Analysis of the phenomenon of violence in children's cinema and its negative effects

Abdou Nadia [1*]
Zitouni abderrazak [2]

[1] **University Djelfa, Algeria**
n.abdou@univ-djelfa.dz
[2] **University Djelfa, Algeria**
abderrazak.zitouni@ univ-djelfa.dz

ABSTRACT

Recent years have witnessed a technological and technical boom in the audiovisual field, including cinema, which has developed remarkably at all levels and has taken multiple dimensions in dealing with content from political, cultural, social, economic and other fields. It has attracted and targeted a wide audience to increase financial revenues, but on the other hand and from the target audience Also, the children, who posed a complete dilemma in dealing with films, all forms of aggression, violence and terrorism that affected their emotional, psychological and social orientation and the imbalance of many of their intellectual balances.

Keywords: **children's; cinema; film; violence**.

[*] *Abdou Nadia*

1-Introduction

The form of the digital world with all the contents of an artistic and aesthetic creative giver of ideas, as well as knocking on the doors of all fields of economic, social, culture and other paths, including the arts of all kinds of photography and cinema, which has become closely related to digitization, as it constitutes means of communication and communication, which witnessed a major pioneering renaissance to attract viewers until it became a number economically Due to the viewership rate, content makers and producers rushed to open the doors of film production without taking into account any cultural and social aspects of the viewing audience or the age group to receive the content, especially since recently children have become the most vulnerable to violent and terrible content and other content that violates ethical controls . All of these phenomena form A turning point to change the mentalities, behaviors and mentalities of children as a result of the crowding of bad content that provokes violence and terrorism

2. The phenomenon of violence in children's cinema and its negative effects:

Violence in children's cinema has become a significant concern in recent years. This phenomenon refers to the portrayal of violent acts, aggressive behavior, and intense action sequences in movies targeted towards young audiences. The impact of this portrayal on children has raised questions regarding its potential negative effects.

Firstly, the exposure to violence in children's cinema can desensitize young viewers to real-life aggression. Continuous exposure to violent content can blur the line between fiction and reality, leading children to perceive violent behavior as acceptable or normal. This desensitization may contribute to an increase in aggressive tendencies among children, as they may imitate the violent actions they witness on screen.

Furthermore, violent content in children's movies can negatively affect their emotional well-being. Young minds are impressionable and vulnerable to the imagery and themes depicted on screen. Excessive violence can instill fear, anxiety, and distress in children, impacting their mental health and overall development. It may also hinder their ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Additionally, the glamorization of violence in children's cinema can undermine the importance of peaceful conflict resolution. When violence is portrayed as the primary means of problem-solving, it sends a harmful message to young viewers. Instead of promoting empathy, communication, and non-violent strategies, children may internalize the idea that aggression is an effective way to resolve conflicts.

Addressing the negative effects of violence in children's cinema is crucial. Filmmakers, parents, and policymakers should collaborate to establish stricter guidelines and age-appropriate content ratings for children's movies. Additionally, promoting media literacy among children can help them develop critical thinking skills and discern the impact of violent content on their well-being.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of violence in children's cinema has significant negative effects. It can desensitize children to real-life violence, negatively impact their emotional well-being, and undermine the importance of peaceful conflict resolution. Taking proactive measures to mitigate these effects is essential to safeguard the healthy development of young viewers.

The young viewer is naturally attracted to what catches their attention in the movement of things, which motivates them to interact with those composite images. Since its inception, children's cinema has aimed to liberate the young child's mind from the constraints imposed by realism and enter the realm of mental, psychological, and emotional emancipation. This creates a generation that is creative and innovative, without neglecting the pleasure that forms in the mind of the young viewer when engaging with those images in an engaging manner, which always makes them anticipate what is to come in the scenes.

Animated films, or Animation, are the films that give movement and life to inanimate and non-speaking objects, such as drawings or puppets, based on the principle of persistence of vision and the illusion of movement (Shukri, 1994, p. 25).

