in his life. Some development however does take place in Munoo’s character.

It is clear from the following remark by the author in connection with Munoo’s reach to the change in Ganpat’s behaviour. Munoo who was always quick to sense people’s emotions had emerged with a capacity for more real institutions since his illness”. However in this novel this author's emphasis is on the poverty and the helplessness of the poor and on the exploitation which the poor are subjected to.

Arundhati Roy’s The God of small things

Estha and Rahel, The two twins in the novel were leading a suffocated and isolated life in Anemone house. Among the two, Rahil becomes aggressive and Estha becomes submissive. Both of them had witnessed the torture of their mother Ammu and Velvetha had undergone. Rahel’s mother had died when she was barely eleven. After the death of her mother, Rahil could not get proper education.

At the time of Ammu's death. Rahul was only a child of eleven. Rahel had witnessed the suffering of her mother, the injustice done to her mother, the injustice done to her at her mother, the injustice done to her. At her parental home and possible condition of valutha became a nightmare for young Rahel. Estha also faces several possible experiences. These traumas make Estha confined him to his own little world with no concern for the outer world.

The novelist has portrayed Estha after her own brother Lalit Kumar Christopher Roy. According to him, she was a brilliant student, an orator and an athlete. She went to New Delhi for higher education when she was 18 years old. She joined the Delhi School of architecture. She even lived in a tin shaded room at Feroz Shah Kotla . There she sold empty bottles to make her living.

Rahel plays an important role in Arundhati's novel. She remains isolated and suffocated in the entire novel . Rahel had witnessed the torture of her mother Ammu. She along with her mother and Estha are always neglected at the anemone house. Her suffering makes her attitude harsh and hateful towards others.

She was accused of hiding behind doors and deliberately colliding with her seniors. When she was questioned by the principal about her behaviour. She eventually admitted that she had done it to find out whether breasts were not acknowledged. they were not supposed to exist and if they didn't hurt. She suffers psychological torments which make helpless and hopeless.

V.S. Naipaul's A house of Mr. Biswas

Mr. Mohan vishwas

Mr. Mohan Vishwas was born in a village of Trinidad. He is born of humble parents, his maternal grandfather having immigrated to Trinidad from India to work on a sugar-estate. The birth of Mr. Biswas takes place in the midst of certain bad omens. In the first place he is born at the hour of midnight which is thought to be inauspicious. Secondly, the boy is born in the wrong way. Thirdly, the boy is born with sin fingers. The midwife says that no matter what precautions are taken, this boy will eat up his own father and mother. The pandit who is summoned to make predictions about the boy's future, says that the boy will grow up to be a lecher, a spendthrift and a liar because there will be gaps and spaces between his teeth, and because this gap would not be a good sign.

As time passes Mr. Biswas receives less and less attention. The limbs which used to be massaged and oiled twice a day now remain dusty, muddy and unwashed for days. As a result of this, he begins to suffer from eczema and sores and even his growth is somewhat retarded. At the end of 6 years Mr. Biswas was withdrawn from school and sent to Pt. Jairam's house in order to become a pandit. In his future life also he struggles, as he is just ghar-jamai and he wants to build his own house, which represents his identity, He later becomes journalist.

Conclusion

In these novels of these contemporary Writers child life is described and child attitude can be seen through the stories written by these Authors. Innocence and hardship a child

faces is also explained, and how a child feels and understands with their thinking and eyes. Hardship faced by a child if he is born from lower class is also illustrated.

While writing they have analysed the socio-cultural modes and traditional values and rules, injustice that have to be accepted by children from lower class. The oppression they find in their life. Due to Superstitions, injustice in the name of religion happens with these children. Novelist Anita Desai, Mulk Raj Anand, Arundhati Roy, VS. Naipaul have well described the pathetic condition of children from backward and poor sections of the society.

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