

Philosophical-Educational Analysis of Iranian and English Picture-Story Books Based on "Authority and Freedom" Categories

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Abstract

Authority and freedom paradox is one of the most important issues in the philosophy of education as it is in the children's literature. Techniques used by authors of children's literature works, originate from their view on the child. The purpose of this paper is to compare Philosophical-Educational analysis of Iranian and English picture-story books via discovering and investigating the authors' view on "authority and freedom" categories. The research is a kind of exploratory and descriptive research with non-emerging approach to research design. Purposive sampling and documentary method of data collection and interpretive-descriptive method of data analysis were used. Two picture-story books "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" by Beatrix Potter and "Hypa and Shypa's Shoes" by Morteza Khosronejad had been chosen for analysis. The research question is based on Iranian and English authors' viewpoints on "authority and freedom" in the children's literature and comparing them. Revealing the techniques in the works is important for the authors, because they sometimes use these techniques unconsciously. Denuding the techniques can also be considered by critics, parents, teachers, and even children. The results show that the authors' view on the child affects the way of writing books and the use of various techniques. The results also indicate that although they belong to different social and cultural settings, the Iranian and English authors' viewpoints on the child are an independent being that is free, adventurous, vivacious, and able to solve the problems. The authors also are aware of the existence and importance of "authority and freedom" categories in the children's literature. Although Beatrix Potter makes a beautiful balance between the author's authority and the audience's freedom at the end of his story, Khosronejad delicately accepts child freedom beside the adult support and inspection.

Keywords: Authority and Freedom paradox, Picture-story Books, Beatrix Potter, Morteza Khosronejad

1. Introduction

Children's needs of freedom and adults' tendency to use authority is among the fundamental issues concerning different philosophical, educational, literary, political, sociological and some other fields. It particularly sets forth for discussion in children's literature as it is usually created by an adult and children have fewer roles if not any in the production of literary works. As Peter Hunt (2006, p. 1) says, "Children's literature has often been seen as an international, intercultural phenomenon, on the assumption that aspects of childhood and storying are common across the world- with clear cultural and political implications". Despite the fact that children's literature is affected by various nations and cultures, the producers or creators and addressee' age distance which is the basis of the authority of the adults in children's literature is common all around the world.

Speaking of children's literature as a realm of thought, and most recently as an academic and scientific discipline, has always faced challenges. The first challenge is that the children's books are often written by adults; in this way is there any children's literature?

Jacqueline Rose (1984) believed that children's literature is a fictitious and artificial literature because it is created by adults (Khosronejad, 2009, 31).

Roderick McGillis (2008, p. 259) believes that:

Behind children's literature in every aspect of its creation and dissemination are adults. Adults write the literature, edit it, promote it, sell it, review it, read it, select it, and provide it for children. Adult desire is writ large over the field of children's literature. Because of the adult inherent in children's literature, that seemingly simple literature (simple in comparison to that for adults) is not so simple. Complexities lurk everywhere in literature for the young.

The second challenge is between educational or communicative view and the aesthetic one. The third one is a discussion of authority and freedom. This article deals with the third challenge, therefore it discusses the "authority and freedom" paradox in children's literature.

Children's literature is based on two persons (adult and child), thus, its nature and identity arising from the twofold challenges, tensions and trends. In one side there is an adult with its motivation and desire and at the other side there is a child with his needs and wishes. Therefore, one of its features is

educational and for this specificity of educational view, the most pivotal theoretical discussion is the author's point of view on authority and freedom categories. (Khosronejad, 2009, p. 38)

Authority and freedom categories in children's literature can be taken in to account from the following aspects:

- a. Discovering and examining the techniques which the writers apply to show their own specific views on "freedom and authority". Revealing the techniques in the works is important for the authors, because they sometimes use these techniques unconsciously. Denuding the techniques also can be considered by critics, mothers, fathers, caretakers, teachers, and even children
- b. Finding kinds of relationship that exist between these two categories: There are three Kinds of relations between these two categories in educational processes (here in the process of narrating the story): 1. Applying freedom at first and then coming up with the authority, 2. Applying authority at first, and then coming up with freedom and 3. To consider a dialectical relation between them.

