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Extended Abstract

Analysis of Gender stereotypes in the Published stories of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in the 60s (A and B Age Groups)

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Introduction

Socialization is the process through which an unaware child gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable, and skilled individual who respects the values and teachings of the culture into which he or she was born. Socialization occurs when children learn the customs of their respective groups so that they can behave in an acceptable manner within that group. This process requires an emotional connection with models, because children's thoughts, feelings and actions are formed in their connection with close relatives and the wider world. Literary works can be an effective aid in the development and nurturing of these dependencies. Among the creative works of children's and young adult literature, stories are the most fundamental ways of indirectly transmitting concepts and values to children. They prepare children to accept gender roles, identities and norms, values and beliefs based on gender differences.

It is very important to pay attention to how gendered characters and behaviors are represented in children's and adolescent literature; because the characters in the story are involved in events that easily create gender stereotypes in the minds of children, and the younger the child, the less resistant they are to the influences of these stereotypes.

Research Method, Review of Literature and Purpose

The aim of this paper is to identify and analyze how gender stereotypes are represented in the stories suitable for age groups A and B, published by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults" between March 1981 and March 1991. The reason for this choice is that early socialization occurs during childhood and this Institute has been recognized by authors, families, and other institutions related to the education of children and adolescents as the most important source of publishing selected works for different age groups of children.

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This research was conducted with respect to the most important elements and structural features of the stories, in an analytical-descriptive manner, and the theoretical basis of the discussion is the teachings of the sociology of gender. This analysis can explain the content and extent of the impact of gender stereotypes presented in these stories on children. This study can also be used by researchers in research related to the works of this institute and the general policies of education in the first years after the Islamic Revolution.

Many articles have been written about gender discrimination in textbooks and literary books and magazines for children, some of which are mentioned here: Pourgiv and Zekavat (2010) have analyzed gender roles in the story of "Khale Sooske". In this paper, it is argued that creating gender roles and values related to it as well as the way they are presented to the reader in different ways such as children's literature and internalizing them are all performed by the patriarchal discourse in order to support and continue such systems within the social-cultural context.

Maghsoodi and Tonadvoli (2014) analyzed the social roles of men and women in children's and adolescents' magazines based on the sixteen roles introduced by Parsons. They have concluded that in these stories, men play influential, supporting, or strategic roles, and women often play ordinary roles.

Discussion

The basis of this research is 18 books for the age groups A and B, published by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults between March 1981 and March 1991, which are classified under the title of stories. In accordance with the age group of the child audience, all of the works in question are accompanied by images, and among them, three works are visual and without text.

In six of the stories in the studied texts, non-human characters play roles, and the plot of all of these stories is based on the pattern of "exploration" and final success. The characters in the three stories do not have gender identities, but in the three stories, the use of adjectives such as lady, gentleman, aunt, and uncle has determined the gender of the characters, and their actions are in accordance with conventional gender stereotypes.

In only two works narrated by a first-person narrator is the narrator's gender identity hidden in the text, but the absence of the mother and the presence of the father, his role in raising the child, his superior power and dominance, and the child's obedience reinforce gender stereotypes based on the power and authority of the father or man in the child's mind.

In ten stories, the narrator is omniscient and the main character of the story is a human being. The limited omniscient narrator narrates the world from the perspective of a boy whose mindset, desires, and actions form the basis for a plot based on "exploration." Thus, physical activity, exploration, and curiosity are attributed to boys; that is, all the activities on which gender stereotypes define men and masculinity. Also, the images presented of the family have specific designs: father, mother and two children, the first of whom is always a boy. In this model, women are not excluded from the text, but unlike men and boys who enjoy a variety of work and activities, jobs, and clothing, women are homogenized in not having a job, in the same type of clothing they wear, and in the type of interests and daily activities they have. In this way, all the characteristics attributed to men are taken away from women: strength, self-confidence, exploration, and resourcefulness are attributed to men, and weakness, helplessness, passivity, and dependence are attributed to women.

In three picture books without text, the characters are just the boy and his grandfather. The grandfather is the source of the child's awareness and familiarity with nature, life, work, and exploration and her image, despite all this effectiveness, is the complete opposite of the stereotypical image of the weak and sick grandmother in some stories. In addition, the stereotypical male faces seen in all picture books show confidence, strength, and seriousness and stand in contrast with the dependence, weakness, and kindness seen in the images of women.

Conclusion

The results of this research show that, except for three works in which non-human characters play roles, gender stereotypes are explicitly and implicitly defined and instilled in children in all the stories discussed.

The main character of all stories in which humans play a role is a curious and creative boy. In all stories, men play a prominent role in the beginning, ending, and progression of the plot; their field of work is outside the home, they have different appearances, occupations, and interests, and with their actions, resourcefulness, and authority, they play the role of helpers, legislators, and guides. Women appear in only a few stories and with the same appearance, and in traditional roles of the weak little sister, the dependent, patient mother, or the sick and infirm grandmother. Therefore, these stories define femininity based on gender stereotypes such as housewifery, lack of logic and nagging, weakness and helplessness, calmness and tolerance, obedience and kindness, and the like.

These stories normalize gender discrimination by instilling gender stereotypes and establishing precise and contradictory boundaries between female and male roles and in this way, they are effective in preparing children of age groups A and B to accept and internalize the entire structure of relationships between men and women as part of their gender role and in turn, they reproduce, repeat, and perpetuate forms of gender discrimination.

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