

The Inside and Outside of On-Screen Adaptations of Children Literature

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(Session 2014-2018)

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THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF ON-SCREEN ADAPTATIONS OF CHILDREN LITERATURE

A THESIS TITLED

Submitted to University of Management and Technology, Lahore

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of B.S Honors

In

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

By

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DECLARATION FORM

I, Komal Tahir, declare that this thesis is entitled “The Inside and Outside of On-Screen Adaptations of Children Literature” is my own work and is not submitted previously, in whole or partially with respect to any other academic degree.

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Research Completion Certificate

It is certified that the research work contained in this thesis titled title: The Inside and Outside of On-Screen Adaptation of Children Literature has been carried out and completed by Ms. Komal Tahir under my supervision. The quantum and the quality of the work contained in this thesis are adequate for the award of Degree of Honors in English Literature.

Acknowledgements

All praises to Allah the most Beneficent and Merciful for the strength, knowledge and His blessings in giving us this opportunity to endeavor with patience the challenges and difficulties to complete this final project.

I would like to appreciate to my supervisor Miss Afraz Jabeen for providing the necessary support, guiding and stimulating facilities for the research. I am extremely grateful and obligated to her for invaluable assistance, continuous support, and for bestowing the shining pearls of wisdom in finalizing the research.

I place special gratitude, and my sincere thanks to Dr.Arshad Ali Khan Director ICCS, for his continuous encouragement and essential techniques.

I take this opportunity to express gratitude to all the Department faculty members for their help, patience and sharing their immense knowledge. I am very thankful to my parents who supported, encouraged and motivated in every possible way.

ABSTRACT

The study entities the psychoanalytical analysis considering the children literary fiction adaptations which will not only explore the negative effects of the animated movies but also the influence of the negatives attributes on the cognitive development of children. The impact of foul images will be discovered in the following research with the involvement of psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud. It will also weave the levels of personality development, Id, Ego, and Superego in analyzing the changes in child's imaginative thinking and behavior. The thesis unfolds the dimensions of mass media production and its negative portrayal of characters. The research also puts a light upon the understanding of different critics about the children literature and role of children fiction adaptations. It also intends to present the stereotypical images displayed in animated movies and its effect of a child's retentive processing. In addition, the media transform the thinking process of children, regarding to this point the study highlights the disturbance in child's learning process with the help of three surface levels of mind, conscious, unconscious and preconscious.

Keywords: Psychoanalytical, stereotypical, hegemonic media, children literary adaptations, personality development

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Children Literature is a bridge between the colorful dreamy world and a tougher real world. The child is armed with the torch of knowledge, awareness, and guidance that helps to cross this bridge between the world of fantasy, illusion and the world of twist and turns” (Behrangi, n.d). The essence of two worlds influences child’s state of psyche and mental process. The brain is a hemisphere in which the world of primary and secondary resides. Whereas, these worlds are affected through the screen of media, the West organization of mass media display such techniques in the movies that pinch in the mind of children as well as adults. “The good children literature appeals not only to the child in the adult but to the adult in the child” (Goethe, n.d). The child in the adult demonstrate that children featured movies present entertainment that even an adult surrounded by the sufferings of life forgets everything due to the heavy dose of amusement. The adult in a child presents that, entertainment is so powerful in its approach that it builds a mature understanding in young age. The features of adults are present in the children and these elements are provoked through watching the animated movies, these movies are formatted on the basis of adults thinking. The adaptation of different stories begins from the children literature.

The genre of children literature begins with the stories that have demonstrated orally to children by adults. Not only stories but poems, songs are illustrated to instruct, educate and amuse children. During medieval period, children literature has been prominent into religious

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codes and books. This literature has centered to be didactic, related to education and teachings only. The stories reflected the elements of moralistic nature and religious lessons which have changed through the media into rebellious behavior and modern thinking. The screening not only educates the morality but also affect the learning of children at young age. According to Philippe Aries, “children’s were considered as ‘miniature adults’ because they were dressed to look like adults” (Ulanowicz, n.d.)

