

CHILD CHARACTERS, THEIR PSYCHE & TREATMENT IN RUSKIN BOND'S 'THE ROOM ON THE ROOF.'

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ABSTRACT

The Room On The Roof is a famous novel created by Ruskin Bond at the age of 17. The fiction genre got first published in the year 1956 and still asserts publication.

The novel is his first creation at the age of adolescence - the age of emotional and physical changes in the life of a growing teen.

The young writer has created different child characters like Rusty, Kishen, Somi, Suri & Ranbir, who are either teenagers or approaching the state in the story.

The child characters are portraying the emotional behaviours on the demands of circumstances and are going through psychological vicissitudes. This invokes to study each child's character through psychological measures.

The general psychological measures used in studying a character are – openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. They would be lightning effects to study their psyche and characters and would help in finding treatments as well.

Keyword: *childhood, behaviour, child- consciousness*

1. RUSTY

The novel revolves around Rusty, a seventeen-year-old Anglo Indian, born in India. He lives with Mr John Harrison, his guardian, on the outskirts of the town Dehra, with the European people, no friend of his age and feels lonely.

The psyche trait "openness – openness to experience" in Rusty is like – absent and present both. The story of the adolescent Rusty opens with his description and lights on his state of mind. "Rusty who is three miles away but does not wish to reach home... The mind is as usual absent from the surroundings" (Ruskin, Ch. 1)

He likes rain, smells the freshness but avoids looking at the surroundings. He wanders and does not respond to Somi's call. Nevertheless, he changes and loves to experience the various fervours life brings after leaving his guardian's house and meeting the Kapoors. He starts expressing his fondness for the delicacies and love interest.

Rusty is called a dreamer in the story. Rusty is a force dreamer who dreams about what he expects.

He dreams of striking back his violent guardian that becomes a reality.

The presence of compassion, communication, and friends helps a child to be attentive and responding. So does happen with Rusty.

Rusty on conscientiousness - the sense of duty, dependability and achievement scale is firm. He does not wish to disobey Mr Harrison as he feels gratitude towards him for providing an orphan with a home, food, and education (Ruskin, Ch2).

He does not want to live with Somi and his mother as a burden and strongly wishes to be self-dependent by doing a job. He disciplinarily visits Kapoor's house for the job prospects and achieves it.

His sense of responsibility is right on the ground of the strong education he poses.

"Extraversion" trait shows someone as an extrovert or introvert. Rusty was an introvert who prefers to walk alone, talks to himself and the creature lizard who was his listener during his lonely days in the room on the top. He does not express his discomfort throughout the cycle ride down to the town with Somi (Ruskin, Ch: 1).

The presence of family and friends does add positive extrovert traits in an adolescent's character.

The psyche trait "agreeableness" measures the extent of a person's warmth and kindness. Rusty's character looks very agreeable at the number of places – helps the missionary's wife in the garden, does not mind pushing the clogged car of Mr Kapoor, accepts to take care of Kishen being asked by Meena in their absence and finally plays the role of an elder brother to Kishen.

Family and society instil such traits in one's individuality.

The "neuroticism" – the anxiety, depression state of Rusty does fluctuate with the changing circumstances while living with the rude guardian Mr Harrison he is seen alone and depressed.

On the entrance of new friends he blossoms. Season of life changes and becomes impulsive and rebel against the tyrant guardian and retaliate to the beatings with the cane (Ruskin, Ch.: 6). He ran away from his house and turns up happy, confident and in love with the new life and people.

Sadly, the demise of Meena and parting with his new friends one by one turn him again lonely, and he falls into a state of depression. The circumstances are favourable again with the culmination of two lonely ones - Rusty and Kishen.

When a child is avoided due to any reasons, he is sure to develop neuroticism traits. However, the attention of friends and family helps it to bloom.

2.KISHEN

Kishen is the only son of Meena and Mr Kapoor. He is described as a scoundrel, a monkey who is crude and well spoilt (Ruskin, Ch: 9). He had his ways and was not religious. He must have some virtues which reasonably make Rusty his elder brother-like from a teacher of English to him.

Kishen is agreeably quite open to experience as his adventures with the cow Maharani in the bazar, stealthily having chaat, roaming around the whole town through strange streets. But excessively being open and fearless he turns a professional thief (Ruskin, Ch.: 22)

Kishen has a family, but he lacks a strong sense of duty and is completely not disciplined and

dependable. He is aimless and does not mind lying to his parents.

Kishen is quite extroverted, social and chatty. Over extrovertness is of no help to him as his indulgence in every matter makes him a less audible and trustworthy. Meena calls him a fool (Ruskin, Ch: 11)

Kishen has a good trait of 'agreeableness' as he quite friendly, helpful and warm with Rusty. This trait helps him to have a lifelong friend who becomes his family after losing his mother.

Kishen on the scale of 'neuroticism' does not come out as a depressing child. After his mother's death, he does not fall into depression. But he was a rebellion which went against his father and decided to live a life of a thief than living with a step-mother (Ruskin, Ch.:21)

Controlling the desires and practising patience brings out virtuous individuality that is worth living. If his father was responsible for his family and mother was more loving and admiring. He could have been a well conscientious, more audible and a good respondent to the negative circumstances.

3.SOMI

Somi is a good friend of Rusty who is Punjabi and lives with his mother in a middle-class setup. He is a virtuous friend of Rusty who helps Rusty when he left his guardian's house. "It is impossible to resist the warmth of his nature" (Ruskin, Ch: 2).

On all the traits of the psyche, Soni is a child who is open to experiences as he does not mind driving a cycle with all friends in the rain. He is a positive extrovert, as coming forward to extend a helping hand to his friends at the time of need is admirable. He is highly agreeable, as he is kind and helpful to Rusty and others. Somi lives with his loving and caring mother and friends. Absence of any kind of frustrations births no neuroticism – rebelling and depressing life.

There are other child characters in the story, like Suri and Ranbir. From them Suri the spectacled boy is depicted as blackmailing not-trustworthy friend. On being responded sternly by Rusty, he chooses to step back and decides to stay quiet (Ruskin, Ch.: 11)

Ranbir's stubbornness on calling Rusty for Holi turns disastrous for his friend.

When an adolescent child is seen according to these traits, it can be like - a little harder on one and quite flexible with the other. An adolescent state is definitely to change into adulthood and identifying the child's psyche traits would provide the right treatment to bring up a character, balancing all traits.

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