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Analysis of Bitch {the story of} By Christy Herdman

The objective of this paper is to critically look at Bitch {the story of} by Christy Herdman. The following will explore how different narrative techniques are used to change the visual intensity throughout the story structure. The aim is to understand how the text, audio, and visual elements work together to create an engaging story. Overall, the following will investigate how the aesthetic of the narrative creates a magical feel reminiscent of a childhood storybook.

Before delving into the analysis, it is essential to provide a brief explanation of the overall theme of the narrative. Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018) uses the framework of a traditional fairy-tale to tell the story of how the very definition of the term Bitch has evolved. The narrative includes a protagonist, heroine, villain, and even a hint of magic sprinkled throughout the pages. The main characters of the story are the personified terms Bitch, The Patriarchy and Girl Power. Bitch is the protagonist of the story, Girl Power is the heroine, and The Patriarchy is the antagonist. The text aims to exclude male and female pronouns when referencing the characters; this allows the audience to follow the challenges the protagonist faces in Bitch's quest for equality without gender labels. The graphic elements add to the playful feel of the book; a style often associated with children's stories. See *Appendix 1* for full Script with Visual & Animation Descriptions.

TEXT ELEMENTS

From the beginning, the text on the screen is used to draw the viewer into a fantastical narrative. The presentation of the book graphic and Times New Roman font for the Title Screen set the scene for Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018). The font choice and book cover design enables the viewer to draw a connection to the traditional medium of a storybook within the video format. The narrative concludes using the same Times New Roman font from the cover page. The same font is used to create consistency, and signals to the viewer that the story has ended. The implementation of the iconic, “The end” conclusion allows the audience to associate the narrative with a storybook format.

Text-centric graphics are used to enhance the storyline. Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018) opens with the iconic fairy tale text ‘Once upon a time,’ and this helps to provide context to the kind of story the audience is about to watch. This fairy tale trope, allows the narrative to be in a magical setting, without the need to outline a specific time or location. Words and phrases embedded in the graphics enhance the story, designed to captivate the viewer with a combination of visual/auditory storytelling. Overall, text found throughout Bitch {the story of} reinforces the audio content.

AUDIO ELEMENTS

The audience moves into the magical world of the fairytale with the sound effect charm that marks the beginning of the tale. Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018), is told from a third person perspective. According to Hazel Smith, this Point Of View is a Homodiegetic narrator (90). The female voice-over narration used throughout adds to the feeling of the audience being read a book. Using a female voice aligns with the theme of female empowerment. Keeping the sound effects to a minimum allows for the viewer to experience the visual narrative as an oral story without distractions.

VISUAL ELEMENTS

So, let's delve into how *Bitch* {the story of} (Herdman, 2018) uses visual clues to help guide the story.

COLOR (Block, Chapter 1, 2008)

Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018) utilizes color in an intentional way designed to create consistency throughout the narrative. By removing color, the subject is highlighted, ensuring the viewer is not distracted by color. The monochromatic color creates an artistic, magical feel of a fairytale. The tone and luminance values of the black and white images create a strong aesthetic that captivates the audience. The illustrations are expressed in black and white to align with the storybook theme. The greyscale palette of the images helps to create consistency throughout the storyline.

Each page contains both a black & white image and illustration/graphic text associated with the narrative. The only exception to the black and white color selection is the implementation of the color pink. The use of the color pink foreshadows the presence of Girl Power during the conflict phase. And, returns at the climax of the story. The implementation of pink plays a role in creating an increased sense of drama and is used to highlight the influence of Girl Power. And, the physical change the protagonist goes through once impacted by the actions of Girl Power. The color pink becomes more muted in the resolution phase, as the story concludes to align with the decline in dramatical events.