3-Cartoon movies:

Children's cinema is considered a distinct genre from other types and an integral part of the film industry. According to George Sadoul, "Animation forms an independent branch in the art of filmmaking. It breathes life into drawings on the screen, sculptures, images, lines, sizes, and dolls. Thanks to animation, all the visual arts can now enjoy movement" (Sadoul, 1968, p. 431). There is a prevalent belief among many contemporary audiences that the art of animation predates the emergence of cinema. However, if we look back, we find that this art actually preceded cinema by several years. "Since the dawn of history, ancient painters have been attempting to bring movement to their drawings, so they appear alive. When the cave dwellers desired to record the history of their lives and leave it for their children and descendants, they tried to carve on the cave walls vivid images of the events they witnessed. With all the creativity they possessed, they sought to make these images move. One of the most remarkable of these drawings was a depiction of a bull with multiple legs in various positions, depicting the intricate details of the bull's movement. (Atallah, 1997, p. 45)"And it is known that the credit for the invention of

animation goes to the Belgian scientist Joseph Plateau and the Austrian professor Simon von Stampfer in 1832 (Perkins, 2002, p. 53). With the invention of their "Phenakistoscope" device, these discoveries turned the world upside down and characterized the 19th century with results, theories, and physical efforts that extended into the Renaissance era. While still images provide a sequence of motion rather than its continuity, it is the viewer's brain that translates these static images into continuous movement, in what is called the Persistence of Vision. Although this explanation does not provide the final word on the matter, there is another theory known as the Phi-Phenomenon or Acceptance of Phenomenal Identity that offers an alternative explanation or complements the previous theory (Hilmi al-Muhandis, 1989, p. 10). Because scientists sought to achieve a common dream, which was capturing motion in images, they succeeded in realizing this dream through the invention of a machine based on the phenomenon of image persistence on the retina. The images imprinted on the retina do not disappear immediately, and this property transforms a moving spark into a straight line of fire, as the eye can retain the image for about 1/10 of a second after it is removed from in front of the eye. These studies were planned in the 17th and 18th centuries by figures such as Newton and Chevalier D'Arcy (George, s d, p. 17).

This experiment involved a disc with spaced-out drawings on its edge, representing successive stages of a specific event. By rotating the disc, the viewer would observe the edge through a single peephole, which meant that the sequential images would pass by quickly, giving them the illusion of motion.

Other attempts were made during that period to find a method for capturing motion, including Thomas Edison, who invented the "Kinetoscope" machine. However, this invention relied on visual illusion to display moving objects.

In 1878, Emile Reynaud presented his invention at the International Paris Exhibition, where he achieved great success. Thousands of admirers were drawn to this marvelous art, and demands for it increased. According to Georges Méliès, "Reynaud created the Praxinoscope machine in France, which was an evolution of the Zoetrope game, thus announcing his optical theater in 1888. Through this invention, he was able to display animated films composed of strips that could last up to 15 minutes in some cases. " (George Medbouk, s d, p. 11)

At the beginning of the 20th century, the world once again witnessed a significant milestone and an exciting discovery in the field of photographic imaging. Animated images preceded cinema with Plato, Stampfer, and especially with Emile Reynaud, who was unparalleled in his art, humor, and humanity. In order for animation cinema to become widespread, it needed to

merge technologically with still images, and that possibility was made available through an American invention (George, s d, p. 431).

A remarkable technological advancement was achieved, which led to the birth of a magical cinematic device by the physicist "Emile Reynaud," namely the "Praxinoscope." Its convenient design confirms this, as stated by Rida Al-Tayyar: "...The art of animation was born through the invention of the device called the 'Praxinoscope' by the artist Emile Reynaud at the end of the 19th century. This device, operated by a rotating handle, allows anyone to look through a hole and see images that appear to move in rapid succession. (Rida Al-Tayar, 1982, p. 14)"

His first animated film, "Fantasmagorie," which was produced in 1908, primarily consisted of sequential drawings. We must not forget the efforts of inventors such as Segundo de Chomón from Spain, Earl Hurd, Armstrong from England, and Starevich from Russia, who revolutionized this art form with their experiments, which were immortalized in the history of world cinema. They replaced drawing on paper with drawing on celluloid sheets, enabling the movement of animated characters against a static background.

"Children's cinema encompasses all films directed towards young audiences, including narrative and documentary films of various kinds, as well as animated cartoons and puppet films." (The Cinematic Dictionary, 1966, p. 448)

During the second and third decades of the twentieth century, American animated films, like American comedy series, were rich in fantastical, exaggerated, and surrealistic formats that captured the essence of the world, which couldn't be captured through realistic live-action films. These films were enhanced by a marvelous primitive tendency, setting them apart from increasingly polished and lifelike motion pictures. " (Nichols, 2005, p. 249)

The artist Walt Disney is considered the spiritual father of children's cinema. During the 1920s, he worked on numerous animated cartoons, collaborating with his brother Roy and the artist Ub Iwerks. Mohammed Al-Ahmad confirms this by saying, "In 1922, Walt Disney founded Laugh-O-Gram Studio, through which he produced animated cartoons adapted from fantasy stories" (Mohamed Al-Ahmad, 2001, p. 155). This advanced stage, in which his family took the lead in producing many cartoons at the Laugh-O-Gram Studio, was only the beginning and the formation of the alphabet of children's cinema. However, it faced failure and did not receive the attention it deserved, eventually leading to bankruptcy.