This historic view of children literature continued by Puritans society of 17th century England The fastest developing domain initially begins. The Puritans injected the religious tenets in their own children through reading. This combination is encircled into two functions such as instruct and delight. The purpose of stories is to instruct children morally and ethically, similarly, stories lead towards the delight and feeling of being thrilled. Moreover, the collections of children literary books are equally characterized as the books of adults. The reflection of adult’s fiction is mixed with the power of artistry elements such as magic and fantasy. Further, children literature comprises multiple genres such as fiction, non-fiction, picture books, poetry, historical, biography, fables, graphic novel, adventure fiction, comic books, folklore and fantasy. These all literary genres set an amalgamation of positive and negative elements which obliterate the cognition process of a child. The on screening of movies with positive elements is ruined with the negative input. The media production raised its flag in every era and still its progression is moving in the modern period. With the passage of time children literature becomes more advanced in modern era. The modern period reflect the dynamic part of entertainment and amusement for kids and adults.

The children literature is a viable aspect of 18th century which is fuelled with the contributions of John Newbery, the father of children literature. The publishing of children literature begin in Britain and also in other regional centers. In this era the title of the books was designed according to the fancies of children and adults. In the first half of 18th century, few stories have published for children without any religious conflict and instructional purpose. But 1740's London publishers begin to produce stories to instruct and delight the young readers. The second half of the 18th century flourished with the different variety of children literature. The books of children literature included the highest competence with such complex plots. These plots reflected both word and art which indicated that children have not only the target audience. The mid- 19th century turned into a *Golden Age* for children literature and massive production turned out. The authors focused towards child's imagination rendering the concept of religious tactics. The publishing houses were enriched with works of children literature and paper printing become available. The literary fiction of children is later adapted by many directors to display the words into images.

Children literature adaptations have a very strong bond especially in contemporary era. The adaptation is a product which reorders specific elements of literary and non-literary work. It also includes reinterpretation and recreation of a specific source. Further, adaptation created through directors includes variations and repetition in an original work of a certain author. In the procedure of adaptation the adapter begin to recreate the work in own style and dimensions. The adapters take the original work and reprieve it in screening. They interpret the work and involves creativity, imaginative thinking to make the adapted product of their own. The process of literary adaptation moves from one genre to another with various new techniques. It holds the

atmosphere of adapted content, however, keeping the original aura in it. Moreover, in on screen adaptation, the directors shift the work according to culture, regional, historical background and linguistic language. These attributes specifies the text being adapted with different alternations in the production. The twist and turns make a reflexive approach in the developing process of children. The visionary aspects remain consistent in the mind whereas the reading images remain to some extent. The stories are moved from one medium to performance media in the cycle of adaptation. The adaptation is being more polished in the contemporary era. The product of adapting children stories with different cinematographic techniques gives a new realm to literature. The techniques targeted the audience including children and adults. The mesmerized audience demand for fidelity and cinematographic techniques when it comes to their favorite literary story regarding children literature. The audience involves children and adults to the on screening of their favorite author's stories. There are some elements in children literature which provokes the psyche of children and grownups. The on screen production affects more expeditiously on child intellect than story reading.

The media play its strategy to grab the attention of the audience through screening children literature. The attention of young generation diverts from fidelity level towards the infidelity. The mass media production involves video games, music and cartoons to trap the consideration of children. While such media provide education and entertainment but at the same time it also provide damage to the learning of children. For this purpose following adaptation are selected to dissect the positive and negative effects centered upon the psyche of children and adults.