PHYSICAL SPACE, ON THE SCREEN COLOR (Block, Chapter 1, 2008):

Each page of the story uses two graphics: a photograph and an illustration as a visual constant (Block, Chapter 9, 2008). *Bitch* {the story of} (Herdman, 2018), uses the physical space of the screen intentionally and places the two graphics on each page based on the context of the story (Block, Chapter 1, 2008). The narrative uses space to emphasize the inequality between the protagonist and antagonist. For example, pages that represent the unbalance within the world the layout uses one third to two third ratio to visually showcase the dominance of The Patriarchy. When the story arc features the feminine influence in the story, the images visually show the balance with two pictures of the same weight, intentionally

placed in equal proportion on the screen. When the narration captures the negative emotions of The Patriarchy, the graphic takes over the whole screen.

Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018) considers how images associated with specific characters are visually represented. For example, Close up, full bleed images on pages 8, 18, and 21 give the audience an intimate view of the antagonist and serves to create tension by projecting the strong, negative emotion at the viewer. Generally, the narrative has the protagonist occupy the right side of the page and the antagonist graphic resides on the left side to provide a visual constant for the viewer to easily follow. When Girl Power plays a role, the graphic is placed in the center of the image with equal space on either side. However, the images are still restricted by invisible boundaries, limiting the amount of real estate the graphic takes on the page. Overall, the implementation of straight on shots, help to establish the point of view for the audience, guiding the spectator to view the story as an onlooker.

LINE (MAIS, Week 8, 620):

There are invisible lines and photo edges that strive to divide the pictures on the screen to showcase the unequal relationship between Bitch and The Patriarchy. The story uses lines as a way to set limits between the graphics. The sharp edges of the images accentuate the inequality between the two characters. Occasionally, the cut-out illustration overlaps the black and white image to visually represent The Patriarchy's dominating power over Bitch.

MOVEMENT (Block, Chapter 1, 2008):

Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018) uses the following Keynote animation techniques to progress the photo slideshow forward:

- *Page Flip* - The animation is implemented on each page to constantly move the story forward by mimicking the action of turning a page, keeping the viewer in the storybook setting.
- *Build In: Move In/Out, Top to Bottom* - Animation in the exposition provides the viewer with an understanding of the power struggle between the antagonist and protagonist. Images that reflect

The Patriarchy negatively impacting Bitch uses the *Build In: Move In/Out, Top to Bottom* animation. The downward movement, demonstrates the Patriarchy arrives on the scene from a position of power.

- *Build In: Move In/Out, Bottom to Top* - The content that highlights Bitch's positive actions applies the *Build In: Move In/Out, Bottom to Top* animation. Visually representing Bitch increasing power, the rising up of Bitch.
- *Flip* - This animation is designed to create a magical presence in the story arc and signifies a positive change in the protagonist.
- *Pulse* - Used to reflect the negative, escalating emotions of The Patriarchy, pulse is used to create increasing tension in the story arc.

Overall, the visual graphics move in and out of the page and maintain the flow of the accompanying narrative.

STORY STRUCTURE (Block, Chapter 9, 222):

The story structure implements various tactics to move the audience through the narrative.

a) EXPOSITION (Block, Chapter 9, 222)

Pages 3 to 6 acquaint the viewer with the protagonist, Bitch. The antagonist, The Patriarchy is also introduced at this phase of the story. The protagonist and antagonist enter the scene using the *Build In; Move In* animations that will guide the story. Through the exposition, the audience is provided background on the character traits, desire and/or motivation of Bitch.

b) INCITING INCIDENT (Block, Chapter 9, 222)

Now that the audience is acquainted with the protagonist's wants and desires, the inciting incident commences the action of the story (Pages 7 to 10). The Black and white image of Bitch shows the protagonist is literally hitting the road and physically changing form. The *Flip Animation* is used to show the transformation of Bitch into a new being. The change in form

attracts the attention of the male gaze, causing The Patriarchy to become jealous and lash out in anger. This pivotal point of the story shows the change in The Patriarchy's view of Bitch and communicates the driving motive behind The Patriarchy's actions.

c) **RISING ACTION** (Block, Chapter 9, 222)

As the plot moves forward, the conflict increases in intensity (Block, Chapter 9, 224). The conflict of the Bitch {the story of} is an external struggle between the protagonist and antagonist. On pages 11 to 20, the story arc captures various obstacles Bitch faces. The graphics and animations intensify to match the escalating drama.