In 1923, the Disney family headed to Hollywood to unleash their ideas after finding fertile ground for their aspirations. In 1927, they created a film titled "The Lucky Rabbit," which became a significant milestone in the history

of animation. It was the first series of distinguished episodes produced by Walt Disney at the time and gained immense popularity in Hollywood. When the animated film "Mickey Mouse" was released in 1928, it became the most popular film in the history of children's cinema, and its characters conquered all international channels. According to Zafar Henry Azar, he said, "In it, the brothers Elias carried out their first series of animations after several experiments, titled 'Alice in Cartoonland' or 'Alice in Wonderland,' as it is commonly known in world literature." And the most prominent character created by Disney was the famous mouse, Mickey Mouse (Zafer Henry Azar, 1983, p. 67)

When sound was introduced, directors were able to provide a complete portrayal of events, convey the desired impact, and it was successfully used in a number of experimental films in Europe, particularly in Germany, France, and Britain. Techniques such as "silhouette" and "puppets" were employed by the finest European animators, such as Lotte Reiniger in Germany, Berthold Bartosch in France, and George Pal in the Netherlands (Mohamed Al-Ahmad, 2001, p. 155). Later, in 1934, a more advanced version of the Praxinoscope was introduced by a mathematician named William Horner. This new device was called the Zoetrope, and it allowed hand-drawn animations to be presented to the public. This can be considered as the beginning of motion pictures.

Please note that this translation may not be word-for-word, but it captures the essence and meaning of the original text (Mohamed Al-Ahmad, 2001, p. 160).

In the 1980s, Warner Bros. decided to revive the character that was the most quoted and profitable in its multiple productions, Batman, directed by Tim Burton in 1989. Walt Disney Pictures also presented the film "A Christmas Carol" directed by Zemeckis and based on the British author Charles Dickens.

What a child experiences in a novel or a film, the suffering they endure, and the tragic fate they face are just threads in the narrative's plot. These threads intertwine with many others, merging to address a subject that goes beyond the child's life and destiny, encompassing society as a whole and the conflict between the old and the new (Said Murad, 1988, p. 138).

Filmmakers in children's cinema have paid great attention to visuals and sound while neglecting content and noble goals, turning a blind eye to the profound message that serves the noble human spirit.

This art has evolved rapidly, but the evolution has been superficial in terms of sophisticated visuals, precision in all aspects, loud and high-quality music. However, the content has not evolved much, and the ideas have remained largely the same from the first film until the latest film, "Ant-Man" in

2015. This stagnation and stagnancy are not due to limited thinking or the barrenness of these creative artists. It is an economic process subject to the law of supply and demand. Consequently, we find that these works indirectly encourage violence, whether it is verbal violence through speech or physical violence through imagery such as hitting, killing, stabbing, burning, etc. This is far from the reality experienced by the young audience.

We find superheroes with limitless power, like Batman, Spider-Man, and recently Ant-Man, who emphasize this. Sa'id Murad confirms this by saying, "This official educational approach adheres to the regressive capitalist perspective towards life and society. Therefore, children's cinema, produced by major corporations and monopolies, reflects this approach that raises the youth with a spirit of individualism, adventure, racism, distorting history and emptying it of any revolutionary content, and the frantic race to possess personal welfare and values of superiority over others, and presenting scientific and technological progress as a terrifying destructive force, perceiving war as an inevitable fate, and highlighting the ugliness and evil in life as the sole responsibility of flawed humans since ancient times and forever."

These ideas may not appear explicitly in capitalist-produced children's films. Instead, they manifest through the adventure style, fast-paced action, pranks, and suspense, all aimed at innocent entertainment for children. However, the style and objective, with all their means of "entertainment," cannot conceal the intellectual essence of the educational approach inherent in the nature of the capitalist system that produces such cinema (Said Murad, 1988, p. 143).

