

LIABILITY OF CHILDREN LITERATURE AT PRESENT TIMES AND THE CREATION OF MYTHICAL IMAGES BY MEDIA

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ABSTRACT:

One of the traditional methods that has the ability to shape children towards morality and introduce complex ideas and concepts to young minds in such a way that other forms of entertainment cannot is storytelling. In the present day scenario it has become a lost art. Modern technological advancements like television and internet has subdued this art and left no space for it to breathe. This research paper throws light on the vanished art of telling stories to children, the importance of children's literature today and addresses the question of how it can contribute to the present generation. The tradition of grandparents narrating stories about God, great Kings and Queens, fantasy stories which are sugar coated with high morals, love for others, ethics and spirituality has become outdated. Grandchildren of this generation have too many things to get distracted and grandparents have too many stories kept inert. This paper argues that the responsibility to substitute the old tradition of teaching morals through narrating stories now falls on paediatric literature to mould the younger generation right from their childhood. Moving away from usual complaints about the present technological advancements like iPods and play stations, this paper encourages paediatric literature to understand the situation and take up the responsibility to shape future generations.

Before written literature come into practice, it is oral tradition that is practiced by people throughout the world. Parenting is not an easy task to handle at all the times. The well-being of children is concerned both by the parents and grandparents. They teach morals and all other good things to their children easily through stories. Most of the moral stories may not be real but it triggers the mind of children and let them think about it. There are four important concepts that are relevant with the title of this paper. They are as follows:

- Nature of storytelling
- A lost art
- Importance of children literature
- Responsibility of a writer

NATURE OF STORYTELLING

Children catch ideas very fast and if anything is narrated in an interesting way, they remember it for a long time. At first it has emerged as an oral form and then it has developed into the written form and has become two different genres. Stories are a brilliant way to portray children about the world outside them. It introduces them new things and they learn many things which are necessary for them even before experiencing it.

The basic idea of telling stories to children is to teach them love for other, knowledge, cleanliness, love for animals, nature, etc.. Even complex ideas can be taught to them through the creativity of the narrator. Starting from the basic ideas, stories can also easily teach children about the importance of family. There are advantages in both stories that are narrated orally and stories in written form.

While narrating a story orally, the narrator can be conscious of the listener. If the listener is not very interested, the narrator may do alterations in the story to grab the attention of the listener. Even the tone of the narrator contributes more to the narration. Another important thing about telling stories to children is that it engages the time of the children and it gives some space to spend time with parents, grandparents or acquaintances.

Usually parents and grandparents narrate stories in their own mother tongue, so it gives exposure for the children to learn new words and leads to the possibility of gaining good knowledge about their mother tongue, unlike the present generation who feels proud saying that they are not very fluent in their mother tongue. Through narrating stories parent gets the advantage of understanding how their children emotionally reacts. For example, if the child feels sad or scared of a particular character in the story, it gives some idea for the parent to know how their child thinks by their reaction.

Stories in written form also have its own advantages. Through reading a child gets introduced to new words and helps in learning vocabulary. Unlike the oral form of narrating stories, written form follows grammar and leads to good grammatical knowledge. As the present generation is completely different from previous generations, it is very difficult to manage their time without too much time being spent in gadgets. Therefore, if parents could not available to engage their children they can at least do is to provide them with good books.

Books may have stories about adventures and magic, but most of the books aim at providing knowledge and wisdom. These imaginary stories with pictures often trigger the knowledge of children and let them enriched with more creative thinking. Stories are one of the important parts of childhood. It has the power to mould the young minds.

A LOST ART

Good old days are now being replaced by play stations and iPods. Time is changing and in its course of change many classic things have vanished. One such thing is storytelling. Amidst the advancements in technology the art of storytelling have somewhere lost its charm. Great Panchathantra stories are replaced by Ninja and Hattori. Doraemon and Shin Chan sits in the place of Vikram and Betael. All the television shows takes the place of folktales.

Folktales aim only at teaching moral and knowledge. In those days people narrate stories about Great Kings and Queens to make them brave and fearless. They tell stories about Gods to make them more spiritual. Stories keep them more alive and provide young children with whatever necessary for their knowledge. It is true that not everything should be learnt through experience. There are some things about which children should have prior knowledge. Not that written stories have less moral and they convey nothing to moral growth of children. Even one's own culture is learned through stories. It also creates a positive attitude towards one's own culture and also the culture of others.

Most of the stories today contains violence and teach them negative attitude towards other people. Children's television shows are adult-centred and provide them with fake knowledge about love and relationships. Television shows focus only on entertainment and lacks in providing knowledge. Parents make their children read stories only to have good vocabulary.

Sitting in front of television for an hour watching television shows meant for children cannot be equated with our grandparents narrating "The Thirsty Crow" story for two minutes. The art of our grandparents narrating stories is not the chit-chats or gossips but actually telling stories that sparks conversations, make children to laugh and think. Storytelling is undeniably a great loss for the present generation children.

IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN LITERATURE

The purpose of kid's books is not only to learn how to read as a lot of people perceive but it make the children to read the world around them. As the tradition of storytelling is not effectively practised in the present generation, the responsibility of teaching knowledge, morals, spirituality, love and other basic things needed for the psychological growth of children is now falls on children literature. They are in the place of parents and grandparents to narrate stories to the younger generation.

There is no use in blaming the technological standards instead to think of a solution. There are a lot many things around children to distract them and there are also many possibilities to mislead them. Many books are written targeting children only for business

profits. Many imaginary fantasy characters are created to grab the attention of children. They unknowingly create stereotypes in the minds of children.

It is psychologically proven that children learn things very fast compared to any other age groups. Being the future generation of the world they must be taught good things that enrich their knowledge. Usually children's stories have happy ending and it gives hope for them. It is very easy to teach them both good and bad things. Both print and electronic media have the power to rule the minds of people. Stories can also be meant for relaxation and entertainment but it does not mean that it can be dumped with junks only to entertain. Because of those fantasy stories children's creativity may increase but it is not the only purpose of children literature.

A very good example for gender stereotype is the fantasy characters today. Who said Barbie is only meant for girl children to play with? Why don't boys play with Barbie? Even a chocolate named Kinder Joy have two separate wrappers, for boys and girls. It is sad to see a boy feels ashamed just to get a chocolate that has a phrase "for girls". We people may feel proud of our improvements in technology but we lack what is necessary for a good living.

RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILDREN LITERATURE TODAY

Whatever the age may be whatever the circumstances may be, if it is good product of literature and it is enriched with high values people have the complete ability to respond to that. For example, a story named "Make Way for Ducklings" by Robert McCloskey, it is a famous children's story of 1940's. It portrays the love of mother towards their children, the importance of family relationship in a very moving manner. Being loaded with huge responsibility of shaping the young minds, the writers must be very conscious of the ideas they convey.

The writer has to narrate the story using "the eyes of a child". Writing stories for children is not a very easy task. Even the usage of vocabulary in the story is also important. The words a writer use should not be more critical. The writer must write the story in children's language. According to the present generation children, some changes can be made based on their interest to find the story interesting. Therefore the stories must be both entertaining and 'informative'. Let them explore the world !

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