

The jungle book: disneys approach essay example

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Released in 1967 by Walt Disney Animation Studios, the movie “ The Jungle Book” is an adaptation of Rudyard Kipling’s work having the same title. The story revolves around the character of a young orphan boy named Mowgli. The story begins when Bagheera, a black panther discovered the lost young boy in a basket. Bagheera takes Mowgli to a mother wolf. Together with the mother wolf’s cubs she will raise young Mowgli. The adventure begins 10 years after when the Bengal tiger Shere Khan returns to the jungle. Afraid that Mowgli’s life is in danger in the presence of the Bengal tiger, the wolf tribe decided to take the young boy to the “ human village.” Bagheera offered to escort Mowgli but the boy refuses to leave the jungle and insisted on staying. Leaving with a sad heart, Bagheera and Mowgli started to sojourn the thickets to find their way to the “ human village.” On their way to the village a hungry Indian python Kaa takes Mowgli for a prey but eventually fails as Bagheera intervenes. The adventure continues as Mowgli tries to join a group of elephants headed by Colonel Hathi and his wife Winifred. Bagheera finds himself in an argument with Mowgli as the boy attempts to join the elephant troops. As a consequence, the young boy is left on his own (The Jungle Book).

Mowgli’s continued his journey and soon finds himself with the laid-back bear Baloo. The bear promised to raise Mowgli on his own so that the boy will never have to return to the village. Having that desire to remain in the jungle forever, the boy stayed with Baloo but an unexpected twist happens. A gang of monkeys tricked Baloo and kidnapped Mowgli. The gang took Mowgli to their leader—an orangutan—named King Louie. King Louie made a promise that he will spare the boy if the boy tells him the secret of making fire. The

young boy however, was not raised by humans ergo he does not know how to make fire. Bagheera and Baloo rescued the boy and a series of chaos follows. King Louie's palace was annihilated (The Jungle Book).

Meanwhile, Bagheera convinces Baloo that the jungle would never be a safe place for the young boy so long as Shere Khan is present. Then Baloo started talking to Mowgli about the danger that lies ahead of him if he does not return immediately to the village. However, Mowgli takes it as Baloo breaking his promises and he then ran away. Soon Baloo and Bagheera mobilized their allies to find the young boy. Bagheera seeks the help of Hathi to find Mowgli while Baloo sets of find the boy. While Sheera Kan lurks in the perimeter close to Bagheera and Hathi's he overheard the conversation of the two in search of Mowgli. After hearing the conversation, Shere Khan then started to hunt and kill the boy. On another note, as Mowgli went astray, he then met Kaa once again. The phyton, determined to get his revenge, hypnotizes the young boy before he devours him. However, Shere Khan unknowingly intervenes with Kaa's attempt freed Mowgli out of hypnosis. The young boy tricked the snake and once again he was able to escape (The Jungle Book).

Mowgli then met a group of vultures and made friends with these creatures as they share the same sentiment of feeling outcast. But Shere Khan eventually found Mowgli. He scared the vultures and threatened the young boy. Baloo now on the rescue tries to keep Mowgli safe from Shere Khan but the bear is scathed. The vultures helped Baloo to distract Shere Khan. Mowgli on the other hand gathers flaming branches from the trees ablaze by a lightning strike. The young boy then tied the branches to the tiger's tail.

Afraid of the fire, the tiger backed off and ran away. Bagheera and Baloo then take the young boy to the edge of the village. Hesitant at first to go to the village, the young boy's mind soon changed as he sees a beautiful young maiden coming down to fetch water in the riverside. Now all is well, Mowgli stayed safe in the Man-Village while Baloo and Bagheera returned to the jungle after seeing to it the Mowgli is happy with his own kind (The Jungle Book).

While Rudyard Kipling tries to demonstrate the growing conflict of animals and humans in the environment, leaving a dark and sinister mood in his novel, Disney however, takes a straightforward approach. Disney modifies and enhances the story as it tries to maintain a wholesome family approach. However, hidden inside the film "The Jungle Book" is a series of metaphors that represents social and political ideologies.

Animated motion pictures—one of the best ways to capture the attention of the people especially the children—encourages people to respond both cognitively and physically to what animation presents. To adults the movie may be seen as just a cartoon film. But Disney has demonstrated its power to unite both fantasy and reality in this film which marks the story of valor, power, friendship and fidelity (Artz).

The movie may seemingly appear "innocent and cute" to the eyes of the public but it reveals a hidden layer of the separation of the role of men and women, or what a hero is supposed to be and other metaphors. To some extent the movie tries to educate the children about India and show the moral values embedded in a more tolerable and acceptable plot, character, scenes and setting and music (Artz). As Disney re-writes and transforms the

story of Rudyard Kipling in a different form of media, it tries to emphasize and lay the foundation of the common social psychological needs that are linked with the socialization process in a larger social structure such as happiness and social acceptance. It elucidates a success in persuading children to watch the movie as it provides comfort in the form of friendly animals. Making animal characters talk and act like human, carrying the Indian accent, names, and setting creates cultural familiarity. Children easily associate a stereotyped culture of India with the name of the animal characters within the animated film and how these characters speak (Artz). In the movie, the human is just part of a large environment which is heavily influenced by the animals that lived within the jungle. The character of Shere represents power or force of chaos which threatens the order of a peaceful co-existence between Mowgli and the wolf tribe. Happily ever after is only achieved as Mowgli successfully returns to the human village through the help of Baloo and Bagheera. The movie presents an idea to the public that there will never be a peaceful coexistence between man and the animals in wild. And that man must belong to his own kind.

The separation of the role of men and women has been clearly emphasized in the animation. Women, such as the mother wolf has been seen as a nurturing individual and commonly associated inside the home while men protect the home. Masculinity is stereotyped in the likes of the real heroes in the story—Baloo and Bagheera. The bear and the panther display their valiant and protective nature as the story progresses. Their protective nature lies with the fact that while they leave Mowgli on his own, they are also determined to find and send the boy safe back home to the village. Another

definition of masculinity in this story is that the heroes are wise and rational. Bagheera amply demonstrated his capacity to lead and his rational thoughts as he offered to guide Mowgli back to the human village and as he decided to send Mowgli to the care of the mother wolf. But “ The Jungle Book” may be just an exception to the depiction of masculinity of Disney. In other stories, the heroes are hypermasculine men—the likes of Gaston and Jaffar—are being punished.

Works Cited

The Jungle Book. Dir. Wolfgang Reitherman. Perf. Bruce Reitherman, Phil Harris, Sebastian Cabot, Louie Prima, and George Sanders. Walt Disney Productions, 1967. Film.

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