

The Role of fantasy and magic in Children's literature

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Abstract

This research paper attempts to explore the profound impact of magic and fantasy in children's literature. It goes deep to find out the significance of these elements in nurturing creativity.

INTRODUCTION

Literature reflects society and different people of different age groups living in society. People influence literature and in turn, literature helps in improving and shaping the society. Men, women and children all form society and have their own emotions, feelings, and needs and that is why literature can be categorized into women's literature, Dalit literature, and children's literature.

Children's literature is important for young readers because it plays a significant role in shaping young minds and helping develop interest in reading. All children's stories have fantasy and magic as the main element. Children's literature serves as a reflection of the dreams, fantasies and magic of young children in many ways. These elements not only draw attention and magnify all aspects of childhood.

Children's literature proves to have a direct impact on child's mind. It helps then to develop all aspects of development. The message drawn from the literature read by the child helps transform character and personality.

Children's literature helps the child perceive the real world in a positive way through the medium of fantasy and magic. Children's literature can be broadly defined as any creative literary work that has been especially written and designed for children's use.

Importance of Children's literature Children's literature is crucial for learning and development. Literature allows children to grow, imagine, and learn. Few reasons support that children's literature is vital for early childhood education and care.

Language development

Children's literature exposed young children to rich vocabulary, sentence structures, and language patterns. Reading aloud to children helps them develop their listening and speaking skills, expanding their vocabulary and understanding the language.

Cognitive development

Engaging with stories and books stimulates children's cognitive abilities. They learn to follow narratives, make predictions, and understand cause-and-effect relationships. It enhances critical thinking, problem-solving and comprehension skills

Imagination and creativity

Children's literature fosters imagination and creativity. Through vivid illustrations and captivating stories children can explore different worlds, characters and scenarios. This imaginative play supports their creative thinking and helps them develop their own storytelling abilities

Emotional development

Books provide a safe space for children to explore and understand their emotions. Stories often feature relatable characters facing various challenges and experiences. Children can identify with these characters and develop empathy, compassion, and emotional intelligence.

Cultural Awareness and Diversity

Children's literature exposed young learners to diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives. It helps them appreciate differences and promotes inclusivity. By reading stories featuring characters from various backgrounds children develop a broader worldview and acceptance of others

Early Literacy skills

Children's literature serves as a foundation for developing early Literacy skills, including letter recognition, phonics, and reading comprehension. Exposure to books and stories at a young age contributed to building a strong foundation for later reading and writing abilities

Bonding and Relationships

Reading together created meaningful bonding experiences between children and caregivers. It strengthens relationships, improves communication, and provides opportunities for shared enjoyment and quality times

For this a clear understanding of magic and fantasy. Fantasy is a type of imaginative fiction featuring feelings, places, and events that could never occur in real life.

Magic in fiction is the endowment of characters or objects in works of fiction that do not occur in the real world. For example Alice in Wonderland written by Lewis Carroll is one of the first portal fantasies, a genre that presents the reader with a completely new world after passing through a fantastical world where humans talk in a non-sensical verse. She continues to go through several portals taking her from one topsy turvey world to another.

Jonathan Swift employs the use of fantasy in his novel 'Gulliver travels' where Gulliver is on an adventure in the mind of the author. Swift makes these fantasies to appear real to the reader through his charmed story-telling and fusion of facts and fantasy. Gulliver's adventures are imaginary. He sets a journey to explore on real islands but comes to find himself on an island with strange and unusual characters like tiny people, giants and enlightened talking horses to criticize European society.

Similarly R.K. Narayan's Malgudi days fiction comes with real persons and real situations. Only Malgudi is a fictional town imagined in the mind of the author where his literary works take origin. All the stories of R.K. Narayan revolve around the people living in Malgudi who live in Malgudi and are found to overcome struggles of living in a small town in southern India in the nineteenth century.

In another novel, fantasy's aim is within the immediate context but becomes incongruous in the larger context which includes realistic persons and realistic situations. All the novels of R.K. Narayan have realism and fantasy very loosely threaded together.

In 'The Guide' we find order-disorder-order in Narayan's novel. "All the alarms and excusing, all the excitement and suspense, all the regrets and recrimination are over. Raju realizes that 'neither Marco nor I had a place in her life, which she had its own sustaining vitality and which she herself had underestimated all along'".

Most of his novels took place in a fantasy small town of southern India, Malgudi. Some more examples of fantasy and magic are found in William Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' where apart from the enchanted forest, there also exists in Shakespeare's world an enchanted island where things are not what they seem to be and where magic does not entertain at all but regenerated the sinful, reconciled the estranged and restores the lost. One does not see a train of fairies hopping about and making mischief in the Tempest but a strong central character, a magical magus dealing with seemingly white magic, controlling the force of nature and using his favourite slave, the airy spirit Ariel as the chief executive for his carefully planned schemes. Shakespeare used magic in this play to show that it can be both merciful and terrible power making the audience experience feelings of unease throughout the play before finally using the very same

magic to bring about a happy or a satisfactory ending. In other words, the one play in which fantastic elements are more or less realistic

Thus, research indicates that fantasy and magic fiction play can benefit kids. Engaging with fantasy and magic can stimulate creativity and boost vocabulary. It may help some children develop self-regulation skills. It might even enhance their working memory performance and under some conditions help them discover creative solutions to problems. Fantasy and magic may help children to connect with the realities of the world and help them in facing the real challenges of the world.

Children's literature is important to early childhood education and care as it supports language development, cognitive growth, imagination, emotional understanding, cultural awareness early Literacy skills, and meaningful relationships

Incorporating quality children's literature into early learning environments can have a positive and lasting impact on young learners.

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