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English 403 - Children's Literature

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<p align="center">Final Project Prospectus</p>

Topic

The topic of my final project will be: "The Works of Neil Gaiman and the movement of Children's Literature away from the 'Disney Template' ". EDIT: After writing the rest of this prospectus, I think refining this may be beneficial. Something like: "Examining the works of Neil Gaiman: Children don't need their literature dumbed (or Disney'd) down."

Questions

Note: I will be using the term 'selected books' in my questions below. These will (by and large) be a set of best selling children's books by Neil Gaiman, including Coraline, Wolves in the Walls, The Graveyard Book, Crazy Hair and Chu's Day. More will be used, but this is a sample of books, all of which are critically acclaimed, and most are award winning, including the Locus award and Hugo award.

Questions that I will attempt to answer in this paper will be:

1) Are more children's books today leaning towards supernatural subjects than in the past (say, 25 or 50 years ago)

2) Are children reading 'scary' or 'scarier' books earlier today than in the past?

3) 'Disney Template' books have very crisp demarkation points for their protagonists and

antagonists - the hero is an archetypical "good guy" and the villain rarely has any redeeming

qualities - do a selection of popular books maintain this distinction?

4) Does a selection of books contain characters that are more real and relatable to younger

readers (ages 6-12) than previously?

5) How do the selected works compare to similar award winning books of a previous generation

with regards to disneyfication of their major themes?

Preliminary Bibliography

As scholarly sources, I expect to cite:

Rudd, David. "An Eye for an I: Neil Gaiman's Coraline and Questions of Identity". *Children's*

Literature in Education 39, 159-168 PDF File.

Mortensen, Finn Hauberg. "The Little Mermaid: Icon and Disneyfication". *Scandinavian Studies*

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Nel, Philip. "The Disneyfication of Dr Seuss". *Cultural Studies* 17(5), 579-614. PDF File.

Sutton, Roger. "It's Good To Be Gaiman". *School Library Journal* 30-32, March 2009. PDF File.

Banks, Daisy. "Interview with Jack Zipes: Jack Zipes on Fairy Tales". Web. 17 April, 2013.

http://fivebooks.com/interviews/jack-zipes-on-fairy-tales

Zipes, Jack. *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Societal History of a Genre.* Princeton

University Press. 2012. Print.

Zipes, Jack. *Are fairy tales still useful to Children?* Web. 17 April, 2013.

http://www.artofstorytellingshow.com/2008/06/29/jack-zipes-fairy-tales/

Thesis Statement

While a great deal of children's literature showcases some fairy-tale like elements popularized by Disney, modern authors such as Neil Gaiman are showing less and less Disneyfication, more advanced topics, and characters with more depth than children's authors of the past.