d) **CLIMAX** (Block, Chapter 9, 222)

Page 21 marks the start of the most intense part of the conflict, the climax (224). The narrative has reached a pinnacle point of the story. The Pulse animation increases as the story moves closer to the climax, in essence increasing visual intensity. The change in color tone, marks the heroine of the story stepping. This is evident by the additional pink color on PAGE 22 to 25 (Block, Chapter 9, 234). And, the final change to Bitch being a symbol of empowerment in pink is evident as the protagonist achieves the goal of obtaining equality.

e) **RESOLUTION** (Block, Chapter 9, 222)

The visual resolution is captured on pages 26 to 30. At this phase of the story, the protagonist has resolved the conflict announced at the beginning of the story and the dramatic events decline subside. The narrative visually shows Bitch has obtained equality by showing two images with equal weight on the page. And, the color pink becomes less vibrant as the story ends (Block, Chapter 9, 222).

Overall, Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018) takes the audience through a visual journey of the different definitions of the word Bitch. By personifying the terms, it allowed the main characters to be more

dynamic. Movement is one way the narrative sets guidelines of how the story will progress. These visual rules outline parameters around the animation, to understand the role of the protagonist and antagonist. The narration and accompanying graphics, use visual clues to showcase the positive and negative influences that impact the main character. The combination of text, audio and visual components enable the audience to immerse themselves in the narrative of Bitch {the story of} (Herdman, 2018).

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APPENDIX 1

Bitch {the story of}**Script with Visual & Animation Descriptions****PAGE 1**

No narration.

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo - Full-screen shot. Book Cover.
On-Screen Title - BITCH moves into the frame.
(ANIMATION - Build In” TWIST & SCALE)
2. On-Screen Title - (the story of) (ANIMATION - Build In: Typewriter).

PAGE 2

No narration.

VISUAL:

1. On-Screen Title - By Christy Herdman moves into the frame (ANIMATION: Build In -Typewriter).

PAGE 3

Once upon a time, Bitch was defined as a lady among dogs; a majestic female canine (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Words in old fashion script: Once Upon A Time. (ANIMATION - Build In, Flip).
2. Black & White Photo: Vintage photo of regal female dog moves into frame (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Bottom to Top).

PAGE 4

Bitch grew up alongside the Patriarchy as a domesticated creature. Bitch was the very definition of man’s best friend (Herdman. 2018).

VISUALS

1. Black & White Photo: Image of a dog in a domestic scenario.
2. Cut out Illustration - Man and dog (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Top to Bottom).

PAGE 5

Bitch longed to be more than just a companion. Bitch yearned to have the same status and be part of the world the Patriarchy saw as theirs alone (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Dog looking out of a window.
2. Line Drawing Illustration: Cityscape (ANIMATION -Build In: Move In, Top to Bottom).

PAGE 6

Bitch was tired of the Patriarchy always looking down at Bitch. Tired of never being seen as an equal. One day, Bitch decided enough was enough (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Dog looking sad, viewed from above.
2. Line Drawing Illustration: Gender symbols highlighting inequality (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Top to Bottom).

PAGE 7

So, Bitch walked out of the home and left behind the four-legged form Bitch had inhabited for far too long (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Dog in the center of the screen (ANIMATION - Build Out: Flip)
2. Line Drawing Illustration: Rear view of girl with backpack (ANIMATION - Build In, Flip, Left to Right).

PAGE 8

Bitch's departure hurt the Patriarchy. The Patriarchy felt abandoned by Bitch (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Full Screen of man crying
2. Line Drawing Illustration: Showcasing Man's broken heart (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Top to Bottom).

Page 9

Bitch saw this as a step in the right direction, toward equality (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: The Future is Female Child.
2. Line Drawing Illustration: You Go Girl (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Bottom to Top).
3. Pink Heart Illustration: (ANIMATION - Build In: Move in, Bottom to Top; Flip, Left to Right).

