Consequences of Negativity in English Literature

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Abstract

The effects of negativity in contemporary fiction might extend beyond the story's characters to the readers as well. Poverty, inequality, and injustice are all examples of societal problems that can be brought to attention by emphasizing the negative. This has the potential to increase understanding of the issues and encourage in-depth reflection on them. However, studies have shown that reading too much negativity in literature might have the same effect. Feelings of pessimism, melancholy, and cynicism might set in after prolonged exposure to stories with unpleasant themes and characters. Particularly vulnerable are young people and those with preexisting mental health conditions.

Changing community dynamics, reinforcing positive behaviors, providing educational, social, and psychological support, and restricting or banning access to harmful literary works are all ways in which society can help kids cope with the aforementioned problems. For the purposes of this study, the foregoing is a comprehensive summary of the impact of unfavorable/ negatively described literary characters on students.

Keywords : consequences, poverty, inequality, injustices, hopelessness, cynicism.

Introduction

The hallmark of a negative character is behavior that goes against the norms of the community to which one belongs. When an individual acts in a way that goes against the norms of society, we say that they have misbehaved or are upsetting the social balance, revealing something unfavorable about their personality. According to Sabrahmenyam, k. et al. (2011), the impact of negative characters in works of literature is a worldwide concern that has been felt since at least the 15th century, prompting the creation of guidelines and rules by intellectuals and literary critics such as Plato, Aristotle, and Horace. According to Plato's The Republic, exposing young people to literature has a negative effect on society since it is a replication of imitations that is far removed from reality.

Hew, K. F et al. (2012) found that exposure to various forms of drama (plays), poetry, and film increased adolescent interest in making friends. They don't care if the other person is younger or older than him; they just want to recreate the conditions under which they read. The young don't know what plane they're floating on; they're too busy shaping the future to care.

Some of the best works ever written for children include Pinocchio, Alice in Wonderland, Winnie the Pooh, and the Harry Potter books and movies, as stated by Livingstone, S. M., et al. (2009). These books are popular with kids because they either include a fully realized universe or have protagonists that readers can identify with. Students find these books entertaining and often come to identify with (and even idealize) the characters inside them. Moral stories help parents and

educators instill valuable life lessons in their children. Some of the most well-known authors for children include Aesop, Enid Blyton, Roald Dahl, and Mark Twain, among many others. Many people's youths have been improved thanks to them.

The world's children have been entertained by their works in the millions. The most frequently used supplementary features are the audio and video playback options. The videos might range from those uploaded by users on a wide variety of topics to professionally produced content like movie trailers and short films (YouTube). According to Patchin et al. (2010), the spread of literature throughout the world was aided by publications published in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. People all across the world can communicate with one another through literature, including film, drama, poetry, and fiction. He continued by saying that both positive and bad changes in behavior are being influenced by literature among different demographics, especially young people.

Literary Protagonists who are Villains: Negative literary characters are those who deceive the reader or who have the power to influence the reader to engage in immoral behavior. As a result, it is important to limit pupils' exposure to poor-quality literature so that they don't develop unhealthy habits as a consequence of reading it. This necessitates that students have a say in how often and for how long they read books.

Occurrence of Positive and Negative Examples in Literature: In fiction, there are two types of characters that authors typically present to readers: role models and antagonists. Both can be helpful in teaching important life lessons and shaping one's character.

Examples of Positive Characters: When a character takes decisions that are in line with God's will and ultimately beneficial, both for themselves and for others, we can look to them as an exemplary role model. Fictional works that feature virtuous protagonists and antagonists demonstrate unequivocally that following God's precepts yields rewards (either in this lifetime or in the next). Readers can take inspiration from these exemplary figures.

Mr. Eardley exemplifies great character in The Shepherd of Bethlehem, King of Israel. He's the new minister in town, and on the day he arrives he falls on some ice that a mischievous kid put there. Mr. Eardley is forced to spend a considerable amount of time in bed after breaking his leg, but he never expresses resentment at the youngster or self-pity. Mr. Eardley continues to reach out to the lost by hosting Bible studies in his residence, despite the obstacles he faces.

