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## Description

***“Beware of Children”: Representation of Childhood in Khalid Jawed’s (Nematkhana) The Paradise of Food***

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### **Abstract:**

The paper draws upon Karen J. Renner’s conceptualization of evil children narrative and seeks to argue that the evil act of homicide committed during the conscience free period of childhood takes an existential toll on the protagonist with the building up of conscience in adult life. The source of evil is shown to be in the dysfunctional family and social structures. The affective responses in the form of anger and revenge in turn play a pivotal role in the make-up of Guddu’s childhood. It will argue that traumatic childhood thereby precipitates existential problems which remain irresolvable for the protagonist and that the protagonist’s search for a court of law gets transposed into an internal court of his own guilt-ridden conscience. In doing this, the paper presents the complex experience of Guddu’s childhood and its role in configuring his adult life.

The paper distinguishes child from adults by way of age bracket commonly used in law discourse, where those younger than eighteen years of age are considered children. Guddu’s experiences understood as referring to his childhood are contextualized within this bracket. For the category of evil children, the paper follows Renner’s framework as developed in her works, particularly *Evil Children in Popular Imagination* (2016) and extends her argument by considering the novel under discussion here.

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