

Overview of Popular Literature

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ABSTRACT:

Popular Literature, which is the 'Literature of the People', is the natural extension of folklore and myths in the 'age of print'. It is also called 'imaginative literature', as it derives the strength from the writer's vivid imagination, with fantastic creativity, more evidently than does the main stream realistic fiction. Usually, popular literature is read, not necessarily to have a new experience, but to repeat a pleasurable one, which the reader had before in a slightly different form.

If we see today, the younger generation is more attached to something adventurous, involving danger, new technology, modern life, independent and intelligent heroes and heroines, challenges, enlightenment due to power of reasoning over superstition and nature, leading to knowledge.

Keywords: Popular literature, Fiction, Imagination , Pleasure

I INTRODUCTION

Popular Literature, which is the 'Literature of the People', is the natural extension of folklore and myths in the 'age of print'. It is also called 'imaginative literature', as it derives the strength from the writer's vivid imagination, with fantastic creativity, more evidently than does the main stream realistic fiction.

It is bought and read by a large number of people and almost every pop book is a bestseller. Popular literature as the term suggests, is popular among the young readers of literature, since it tends to be entertaining, gives the reader enjoyment and adventure; and takes its readers to different unknown places, offering escapism. The language is simple and the vocabulary contains new English words, easy to learn. Normally, popular literature cannot be understood

in terms of individual texts. There is a shared inter-text of convention, character and language with other related books.

II GENRES OF POPULAR LITERATURE

The various genres of popular literature are:-

1. Romance
2. Action Adventure
3. Fantasy
4. Mystery
5. Detective Fiction Whodunit
6. Police Procedural
7. Crime Fiction
8. Creative Non-Fiction
9. Contemporary Fiction
10. Thrillers
11. Legal Thriller
12. Techno-Thriller
13. Science Fiction
14. War Fiction
15. Western
16. Misery Literature
17. Gothic

18. Chick Literature
19. Fairy Tale
20. Dystopia
21. Spy Fiction
22. Family Saga
23. Inspirational Fiction
24. Classics
25. Young Adult
26. Christian Fiction
27. Historical Fiction
28. Sports Fiction
29. Memoir/Autobiography
30. Contemporary Non-Fiction
31. Biography
32. Extreme Non-Fiction
33. Classic Non-Fiction
34. Travelogue--Travel Writing
35. Horror Fiction
36. Humor
37. Popular Fiction
38. Nonfiction and the Enlightenment

39. Pornography
40. Horror
41. Adult Comics
42. The Ballad and the Resistance
43. The Postmodern
44. The Reader and the Fan
45. Gender
46. Pleasure and Desire
47. Doubling
48. The Uncanny
49. Inter-Textually
50. Myth etc.

III FEATURES OF POPULAR LITERATURE :

1. It is often seen in relation to other texts i.e. magazines, films and television
2. It is formulaic – it has a kind of setting, follows a limited number of lines of action, a familiar cast of character and hackneyed language
3. The ending offers a magical resolution
4. Whatever is the time and setting, its value system is modern and urban
5. Problems like murder, racism, revolution and unemployment are dealt with individually, rather than socially or in a structured way
6. There is an unproblematic division between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ characters
7. It gives priority to wish fulfillment i.e. fantasy over duty

Popular literature texts are those mainly produced for entertainment, as they provide pleasure.

The readers of popular literature usually just want to read something entertaining. They look for an escape from the pressures or the boredom of reality, in books that offer humor, excitement or fear. The styles of popular literature are often formulaic, sentimental and freer than that of classic literature. Popular literature works are ‘popular’ and tend to be short lived since they are likely to be replaced by new ones, but many of them occupy their permanent place in classical literature.

E.g. Robinson Crusoe.

Popular literature gives the readers a fast fun adventure often termed ‘escape reading’. The popular genre takes its reader to different exotic locales that are beyond their daily lives. Living vicariously, the reader can sit for a few minutes and yet, days later, without losing the jest of the piece. Unlike classical literature, popular literature very often has no deep meaning that must be concentrated on and uncovered. It is straight surface level reading. It is also looked upon as the lower intellectual requirement, which makes popular reading available to the masses in cheap paperbacks. The feeling of thrill, sentimentality makes popular literature easy read, but it does not lend itself to the academic study of classic authors. Unlike the classics, these do not bear well with repeated readings and ultimately do not stay on the shelves very long.

The intellectual one, who enjoys reading for the sake of learning, is most likely the reader of classical works. The classical authors address specific issues, primarily moral issues in refined, intellectual styles. Each of these authors addresses issues pertinent to a human being in general i.e. good evil, death, immortality, nature etc, in a manner that encourages close readings and serious reflections. Classical literature welcomes a second reading as the reader often gains something different each time the work is read. There are some authors who cross- literary boundaries. E.g. Poe is a classical author because his gothic style is still studied and analyzed today and it is popular because many still read his work, just because his gothic, mysterious stories intrigue them, e.g. Harriet Beecher Stowes, ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’, is classical because it is still studied in the universities today, is popular because, it is sentimental, entertaining and sold like hot cake immediately upon its first publication.

Classical literature gives us something to think about. The classic work take the form of tales, told by narrators leading one to feel the decisions are not necessarily their own. They are only re- telling which absolves them of guilt associated with the actions of characters which

follows the classic theme of maintaining that there is no right or wrong because none of us is without sin.

Thus classical literature gives the reader topic to contemplate: popular literature is entertaining and offers something the readers identify with.

IV PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF POPULAR LITERATURE: -

Popular literature is read by all kind of readers. It emerges in a fertile social field defined by art, commerce and folk traditions and is generally creative, exciting and inventive.

Popular literature is simple and easy to read and children like to read or are interested in these books and interest is the key element in learning, without it no or low learning occurs. When the students have an interest in what they are reading, they will frequently transcend their so-called reading level. It has been found that, factor of both interest and access improves learning motivation, effort and attitude to reading. It is an important resource for learning that is related to cognition. Intrinsic motivation and inherent interest is choice, which is affected by interest and is influenced by individual needs and background. Thus self-selected reading leads to more volume of reading and generally the books that the children choose are harder than those do, that are chosen by influencing adults. In order to become independent readers they need to choose and respond to literature.

V CONCLUSION

Popular literature provides interest choice, opportunity and accessibility etc. it offers a starting point, which makes the reader gain confidence in mastering books. Popular literature books also give the reader a guarantee of reading satisfaction before they start as the reader knows what to expect from the story.

Popular literature provides practice in processing of making patterns, putting stories together, extrapolating, confirming and it may provide a crucial step towards more substantial reading and the child can learn to read for enjoyment and entertainment through its exposure of popular fiction.

It was found that books could become status symbols and bases for social groups. This phenomenon is currently apparent with the Harry Potter series of books, with the children engaged in animated discussions and participatory actions i.e. acting of stories, basing their

clubs on the houses at Hogwarts and becoming the character themselves, keenly anticipating the release of each new book.

Through popular literature, there is an attempt by some authors to expose children to important societal issues such as prejudice, divorce, friendship and death, all at a safe distance and a superficial level with a security in the knowledge that the happy ending will await the reader.

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