

# Book analysis: before we were free essay



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Adolescent literature is a form of literal writing that targets teenagers and issues affecting them. With teenagers as the audience, this type of literature has specific characteristics that identifies with the group. Some features include issues affecting teenagers such as in orientation of major themes, and simplicity that captures the group's attention.

This paper seeks to explore the book *Before We Were Free* with the aim of proving the work as adolescent literature. In order to achieve this, the paper will analyze the book in relation to characteristics of adolescents' literature. One of the major features of adolescent literature that is applied in the text is an adolescent protagonist. This means that the literature's outline is centered on an adolescent from whom other the characters' roles are derived.

A review of the literature identifies Anita, a 12 year old, as the main character. The major themes of the book, freedom and social relationships, are also developed through her as other characters are defined in relation to Anita. Her sister, Lucinda, is for instance described from Anita's point of reference. The author illustrates Lucinda's emotional instability relative to that of Anita. While the two characters were both sad, in one instance, Anita was able to hold her composure much better than her sister was.

Similarly, the author uses Anita in demonstrating other characters conditions under her narration. She is used to illustrate the learning conditions and rules at her school, in which pupils had to emulate practices in American schools. The same approach is used to illustrate the society of the Dominican Republic's suffering under the police officers that induced fear in the society

(Alvarez, p. , 12, 17). Application of a familiar setting is another characteristic of adolescent literature that is observable in the text.

A family set up like Anita's family for example illustrates a home in which most adolescents are familiar. Scenes such as the rules in American schools, as well as the suffering under dictatorial rule are also common knowledge among the target group, as they relate to history and contemporary issues acquired through curriculum syllabus or from informally learnt history from adults and news. Similarly, the expressly and impliedly demonstrated themes of dictatorial leadership and family relationships are daily experiences of adolescents who are under constant guidance by parents in their family set ups and by teachers in schools (Alvarez, p. 79). Application of the first person narration, as well as the passive role of adults in development of major themes also identifies the work as an adolescent literature.

The main character, Anita, is the narrator in the story and presents the story and other characters from her point of view while the involved adults in the plot such as Anita's father and Trujillo are just facilitators of themes of conflict, lack of freedom, and relationships. Alvarez succeeded in developing a literary text whose themes demonstrate the book's educative purpose. These themes demonstrate the text's possible application in informing the target population, the adolescents, of the existence of conflicts and essence of positive approaches to and benefits of conflict resolution. The family based approach to the story also educates the adolescents, who are at a rebellious stage, of the benefits of social relations and conflict resolution. The text also applies irony that demonstrates Anita's indifferent opinion over

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freedom that is contrary to what was expected of her enlightenment about the subject.

While she learned from school that her country lacks freedom, Anita remains content and does not question this. However, the destiny of the fight for freedom remains unresolved and its success debatable. Alvarez's text is, therefore, an adolescent oriented literature.