This paper attempts to explore the "authority and freedom" techniques applied in Iranian and English picture-story books by using inductive and deductive content analysis. It also tries to explore the authors' philosophical and educational approaches to "authority and freedom" relationship and finally to discover the impact of socio-cultural aspects on the authors' viewpoints.

Literature review:

During the history of philosophy and education, authority and freedom issues were under consideration in various forms such as: progressivism /traditionalism, conservatism/liberalism encounters or creativity/socialization, external/internal discipline, content-oriented/child-centered concepts which all implicitly contain the fundamental conflict between freedom and authority. Yet, the question has remained unresolved.

In Paul Nash's (1966) book, *Authority and Freedom in Education, an Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, he examines various aspects of authority and freedom in education. He examines authority and freedom relationships in education from the following aspects:

- A. The authority of work and the freedom to play.
- B. The authority of institutions and the freedom to think, teach, and learn.
- C. The authority of discipline and the freedom to develop one's interest
- D. The authority of the group and the freedom to become oneself.
- E. The authority of excellence and the freedom to enjoy opportunities.
- F. The authority of determinism and the freedom to choose
- G. The authority of tradition and the freedom to create.
- H. The authority of commitment and the freedom to grow (Nash 1966).

He thinks that defining "authority" which exercises a force or influences us, and "freedom" as the power to achieve, choose, or become, are rough definitions and argues:

When we examined "authority" and "freedom" in context, we quickly came to realize that we do not want all kinds of freedom: nor do we want to avoid all kinds of authority. Rather, we want to examine and evaluate these key terms and their relationships in a variety of situations and under diverse influences. The purpose is to identify the kind of authority and freedom we want to foster or discourage. (Nash 1966, 325-326).

He actually means that we need special kinds of rhythm between authority and freedom in educational settings and also in our lives.

Leila JahromiTadavani (2009), in her MA Thesis examined the concepts of creativity (freedom) and socialization (authority) in the process of education on the basis of the view points of two main Iranian educators Gholamhossen Shokohi and Mirabdolhossein Naghibzadeh.

Although Naghibzadeh agreed with the idea of applying freedom at first, and then coming up with the authority, Shokohi thought that it is better to apply authority at first, and then come up with freedom. JahromiTadavani compared these two ideas with that of William Blake's dialectical thinking and Derrida's deconstruction theory, and proposed the third relation between these paradoxical notions that consider dialectical relations between them (JahromiTadavani 2009).

It seems that dialectical approach can solve the problems in such paradoxical situations. In other words, both authority and freedom can be considered in relation to each other at any stage. As Nash emphasizes, we need a special kind of rhythm in our lives between authority and freedom.

Critical children's literature studies approach children's literature as a site where the power struggle between children and adults can be clearly seen. Tatar, Hunt, Hollindale, Nodelman, and Lukens emphasize the fact that children's literature is written for children by adults as a result of which these books are an extension of adult normatively. Adult normatively in this case refers to the disciplinary forces that shape children into what adults believe they should be. (Wilson, Melissa 2009, p. 45-56).

Wilson also says:

Because of the hierarchical relationship between adults and children in the realm of children's literature,

books are produced to teach children something. Like all stories, children's plots have holes or places for reader interpretation. But unlike other stories, stories written for and marketed to adults, children's books didactically connect all the dots for the child, leaving little room for individual interpretation. This is because, according to Hunt, adults assume that children don't know enough to fill in the blanks and, therefore, that adults must provide all the commentary necessary to "understand" the book while at the same time forcefully inculcating the "message" to the child. Hunt (2004) sees children's literature as adults' attempts to (re)construct an ideal childhood, one that may not and may never have existed. In his view children's literature is problematic as it offers children recycled and limited narratives in the guise of books written expressly for them and about their (supposed) experiences. (Wilson, 2009, P. 47-48).

Maria Tatar (1992) believes that "the power imbalance between the adult author and the implied child reader is too great to overcome". (ibid, p.47)

Maria Nikolajeva (2010, P. 5) writes, "adult authors ostensibly write children's books, and adult critics evaluate them, from wider experience, large vocabulary, higher cognitive capacity-biological and psychological facts hard to dismiss". She continues, "thus, we are dealing with the imbalance, inequality, asymmetry between children and adults, the way it is presented and assessed in children's books, books intended for the young audience" (ibid, P. 8).

