

Becoming the Animal: Political Discourse in Animation through Anthropomorphic Characters

Sousan Qadeer
Beaconhouse National University
School of Visual Arts & Design, Department of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies

IJSER

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank Allah Almighty for giving me the strength to conduct this research. Then I will thank my teachers, Shanza Elahi, for her immense knowledge in the field and witty sense of humor that kept me from dozing off on those Tuesday mornings. And Sara Aslam for being a colossal support not in this course but throughout this semester. I'm extremely grateful to the library for providing me with resources when there were so many restrictions because of the pandemic. I want to thank my mother for keeping me fed when I was working, my sister who inspired me to take interest in animation and lastly, my beloved dog, Emily, without whom I would not have realized the importance of animals in our lives and in our society.

IJSER

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
List of Tables and Figures	3
Abstract	4
Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review	7
Chapter 3:Methodology	11
Chapter 4:Results of the Study	13
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion	22
Bibliography	24
Lexicon of Animal Symbolism	26

IJSER

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Findings from Literature Review	13
Table 2: Findings from the Interviews	15
Table 3a: Comparison of <i>The Donkey King</i> and <i>Zootopia</i>	18
Fig 1. <i>The Donkey King's Mangu</i>	19
Fig 2. <i>Zootopia's Judy Hopps</i>	19
Fig 3. <i>Mangu as King</i>	19
Fig 4. <i>Judy as Police Officer</i>	19
Fig 5. A goat is being kidnapped	20
Fig 6. A predator is being kidnapped	20
Fig 7. Mangu becomes the hero	20
Fig 8. Judy has been given the badge	20
Table 3b: Contrast of <i>The Donkey King</i> and <i>Zootopia</i>	20
Fig 9. A human as villain	21
Fig 10. A sheep as villain	21
Fig 11. The cunning fox <i>Miss Fitna</i>	21
Fig 12. Clever but good fox <i>Nick Wilde</i>	21

IJSER

Abstract

This study takes an extensive look at the characterization of animals in animated movies. Although this subject has been researched immensely before, there is limited research that explores the role of anthropomorphic animals in political discourse through the formal aspects of children animation. This research conducts a comparative case-study method by taking two animated movies, each from local and western contexts, in an attempt to explore the relationship between the political dialog, conveyed through the use of symbols relating to the animal and its reception by the audience. Existing literature has discussed the tactics used by the animated industry to grow its spectatorship by incorporating adult audiences through the application of humor and satire. The purpose of this research will assess relevant literature to investigate the kind of animal iconography to convey socio-political messages and its effect on the general audience.

Keywords: Animation, Anthropomorphism, Political discourse, Children and Adult audience.

IJSER

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

One of the most important characters which have been reigning the animated film industry for

years is the Animal. The animals around us have been shown in an anthropomorphic style. They walk on two legs and wear clothes like humans do, and are capable of making complex speeches and decisions within a fictional narrative, all the while maintaining their animalistic/non-human form. The hybrid form of human and animal is not a nascent invention but it has been depicted in art and architecture of the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece to name a few. This form of representation also made its way into children's folk tales and as political cartoons in newspapers (Bliss, 2016). The anthropomorphic animal in animated movies lives in a fictional world that mirrors human society. They are mostly shown in residential buildings similar to our own and often depicted as having jobs that prevail in our society, such as firemen or baker (Hamilton, 1983).

Anthropomorphic animal is a tool used by animators to define a character effectively (Jardim, 2013). but there is more to it than just being an aesthetic expression of animation. The anthropomorphic iconography in animation is the most successful amongst audiences of all ages as well as lucrative for the producers. The animated animal has become a universal symbol (Wells, 2008). They are very popular especially among children for they recognize and label the real animals around them as their favourite animated animals. The animation industry is growing by the day. Its viewership is increasing as adults also enjoy these movies as much as children.

1.2 Problem Statement and Related Research Questions

The other aspect of this discussion is that animated movies use the animal form to narrate complex issues pertaining to their regions such as politics, ethnic and gender biases. They do this in such a manner that a variety of connotations emerge from within a narrative, by means of symbolism attached to a particular animal. These symbolism are portrayed by giving animals and other inanimate objects human attributes. But how will these symbolism affect the viewer is something to be examined. The following study will inspect the effects of these animated movies which contain socio-political issues through animal iconography, on the general audience.

This study focuses on the impact of symbolism and iconography through anthropomorphic characters used in animated cartoons. The animal is constantly used to allude to political and social issues through symbolism. The main goal of the animated film industry is to target as many audiences ranging from children to adults without being pervasive especially to the younger audiences in their impressionable age. The messages are being conveyed in an explicit way. The intent of this study is to investigate how animation can be used as a tool to address serious and real life issues such as politics and to raise awareness in the general public through anthropomorphic allegory.

This study will also focus on the themes of humor and satire through which the animated movies make a political discourse and also how it comes into play in targeting specifically adult audiences who might not be so enchanted by the element of fantasy in animated movies, like their younger counterparts.

This research will examine the following emerging question(s):

- What is the role of anthropomorphic characters in animated movies?
- How are these characters being deployed as tools to allude to social and political issues pertaining to local and western contexts?

