

## **Socio-Cultural Effects Of Visual Representation Through Animated Films With Special Reference To Movie- Inside Out & Zootopia.**

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*With the rapid development of science and technology, the world of animated cinema has evolved by leaps and bounds. While animated films of the past were targeted for a specific audience especially children, the same cannot be said anymore in the present day about this highly popular genre of cinema. Commercially successful films like Frozen, Zootopia, Kungfu Panda, Despicable Me, Inside Out, Wall-E, Ice-age, are just a few examples of the increasing popularity of the animated movies. All the aforementioned titles have found great appeal and have mesmerized children and elders alike. The story of any film plays an important role in capturing its audience and eventually determining a film's critical acclaim and financial success. The story concept ties together various visual elements which gives shape to the story teller's vision and contribute to the overall effect of an animated film. The main aim of this research is to explore the effectiveness of visual representation in animated films while spreading social awareness.*

*The basic objective of the study is to study the Socio-cultural effects of visual representation in animated films.*

*The researcher implied qualitative methods for the research.*

*This study is anticipated to be a pioneering activity in exploring the effectiveness of animated films in spreading social awareness.*

**Keywords:** *Animation, cinema, critical acclaim, social cultural effects, visual representation.*

### **Introduction-**

Films are basically visual art work used to simulate experiences that communicate ideas, stories, perceptions, feelings, beauty or atmosphere through the use of moving images accompanied by sound or other sensory stimulations. This powerful visual and a popular mass medium reflects cultural values, reconstructs images, and moulds public opinion in addition to providing entertainment to society. While a film may not present factual characters, it tries to represent the contemporary society or the various issues of the society and it is a powerful medium in highlighting serious issues, social evils, and various social, political and environmental problems in an informative and entertaining way. Films, therefore have the ability to motivate public opinion as it assures of a high degree of attention. Mainstream cinema has a larger impact on the audience as it reaches out to a large number of people. It is therefore apparent that quality cinema with meaningful messages issued in public interest should be produced in large numbers. It has great potential to motivate people to take stand against the social issues & to be a part of the social campaigns run against government & private organisations. The uniqueness of films lie in its likeness to real life and in the compelling blend of several arts including painting, dance, music, poetry, sculpture, architecture, photography, editing, etc. In a cinema, people on the screen can be seen walking, talking, laughing, reacting and emoting to situations which make it believable and engrossing to the viewers. In short, the moving images in cinema differentiates it from other forms of art and lends more credulity to this form of communication.

Communication is known as- the act or process of communication is the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinion or information by speech, written words or signs. In general, communication can be divided into two different forms like visual communication and verbal

communication. Visual Communication is the interpretation, transformation and expression of messages(ideas/concepts) in forms that can be viewed.

Visual communication is defined as the practice of graphically representing information to efficiently,

effectively create meaning. It includes: signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, photography, product design and an altogether different art form i.e. an animation.

In the present digital age of limited attention spans, visual communication is the strongest medium to communicate. Cinema is a powerful visual medium of mass communication and can encourage people to bring positive change needed for the growth of the society. With its wider outreach and acceptance, it can easily influence, mould & shape the society.

Animation, which is a very potent form of visual communication, results from the rapid display of sequence of images of 2D or 3D artwork or model positions in order to create an illusion of However, it would be a gross understatement to say that animation is just a sequence of images played at a very fast scale. This ever evolving art is also a tool for the generation, exploration and connection of ideas in addition to the commonly perceived purpose of communication. It can visualize thoughts, feelings, and experiences through abstraction or simplification and by joining forces with the digital medium, the capabilities of animation have evolved manifold. Thus, it gives free expression to imagination which can easily transcend the boundaries of traditional cinema. In short, animation transports a spectator to an imaginary world dreamed up by the artist.

Society has been greatly influenced by cinema and vice versa. Since the introduction of cinema in the world, it has tried to portray the reflection of the society through its big screen. Cinema has been one of the leading media to create awareness in the society on different social issues. There are various films which inspired, motivated, and have been instrumental towards changing the mindset of the society on the common social issues of casteism, social discrimination, zamindari system, untouchability, women empowerment, national integration etc.

While animated films of the past were targeted for a specific audience especially children, the same cannot be said anymore in the present day about this highly popular genre of cinema. Commercially successful films like Frozen, Zootopia, Kungfu Panda, Despicable Me, Inside Out, Wall-E, Ice-age, are just a few examples of the increasing popularity of the animated movies. All the aforementioned titles have found great appeal and have mesmerized children and elders alike. The story of any film plays an important role in capturing its audience and eventually determining a film's critical acclaim and financial success. The story concept ties together various visual elements which gives shape to the story teller's vision and contribute to the overall effect of an animated film. This research aims to explore effectiveness of visual representation in animated films while spreading social awareness.

