

A CHILDHOOD TURNED INTO A MIRAGE (BASED ON SADRIDDIN AYNIY'S NOVEL "ODINA")

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Abstract

Childhood is considered the most innocent and dream-filled period of a person's life. However, not every individual experiences childhood in the same way. For some, it is a source of sweet memories, while for others, it remains a time filled with hardships and injustices. Sadriddin Ayniy's novel "Odina" is one of the most significant works that depict such bitter realities. This article analyzes the theme of childhood as portrayed in the novel "Odina."

Keywords: Odina, war, childhood, protagonists, self-management, aspiration, struggle.

War has left many devastated, turning children into orphans, stealing their childhood joys, and making women widows while hunger prevailed. The protagonist of our story, Odina, experiences such hardships during his youth. At the age of twelve, he loses his parents and becomes an orphan. His father was a very poor man, possessing nothing but a single cow. Village elder Kamol assists in burying his father, but in return, Odina spends his life in servitude under the elder. He endures the oppression, tyranny, and cruelty of the elder, living without dreams or hopes. People would go to great lengths for their own benefit, even selling their conscience. During that time, most people lived solely for their own gain. It is easy to be a person, but not everyone can be humane. Humanity had nearly disappeared, and the poor suffered the most, being treated like animals. The village elder also exploits the young Odina, making him a shepherd. Despite being a child, he frequently suffers severe beatings. When his master is in a bad mood, Odina's bright days turn into dark nights, illustrating one of the many examples of human oppression.

Due to widespread illiteracy, the poor were unaware of their rights and blindly obeyed the wealthy and high-ranking officials. Many actions were taken against the Jadid movement, and even possessing a newspaper could result in a lifetime prison sentence. Many mothers witnessed the deaths of their children but could not resist. Such injustices are frequently encountered in Odina's life. He endures countless injustices and cruelty. So many separations,

suffering, and beatings break his young soul like a fragile sapling. Despite being a child, he does not experience a true childhood. He does not even have the right to dream. Eventually, he escapes from the elder's grasp and heads to Fergana to work in a cotton factory to marry his beloved, Gulbibi.

He works tirelessly, enduring severe hardship. The factory supervisor, Qurbanali, treats the workers as slaves. It is a case of "escaping the rain only to be caught in a hailstorm." Although Odina works twice as hard as his peers, he remains grateful for escaping the elder. During difficult times, thoughts of reuniting with Gulbibi give him strength. He endures many trials and hardships in his pursuit of love. However, due to his intense and constant labor, he contracts tuberculosis without realizing it.

Gulbibi is depicted as a loyal beloved. She waits for Odina and rejects all other suitors. However, the village elder Kamol also tries to pressure Gulbibi and forcibly marries her to his son, Ibob. Ultimately, the elder and his son become the reason for Gulbibi's tragic demise. Just as humans cannot live without water and air, they also cannot survive without dreams and hope. Every person comes into the world once and desires to live freely and happily. However, neither Odina nor Gulbibi had such freedom. Due to constant abuse at the elder's hands, Gulbibi dies. Similarly, Odina succumbs to tuberculosis in Tashkent.

Sadriddin Ayniy's "Odina" is one of the classic works of Uzbek literature, portraying the struggles of people from various social backgrounds. In this novel, Ayniy explores complex themes such as social injustice, personal and familial relationships, love, and devotion. The psychological states of the characters and the impact of their harsh conditions are vividly depicted. The novel forces readers to reflect deeply on human resilience and injustice.

Ayniy's novel uniquely captures the inner experiences and struggles of Uzbek society, providing insights into the socio-psychological challenges of that era. The novel illustrates human efforts to understand themselves, strive for happiness, and fight against social injustices. Odina's character represents self-awareness, love, devotion, and resistance to social oppression. Ayniy not only develops his protagonist physically but also shapes his spiritual and intellectual growth, bringing readers closer to the realities of life. The novel deeply examines familial and social relationships, an individual's role in society, and the battle for self-realization. Through each character, Ayniy revives the spirit, values, and aspirations of the people, embodying humanity and sacrifice. His novel helps readers understand the living conditions, emotions, and perspectives of that time, vividly portraying the struggles of the poor and enslaved.

Through the depiction of Odina's life, this novel serves as a lesson for today's youth. Despite immense challenges, he never abandons his goals. The novel's portrayal of Odina's time in servitude sends chills down the reader's spine. This story instills love for life, self-confidence,

humanity, compassion, and, most importantly, gratitude for the present. By witnessing the ignorance and illiteracy that led to people's oppression, readers realize the importance of education and strive for greater knowledge. This novel fosters gratitude for modern life. It is not just a book to read but a journey where readers experience the pain and struggles of its characters.

"Odina" does not only highlight the social problems of Uzbek society but also expresses an individual's search for true happiness and the depths of the human soul. With his brilliant style, Ayniy presents new perspectives on the human spirit and its place in society. This novel is not only a work of literature but also a profound study of self-awareness. "Odina" is not just a story about one person's fate but a broader exploration of social issues. It urges readers to think about kindness, education, and the construction of a just society. Given that children in various parts of the world still face hardships today, the novel remains relevant.

Sadriddin Ayniy's "Odina" is one of the rare works that thoroughly explores the complexities of childhood. Through the protagonist's life, the author emphasizes the need for societal change to prevent the suffering of children and fulfill their dreams. This novel encourages every reader to think about humanity and justice. Additionally, it helps one understand the importance of emotional and social skills, shaping childhood feelings that influence future life.

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