



Extended Abstract

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A Reading of the Tale “Friendship of the Pigeon, the Crow, the Mouse, the Tortoise, and the Deer” from *Kalileh and Dimneh* Based on the Narrative Features of Philosophy for Children (P4C) with a Critical Perspective on Its Rewriting

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Introduction

Kalileh and Demneh, which is considered a part of the Persian didactic literature, is a book filled with social, political, and moral lessons in the form fables. The high potential of this book and its diverse, insightful themes have led to many rewritings and adaptations, as well as its application in other areas. One of these relatively new areas is teaching philosophy to children (P4C).

In recent years, with the rise of the P4C program, the necessity of providing appropriate local resources for its implementation has become important. To this end, several attempts have been made to rewrite the stories of ancient Persian texts, and some writers have devoted themselves to rewriting literary works following the standards of P4C stories. In the meantime, the precise explanation of the dos and don'ts of a story has become highly crucial. Since the P4C program, especially the writing of philosophical stories, is a new trend in our country, it is necessary to analyze the works published so far to prevent misunderstandings and errors and put this trend on the right track.

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Method and Purpose

In the present study, which was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method, we have explored the tale "Friendship of the Pigeon, the Crow, the Mouse, the Tortoise, and the Deer" from the seventh chapter of *Kalileh and Dimneh* and its rewriting in the book of *Intellectual Stories for Iranian Children*. To this end, by studying the first-hand works of writers and researchers in the fields of P4C and children's literature, the criteria for a children's philosophical story have been collected through recording. In the following, the original tale of "The Friendship of..." and its rewriting have been analyzed based on the criteria obtained at three levels: literary, philosophical, and psychological.

At the literary level, we explored writing characteristics, including fluency and coherence, congruence of the writing to the audience's reading level, as well as narrative elements such as plot, characterization, details and descriptions of the story, conflict, resolution, action and event in the two stories. At the philosophical level, the four types of thinking (critical, creative, collaborative, caring), argumentative dialogue, the potential of philosophical modeling, capacity for exploration and questioning, the ending of the tale, and its rewriting have been analyzed. Finally, given that the authors stated in the introduction of the book *Intellectual Stories for Iranian Children* that the target audience is children and adolescents aged 8 to 14, at the psychological level, we have assessed the appropriateness of the subject and content of the story with the emotional states and needs of the target audience.

The purpose of the present study is to reflect on the seventh chapter of *Kalileh and Dimneh* based on the components of a children's philosophical story, which, as mentioned earlier, has been examined at three levels. Furthermore, the rewriting of this tale in the collection of *Intellectual Stories for Iranian Children* has been explored and investigated to determine the extent to which the authors adhered to the criteria of the P4C.

In this study, we have sought to answer the following questions: 1) What are the philosophical and literary characteristics of the story "Friendship of the Pigeon, the Crow, the Mouse, the Tortoise, and the Deer" in the seventh chapter of *Kalileh and Dimneh*? 2) Is this tale appropriate for use in this program given the P4C story criteria? 3) To what extent have the authors of the book *Intellectual Stories for Iranian Children* been able to observe the P4C and children's story criteria in rewriting this tale?

Discussion

The Philosophy for Children (P4C) program, founded by Matthew Lipman, a professor of philosophy at Columbia University, aims to foster individuals with independent thinking and reasoning abilities. Given that this program has officially entered our education system, its implementation requires the availability of appropriate resources and storybooks. Looking at the resources used in the P4C program, we find that most of these works are non-native and, due to cultural differences, are not suitable for the P4C program in Iran. Moreover, translating these texts occasionally causes language barriers.

These major drawbacks lead us to move towards local stories that are appropriate to the culture and customs of our country. Given the rich history of Persian literature, ancient Persian texts, both in verse and prose, include folk tales and outstanding literary works that enjoy high literary acceptance due to the. Moreover, since they are often written in the form of stories for educational and moral purposes, they have countless philosophical, ethical, and social themes. In addition, the narrative structure of these works makes the events, conversations, and characters natural, unlike philosophical fictional stories, which makes it easier for children to relate to the story.

In addition, given the need for children and adolescents to become familiar with ancient Persian literature and the richness of these texts in teaching moral and philosophical concepts, the importance of using these works and evaluating their rewriting becomes more apparent. Thus, providing a model of the criteria for philosophical fiction is becoming more evident than ever.

Conclusion

The tale in question is appropriate for the emotional states of children aged 8-14 in terms of subject and content, and it enjoys the criteria of P4C stories, such as literary adequacy, psychological adequacy acceptability, and philosophical adequacy. The subject, type of characterization, actions and emotions of the characters, narrative sequence, and central dialogue make this tale very appealing to children. Given the provided explanations, the story has a very high potential for being incorporated into philosophy classes, and since it provides good examples of how to think and reason, it is a very appropriate model for practicing inquiry. It also fosters critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborative thinking, and caring thinking in children.

The examination of the rewriting of this story, which has been published under the title "All Together" in the collection of *Intellectual Stories for Iranian Children*, revealed that this work lacks the criteria of P4C stories and even children's literature. Considering all the issues raised on

the philosophical, literary, and psychological levels, it appears that the authors were unable to present an acceptable work, and the weaknesses of this rewrite outweigh its strengths.

Key words: *Kalileh and Dimneh*, philosophy for children (P4C), philosophical story; rewriting of classical texts

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