- What are the strategies incorporated in animation that are used to target a specific audience?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study will be divided into three parts relating to the possible research question(s) mentioned in the last paragraph.

- This research will inspect the role of **animated characters in animation**. It will also look into **anthropomorphism, non-humans, animals as humans**.
- The themes of **social and political issues in animation** will be examined with the help of data collection.
- Moreover, it will focus on **American animation** and its place in **popular culture** and its further **impact on its target audiences**, through the themes of **humor, satire, dark comedy, fantasy**. The hidden meaning behind **humor in animation, viewer's perception of humor** and **adult humor in children's cartoons** will also be discussed.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study would be beneficial to the artists who are exploring the relation between symbolism and art and for creative individuals who want to discuss the current political scenario without being too direct or offensive because the aim of this study is to find ways to convey a message about a sensitive subject which would otherwise seem controversial. This research is important for the animators of Pakistan to study the subtleties and iconography deployed through anthropomorphic characters. This point is significant for the progress of the animated industry of Pakistan. It is also substantial to invoke empathy in the readers to be kind and mindful to the animals around us by showing relation between the two species.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations attached to this study. First one is the restriction of time because there are thousands of animated movies out there and this study is able to dissect only two of them. The other limitation is the lack of material in terms of local context. Pakistani animation industry has a very long way to go and there exists only a few examples which can be counted on finger tips. Whereas in the west, there are numerous samples to choose from. For that reason there was only one Pakistani animated movie in which political issues are discussed through anthropomorphic characterization.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The following terminologies will be repeated throughout the study and it's important to learn them for a better understanding of the research.

- Anthropomorphism :
 - a hybrid of animal and human form,
 - giving human attributes to non-human objects.
- Animation :
 - to make alive,

- moving cartoon images
- Carnavalesque :
 - of or relating to carnival; festival,
 - mocking of authority and hierarchy in a satirical tone
- Political correctness :
 - Term used to intend the least amount of offense through language, especially when describing marginalised groups such as race, gender, religion etc.
- Intertextuality :
 - Term used to define the relationship between texts, in the form of caricature, imitation, retelling, tribute or metaphor.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examined for this study was distributed into three parts relating to the theoretical framework and the analysis of these readings to the relation of the study. This measure was taken to ensure that every component of the research question(s) will be addressed and the findings from this chapter will be organized accordingly. For the following sub headings, relevant literature was reviewed and assessed in order to fill the gap in the study.

2.1 Anthropomorphism in Animation

Anthropomorphism is a term to describe the association of animals with humans. Animated features are using anthropomorphic characters to give human attributes to animals and deploy their hybrid form to present our social narratives (Learoyd, 2019). It seems that the humans are in a struggle to communicate with the animal through ascribing their behaviour on to them (Hamilton, 1983). By breaking anthropomorphism in two, we get the *anthropos* as the human and the *morph* as the non-human. animated features today are focusing on the non-human form of its main character to narrate a fictional story. However this shift from the human to the non-human is gradual and entwined with the reception of the viewer. animators today are using the anthropomorphic by taking the spectator in a non-human society which lies within their human world.

The anthropomorphic subjects in the animated movies these days mimic human behaviour. animated films such as *Ratatouille* and *Bee Movie*, where the form of the main characters is animalistic but their actions and intentions are human. This approach was used in earlier hand-drawn animations as well. Nowadays, with the help of exceptional computer-graphics, the anthropomorphic subjects convince the viewer of their consciousness. The anthropomorphic subjects are very popular among audiences of all ages and also promote the already burgeoning animated industry. These personality traits given to anthropomorphic subjects are just assumptions based on an animal's unconscious behaviour. The subjects in these movies are constructed through the mixture of 'fantasy' and 'reality' which helps in the narration of a fictional story. This form is used by animators to travel to spaces and areas that are inaccessible to humans because of their size and form. The anthropomorphic subject takes the viewer by the hand and gives the glimpse of its world through its own perspective.

The earlier civilizations and mythology in which some hybrid form of human intelligence and animal strength was worshiped and the world in which they lived in, is much like the animated world in which anthropomorphic characters live. It is an amalgamation of human and animal

habitat. This process works as a visual pleasure for the audience to see non-human agency, moving and behaving as a human. Through the unification of the human and non-human agencies an aesthetical visual is created, which also plays a part in alluding to cultural, social and psychological issues pertaining to humans through satire and allegory. This process is carried out by placing the anthropomorphic subject in a simulation in which it works as an implication to prelude to a real life scenario.

The anthropomorphic character in animated movies is in a constant state of flux between its human and non-human form. it never breaks away from the constraints of its animalistic form no matter how conscious it may seem. This also encourages the viewer to ponder on the animalistic nature of humans by reflecting humanity upon the animal (Holliday, 2016).