The research includes a fairytale; “The Little Mermaid” written by Hans Christian and the adaption is created by Rons Clements and John Musker. Secondly, the research includes a novella “Coraline” written by Neil Gaiman, later an adaptation is formed by director Henry Selick. Thirdly, the study will highlight the effect on child’s psyche through one of the novel “ParaNorman” written by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel, later created into a 3D animation adaptation by Chris Butler, Sam Fell. Furthermore, the research includes the famous stories and their adaptations to highlight the rigid rules and its influence upon young generation. One of the famous literary stories is “Aladdin” a tale from the book “One thousand and one nights” known as “The Arabian Nights”. In the light of stereotypical notion one of the famous novel is included “The Breadwinner” written by Deborah Ellis. The work is created into an on screen adaptation by Mimi Polk and Angelina Jolie. These all works will demonstrate the role of media and its impact on the psychology of children and adults. The animation is not only for children but for the adults as well because there are some features, images and use of language that is for the grownups rather than young generation. These vast elements shed negative influence on the mental state and behavior of children which is the main arena of this research.

Research gap:

The research displays that exposure to media result in aggressive attitudes and violent behavior in some children and adolescents. The main aim of this research is the adaptation of children literature on screen and its effects on the psyche of children. It adds a new dimension to highlight how media play the hegemonic role by adding influence on children and their cognitive development.

Research questions:

Q1. How hegemonic media is exploiting the genre of children literature? According to Freud's psychoanalytical study how the on screen animated characters affect the cognitive development of children?

Q2. How stereotypes are presented and challenged in the adaptation of children literature?

Research objectives:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of media and its disastrous effects on children in the lens of psychoanalytical study. The on screen adaptations made out of children literary fiction produce the change in child's actions, thinking and behavior. The study intends to highlight the psychoanalytical framework and Freud's concept of Id, Ego and Superego. The effects are dissected into three layers of personality development. It will also focus upon the notion of West media and its production of stereotypical adaptations. The hegemonic Western media adds its ideology in the reproduction of adaptations.

Research Methodology:

The focus of this qualitative study is on the discussion of mass media screening impact on the viewers including children. The effect of movies and its adaptation affect the developing learning stage of children. The psyche of young generation is analyzed under the psychoanalytical theory by Sigmund Freud. The random selection from children literature adaptations will help to depict the mental process and child's psychological state in an overt and covert way. The literary fiction adaptations including fairytales, novel, novella and comic books is analyzed under the umbrella of psychoanalytical study by Freud. The purpose of analysis is to identify the effects of media and it's featuring of sadistic images on screen due to which change of behavior and thinking take place. Moreover, the research is to determine the relationship between the producing media and audience. In order to do this, the analysis deals with the psychoanalytical theory by Sigmund Freud and the levels of personality based on three levels Id, Ego and Superego that demonstrate the psychological condition of children. The study will also analyze the dialogues of characters uttered in the movies and effect of linguistic language upon the learning stage of young generation.

Chapter one focuses on the introduction and chapter two present the literature review. Chapter three will focus upon the hegemonic role of media upon the cognition process of children in the context of psychoanalytical theory and its three elements of personality development. It will focus on the changes in structured brain of children due to the negative on screen images and the change of behavior which leads children towards aggressive actions. The child's reflection of actions in the mirror of psychological interpretations and involvement of

three instincts agents will help to understand the difference between social learning and learning through media. The research is analyzed under this detailed use of techniques.

Chapter four focuses upon the rigid context of stereotypical notion involved into the movies that highlight many negative concepts, ideas and images in the society. The fixed oversimplified images effects on children motor reproduction is discussed with the concept of Albert Bandura's social learning theory. The representations of generalizing the concept of stereotypical on screen affect the thoughts and decision making power of children on the basis of cultural and social norms. This portion will also shed light upon the process of social learning and impact of media on behavior and cognition.

In the paradigm of psychoanalytical theory by Sigmund Freud the adaptation of children literature is analyzed on the basis of overt and covert behavior of children. The internal and external process produce conflicts within the personality of human. The study revolves around the notion of inside and outside development of child's intellect regarding the influence of mass media. The reflection of visionary images in mind develops twice the effect of it on inside and outside and produces two different histories within a personality. The adaptations of children literary fiction create positive and negative elements side by side but the negativity overlaps the positive factors which create feeling of goodness on the outside and inappropriate on the inside. The role of media is to portray the notion that the outside world is the mirror image of one's inside world, the battle between the rights and wrong confuse child's state of mind with the influence of on screen filming. The development of inner surface and the outer surface is examined with the psychoanalytical theory and its dimensions.