Khosronejad, Hajvani, Mohammady are among Iranian scholars that focus their attentions on different aspects of children's literature.

Khosronejad's (2009) main book "Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Children's literature", is one of the most outstanding writing in children's literature. Theory of "innocence and experience" which is one of the main findings of his book, is properly proposes for the first time and its function examines then writings of Iranian children poets. He also applies Piaget's genetic epistemology in interpretation of children's literature for the first time. It can infer from his writing that he is in accord with the dialectic approach in paradoxical situations such as "authority and freedom", because in his book and some other articles (Khosronejad 2005, P. 156), he introduces two main approaches to the "child": "child as an end" and "child as a device". Then has stated: "The meaning of childhood and our childhood construct is our first step in dealing with education and children's literature" (Ibid, P. 156). Finally, he criticizes both approaches, and brings up a third approach [dialectical] which is consistent with the William Blake idea and suits theories of psychology, philosophy of education and philosophy. That is the association of the two previous approaches beliefs and perceptions, the child as an end and the child as a device, and as construed by Blake, the passage from innocence to experience and absorbing it and getting a third mode which is inclusive and integrated with both but better than them (Ibid, P. 60-61).

Fateme Farnia examines the issues of power and empowerment in the works of Roald Dahl and Lewis Carroll. She has used Michel Foucault's ideas regarding power and Elisheva Sadan's theory of empowerment to study the quality of power in the works and how to empower the characters and readers which are mostly children. Her findings indicate that Roald Dahl includes modern ways of power domination and realistic empowerment procedure in his work. Finally, she proposes the following tactics through which one is able to empower the characters:

1. Linking
2. Priming
3. Providing information and knowledge
4. Developing skills
5. Modeling
6. Precise formulation of values
7. The use of doubt
8. Informality in professional intervention
9. The use and development of creativity
10. Creating a virtual world. (Farnia, 2009, P. 155-156)

This study investigates only the picture-story books from a variety of children's literature, including picture-story books, fiction, novels, and poetry.

Perry Nodelman(2000, P. 265)says "while words and pictures are different media and communicate different things in different ways, both are sign systems and share the basic qualities of sign systems (2006: 265).

David Lewis (2000, p. 294) believes that "picturebooks began to be taken seriously as an object of academic studies during the latter years of twentieth century". He considers these books as interwoven of words and pictures and describes five different types of text-picture relationships from Golden, J. (1990) points of view. These are:

1. Text and picture are symmetrical,
2. Text depends on the picture for clarification,
3. Illustration enhances, elaborates text,

4. Text carries primary narrative, illustration is selective, and
 5. Illustration carries primary narrative, text is selective” (Lewis, 2000, p. 304).
 Hunt (1984) says: "child feels superior against words (which are the signs of adulthood madness and selfishness) in the picture-story books” (Khosronejad, 2008, p. 648). Nikolajeva besides Hunt states that “picturebooks have great potential for subversion of adult power and interrogation of the existing order. The two narrative levels, the verbal and the visual, allow counterpoint and contradiction between the power structures presented by words and images.” (Nikolajeva, 2010, p. 169).
 Therefore picture books are provided based on two sign systems, words and images that each has its own functions. As children’s literature scholars and among them Hunt and Nikolajeva have emphasized, words represent adult’s authority and images are representative of child’s freedom in picture books. Choosing picture-story books as the context for analysis in this study is because of the apparent existence of authority and freedom categories in it.

2. Research methodology

This study chooses the qualitative research paradigm. Researchers use purposive sampling and documentary method of data collection and interpretive-descriptive method of data analysis. Researchers use inductive and deductive content analysis in order to find the “authority and freedom” literary techniques or devices applied in the samples.

3. Findings

Table 1 shows the classification of story elements and devices.

