

**Manifestations of Responsibility and Independence in the
Kurdish Story “Hapeli-Hapaw” from the Perspective of
Donald Winnicott's Theory of Dependence and Psychological
Transformation**

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Introduction

Folk children's stories are considered valuable sources for interdisciplinary analysis, especially psychoanalytical readings. These stories are very frequent in Kurdish language. This provides an opportunity for psychological readings. “Hapeli-Hapaw” is one of the Kurdish oral stories in which the relationship between the mother and the child comes under attention. In this article, the manifestations of responsibility and independence in the story are investigated using a descriptive-analytical method based on Winnicott's theories regarding the psychological development of the child. This study provides a review of Winnicott's ideas and then analyzes the story based on these ideas. It is argued that this story is a symbolic expression of the three stages of dependence, i.e. absolute dependence (staying at home), relative dependence (going to the market) and moving towards independence (getting married and going on a journey). The story

emphasizes the importance of a suitable interaction between the parent and the child in order to reach the third stage.

Methodology, Review of Literature and Purpose

In the recent years, a lot of research has been done on Kurdish folk tales; for example, "The Morphology of Fairy Thales in Kurdish Language" by Ebrahimi and Parsa (2016), "Investigating and analyzing the Legend of Shamaran in the Region Mokriyan in Mahabad" by Masrou and Rahbar (2019), and "Psychoanalytic Analysis of the Kurdish Legend "Shirzad Shirpanj" Based on Sigmund Freud's Theory of Oedipus Complex" by Moradi Nesari (2023).

On the other hand, folk tales help children to become a more independent and social beings. Bruno Bettelheim in his book, *The Uses of Enchantment*, believes that the function of some popular stories such as "The Goose Girl" is attaining independence and self-awareness (2019: 176).

Nevertheless, a thorough search in Iranian scientific sources revealed that there is no published work on the application of Donald Winnicott's views in literary criticism, especially in folk tales, and consequently on the story of "Hapeli-Hapaw". Therefore, the present article can be considered a new study that aims to investigate the evolution process of the hero of the story based on Donald Winnicott's theory of dependency with a descriptive-analytical method.

The representation of responsibility and the way to achieve independence are the basic questions of this research. The findings show that in the story under study, becoming responsible and independent is necessitated by the existence of a "good enough" (not

too good or bad) relationship between the parent and the child, as well as the existence of a facilitating environment where the child can experiment and discover the world.

Discussion

It is very important to pay attention to the child's needs and respond accordingly. Donald Winnicott is one of the prominent contemporary psychoanalysts who has expanded our view of the early years of development with his works. From his clinical observations, he concluded that the presence of a parent who is "good enough" (not too good or bad) guarantees the child's normal development and flourishing.

According to Winnicott's, there are three stages of human dependence and psychological development: absolute dependence, relative dependence, and movement towards independence (2017: 1). The stage of absolute dependence is the initial period of development; when the baby is not able to do any of his/her own affairs and the parent's duty is to meet his/her needs immediately. This response becomes a little weaker in the stage of relative dependence, i.e. when the child can do some tasks by him/herself, and in the stage of moving towards independence, this delegation of tasks accelerates according to the age of the child or the adolescent.

On the other hand, one of the basic themes in folk tales is reaching maturity and becoming independent. The heroes of these legends have to accept the responsibility of their lives, step in the path of independence and fulfill this developmental task properly. They inevitably have to leave their father's house and the fate makes them

confront many hardships, overcoming which makes the hero reach eternal happiness.

“Hapeli-Hapaw” is the life story of a hero who goes on a long journey to reach responsibility and independence. This legend begins with the description of the life of a mother and a child. With the death of the father of the family, the mother has managed to properly fulfill the mission of being a mother and has raised her child with dedication and self-sacrifice. In this story, Hapeli-Hapaw's mother is not a "good enough" mother but a "too good" mother who does not allow her child to experiment and move towards independence and does not let her son do even the easiest tasks. The mother eventually finds out that this excessive attachment / dependence has had a destructive effect on her child's process of independence. One day, the mother uses a trick to lead Hapeli-Hapaw out of the house and make him encounter the outside world. Later on, Hapeli-Hapaw goes to the market and through a series of accidents, marries the king's daughter. After his marriage, he goes on a journey with a caravan and goes through different stages of his transformation. It is on this journey that he achieves psychological integrity by recognizing all dimensions of his existence (id, ego and superego). At the end of the story, Hapeli-Hapaw returns home with a lot of wealth, which is a symbolic expression of his inner richness, and lives happily.

Conclusion

Folk children's stories are among the best sources for children's intellectual development and the expansion of their symbolic world. By sympathizing with the heroes of these stories, the child gives a symbolic

form to many of his/her unconscious desires and impulses and achieves an indirect understanding of his/her feelings. On the other hand, psychoanalytic readings have increased the importance of these stories and are effective in the expansion of their world of meaning. The story of “Hapeli-Hapaw” is one of the Kurdish children's stories in which the hero's journey from dependence to responsibility and moving towards independence is expressed. From the perspective of Donald Winnicott's theory of dependence and psychological development, this story is a symbolic expression of the three stages of absolute dependence (being at home), relative dependence (going to the market) and moving towards independence (marriage and journey), in which the existence of a parent who is good enough (not too good and suffocating or bad) is emphasized. This is a parent who paves the way for the child's movement towards the third stage of mental development by creating suitable platforms. According to the story of “Hapeli-Hapaw”, becoming responsible and independent requires a kind of limited frustration, a separation and reduction of the parent's adaptability (in a slow and gradual manner) and a suitable space for the child or the adolescent to gain experience. On the other hand, by expressing three tips / advices (which are symbolic expressions of three domains of mental life), the story deems it necessary to pay attention to all aspects of human existence in order to reach maturity and inner integrity. This is a theme by the use of which the hero of the story can achieve eternal happiness.

Keywords: Folk children's stories, Hapeli-Hapaw, Donald Winnicott, dependence, independence, responsibility.

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