Young children are known for their transparent and innocent nature. Therefore, we find that these cinematic works indirectly distort the thinking of the young recipient. The loud music and diverse high-quality visuals are attractive elements that mesmerize the child, and they try to imitate these supernatural beings, forming a distorted image of an ideal role model in their simple minds. They dream of sleeping and waking up to find themselves strong, capable of killing for the sake of killing, stomping on everything, burning, destroying, and chasing imaginary villains coming from either outer space or the Earth's core. This goal goes against the nature of the good human and the transparent self, far from the world of the child, which is characterized by innocence and virtue.

From this perspective, we face a great task of changing this corrupt logic and creating a culture that does not encourage violence in all its forms. We cannot stand idly in the face of this media storm and watch the young recipient drown in a vortex of violence with no return. We cannot claim in this article that this does not happen in children's cinema. If we examine it closely and pay attention, we find that most animated films work towards the opposite goal.

Sa'id Murad affirms once again, "It is known that at a certain age, a child admires heroism and tries to imitate it. He wants to become a grown-up who is not afraid of risks, who challenges and triumphs over them. Adventures ignite his imagination and decorate life with actions that satisfy him. When he watches the white American man on the screen, undefeated, passionately following his victories and triumphs over risks and challenges, he does not care at all about the hundreds of Native Americans shot down by white bullets, and he does not show the slightest sympathy for the victims. This is because he follows the adventure and the hero. This type of film cunningly exploits what characterizes the understanding of a child at a certain age, to inject a poisonous dose that distorts the facts and presents them to him, which he eagerly accepts and glorifies. (Said Murad, 1988, p. 153)"

We can say that animated films have always been and still are the preferred material for young audiences because they suit their age, thinking, comprehension, and inclinations. The young audience interacts with expressive images and beautiful colors without fully grasping their meanings. They are also known for their attachment to stories of superpowers, imaginative flights, and adventure events. Thus, in animated films, they wander into other worlds filled with mystery and wonders, stories of witches, and giants. These worlds differ from their own reality, satisfying their imagination on one hand and aligning with their understanding and comprehension abilities on the other.

4. Conclusion

At the end of our research, we see that cinematic films played a leading role in the development and promotion of public taste in societies and constituted a criterion for state progress and a door of trade and economy, but on the other hand, it requires taking into account the age group, respect and commitment to enacting laws and controls that protect the category of children and youth, especially with the spread of digital cinema and media Social communication, such as YouTube, Facebook, and other social networking sites, which constituted an obsession for parents, guardians, and even countries, especially with the volume of violent, intimidating, moral, and pornographic exhibits, and taking advantage of technology in producing restricted or controlled programs for all productions, shows, and cinematic and digital content.

5. Bibliography List :

Atallah, M. S. (1997). "Cinema and Television Arts," 1st edition, . Cairo: Dar Al-Masriah Al-Lubnaniah.
George Medbouk, ". (s d). "Illustrated Encyclopedia of World Cinema, (éd. 1). Beirut: Dar Al-Rateb Al-Jamia - Souvenir Series,.

George, S. (s d). *A History of Cinema in the World.* the same reference as before.

Hilmi al-Muhandis. (1989). *"Screen Drama* (éd. 1). Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organization,.

Mohamed Al-Ahmad. (2001). *"Cinema Renews Its Youth,"* (Vol. 1). Damascus: General Cinema Organization.

Nichols, B. (2005). *"Movies and Methods* (Vol. 1). Cairo,: National Translation Project ,translated by Hussein Bayoumi.

Perkins, V. (2002). *"Film as Film," translated by Osama Isber.* Damascus: 1st edition Ministry of Culture Publications - General Organization for Cinema.

Rida Al-Tayar. (1982). *"Animated Films and Puppets.* (I. 107, Éd.) Baghdad: " Al-Mawsu'ah Al-Sagheerah.

Sadoul, G. (1968). *"History of Cinema in the World," translated by Ibrahim Al-Kilani and Faysal Kamnash.* Beirut: Awaidat Publications.

Said Murad. (1988). *"Journeys in Cinematic Worlds* (Vol. 1). Beirut,Lebanon: Dar Al-Farabi.

Shukri, A.-M. (1994). *"Visual Drama," Arabi Publishing and Distribution.* Cairo.

The Cinematic Dictionary, ". (1966). Moscow: published by "Soviet Encyclopedia.

Zafer Henry Azar. (1983). *"A Look at Contemporary World Cinema,"* (Vol. 1). Beirut: University Institution for Studies and Publishing.