Table 1.the classification of story elements and devices

Story elements and devices		Displaying quality	The degree of giving freedom/authority	
Theme		explicit/implicit		
		The nature of the message		
Plot		Open/closed		
Point of view		objective		
		limited omniscient		
		omniscient		
		first person		
Voice	In the written text	monophony/ polyphony		
	In the pictures	monophony/ polyphony		
	In the written text and pictures	monophony/ polyphony		
Characterization		flat, direct, extrovert, static and unable		
		round, indirect, introvert, developing (dynamic) and able		
The relationship between the written text and pictures		prevalence of pictures over written text		
		prevalence of pictures over written text		
		balance between pictures and written text		
Decent ring device		happy ending, intertextuality, metafiction (narrator interference, self-revelation), and trip		

The first column in Table 1 includes story elements (theme, plot, point of view, voice, characterization, the kinds of relationship between the written text and pictures and decentring device). The second column shows the kinds of devices or techniques displaying. The third column represents qualitatively different degrees of giving freedom/authority that located along the continuum (authoritative, more authoritative, balance, more emancipator, and emancipator).

This study comparatively investigated the Iranian and English picture-story books.

A) The analysis of "*Hypa and Shypa's Shoes*" written by Morteza Khosronejad and illustrated by Ali Khodaee

A summary of the story

Hypa and Shypa are octopus twin octopi that live happily with their mother in the sea. Although Hypa is a boy and Shypa is a girl, their appearance and behavior are the same. One day Hypa and Shypa bring out their head out of water and see the children who have put on beautiful shoes in the shore. They urge their mother who is now worried about what they do, to buy shoes for them. They go to the shore and buy colorful shoes and turn back to the sea. In the sea, their mother goes faster and gets away. Suddenly, a frightening giant animal follows them. They take off their shoes and run away toward home. They hang the shoes at their home wall to remind that day. Now they sometimes play with their shoes under the water, and sometimes bring them to the shore in order to play with the other children.

The analysis of "*Hypa and Shypa's Shoes*"

The theme of the story which is its controlling idea is left implicit. Therefore the writer invites the reader and actually gives the reader freedom to discover the theme that is often a delicate task. The reader may infer this theme: (although adventure may jeopardize the lives, it provides new and delightful experiences for children). Therefore, the theme ensures the child's freedom.

Plot that is the sequence of incidents or events of which a story is composed (Perrine, 2000, 43), was made up of conflicts between the protagonists (Hypa and Shypa) and antagonist (mother and the fearful giant animal), suspense, open and happy ending. Thus the reader faces some interrogative situation thus ensuring his/her freedom to think.

Although the writer uses limited omniscient point of view somewhere in the story, the story is narrated mostly in the objective or dramatic point of view. The writer doesn't comment, interpret, or enter a character's mind in order to give the reader the chance of thinking, interpreting and analyzing the evidences.

Hypa, Shypa, the mother and the narrator have their own voice in the text, thus the voice in the text is polyphonic. The voices of Hypa, Shypa, the mother and the monsters (fearful animal) can be separately identified in the pictures; therefore the voice in the pictures is polyphonic too. Since the written text and pictures express the same meaning, the voice in them is monophonic.

The major characters (Hypa and Shypa) are characterized directly and mostly indirectly. Since they are complex and many-sided, their characters are round. They acquire new experiences from their adventures and undergo some changes; therefore they are developing (or dynamic) characters. These kinds of characterizations invite the reader to think about, and interpret the characters and their actions freely.

The mother who is the minor character has indirect, round and dynamic character. The reader can discover her character which is conservative, compassionate, and follower indirectly from her dialogues and actions. Although she reproaches her children for bringing out their head out of water, she finally becomes compelled to accept and follow their request. At the end of the story she is happy "Mom laughed and said," or "Mother laughed and said again," (Khosronejad, 20) and she sometimes allows her children to go out of water and play with the children.

Because the text and pictures almost tell the same story, there is relatively a balance between the written text and the pictures.

Appropriate form of decentring Techniques has also been used in this story. Octopuses come out of the water and walk on land and put on human shoes is an example of the application of the inversion technique because they are expected to live in the depth of the sea.

The Octopuses travel from the sea and after walking in the shore and go to the shoe store, they return from the same path. This motion or journey from one place to another and then coming back is a trip technique which is a kind of decenter technique.

Number, type, size and color of the shoes decenter the reader and viewer's attention.

Metafiction is another decentring technique that the writer uses in the story: he somewhere intervenes (ibid ,6, 11) and somewhere tries to give the reader some information (ibid, 6).

Female temptress (Shypa) and the mother's hindrance and finally surrendering her may associate with Eve temptress and Adam's surrendering. The experienced reader may trace the intertextual relationship between this story and the story of the fall of Adam and Eve.