PAGE 10

Now that Bitch was out in the world, the Patriarchy saw Bitch in a new light, as an object of desire. The Patriarchy noticed that Bitch's physical appearance attracted the attention of the male gaze (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Representation of the male gaze.
2. Line Drawing Illustration: Pin Up Girl (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Bottom to Top).

PAGE 11

Jealous of Bitch, the Patriarchy tried to tarnish Bitch's reputation by framing Bitch in a derogatory light. The Patriarchy lashed out in anger, labeling Bitch a whore and slut.

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Vintage image of prostitute. Image highlights promiscuity.
2. Cut-out Illustration: Graphic of lips saying slut moves into frame. Graphic aligns with the definition of slut and whore.
3. Cut-out Illustration: Graphic of man with megaphone (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Top Bottom, Pulse).

PAGE 12

This negative reputation made it hard for Bitch to be equal in the world. Viewed as a subordinate, Bitch was seen and not heard. Bitch realized, even outside the home, Bitch's actions were restricted (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Tight cropped image of woman with mouth taped.
2. Cut-out Illustration: Graphic of maze outlining inequality between genders (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Top to Bottom).

PAGE 13

So, Bitch decided to get political and demand to have a voice. To cast a ballot. Bitch fought and won the right to vote (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Women protesting right to vote.
2. Cut-out Illustration: Cartoon like line drawing of voting ballot (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Bottom to Top).
3. Pink Heart Illustration: (ANIMATION - Build In: Move in, Bottom to Top; Flip, Left to Right).

PAGE 14

It was a small victory, but Bitch's struggle with the Patriarchy was far from over. Threatened by this new found right, the Patriarchy once again turned on Bitch. This time, the Patriarchy characterized Bitch as a universal insult designed to limit Bitch's ability to be equal (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Women Work, Women vote poster.
2. Cut-out Illustration: 3 graphics of talk bubbles with symbols that represent swear words (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Top to Bottom).

PAGE 15

The Feminists saw the way the Patriarchy attacked Bitch and rallied to support Bitch. They wanted the Patriarchy to see Bitch as a powerful equal (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: 2nd Wave Feminists. Image sets scene of the 1970s women's movement.

2. Cut-out Illustration: 2nd Wave Feminists with Girl Power sign moves into frame. Graphic connects to text reference to feminists rallying behind Bitch. (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Bottom to Top).

PAGE 16

Bitch's characteristics were embraced by the feminists, forming a bond between the two. One feminist even wrote a manifesto dedicated to Bitch, stating, "We must realize that Bitch is Beautiful." (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Visual Representation of Manifesto.
2. Cut-out Illustration: 2nd Wave Feminist moves into frame, matches text to reflect activist (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Bottom to Top).
3. Pink Heart Illustration: (ANIMATION - Build In: Move in, Bottom to Top; Flip, Left to Right).

PAGE 17

So, now Bitch had a connection to the feminists, and this affinity threatened the Patriarchy even more. The Patriarchy feared that Bitch's demand for equality would strip the Patriarchy of their power (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Woman holding With Her poster.
2. Cut-out Illustration: Scared male (ANIMATION - Built In: Move in, Top To Bottom, Pulse).

PAGE 18

To fight Bitch, the Patriarchy grew even more misogynistic and continued to amplify the negative perception of Bitch (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

3. Black & White Photo: Boy with boxing gloves.
4. Cut-out Illustration: Group of Angry males (ANIMATION - Built In: Move in, Top To Bottom, Pulse).

PAGE 19

During this dark era, Bitch was characterized as being aggressive, assertive and angry. The Patriarchy actively spread propaganda to associate Bitch with a man-hating stigma (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Angry Bitch. References narration of angry trait.
2. Cut-out Illustration: Aggressive Bitch moves into frame.. References narration of aggressive trait (ANIMATION - Build In: Move In, Top to Bottom).

PAGE 20

Once again the Patriarchy slut-shamed Bitch. And, said, Bitch deserved to be disrespected (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Bad Bitch buttocks visually represent 1990's Bitch being labeled.
2. Cut-out Illustration: Media coverage graphic moves into frame. Illustrates how Bitch is being disrespected. (ANIMATION - Built In: Move In, Top to Bottom).

