

Fantastic realism as a vehicle of edutainment in children's cartoons: the case of lion king 11

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Abstract:

This paper is a combination of content analysis of Lion King II Simba's pride (1998) and observations made during a session with a group of children watching the film. The group consisted of eleven children of Nairobi school Nursery and three of their teachers. After watching, the children were given time to talk freely about the film and then asked specific questions by one of their teachers. Later they were asked to illustrate pictorially what they could remember from the film. The reason for this was to help them focus their thoughts during their free discussion on the film. The paper addresses the fundamental question of the function of children's animated cartoons. It posits that children's cartoons are not merely a form of toys for entertainment. Rather they should be seen as a form of edutainment/ infotainment. The paper uses Lion King II as an example through which it argues that children's cartoons can successfully accomplish edutainment by combining fantasy and realism to produce a mode of expression, which I have termed Fantastic Realism. In order to advance this argument, the paper focuses on two issues that are key in children's cartoons. These are bad guy/good guy motif and mood. The paper shows how Lion King II has exploited the above to achieve Fantastic Realism, which is used as a vehicle of edutainment