The reader can hear and distinguish different voices in the dialogues between Shypa, Hypa and the mother, "Shypasaid:" "how beautiful is human while putting on shoes!" And "Hypa replied: "Yes, but we're not humans." (ibid, 8 to 9) and "the twins said:" "We want the shoes! ", "their mother said with surprise," "What! "" ... and "the mother sighed and said," "Oh! You finally brought your head out of the water? I did not say that... "" ... and "Twins again uttered their own words:" "We want shoes!" (ibid, 11). Therefore, each character has his/ her own idea and it is a feature of polyphony as an intertextual technique.

Table 2: Analysis of picture-story book "Hypa and Shypa's Shoes"

Story elements and devices		Displaying quality	The degree of giving freedom/authority
Theme		<i>implicit</i>	<i>emancipator</i>
		<i>The nature of the message</i>	<i>emancipator</i>
Plot		<i>Open ended</i>	<i>emancipator</i>
Point of view		<i>objective</i>	<i>More emancipator</i>
Voice	In the written text	<i>polyphony</i>	<i>More emancipator</i>
	In the pictures	<i>polyphony</i>	<i>emancipator</i>
	In the written text and pictures	<i>monophony</i>	<i>authoritative</i>
Characterization		<i>round, indirect, introvert, developing (dynamic) and able</i>	<i>emancipator</i>
The relationship between the written text and pictures			<i>authoritative</i>
		<i>balance between pictures and written text</i>	
Decentring device		<i>happy ending, intertextuality, metafiction (narrator interference, self-revelation) , inversion and trip</i>	<i>emancipator</i>

B. The analysis of the picture-story book “The Tale of Peter Rabbit” by Beatrix Potter:

A summary of the story

The story is about a family of rabbits, the mother rabbit cautioning her young against entering Mr. McGregor's garden, because he had baked her husband into a pie. Whereas her three daughters obediently refrain from entering the garden, her son Peter defies his mother by trespassing into the garden to eat some vegetables. There, Peter is spotted and threatened by Mr. McGregor and loses his jacket and shoes while trying to escape. He finally found the way out and went home. Since he experienced a frightening situation, he was sick. His mother gave him chamomile tea whereas his well-behaved sisters received a sumptuous dinner of milk and berries.

The analysis of “The Tale of Peter Rabbit”

The theme is left implicit. Therefore, the reader has the chance to think about it freely. Perhaps, some readers infer these themes: "adventure exacts a terrible cost". Or "disobedience causes helplessness and sickness". It is clear that these types of themes are authoritative in nature.

The plot of this picture-story book is composed of incidents or events that took place for Peter, the major character, Peter as the protagonist faced some forces which arrayed against him. The main antagonist was Mr. Gregor. The conflict between them was clear-cut, and easily identified. Peter's mother was another antagonist that the conflict between them was mental. At the end when the author says “I am sorry to say that peter was not very well during the evening”, in fact, she uses an indeterminate or open ending and in this way she gives the reader the chance of having his/her own interpretation.

The author presents the major character indirectly and the other characters directly. In indirect presentation of Peter, the author allows the reader to infer Peter's traits from his action. Although Peter was round and dynamic character, the other characters (Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, their mother, Mr. Gregor), were flat and static. The indirect, round, complex and dynamic characterizations are techniques which encourage the reader to reflect for some minutes on the character. Thus, these are emancipator techniques.

The author uses the third person point of view (limited omniscient) since she focuses only on the actions, reactions, thoughts and feelings of the major character (peter rabbit). In this way it is an authoritative viewpoint for she doesn't let the readers to have their own interpretations.

The only voice that can be heard from the written text is the writer voice; therefore using a monophonic voice limits the reader's mind and dominates the writer's authority. The reader can hear the voice of other characters besides Peter's in the pictures, thus the voice in the pictures is polyphonic. Since the written text and pictures express the same meaning, the voice in them is monophonic.

Because the text and pictures almost tell the same story, there is relatively a balance between the written text and the pictures.

The writer uses some decentring techniques like metafiction and intertextuality in the story. Using an expression “once upon a time” (Beatrix Potter), is the example of metafiction in which the author alerts his reader to this fact that he/she is reading an unreal story. The sentence “I am sorry to say that peter was not very well during the evening” (Beatrix Potter), which is uttered by the writer is an example of the narrator interference that is also a kind of metafiction device.