According to Freud's theory, human psyche is based on more than one aspect. The personality develops in different ways within the shifting of actions and behavior. Freud distinguishes the personality in three dimensions such as Id, Ego and Super Ego. These three components develop the human psyche in different stages of life. The body of Id surrounds the instincts, preserves memories, and drives the sexual desires and aggressive trait. It also includes the biological factors that are presented in brain by birth. The Id is further demonstrated into two instincts, such as Eros which contain the desire of libido. The second instinct is Thanatos which reflects the aggressive element. The Id is the unconscious part of brain that begins to respond quickly and directly to the arrival of instincts. The part of Id is primitive box which is just born and later it will be occupied into Ego and then Super Ego. Moreover, Id is an infantile function that is detached from the external factors. It deals with the unconscious part of mind and neglects exterior experiences of world. The process of Id remains the same and does not change with passing of time because it relies on the immediate response of pleasant and unpleasantness. Therefore, Id operates the factor of fantasy, irrational thinking and a primary process which disregard the ever day experiences. The Id is the unconscious level of human psyche which contains the memories, feelings, thoughts, desire while the feeling of pain, sorrow and anxiety is considered as unpleasant and unacceptable. In the unconscious state of mind the individual is totally unaware of the circumstances.

The Ego encircles the realistic features and controls the desires between Id and Super Ego. It is the central part of Id that controls the external world experiences. Ego works rationally with reason in the process of decision-making. Moreover, Ego tries to satisfy the chaotic and unreasonable demands of Id. It deals with the base of reality and balances the situations to avoid

the negative impact. Ego attains pleasure and avoids the level of pain in order to follow the realistic strategies. In conscious level the individual is aware of every sensation, experience and feeling of any present situation. There is a small amount of portion in conscious level which include memories and thoughts of ongoing scenarios. According to Freud, conscious level is above the surface level of mind, the unconscious part drives to lower surface of the mind which is invisible, while the preconscious part is the storehouse of thoughts, memories, perceptions and past events which can easily summon into the present (conscious) state. The preconscious level deals with the shifting of back and forth experiences of different events and memories. It is present beneath the surface of mind and can retrieve the memories at any time. Ego deals with the conscious and preconscious level.

Thirdly, Super Ego directs the moral conscience of human psyche. Superego works as an authoritative force to control Id impulses. It operates according to the moral codes, values, right and wrong of society, learning of culture and parental teachings. The Superego has the power to approve and deny the desires and needs of an individual. It is dissected into two components such as ideal self and conscience. Each dissection comprises different features and contributes individual's behavior and personality.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

A literature review is a method for evaluating the existing body of the research work. It also includes different key resources for the area of research. A literature review is a work which states the information relevant to the subject of research.

Many of the scholars and authors stated their views upon the negative influence of on screen literature on children cognitive development. The research will try to fill the gaps left unfulfilled by the researchers with the application of Freud's psychoanalytical theory.

Cunningham expresses his views upon the social constructs that build "children and childhood". Every society has its own "socioeconomic conditions", values, traditions and norms that set a different structure for every individual of society. These conditions affect the cognitive development of children. The childhood of a child is based on societal constrains which reflect "different meanings and different cultures". The society molds the innocence of children according to its own conditions and requirements. The critic holds the notion that children literature is imaginary concept but society shapes it according to social constraints. The upbringing of children is divided into social and economic order. In social perspective child's personality is formed through the surrounding of friends and family whereas in economic perspective the wealth and other facilities set cultural differences within child's mental process. Cunningham, *Children's literature-A Cinderella story*, 1995, pg 237)