This book exhorts its readers to strive diligently for the Kingdom, to avoid whining and self-pity, and to use all means necessary to win the lost to Christ. The pastor also presents a character analysis on David from the Bible, which delves into the man behind the shepherd and the king of Israel. The author has successfully interwoven a clear explanation of Biblical ideas into the narrative without making it feel like a sermon. A few of the novel's protagonists undergo a change as a direct result of their Bible studies.

Examples of Negatives Characters: A bad example would be a character that displeases God by making decisions that have unintended consequences for himself or others. Novels with bad examples indicate that disobeying God's rules has bad consequences (now and in the afterlife). These bad instances serve as cautionary tales for the reader.

Helen, the protagonist of the eponymous novel, serves as a prime negative example. While she can confidently answer many questions about the Bible in Sunday school, she does not love God or show any good fruit in her life. Betty, Helen's sister, isn't very well-versed in the Bible, but she doesn't let that stop her from putting what little she does know into practice, such as inviting Louisa, a disabled child, to Sunday school and escorting her home. Helen cares most about the approval of her peers, therefore she refuses to let Louisa accompany her and Betty on their Sunday school walk.

Helen's growing animosity toward Louisa has devastating consequences throughout the book. Readers are urged to take a page from Betty rather than Helen's playbook. Readers will learn how to allow the Bible's teachings sink deep into their souls and live out their faith, rather than just know them intellectually. The themes of hypocrisy, self-control, rage, and being a kind Samaritan are explored in detail in this book.

There is often a balance of good and bad examples in Christian fiction. Some books have protagonists who first display sinful behavior and experience or cause others to experience negative consequences as a result; nonetheless, these protagonists eventually repent and, with God's aid, learn to eradicate this sin from their lives. An other scenario that includes both types of examples is when a story presents two characters, one of whom serves as an ideal instance and the other as a negative one. The narrative progresses to show readers that one character is blessed by adhering to the messages of Christ while the other character is troubled by being indifferent to them.

The Secular Novel Traits: Bo0th Positive and Negative: Even in modern secular fiction, there may be heroes with admirable qualities. Characters often have both admirable and undesirable traits, such as when they risk their lives to save another or when they give generously to those in need, so younger readers need guidance on how to tell the difference between the two. In addition, God is not acknowledged in secular books; yet, this is something that parents and instructors may emphasize to make the story valuable even if it does not explicitly say so. This is why I think it's important for a parent or teacher to guide a student through an investigation of a secular literature and make it crystal apparent to the student which acts and attitudes glorify Lord and which do not.

There are a few secular novels written today that are helpful for Christians, but there are also those that are detrimental. A detrimental novel is one that tries to make undesirable qualities seem admirable. They may, for instance, celebrate violent acts or vengeance. Another form of problematic book is one in which a protagonist possesses a poor character characteristic but

experiences no negative consequences for doing so. These two categories of harmful books offer readers the notion that their sins have no consequences. This is categorically not the case.

In closing, I'd want to stress the importance of both good and bad examples for readers. I would add that good Christian literature is the best place to find such examples, but that a modest amount of secular literature is fine as long as the reader is able to recognize the negative tendencies in characters. Before they have a solid reading foundation and can read independently, young children should be exposed to only a small amount of secular material.

The study's scope is broken down into three parts: its geographical scope, its temporal scope, and its content scope. The purpose of this research is to analyze how four different Soroti secondary schools' eighth-graders have been affected by reading fictional works featuring bad characters.

Most Famous Negative Characters

(i) **Voldemort:** If you think of the word "villain," one of the first things that may come to mind is Voldemort, the noseless villain from Harry Potter. Voldemort is a brilliant and ambitious orphan who will stop at nothing to attain power. Our protagonist Harry's fate is intricately intertwined with that of this seemingly callous and remorseless man.

(ii) **Joffrey:** Joffrey is hardly a formidable or iconic villain in Game of Thrones, yet he succeeds in inspiring profound loathing. Cersei Lannister, his manipulative mother, is largely responsible for turning her son into a despot. He's a bad partner because he's self-centered and trusts everyone too easily. His treatment of Sansa is sure to infuriate you.