However, animals can also be used to convey politically charged messages, keeping in mind their form and the symbology they have that exists in our culture. animated films have used animal representation to allude to particular issues pertaining to politics and society by means of 'political carnivalesque' which depicts how animated films are representing animals as a catalyst to address political issues and challenge authority in an indirect manner. Animal characters are represented in a graphic and descriptive manner to deliver the political message to the general audience so it wouldn't be offensive. Moreover, it is the animal nature of the human which is portrayed by the animals as symbols of power and politics. This idea of addressing political messages has been derived from the caricature political cartooning in british newspapers where animals were not only used as a way to allude to historical and social situations but the appearance of the animal also changes the dynamics of the cartoon. the animal is not cut off from the intended meaning but rather ingrained in it.

Animated films are conduits for connecting humankind with the animal and show the relationship between these two species and also to draw comparisons between them. Humankind is in an eternal struggle to gain knowledge about the animal and through animation, humans give animals meaning. over and above that, humankind creatively uses the animal form to vividly explain its own animality through metaphors. Each animal is presented in relation to humankind, for example predators are shown as enemy and harmless creatures as friendly. These characteristics in animated animals further defines the animalistic traits in humankind viewed within our social structure.

Animation has continuously used the animal to show a range of complexity in a character through simplified form and meaning. The animals are presented not just for the depiction of narrative or for comic relief but as catalysts for conveying social and political messages through iconography. an animated animal has become a reflection of our own self, a lens through which we give meaning to our society (Wells, 2008).

Anthropomorphism is often used as scientific and philosophical terms to analyze the relation between human and animal behaviour. This phenomenon is quite popular in animation and is deeply connected to human psychology and their sensory experience with animals. It is a way to incorporate children as well as adults into this developmental process of getting familiar with the animal (Bliss, 2016).

Animators exploit the animal form in such a way that it weakens the true identity of the animal culturally, rendering it a mere "brand". The popularity of animated animals has led to the domestication of those animals which are elusive and wild. Predators like lions and bears are being confined in small cages in zoos and are being used in "acts" in circuses, which has further estranged the humankind with the animal by this cruelty. but as a beneficial outcome, the animated animal has come to light as a universally recognized symbol (Wells, 2008).

(Eidt, 2016) hypothesized that the popularity of anthropomorphic animals is regarded as a repetition for children to extensively learn from these animated features. The anthropomorphic form of the animal has alienated the human from the real animals even further.

Humans have predetermined perceptions about animals and the placing them in the fully constructed fictional world of the animated movie makes it easier for the viewer to interpret their behaviour (Jardim, 2013).

2.2 Social and Political Issues in Animation

Satire in literature is used as a tool of exaggeration and irony to scoff at individuals, society as a collective and even those who govern the state (Murphy, 2011). The fine line that separates satire from other forms of protests is the use of humor. Satire can be used in entertainment to comment on the human follies or even as a protest to mould human behaviour or society in a rhetoric form (Lundborg & Florberger, 2014). The animated satire has the tendency to poke fun at authority and can easily get away by being funny. animated TV series have much more liberty to take chances in humorous content for it can be justified by the other programs running on the same network. These TV shows mostly cater to adult audiences because their take on humor is provocative in political and social respects. The technique of “intertextuality” in animation is quite a useful term to study if one is finding the relation between satire and animation. What may appear to be a silly cartoon actually contains complex layers of references from our politics and society in a humorous fashion. This technique has placed humor in a precarious position in today’s turbulent times. animation has become a staple for mockin authority and social hierarchy.

The driving force behind animation is the representation of real life. animation is a way to infuse life in drawings and make them move. This point is also relevant for studying anthropomorphic symbolism in animation. animation has a tendency to incorporate humanistic attributes in inanimate objects and animals. This representation might be helpful to study the social and psychological aspects that have been assigned to a particular animal or object and their reflection on humanity (Richardson, 2008).

Walt Disney was the first person to incorporate political messages in children's animation within the backdrop of the cold war between USA and Russia in the 1950’s. This measure was taken against the strategy used by the eastern culture, where they profoundly deployed political messages in children's literature. animated movies can be used to educate children about the current social and political situation and what kind of world we live in through the use of fantasy. The fantasy element along with the use of friendly animated animals can convey the message in less severity. It can also give a chance to parents to prepare their children for the future and make them aware of these issues.

The main ideology that is consistent in almost all American animated movies is the existence of stereotypes. These movies are very successful in maintaining the image of several stereotypes that are prevailing in the American society, related to ethnicity, gender and so on. and also they portray more complex and abstract stereotypes such as a shy and timid girl wearing spectacles and braces while carrying a load of books is often seen as a nerd. Same goes for the stereotypes of Emo, Jock and so on. All of these stereotypes that we encounter in animation and even in live-action movies are much more complex in real american society. They are rather binary and consist of an amalgamation of many stereotypes. the American society is very adamant in keeping these

stereotypes alive by broadcasting them onto the minds of children and they want them to grow up watching and relating to them in their practical life as well.

The underdog culture in animated movies, in which the main character who is an unfavorable, destitute person suddenly is thrust upon authority and rises as the saviour of society. This hope is acute in terms of targeting children. Firstly, it places the child in an inferiority complex for a poor child. and secondly, the child constructs this hope that he/she will overcome his/her poverty and will live in more favourable conditions in future, however the capitalist society makes sure that one who is poor will remain poor. This false hope doesn't come as effective in real life (Booker, 2010).