### **Review of literature-**

#### **Sharma, Archana. (2018). Role of Cinema in Creating Social Awareness.**

According to the researcher the cinema is always influenced by the society and vice versa. From its inception, it tried to portray the social reflection through its big screen. As an interactive medium, films always tries to create awareness in the society on various social issues.

There are various films which inspired, motivated and even changed the mentality of the society on the issues of casteism, social discrimination, zamindari system, untouchability, women empowerment, national integration etc.

She also mentioned that today most of the films talked about some sensitive subjects of the society like health, sexual violence, LGBT etc. During 2017-18 some filmmakers shown their courage by addressing such issues that are taboo in the society like erectile dysfunction, sanitation, corruption, honor killing and menstrual hygiene through their films like Toilet ek prem katha, Phullu, Padman, Shubh Mangalm, Hindi Medium, G kutta se & Lipstick Under my Burkha.

This research paper tried to observe & analyze how society accept these films and how much these are successful in creating awareness among common people on above mentioned issues. The researcher used secondary data available on various mass mediums related to films with social message was studied thoroughly. The findings of the study proves that these films not only commercially successful but also successful in raising awareness and influence people to bring change in the society.

**Mat Zin, Nor Azan & Nasir, Yuhanis & Munirah, Ghazali. (2010)- Promoting socio-cultural values through storytelling using animation**

In this study the researchers opined that with rapid advancement in information communication technology (ICT) has changed the landscape of education and entertainment. Today interactive multimedia application software can be used for delivering instructions. Multimedia technology empowers instructional delivery through effective learning strategies such as digital storytelling using 2D or 3D animations, simulation and digital games. Animation in its various forms like cartoons, anime and animated feature films are now considered as a very popular forms of entertainment. And these forms are widely used in various sectors like advertisement, entertainment, education and science. The researchers showed that anime ( In Japan animation known as anime) is the art that help adolescents to shape and build their favorite anime character. They also opined that it helps in developing various skills and abilities among children. Because of this reason any one can use animation based edutainment software to educate children about their socio cultural values while entertaining them with interesting folklore at the same time.

Though literature plays an very important role in our lives, especially from cultural prospective because it is rich with educational and socio cultural values to be imparted among the people of the society, but always our society gives more emphasis on science and technology at school.

And literature always neglected at the school only exception for those students who wish to take social sciences course. Because of this tradition, the local children are more familiar with the western literature as presented in Hollywood made movies such as Robin Hood, Sleeping beauty and Cinderella. According to the authors with the help of current available information technology tools it is possible to promote local literature among the new generation. This research study carried out to develop an edutainment software which includes content from the Malay literature to help society's socio cultural values to the younger generation.

**Ahmed, shumaila & Wahab, Juliana.(2014)- Animation and socialization process: Gender role portrayal on Cartoon Network. Asian social science**

Through this research the researcher tried to understand the gender representation of male and female characters in various animated cartoons of Cartoon network and the other popular channel for children. Animated cartoons have always been significant among the life of many children. Researcher also observed that the popular TV genre is broadcasted in different languages from Japan, Pakistan, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, India and many other countries. The content analysis of selected animated genre from the month of January to July 2013 is done.

The main objective was to understand the representation of male and female characters in children's animated genre. The researcher selected only the most popular cartoon channels of the children as a sample. The findings of this research reveal that worldwide popular animated cartoon channel tries to represent the male and female characters in a biased and stereotypical way, which to a certain extent play an important role in socialization process for shaping and constructing ideas about male and female's position and character in society.

**Objectives**

Objectives of the Research

1. To study the content of the selected animated movies.
2. To examine the socio-cultural effects of visual representation in Inside out and Zootopia.
3. To understand the work of two animated movies- Inside out and Zootopia through their visuals.

### **Research Methodology**

The researcher has implied qualitative method for the research. Therefore, the researcher applied content analysis method to study the selected animated movies. Due to time constraints, the researcher will select only two movies. Through the content analysis the researcher tries to find out how the animated films are successful in visual representation of socio cultural issues. The researcher will analyse each of these films and try to find out how these animated movies have portrayed socio cultural messages. Researcher has also approached the experts from FTII and film making students to understand their perspective on these films.