Peter has given round, complex, dynamic, adventurous and able characterizations; it may build an intertextual relationship with the characterization of rabbits as a whole which has been used in the fictions and folk literature. Peter's adventure starts from the burrow and after passing through the garden, he returns to his burrow. This is a trip technique which is a kind of decanter technique.

The following table (Table 3) shows a brief analysis of the above picture-story book:

Story elements and devices		Displaying quality	The degree of giving freedom/authority	
Theme		<i>implicit</i>	<i>emancipator</i>	
		<i>The nature of the message</i>	<i>authoritative</i>	
Plot		<i>Open</i>	<i>emancipator</i>	
Point of view		<i>Limited omniscient</i>	<i>More authoritative</i>	
Voice	In the written text	<i>monophony</i>	<i>authoritative</i>	
	In the pictures	<i>polyphony</i>	<i>emancipator</i>	
	In the written text and pictures	<i>monophony</i>	<i>authoritative</i>	
Characterization		<i>round, indirect, introvert, developing (dynamic) and able</i>	<i>emancipator</i>	
The relationship between the written text and pictures			<i>authoritative</i>	
		<i>balance between pictures and written text</i>		
Decent ring device		<i>‘happy ending, intertextuality, metafiction (narrator interference, self-revelation) and trip</i>	<i>emancipator</i>	

Table 3

Implicit theme, fantasy and empowering are emancipator techniques or techniques of freedom.

There are five kinds of authority– freedom relationship. They are:

The relation between Peter and his mother.

The relation between Peter and Mr.Gregore.

The relation between the writer and the reader.

The relation between the viewer and the illustrator

The relation between the picture and the text

Mother lacks enough authority to prevent his child from danger. From the other side, the disobedient child did not respect his mother and he did not feel any responsibility toward her.

The lack of balance between Peter’s freedom and Mr. Gregore’s authority can be felt. If Peter had enough control over his freedom, he would avoid going to that dangerous garden. If Mr. Gregore has enough control over his authority and feels responsibility and accountability toward other creatures, he would avoid having such a savage behavior.

There seems to be an appropriate balance between the author’s authority and the readers’ freedom, as the writer provides enough freedom and opportunity for the reader to have his own interpretation, judgment and understanding, he gives up some of his authority.

The authors use a dialectical approach by means of establishing dialogue between characters, using different voices, and enable the reader to interact with the writer and illustrator and the characters in order to make balance between the author’s authority and the readers’ freedom.

Philosophical-Educational Analysis of the Stories:

A).Philosophical- Educational Analysis of "Hypa and Shypa's Shoes"

This book is one of a picture-story books, named "collection of reflective stories", written by Morteza Khosronejad.

The dialogue between the twins and their mother on page 11 shows the authority of the mother. She doesn't allow her children to do everything so that their freedom has been limited. Despite the mother's demand, Hypa and Shypa bring out their head out of water and in this way they actually violate the mother's authority. The children as readers may also ponder on this rebellious action and attempt to criticize the orders' demands and actions whether that person is his/her mother, father, caretaker, teachers or any other one.

The child may ask him/herself these fundamental philosophical questions that: Why do some adults force kids to do something or prevent them? Why did the octopi like to behave like human beings? What do octopuses pay in exchange for buying the shoes? Are animals, like humans, responsible for their children? Do animals think? "Shypa thought " "Walking on the beach is also very interesting."And then another thought occurred to them" (Khosronejad, 2001: 6).These are worthwhile Philosophical questions that strengthen the child's ability to think and to have a philosophical point of view toward the phenomenon, life and the world. This level of outlook can be achieved only when we consider the child as an independent, active and developing entity.

There are some points in the story that educationally are significant. Although the twins' new experience was adventurous, it was their freedom achievement and it may alert the reader to this fact that their actions should be well-considered.

The twins' sense of responsibility towards each other has educational significance too: as soon as they become aware of the danger, they try to alert each other "Shypa! Escape!"(ibid, 18).

Thinking about the previous experiences which are the reminiscent of sweet or bitter memories can help the child to act logically in their future experiences.

The author does not definitively judge whether the twins and the mother doing were right or not? Therefore he invites the readers to interpret and think about it freely.