These political messages could backfire in animation as well for the content of fantasy and humor may hinder its process to get through to the audience. Satire and humor works in implicit and explicit ways. Sometimes the message can miss the mark by being too humorous and the political issue subsides (LaMarre, Landreville, Young & Gilkerson, 2014). One could be careful while choosing what kind of humor to use to target a specific issue. Humor and satire regarding religion and ethnicity can backfire. Laughter gained from the expense of another person's insult can both unite and divide people in cultural groups (Timmerman, Gussman & King, 2012).

2.3 The Role of Audience in Animated Movies

The first impression of seeing any humorous or satirical subject in art or animation may hinder its process of conveying its true message to the viewer. Humor is difficult to decipher because it may look silly and for that matter it has not been taken seriously by most people. humor is a "multilayered enigma" which can be explored in two ways: firstly it depends on the skill of the person who is incorporating humor to deliver a serious message in form of rhetoric and secondly it is subjected to the wits of the viewer and how clever they are to understand its deeper meaning. To fully understand humor in any form, one needs to be aware of the context of culture as well. One thing which is funny in one time and space, doesn't necessarily come across funny years after it has been made or in a different country (Reaves, 2001). Humor possesses the power to grab the attention of the viewer in the most receptive way as compared to other forms of rhetoric, particularly in conveying a serious message (Podlas, 2011).

The fact that the media has taken over our lives. The media selects the content by itself and chooses what to broadcast in order to control the mind of its audience. It delivers messages to us all the time, telling us how to live our lives, how to look a certain way, what to eat and what we need in our lives. The media feeds us lies, detaching us from the realities of life by plunging us inside a cube. The only way when it indicates the harsh realities of life is through the strategy of humor and satire. The comedians seem to be the only entertainers whose disbelief in the media is reflective in their debates. The element of animation helps in representing social issues in an absurd manner. When we are shown the reality in an animated form, we tend to accept that because the humour makes it digestible. The aspect of fantasy makes the matter at hand hypocritical and pretentious, when in fact, its existence in real life is concrete.

there is a network of audiences within audiences, each of them interpreting the given message in their own capacity, within their own cultural setting. If someone is not familiar with the social issues of America, their interpretation of American animation would be different from someone who is familiar with these issues of gender and ethnic bias.

Humor is mandatory in order to bypass issues that are distressing. It keeps these pressing issues light-hearted. Political humor is an intelligent way to present unpleasant events by twisting the truth. Animation warps the reality in its fantastical element, giving the viewer the chance to make

out their own interpretations. The relationship between comedy and satire is strengthened when issues related to political correctness are presented in a humorous way through exaggeration and criticism, they disclose the incompatibility within our social system. The intention of the animation, oftenly is to offend by means of political correctness (Dejean, 2016).

The most important message these animated features convey to its audience is the importance of family, first of all these movies are advertised as “for the whole family”. but this idea of the family is much more complex than just your immediate family consisting of parent-offspring but the ideology of state-public relation. the state is the head and the public is under the state. the state and public thrives together and will encounter their common enemies by uniting together (Booker, 2010).

These children’s animated features rose to popularity in the 1980’s and since then, the animated companies have been using adult centered humor to expand its viewership. In the subsequent years, these movies have been laden with implicit adult humor, whereas adult humor was rarely used back in the days. It is also realized that the male characters are often the ones who deliver the adult humor (Akers, 2013).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design of the Study

It is a qualitative research based on the study of literature based on the theoretical frameworks of **Anthropomorphism in Animation, Social and Political Issues in Animation and The Role of Audience in Animated Movies**. The literature was analyzed and assessed on the basis of the research questions and the result was gathered according to the frame of the study which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

This is a comparative case-study based on the comparison and contrast of two animated movies, each from a local and western context. Both movies have somewhat similar narratives with anthropomorphic characters. This research will compare the findings of these two movies side by side and draw further conclusions.

3.2 Research Methods

The study is based upon the findings from gathering primary and secondary data. From the primary source, interviews with two experts were conducted. These experts were from fields of animation and film and media studies respectively. The interview with the local animator was conducted over phone and the other one with the professor of film and media studies was conducted in person. Both interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participant and also hand written notes were taken at the time of the interviews.

The secondary data was divided in two ways. First, documents related to the research questions and the theoretical framework, which were read closely and annotated. And the second method of gathering results was done through the selection of two animated movies, each from a local and western context. Both of these movies were put side by side for comparison and contrast.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collected by primary means based on conducting interviews with two experts from the fields of animation and film and media studies respectively. These candidates were

selected on the basis of old acquaintances and also their expertise in the subject matter.

The secondary data related to the literature review was collected from online libraries. Several published articles, peer reviewed journals, web articles and published books were reviewed for this study. Keywords related to the theoretical frameworks were typed in the search engine to generate documents with concerns similar to the related research. Two books were selected for the literature review and those were not found as a whole on the internet, because of this limitation, the campus library provided the full books via email. Only selected chapters from those books were reviewed. The animated movies from the local and western comparison were collected via the internet.