### **Data analysis**

#### **Content analysis-**

##### **Inside out-**

Produced by Pixar Animation studios, Inside out is a 2015 American computer animated comedy film and it was released by Walt Disney pictures. In addition to winning the Academy award for best animated feature and nomination for Academy Award for best Original screenplay at 88th Academy Awards held in 2016, this Movie received fifteen best picture, twenty one best original screenplay and forty best animated feature nominations from over 50 different organization and associations.

**Plot-**A girl named Riley is born, and in her mind, the basic emotions that control her actions— Joy, Sadness, Fear, Disgust, and Anger come into existence. These five emotions have been personified in the movie which controls the protagonist's mind through a console in the imaginary "control-room" or headquarters. The girl's experiences transform into memories which are stored in the headquarters as colored orbs and are sent into her long term memory every night. Her personality is shaped by the five most important "core memories" which the viewers see in the form of floating islands. Joy acts as the leader of the pack of emotions, and she along with the rest of the emotions try to limit influence of the "emotion character" Sadness, which tends to jump into depression at the slightest hint of an unfavorable moment. The enthusiasm or urgency with which the other emotions try to suppress "Sadness" gives an impression to the

**viewer of the absolute undesirability of the emotion "Sadness". It makes one feel as if the antagonist of the story is "Sadness".**

At the age of 11, when Riley moves to San Francisco for her father's new job, several events trigger sadness in the girl's mind. The girl sorely misses her past home after finding that the new house is cramped and old. Her father gets occupied with his new job and consequently spends less time with her. The local pizza parlor serves a limited menu of pizza topped with broccoli which Riley finds disgusting. Even the movers and packers van with Riley's family belongings ends up in a different city and would take weeks to get back to Sanfrancisco. When she attended the first day at her new school, it turns out to be disappointment when sadness retroactively turns joyous memories sad. Because of this Riley breaks out in front of her class and this creates a sad core memory. Meanwhile the emotion, Joy tries to destroy this memory using a vacuum tube but rather she ends up disabling the islands of Riley's personality by accidentally knocking out other core memories loose during a struggle with sadness. This mishap results in all the core memories sent to long term memory usage along with the emotion characters - Joy and Sadness.

In the absence of Joy and Sadness, only Anger, Fear and Disgust are left in control in the headquarters which bring more troubles in Riley's life and eventually separates her from her parents, friends and hobbies. Thus, her personality islands consequently start crumbling and falling into the "Memory Dump", where her memories are forgotten. Running out of options, Anger inserts an undesirable idea into the console, which prompts Riley to run away to Minnesota, with the belief that her happiness will be restored. Meanwhile in the long term memory area of Riley, estranged Joy and Sadness come across Bing Bong, Riley's childhood imaginary friend. This imaginary friend suggests taking the "train of thought" back to headquarters. After several obstacles caused by the collapse of the personality islands, the trio manages to catch the train. But Riley falls asleep in the meantime, causing the train to derail with collapse

of another island. With no solution in sight, Joy takes a recall tube back to headquarters with Bing Bong while leaving sadness behind. But the ground below the tube collapses and sends Joy and Bing Bong to memory dump. Bing Bong's loss dashes all hopes of return to the headquarters. But, crestfallen Joy stumbles upon a sad memory of Riley. This memory shows that when Riley was sad, her parents and friends had come around to comfort her and eventually make her happy. This revelation makes Joy understand the purpose of sadness and that is to alert others through its expressions when Riley gets emotionally overwhelmed and needs help. Joy eventually takes Bing Bong's old wagon rocket to escape the memory dump and reunites with Sadness.

By the time Joy and Sadness arrive at the Headquarters, they discover that Anger's idea had disabled the console rendering Riley apathetic and emotionless. But having learnt her lessons, Joy immediately hands over control of the console to Sadness, who is able to reactivate it and this eventually prompts Riley to return to her new home. Sadness replaces the core memories, transforming them from Happy to Sad and making Riley miss her parents and finally get back to them. On seeing Riley back, her overjoyed parents acknowledge that they also miss their past home. Finally Joy and Sadness collaborate together, creating a new core memory consisting of Happiness and Sadness. This leads to the formation of a new personality island which symbolizes Riley's acceptance of her new life.

Towards the end of the movie, Riley is shown to adapt to her new home with new friends and a return to her hobbies. Meanwhile in the headquarters, all emotions collaborate effectively on a newly expanded console with room for them all.

#### **Socio-cultural effects through Inside out Movie-**

Through the manifestation of emotions, Inside out is a good animated representation of how our minds react to social situations, create, process and alter memories. During the development of this film the director Pete Docter worked very closely with different neurologists and psychologists to understand how brain influences personalities. The content of this film provides great perspective for teaching social thinking even with individuals with Autism spectrum disorder.