(iii) **Rasheed:** Rasheed, from the best-selling novel by Khaled Hosseini, "A Thousand Splendid Suns," a poignant story about two women. These two women form an unlikely bond via shared experiences. Reasons of life that pitted them against one another. Rasheed, the antagonist, is a sexist jerk who treats his two wife like trash. He is also abusive to his own child.

(iv) **Dracula:** Bram Stoker's Dracula is a bloodsucking undead. He's not like Edward Cullen, a dashing vampire who dates normal people. Dracula's monstrous and vicious motivations make him a real monster. Many films, TV shows, and even computer games have used his likeness because of his notoriety for brutality.

(v) **Big Brother:** Big Brother, 1984's Orwellian nemesis, has a unique trait in that we never actually see him or hear him speak. His influence is felt throughout the novel, yet at his elevated level of power, he is beyond of our reach. He stands in for any dictatorial leader who will stop at nothing to maintain control. This involves wiping out ideas like love and history altogether.

(vi) Lady Macbeth: Lady Macbeth, the embodiment of ambition in Shakespeare's play, is responsible for steering her husband down the path of evil. He then proceeds to eliminate the king and any potential heirs, in addition to wreaking havoc on his subjects' daily lives. Lady Macbeth's insanity was a direct result of her ruthless politics and actions. Her repentance is the gradual destruction of her sanity that she knows is coming.

(vii) Frankenstein: Frankenstein, the monster created by Mary Shelley, whose deadliest opponent is also known today as a monster. Frankenstein sought to make a monster in his own image and didn't give any regard to the consequences of his actions.

(viii) Satan: The Biblical Fall of Mankind was orchestrated by Satan, so it would be remiss of me to leave him off this list. The epic poem Paradise Lost by John Milton describes the fall of humanity as a result of Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden. In this case, Satan, or what modern Christians around the world call the "devil," is the one who sows the seeds of temptation.

(ix) Sandeep: Sandeep, the antagonist of 'Home and the World' by Tagore, is a charming yet self-centered thief. Bimal, his buddy Nikhil's housewife, has never left her house before, but he manages to attract and seduce her. When he meets a new person, he immediately starts taking advantage of them for his own gain. He's not the most formidable foe; he's just a lousy person.

(x) Moriarty: Moriarty: Possibly for the first time, the cliche of the mad genius was introduced by Arthur Conan Doyle in his Sherlock Holmes stories. The brilliant detective did, in fact, find a worthy adversary in Moriarty. Moriarty was on par intellectually, observationally, and in terms of knowledge with Holmes. The only real difference was that Moriarty used his intelligence for evil purposes.

This research will help fill in the blanks where there is insufficient data on how literature influences students' attitudes and actions.

Knowing what methods work best for communicating with students is a huge assistance for counselors, especially those who specialize in working with young people.

The findings of this study have the potential to direct subsequent scholarly investigation and the implementation of necessary precautions.

Finally, policymakers in various government agencies may benefit from this study's findings.

In the realm of education, for instance, curriculum designers will have more information to work with when creating lessons for kids.

Definition of key terms of Negativity in Literature : (Ferber. T. 2010) Defines behaviour as 'an action, activity, or process which can be observed and measured'.

a) According to Phelps, E.(2009)' a negative character refers to an action against the rules and regulations that is guiding the society'.

b) According to Cheung, W. S.(2012) 'Literary work refers to the body of written works of language, period, or culture or it refers to imaginative or creative writing especially of recognized artistic value'.

c) According to Gazi Begum (2009) 'behavioural development is the evolution of actions, including reactions and responses to the environment, over an individual's lifespan'.

d) Oxford dictionary defines a character as 'a person, animal or any object used by the author to bring out his information in a novel, poem, play or movie'.

Conclusion

This study aims to portray the interconnected facts about student misbehavior, including the primary signs involving selfishness and self-focused traits, unforgiving, arrogant, defiant, or rude personality traits, and sexual relationship, by taking a global perspective on the rising tide of student misconduct.

Despite the fact that many literary works have both positive and negative effects on students, including the former through exposure to new cultures and the latter through increased intellectual and behavioral growth and language awareness, and the former through assistance in character and social development, it is undeniable that the latter can be a result of exposure to the latter.

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