3.4 Data Analysis

The primary data, gathered from the interviews, was further analyzed to focus on the main questions related to the research as live conversation whether via phone or in person has a chance to get carried away and sway from the purpose of the entire interview. For that reason, the audio recordings were listened to very closely and only the main findings were accumulated as the results.

Same goes for the secondary sources, such as documents and literature that were concerned with the purpose of the study were analyzed according to their similarity with the theoretical framework. The animated movies were also assessed on the basis of similarity of the narratives. Both movies raised particular social and political issues pertaining to their respective regions through the symbolism of anthropomorphic characters.

3.5 Limits of the Study

This study is limited only to the comparison of two animated movies. With the restriction of time, more movies can be incorporated into the research. With the question of the audience's role in deriving the meaning of these movies, a survey could've been conducted among children and adults accordingly with two different questionnaires, each of them catering to young and adult consumers of animated movies. In this way, this study could have been qualified as a quantitative research as well. These possibilities of gathering information from more animated movies and surveys can be counted as the scope for further research.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

For the primary data collection, the consent of the participants was prioritized and the participants were asked for their voluntary contribution to the research. The interviews were based primarily on the knowledge of the participants in the subject matter and were assessed on their relevance to the research; their private matters were not discussed in the audio recordings. This study does not harm or violate the rights of confidentiality of the participants such as the violation and unethical use of their said word.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The results of this study are divided into three parts in the form of tables. Table 1 will depict the findings collected from the literature review relevant to the study, table 2 will answer the research questions which were accumulated through the means of interviews and the third table will be based on the comparative case study based on the findings from *The Donkey King* and *Zootopia*.

Table 1: Findings from literature review

Research Question(s)	Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the role of anthropomorphic characters in animated movies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anthropomorphism can be used as a tool for animating a fictional world in which real life issues can be presented in an allegory while representing animals as humans. Animals can be attributed to human behavior through semantics, for example lion represents king, fox represents clever, owl represents the wise (Wells, 2008).• Humans like to see animals in their image. anthropomorphism posits the aforementioned idea where animals are not only walking and talking like humans but they seem like they are culturally and politically aware like humans as well (Holliday, 2016).• Humankind is in an eternal struggle to gain knowledge about the animal and through animation, humans give animals meaning. Over and above that, humankind creatively uses the animal form to vividly explain its own animality through metaphors. Each animal is presented in relation to humankind, for example predators are shown as enemy and harmless creatures as friendly. These characteristics in animated animals further define the animalistic traits in humankind viewed within our social structure (Holliday, 2016).

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● How are these characters being deployed as tools to allude to social and political issues pertaining to local and western contexts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Animations in which certain social and political issues are depicted through humor are not regarded as thoughtful. The impression of animation with its use of vibrant colors and vivid environment may hinder its process of conveying its true message to the viewer (Dejean, 2016).● What may appear to be a silly cartoon actually contains complex layers of references from our politics and society in a humorous fashion. This technique has placed humor in a precarious position in today's turbulent times. Animation has become a staple for mocking authority and social hierarchy with the notion of satire (Booker, 2010)● These issues are depicted with the help of symbolism through giving consciousness to animals and other inanimate objects which are significant to the context (Dejean, 2016).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● What are the strategies incorporated in animation that are used to target a specific audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It depends on the intention of the creator who is incorporating humor to deliver a serious message in their animation which is subjected to the wits of the viewer and how clever he is to understand its deeper meaning. To fully understand humor in an artwork, one needs to be aware of the context of culture as well (Reaves, 2001).● Even then some adults roll their eyes at this idea for they have this preconceived notion that anything hand drawn cannot be like its live-action equal. Serious issues communicated through the use of humor may also backfire. Audiences could get offended for the purpose of satire is to mock and challenge society and authority (Murphy, 2011).● One has to keep in mind the age group

	<p>of the audience while inserting humor in animated movies. Meanwhile, adult animated TV series have much more liberty to take chances in humorous content for it, PG rated animations have a lot of limitations for it's main audience are children (Richardson, 2008).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The animated companies have been using adult centered humor to expand its viewership. These movies have been laden with implicit adult humor, whereas adult humor was rarely used back in the days. It is also realized that the male characters are often the ones who deliver the adult humor (Akers, 2013).
--	--

Table 2: Findings from the Interviews

Research Question(s)	Findings from the Local Animator	Findings from the Film Professor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of anthropomorphic characters in animated movies? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prime objective of any animation is to convey the message in an indirect manner through the use of animal or inanimate objects so as not to disturb or offend the status quo. • The other aim of the animator is to make the movie as entertaining and fantasy based as possible so the overall appearance of the harsh realities of the society depicted in the movie may come across softer. • It depends on the skill of the animator to get 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals are used as symbols to represent patterns in human behavior. Each animal is associated with a particular attribute of humans. • Animals can also be used as an allegory for political references. They are also safe references for making a political discourse rather than depicting humans. • He gave the example of Snowball the Pig in Animal Farm which was loosely based on a Russian political figure. If someone wants to associate that