Throughout Inside Out, everyone could be guided through a progressive series of tasks, from the simpler job of figuring out and recognizing the basic five emotions of anger, sadness, disgust, fear, and joy and how the characters are thinking, feeling, and planning; to a more complex exploration of how relationships develop and change over time, and how one's own emotions connect to the film. The movie is full of visual literal interpretations, including "train of thought," "brain freeze," and "things that get stuck in your head." Intermediate mind readers may discuss one of the movie's core lessons: it is okay and possible to experience two emotions at once. With support, they may also reflect upon what crying does for us and how it can make you feel better versus continuing to feel sad. Many social thinkers also may enjoy taking a look into the heads of Riley's parents, where they'll have an opportunity to experience the difference between male and female perspective involving a situation with Riley's behavior. Many scenes can be used as discussion points for advanced social thinkers, including short versus long term memory, the creation of memory, abstract through, perspective taking, recall and use memories, how facts and opinions look similar and many, many more.

As Inside out's credit begin to roll, it leaves the viewers with an extra dash of perspective taking by visiting the minds (and emotions) of characters who interacted with Riley throughout the film. Here, Pixar does a delightful job of summing up a human universal and a central theme of the film: for every feeling there is a thought, for every thought there is an action and for every action there is a social reaction.

#### **Zootopia-**

##### **Plot-**

Zootopia is a fictional city of anthropomorphic mammals, which finds rabbit Judy Hopps accomplishing her childhood dream of becoming a police officer. Despite her aspirations and good records in academy, Judy is assigned to parking duties by chief Bogo, who doubts her capabilities as a rabbit. One day, disappointed and in desperation to prove herself, Judy goes out of her way to arrest Duke Weaselton, a

weasel who stole a bag of crocus bulbs known as *Midnicampum holicithias*. After getting reprimanded from Chief Bogo, Judy stumbles upon a case of a missing otter Emmitt, which is reported by Miss Otterton. Judy volunteers for this case and finds support from Assistant Mayor Dawn Bellwether. Chief Bogo is forced to hand over the case to Judy but with a caveat that she has 48 hours to track down the missing other and on failing, she would have to resign.

On her first day, she is hustled by a con artist fox duo, Nick Wilde and Finnick.

Judy enlists the help of a con artist fox Nick by blackmailing him over his confession on evading taxes. Nick happens to be the last person to see Emmitt and he leads Judy to a limousine owned by a major criminal Mr. Big, who in turn reveals that the otter went "savage" and attacked his driver Manchas. The driver further mentions that Emmitt was yelling about "Night Howlers" before, he himself turns savage and attacks Judy and Nick. By the time, Judy's calls for re-enforcements, Manchas disappears. Chief Bogo demands the resignation from Judy turn, but Nick reminds Bogo that there is still 10 hours left to solve the case. To help out Judy, Assistant Mayor Bellwether provides Judy and Nick access to the city's traffic cameras which leads to the discovery that Manchas was captured by wolves, which are probably the night howlers. Judy and Nick manage to locate the missing predators, but only to find them all gone savage and imprisoned at Cliffside Asylum. Further investigations reveal that Mayor Leodore Lionheart has incarcerated these "savage" animals to determine the cause of their behavior and keep them away from public. The mayor and the asylum staff are then arrested on charges of misuse of power and false imprisonment and Bellwether takes over as the new mayor.

Judy receives her much awaited appreciation for solving the case but she puts the blame of the recent savage behavior on the predatory history of the animals during a press conference. Her comments incite hatefulness, discrimination and insecurity amongst the animals of Zootopia, who until then were co-existing peacefully while burying their prey and predator differences. Nick being of predator origins, completely disapproves of Judy's ideas and abandons her. Feeling guilty, Judy quits her job and returns to her hometown.

At home, Judy realizes that Night Howlers do not refer to any animals but actually they are the crocus bulbs Weaselton stole, and they contain some toxins which are responsible for the "savage" behavior of the animals. Judy returns to Zootopia and after reconciling with Nick, the duo find out that the crocus bulbs were for a Ram named Doug who developed a drug made from Night Howlers. This drug was injected into the predators by shooting them with a dart gun making them go savage.