PAGE 21

The violent tone continued to escalate. Until Bitch became the target of a hateful language attack deeply rooted in violent connotations expressing a desire to physically harm Bitch (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Full screen shot. Visually shows Bitch as a target with gun gesture and fist.
2. Cut-out Illustration: Angry Patriarchy illustration moves into frame. Emphasizes the violent tone of the Angry Patriarchy (ANIMATION - Built In: Move In, Top to Bottom & Pulse).

PAGE 22

After years of being polite, this is where the heroine of our story, Girl Power, stepped in. Girl Power set out to prove the Patriarchy wrong (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Cut-out Illustration (with Pink): 1/2 screenshot. Girl Power graphic. Words in design help the viewer to understand the heroine's mission.
2. Black & White Photo: Girl Power visually represents heroine with reference to a feminine icon moves into frame. (ANIMATION - Built In: Move In, Bottom to Top).
3. Pink Heart Illustration: (ANIMATION - Appear; Flip, Left to Right).

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Using the voice of her predecessors, the second wave feminists, Girl Power strived to change how the Patriarchy defined Bitch (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Girl power duo, then and now image to visually show progress from 70 to-date.
2. Cut-out Illustration (with Pink): Girl power symbol moves into frame. (ANIMATION - Built In: MOVE IN)
3. Three Pink Heart Illustrations: (ANIMATION - Build In: Move in, Bottom to Top; Flip, Left to Right).

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Girl Power battled the Patriarchy by using a voice reason to take on the Patriarchy's negative view of Bitch (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Future is female image on screen.
2. Cut-out Illustration (With Pink): Girl Power graphic. "Fight Like A Girl" Slogan ties in with the feminist message throughout. (ANIMATION - Built In: Move In, Bottom to Top).

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Louder and prouder than before, Girl Power spun Bitch into a symbol of empowerment, giving Bitch strong and outspoken character traits (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Black & White Photo: Not Your Bitch sign.
2. Cut-out Illustration With Pink -Empowerment symbol. (ANIMATION - Build In: Flip, Right to Left).

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Thanks to the feminist facelift, Bitch was reimagined. Bitch was now a force to be reckoned with, described as having a don't-give-a-fuck attitude (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Color Photo (with Pink): Modern bitch. Represent the feminist facelift.
2. Cut-out Illustration: Girl Power graphic moves into frame. Highlight the don't-give a fuck attitude (ANIMATION - Built In: Move In, Right to Left).

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Today, Bitch continues to evolve. Bitch has become mainstream and grown in popularity. No longer excluded from the conversation, Bitch has even made it on to the tv (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Color Photo (with Pink): Graphic shows how the new definition of Bitch has a positive spin.
2. Cut-out Illustration: TV Celebrity moves into frame. Image shows representation of Bitch on TV (ANIMATION - Built In: Move In, Right to Left).

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Bitch's negative stigma is nearly all but stripped away. However, even with all the positive talk, occasionally the Patriarchy still gives Bitch a bad rap (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Color Image Photo: Example of Modern Bitch Reference - Stitch and Bitch.
2. Cut-out Illustration (with Pink): Bad example of Modern Bitch moves into frame. Reference - Basic Bitch (ANIMATION- Built In: Move In, Right to Left).

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But, Bitch has the power to withstand adversity. So, watch out Patriarchy karma's a Bitch (Herdman, 2018).

VISUALS:

1. Cut-out Illustration: Silhouette of woman. Text aligns with the "Bitch has the power to stand adversity".
2. Typography: What goes around come around text moves into frame. Connects visual to the last line of story, "Karma's a bitch". (ANIMATION - Built In: TWIRL, Right to Left)

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No narration.

VISUALS:

1. On-Screen Title: THE END? moves into frame. (ANIMATION - Build In: Twist & Scale).
2. On-Screen Title {bitch please ... this is just the beginning} moves into frame. (ANIMATION - Build In: Fade & Scale).