	<p>the message across through the use of animal symbols.</p>	<p>pig with the said politician then it's that person's choice because nothing is said directly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political response on animated animals is not likely. Same is the case for The Donkey King, he says, it's very easy to identify who the donkey in that movie is alluding to because Imran Khan's campaign for Prime Minister was running when the movie was released.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How are these characters being deployed as tools to allude to social and political issues pertaining to local and western contexts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The political and social issues in human form have been depicted in news, documentaries and so on, which can also be seen as a little harsh and too direct. The goal is to divert attention through the use of satire. ● The satirical discourse is being deployed by the news as well. News channels are bringing comedians to reflect upon the political and social situation these days. This method is used to keep the conversation light-hearted without damaging or directly insulting the establishment. ● Whenever humans are depicting the social or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He thinks Lion King can be depicted as an animation which uses political allegory for its reference to Hamlet. ● If the intentions are only to hurt the emotions of a certain group, then those animals are used which have a negative connotation in the targeted culture or even the ideas which are not regarded as something to be depicted, this is where he gave the example of the Danish Cartoons. He thinks the intention of those cartoons were not aesthetic but to hurt the Muslim community. ● In his opinion, all art

	<p>political scenario, censorship can get involved as well which can hinder the broadcast of the content. the use of animal form can get leverage for the content to not get banned.</p>	<p>forms are political, but if the driving force is politics itself then its position has been compromised.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the strategies incorporated in animation that are used to target a specific audience? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The target audience is selected by the animator or the content writer of an animated feature at the stage of pre-production. • The general audience remains oblivious to this selection of audience which is mostly pre-planned. • He gave the example of The Simpsons and the methods they use to target its audience which are definitely not children for the range of complex and bold topics in its discourse regardless of being an animation. • The animated movies are seen as children's movies especially in the South Asian region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful movie would be the one which will hide messages through implications. • Western movies are more popular than Pakistani animation because western animation conveys their messages indirectly. • <i>The Donkey King</i> missed the mark in his opinion because it was considered rather too direct and it clearly depicted Imran Khan and he was very popular as a leader at that time. • In his opinion, <i>The Donkey King</i> is not meant for children for the kind of political sentiment it evokes which is clearly meant for adults.

Table 3: Comparative case-study of The Donkey King and Zootopia

This table will be further divided into two parts for the comparison and contrast of the case studies.

Table 3a: Comparison of *The Donkey King* and *Zootopia*

<i>The Donkey King</i>	<i>Zootopia</i>
<p>The main character of the movie is a donkey named <i>Mangu</i>. Donkeys are symbolized as being obedient and polite. They are attached to carriages and carts to pull weight in several cultures. In this movie, this phenomenon is also highlighted. Globally, donkeys are considered foolish and in that sense, they are depicted to label someone who is dimwitted, as <i>gadha</i> in Pakistan and <i>ass</i> in western cultures. <i>Mangu</i> is a dreamer and believes that his dreams of getting rich will come true one day.</p>	<p>The main character of this movie is a rabbit named <i>Judy</i>. Like donkeys they are also harmless and herbivores. Rabbits are also very popular among children in front of stuffed animals. They are known for reproducing a lot. They are not considered very intelligent and brave. <i>Judy</i> wanted to be the first rabbit police officer and is very hopeful that she would achieve this dream of hers.</p>
<p>The donkey is depicted as the underdog in this movie. The donkey is nominated for ruling the land of <i>Azadnagar</i> (a land of animals living in a humanized society), where the lion is the current ruler. Through some external help, this donkey is elected as the king of the land. <i>Mangu</i> soon realizes that this job of ruling the land is not easy as there is a lot of corruption in the system. Since <i>Mangu</i> is a donkey, he is not considered fit to rule. The stereotype of being foolish is attached to this context.</p>	<p>The rabbit character in this movie is selected as the first rabbit police officer and is sent to the metropolis named <i>Zootopia</i> where all animals, prey and predators live harmoniously. In the police station, <i>Judy</i> realizes that all the police officers are predators and they are being given detective work while <i>Judy</i> is sent to do parking duty. <i>Judy</i> is not considered fit to do detective work. She is seen as weak and meek. She is left to do the least important work.</p>
<p>Soon as <i>Mangu</i> ascended to the throne, innocent animals started to get kidnapped mysteriously. <i>Mangu</i> gets to be the one to find the whereabouts of these kidnapped animals. The family of these missing animals are worried about them but the establishment is not taking any strict action because they are common public.</p>	<p>Predators in the town of <i>Zootopia</i> started to get kidnapped mysteriously. <i>Judy</i>, with the help of <i>Nick</i> the fox, finds the truth about these missing animals. <i>Judy</i> is constantly discouraged by her chief to quit looking for the missing predators as she is not the best person for this job. This can be seen as the gender bias towards women in our society.</p>
<p><i>Mangu</i> emerges as the hero in the end, as he saves all the missing animals. The stereotype of a donkey being dim witted and cowardly is shattered here.</p>	<p><i>Judy</i> gets to be the one to solve the mystery behind the kidnapping and the savage behaviour of the predators. The predators can be taken as the metaphor for different ethnic groups which are stereotyped as being dangerous and troublemakers in the society.</p>
<p>The movie depicts the issues regarding the current Pakistani political situation.</p>	<p>This movie tackles the issues of ethnic and gender bias that persists in the American society.</p>