Before Judy and Nick can inform Zootopia police department with the drug as evidence, Mayor Bellwether ambushes the duo in the National History museum and seizes the drug from their custody. She reveals that she is the mastermind behind the administering of this drug to frame predators as dangerous as they were in the past. Bellwether tries to shoot Nick with the drug to get her to attack Judy but it does not work as the pellets in Bellwether's gun have been replaced with blueberries. In the meantime, Judy records the confession of Bellwether on her role in the whole conspiracy and this proof incriminates the Mayor and her accomplices. Ex Mayor, Lionheart denies knowledge of the conspiracy and asserts that his imprisonment of the "savage" predators was a "wrong thing for the right reason". With the true cause of the epidemic identified and the conspirators behind the bars, the predators are cured and Judy joins back the police department. Nick becomes the city's first Fox police inspector after graduating from the Zootopia academy.

### **Socio cultural effects through Zootopia-**

Zootopia is a comedic and light hearted animated film by Disney. It represents a fictional city in a world where animals have evolved to live collectively in an enormously diverse city, while abandoning their natural food habits. The film is visually mesmerizing and it provides an educational plot about unity in diversity which gets attacked time and again by conspiracies for personal gains.

“The film tries to put insight of the various social issues which are prevalent in today's world, all the while being inspirational. Even though the film is a jubilant children's movie, it successfully portrays the struggles faced by the main character, which is putting up against the prejudices of being a smaller animal like a rabbit.

A bunny who was named as Judy Hopps is the main character in this film. With a goal to become a police officer in the big city Judy encounters the trials and tribulations of having to prove her competence in a respectable work force. The powerful animals at the police station refer to Judy as being just a cute bunny. Eventually, she proves herself to be stronger than anyone perceived her to be. This is the depiction of biases and prejudices that we face on a day to day basis in our lives.

Similarly with the supporting character, Nick Wilde, a fox in the film, is stereotyped as sneaky and sly and is even denied services in an ice cream shop for the same. The film's overall message is to convey that people, irrespective of the stereotypes on their social status, can have the same opportunities and it is eventually a person's grit and determination that will lead to his success. Hence negativity and prejudice should not come in the way of people's dreams.

### **Expert's opinion-**

The researcher interacted with the experts from FTII and some Film making students to understand their observations among these films. She was able to interact with 7 persons including teachers and students of filmmaking. After collecting all of their opinion she was able to conclude the details in the below mentioned way.

Both the movies “Zootopia and Inside Out” are visually very successful in portraying the socio cultural angles of society. Basically in an animated movie, the visual artists have to create each finer elements of the frame which would elevate the story. Since both the movies are sending out strong messages about social issues, their visuals also supplement the content in a great way. The producers of the films targeted a younger section of audience hence the visuals are designed accordingly and the details are taken care of by the technical team.

For example in the film 'Zootopia', the theme is about struggle, hardship faced by the weaker section of the society in order to achieve their objectives in life. Therefore the protagonist character in the film has been presented by a small rabbit which is a weaker species among animals. Again it's a female who is of a shorter stature but wants to be a successful police officer. Hence the character has been chosen to symbolize weakness visually. As in our society the weak are always oppressed and humiliated by the strong, we can observe in the movie, the other characters are featured by wild animals who all are putting the rabbit in trouble. The image size and the camera angles in the movie are clearly signifying the disparity among the characters which replicates the prejudices which exists in society. While the visuals of characters are enacting the storyline, the visual artists of the film have worked carefully to portray the other details of the social elements in terms of background and foreground. The film reveals the countryside, the city life, offices, parks, gyms etc. in such a realistic manner that it presents a vivid reflection of the modern human society which greatly influences the audience.

On the other hand, the film 'Inside Out' has successfully brought out another socio-cultural issue related to children. As the theme of the film is isolation and sadness, the same have been portrayed in the film by its low tone and darkish lighting. The protagonist is shot mostly with blue light, shadows and top angles which express the depressed state of mind of the small girl. The film makes an important point that all emotions are an important part of our life and even the undesirable and non-joyous emotions can eventually lead to joyful moments.

### **Conclusion.**

Films are the best tools of visual communication. It is indeed a powerful and a popular mass medium which reflects cultural values, reconstructs images, and moulds public opinion in addition to providing entertainment to the society. Although it does not present factual characters, it tries to represent the contemporary society or the various issues of the society. It tries to reflect various serious issues, social evils, and various social, political and environmental problems in an informative and entertaining way.

Animated Films has the ability to motivate public opinion as it assures of a high degree of attention. Animation gives free expression to imagination. It carries up spectator in an imaginary world dreamed by the artists. Though this movies are basically focused to the children and topic are related to them only but many others topics can be portrayed through these types of movies. It can be a successful medium to showcase different social issues of the prevailing society.

These two movies- Zootopia & Inside out are highly successful in portraying major social issues through its visuals. The directors of these movies are highly capable in representing the messages of the movies in an exceptional way.

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