

Ethics: haroun and the sea of stories study questions

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ETHICS: Haroun and the Sea of Stories *Study Questions*

Due Haroun and the Sea of Stories: Study Questions Comment on Khattam-Shud's remark that inside a story lies a world that can't be controlled. Why is that important?

This remark from Khattam-Shud referencing the world of stories is not being one that is easily controlled, as well as, believing that all worlds are "...there to be ruled" causes him, the greatest frustration (Rushdie, 1990). This is pointing to the fact that stories inspire people, they establish ethics, and, sometimes, morality. It is the inner workings of individual humans and their creativity that is something that cannot be controlled. One can control people's behaviors and force their actions, but their minds and their stories are not so easily infiltrated and destroyed.

2. Is this a story for children? Why or why not?

Whether or not this story is for children is really a matter of perspective. After all the nature of many classic children's tales the core stories were quite gruesome; they certainly do not have the elements and endings that Disney gave to them. The perspective of protecting children from the darker elements of stories is really more a modern perspective. This story has elements that might appeal to children, but there are also deeper parallels in the story that are clearly intended for a more mature audience. For example, the elements of the story concerning the parallels between the villain and the man that stole Haroun's mother are not an aspect intended for a child reader.

3. What do you think the author had in mind with Khattam-Shud and his Silence Laws? Do we have to know Rushdie's personal history for the story to

make sense, or does the story have a broader application?

The “ Silence Laws” of Khuttan-Shud are intended to prevent storytelling, and more disturbingly quiet the exchange of ideas. Khattan-Shud believed that stories and fantasies needed to be stopped; he also wants to”... do away with speech altogether...” (Rushdie, 1990). People grow through many different forms of communication; it is one of the things that make humanity uniquely intelligent creatures. Denying the right of communication would stifle the words, their creativity, and be easier for the villain to control.

4. If you are familiar with the classic Arab collection of stories Arabian Nights, the names of Haroun and Rashid may sound familiar to you. Their last name is Khalifa. What do you think the author meant by creating such a connection?

This is likely a literary tool to connect this story with the common mythology. “ Arabian Nights” includes discussions on storytelling and of magical places where Genies are potential participating characters. Connecting the two stories helps to legitimize the elements in the story, making it a more believable to readers.

References

Rushdie, S. (1990). Haroun and the sea of stories. Retrieved from http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073386545/student_view0/narratives.html