Visual depictions of the comparison:



Fig 1. *The Donkey King's Mangu*



Fig 2. *Zootopia's Judy Hopps*



Fig 3. *Mangu as King*



Fig 4. *Judy as Police Officer*



Fig 5. *A goat is being kidnapped.*

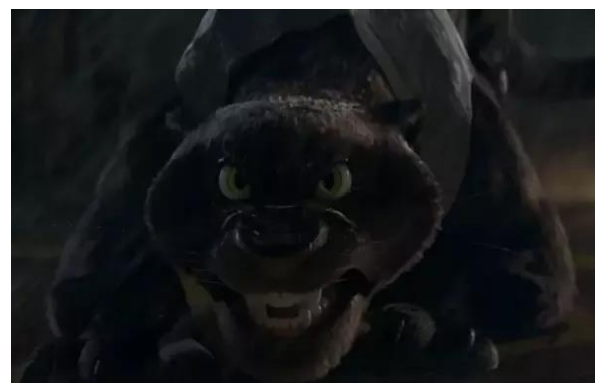


Fig 6. *A predator is being kidnapped.*



Fig 7. *Mangu* becomes the hero



Fig 8. *Judy* has been given the badge.

Table 3b: Contrast of *The Donkey King* and *Zootopia*

<i>The Donkey King</i>	<i>Zootopia</i>
This movie is loaded with direct references from the Pakistani culture such as the role of media newscasters and how they fight on the programs, the protests of common people, the scrutiny of VIP culture such as roadblocks and other privileges and perks enjoyed by political entities.	The ethnic and gender bias persisting not just in the American culture but also in other parts of the world have been depicted in a subtle and indirect manner in this movie through the use of symbolism that are associated with animals such as predators are seen as terrorists, prey are depicted as women or the general public and so on.
A fox who is usually depicted as cunning has been stereotyped in this movie as well. The fox maintained the symbol associated with it as it remained the villain in the whole narrative.	The fox depicted in this movie is seen as a trickster at the beginning but it breaks its own stereotype by emerging as the hero in the end.
It was revealed that a human has been using the fox to kidnap all the animals and take them to the circus. The villain is the ringmaster and all the animals are afraid of him. This alludes to the external influences that impact the Pakistani politics.	The real perpetrator of all the kidnappings and savage behaviour of the predators was revealed to be the polite sheep who was also the mayor of <i>Zootopia</i> . This alludes to the assumption of the corruption of power. Whoever has the slightest authority, no matter how nice they seem, underneath they only care about themselves which can be harmful for the general public.



Fig 9. A human as villain



Fig 10. A sheep as villain



Fig 11. The cunning fox *Miss Fitna*



Fig 12. Clever but good fox *Nick Wilde*

Through the above mentioned findings of all the primary and secondary data combined, the main points which answers each part of the research questions are as follows:

- Anthropomorphic characters are used to enhance the element of fantasy and make the experience surreal. People want to see things that they are not physically capable of seeing in the real world.
- Animals are safer to work with when dealing with sensitive issues such as politics and social discourse. Human depiction can be seen as too harsh and is subjected to scrutiny. Satire also plays a huge role in softening the overall message.
- The writers of animated movies incorporate references from popular culture to increase their audience. Adult humor is also implied through hidden meanings and is often spoken by the male character of the animated feature.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

To draw a cartoon is to express those ideas with freedom which cannot be put into words. Cartoonists working in newspapers enjoy much more freedom than their journalists co-

workers. They can comment on and condemn the establishment at the same time in a humorous manner. As we all know that politics is a sensitive subject, therefore artists, just like cartoonists have expressed themselves creatively all the while highlighting the social and political issues that cannot be expressed explicitly. Humorous exaggeration takes the conversation elsewhere and keeps the overall appearance of the image light-hearted and ambiguous. It is important that the image have more than one meaning and is open to interpretation of the viewer. Since cartoons started moving into animation, the ideas also started shifting and more symbols were inserted into images to highlight the current issues. One of the most important symbols which have been reigning the animated industry for years is the Animal. The anthropomorphic iconography in animation is the most successful amongst audiences of all ages as well as for the producers. The animated animal has become a universal symbol (Wells, 2008). These animals walk on two legs, and are capable of making complex speeches and decisions within a fictional narrative. The animated movies use the animals to narrate complex issues pertaining to their regions such as dirty politics, ethnic and gender biases. Is it imperative that the use of symbolism in cartoons or animation exist so as not to invoke controversies? If the issue at hand is depicted in a direct manner, would it be subject to be perceived as offensive? The reason for these questions is the event of the *Jyllands-Posten* Prophet Muhammad Cartoons, a Danish newspaper's depiction of Prophet Muhammad and the backlash attached to it (Keane, 2008). This cartoon was responsible for a lot of violence in several muslim countries as iconism is prohibited in Islam. But another example of a controversial cartoon comes into context, which did not depict its subject in a human form. *Iran-e-jomee* Cockroach Cartoon, in which a cockroach has been depicted as asking a question in Azerbaijani, which resulted in violent protests within Iran by the Azerbaijani people. These two events are similar in ways that they both started with cartoons and ended in violence. Artists and animators both try to address the social and political issues in subtler ways as to not invoke violence. As creative individuals, it is their duty to address the general public in the form of rhetoric while also maintaining a peaceful stance.