B). Philosophical- Educational Analysis of "The Story of Little Rabbit"

This is one of the most famous works of fiction that was written by Beatrix Potter and published in the early twentieth century. Little rabbit at the beginning of the story faces his mother's authority: she attempts reasonably to forbid Peter and his three sisters from going to Mr. McGregor's garden. Although the mother makes her demand reasonable by saying "your father had an accident there, he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor.", Peter disobediently enters the garden. At first it seems that he is freely doing something, but with profound look, we can notice that his freedom in fact is limited by his inclination. He likes the vegetables and his interest to the vegetables puts him in that dreadful situation. In fact he has an internal conflict with himself. This kind of mental and complex conflict is challenging and may enforce the reader to hesitate and interpret the character and his actions.

The child may ask him/herself these fundamental philosophical questions that: What are the differences and similarities between human and animal? Is Little Rabbit a human being or an animal? Why? Is Mr. McGregor a human being or an animal? Why? Do animals think? Are they able to make decisions? Little rabbit has no clothes, but his sisters have worn clean clothes at the end of the story. What does it mean?

The child may bring up other questions that have educational values. Do elders have the right to prevent a child from doing something?

Peter who is a male rabbit disobeys his mother whereas his three sisters are submissive to the mother. Thus it may arouse the following questions: What's the difference between boys and girls? Do boys have more ability and power? Are they more successful in decision making and using their free will?

The writer finally put the reader in a complex situation. The mother gave Peter chamomile tea whereas his sisters receive a sumptuous dinner of milk and berries.

The writer actually leaves the reader to make decisions and to choose his way by this open ending and it is the most beautiful part of the story.

Cultural- social analysis:

There are some similarities and some differences considering cultural and social contexts in the Iranian and English picturestory books. Child is considered as a unique being whose freedom should be respected in both cultures. Khosronejad as an Iranian author accepts the child freedom beside the adult support and inspection "Hypa and Shypa go to the shore and shoe store with their mother, not alone" and their mother although allowed them to do what they wanted; she had enough control over them too. More important than this, the mother herself learned something new beside her children new experiences.

Beatrix Potter let the main character (Peter Rabbit) to do what he wanted. The mother had not enough control over her child. Therefore in English culture parents are more intrepid toward their children, while in Iran parents are more conservative.

4. Conclusions

Comparison of techniques and methods of using them in the samples shows that: the themes in both Persian and English picture books have been hidden implicitly. Plot seems to be opened in both books.

Decent ring techniques like metafiction, intertextual and happy-ending have been applied by both Persian and English writers. Characterization in both Persian and English works is round, indirect, developing (dynamic) and able.

Relationship between the written text and pictures is balanced in both Persian and English picture-story books.

All the above displaying elements and techniques are emancipators that ensure the audiences' freedom and encourage them to think and have their own interpretations.

Although the Voice in the pictures is polyphonic, the Voice in the text-picture is monophonic in both Persian and English picturebooks. Therefore this technique ensures the author's authority and controlling power over the audiences.

The nature of the theme is emancipatory in Persian picturebook that ensures the child's freedom, whereas the theme is authoritative in English picturebook.

Little Rabbit adventure gives him enough freedom to find himself and leads him toward independence and being in the path of self-realization. The fantastic aspect of both stories allows the audiences to increase their freedom and decrease the adult's authority creatively by criticizing the traditions, habits, rigid laws and common society structures and also by making impossible things possible.

Using a variety of techniques to give freedom to the child by both Persian and English authors, enables him/ her to explore and discover the world creatively.

Although they live in different societies and discourses and belong to different time periods, the Iranian and English authors' viewpoints on the child is positive and they see the child as an independent being who is free, adventurous, vivacious, and able to solve the problems. The authors also are aware of the existence and importance of "authority and freedom" categories in the children's literature. The relationship between "authority and freedom" categories seems to be dialectical as they exist and interact from the beginning to the end of the stories.

Although Beatrix Potter makes a beautiful balance between the author's authority and the audience's freedom at the end of his story while placing the reader in a dilemma of what to choose "chamomile tea for Peter or bread and milk and blackberries for his sister", Khosronejad delicately accepts the child's freedom in addition to the adult's support and inspection "Hypa and Shypa go to the shore and shoe store with their mother, not alone".

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