5.2 Implications for Further Research

This research can be further expanded by reviewing more animated features and also discussing their underlying meanings and the use of intertextuality. This research can also be taken as a bsci step towards the meaning of symbols and semiotics that exist in the visual language which can be made as an art practice as well.

5.3 Conclusion to the Research

Pakistani animation industry has just entered this game for making animals do the talking and walking in animation. It still has a very long way to go to compete in the market that is being dominated by the western animation industry, in terms of the visual style, the use of animal symbols and also to think about how much detail should be given to the viewer to make a political and social discourse, explicitly and implicitly.

IJSER

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akers, C. L. (2013). The Rise of Humor: Hollywood Increases Adult Centered Humor in Animated Children's Films.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4723&context=etd>

Bliss, G. E. (2017). Redefining the anthropomorphic animal in animation (*Doctoral dissertation, Loughborough University*).

https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/thesis/Redefining_the_anthropomorphic_animal_in_animation/9333113

Booker, M. K. (2010). Conclusion: the Politics of Children's Film: What Hollywood Is Really Teaching Our Children. *Disney, Pixar, And the Hidden Messages of Children's Films*, 171-187.

https://books.google.com.pk/books?id=jD9_0jxVmqUC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_s ummary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Dejean, A. (2016). PC Is Back in *South Park*: Framing Social Issues through Satire. *Colloquy*, 12.104-114.

https://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Colloquy/dejean_2_final_formatted.pdf

Eidt, S. A. (2016). Disney's Animated Animals: A Potential Source of Opinions and Knowledge (*Doctoral dissertation, Malone University*).

https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=ma1467902314&dispositio n=inline

Hamilton, C. (1983). Anthropomorphism: You should know what it is. *Rangelands*, 5(4), 166.

<https://repository.arizona.edu/bitstream/handle/10150/638452/11808-11350-1- PB.pdf?sequence=1>

Holliday, C. (2016). 'I'm Not a Real Boy, I'm a Puppet': Computer-Animated Films and Anthropomorphic Subjectivity. *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 11(3), 246-262.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1746847716661456>

Jardim, T. J. (2013). Animals as character: anthropomorphism as personality in animation.

http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/13614/TimothyJardim_0702651P_Anthropo morphism_as_personality_in_animation.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

Keane, D. (2008). Cartoon Violence and Freedom of Expression. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 30(4), 845-875. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20486714>

LaMarre, H. L., Landreville, K. D., Young, D., & Gilkerson, N. (2014). Humor works in funny ways: Examining satirical tone as a key determinant in political humor message processing. *Mass Communication and Society*, 17(3), 400-423.

https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1154&context=comm_fac

Lundborg, N., & Florberger, C. F. (2014). Understanding Satire with The Simpsons: A qualitative study on providing information and knowledge through animated television. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:733804/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Murphy, M. J. (2011). Satire, race, and modern cartoons: Boondocks vs. South Park.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.359.8806&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Podias, K. (2011). Funny or No Laughing Matter?: How Television Viewers Interpret Satire of Legal Themes. *Seton Hall Journal of Sports and Entertainment Law*, 21(2), 289-331.

https://scholarship.shu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1013&context=sports_entertainment

Reaves, W. W. (2001). The Art in Humor, the Humor in Art. *American Art*, 15(2), 2-9.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3109344>

Richardson, K. L. (2008). Introduction: Humorous Subversions: Animation as Cultural Critique.

Studies in American Humor, 3(17), 7-10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42573533>

Timmerman, D., Gussman, G., & King, D. (2012). Humor, Race, and Rhetoric: "A Liberating Sabotage of the Past's Hold on the Present". *Rhetoric Review*, 31(2), 169-187.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41697852>

Wells, P. (2008). Creature Comforted: Animal Politics, Animated Memory. *The Animated Bestiary: Animals, Cartoons, and Culture*, 168-202.

https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4iRjHk5- ofgC&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&ots=IJW5sWzyXi&sig=1XyKth5eLLw6q1s8zNt5b8UccRg&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

IJSER

LEXICON OF ANIMAL SYMBOLISM

The following table depicts the symbolism associated with animals as portrayed in the case-studies of animated movies regarding this research.

Donkey	Foolish, coward, used as a tool to carry the burden of humans.
Fox	Cunning, Trickster, sly, manipulates people

Buffalo	Physical strength
Lion	Royal, Brave, abuses power, spoiled brat
Monkey	Clever, Naughty, takes advantage of the situation by means of scheming
Rabbit	Hardworking, enthusiastic, polite, cute
Sheep	Polite, foolish/simple minded, overlooked or neglected
Chameleon	Changing of colors is depicted as changing of ideology
Wolf	Guardian, can't help howling, intelligent, keen sense of smell.

IJSER