

Encyclopedia of
Children and Childhood
In History and Society

Paula S. Fass, Editor in Chief

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MARY NILES MAACK

Children's Literature

Like the concept of childhood, children's literature is very much a cultural construct that continues to evolve over time. Children's literature comprises those texts that have been written specifically for children and those texts that children have selected to read on their own, and the boundaries between children's literature and adult literature are surprisingly fluid. John Rowe Townsend once argued that the only practical definition of a children's book is one that appears on the children's list by a publisher. Contemporary publishers are not making that distinction any easier; for example, MAURICE SENDAK's *Outside Over There* (1981) was published as a picture book for both children and adults, and J. K. Rowling's HARRY POTTER series is available in adult and children's versions with the only difference being the book's cover art. While folk and FAIRY TALES were not originally intended for children, they have become a staple of children's literature since the early nineteenth century. On the other hand, many books written for and widely read by children during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are considered historical children's literature today and are read almost exclusively by adult scholars of children's literature. Children's literature has been written, illustrated, published, marketed, and purchased consistently by adults to be given to children for their edification and entertainment. Generally speaking, it is the intended audience rather than the producers of the texts who define the field. Children's texts written by child or adolescent authors, such as Daisy Ashford's *The Young Visitors* (1919) or ANNE FRANK's *Het Achterhuis* (1947; *The Diary of a Young Girl*, 1952), are exceptions to the rule. Many famous children's authors, such as Louisa May Alcott and LEWIS CARROLL, produced family magazines as children, and bits of their juvenilia were reworked into published children's books. More often, children's books result from the collaboration or direct inspiration of a specific child or group of children with an adult author. James Barrie's friendship with the Lewelyn Davies boys resulted in the play *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up* (1904) and the novel *Peter and Wendy* (1911). The bedtime stories that A.

A. Milne told his son Christopher Robin were revised into *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926).

Although children's literature is intended primarily for children, it is more accurate to view such texts as having dual audiences of children and adults. Adults, particularly parents, teachers, and librarians, often function as gatekeepers who identify appropriate texts for children. Since children's literature has been marketed and purchased by adults who, in turn, present it to children, authors and publishers have attempted to produce children's texts that appeal to the desires of the actual adult purchaser, if not the child reader of the text. In the picture book and chapter book genres especially, an adult reads to a child or children in a group. It is only with the advent of the paperback book that adolescents, and in some cases younger children, have been able to select their books independent of adult supervision or funds. Prior to the development of public education and free libraries in the late nineteenth century, children's literature tended to be limited to the middle and upper classes. A children's book reflects the ideologies of the culture in which it was written and embodies that period's assumptions about children and appropriate behavior. Consequently, children's literature more often embodies adult concerns and concepts of childhood rather than topics children might choose for themselves. This gap between children's and adult's attitudes toward children's literature is often revealed in the difference between the top-selling children's books, which are frequently series books, and the books chosen annually by the American Library Association as the outstanding picture book (winner of the Caldecott Medal) and the outstanding book of prose (winner of the Newbery Medal).

Early History

In order for a society to produce a substantial body of children's literature it must recognize the existence of children as an important and distinctive category of readers with separate needs and interests. Despite PHILIPPE ARIÈS's much debated assertion that childhood was discovered in the seventeenth century, children's texts with limited circulation have been located from earlier periods of history. Manuscripts for religious education and courtesy books intended to teach rules of conduct were circulated among the wealthy in the Middle Ages. Harvey Darton has suggested that there were no children's books in England prior to the seventeenth century; however, he limits children's books to those printed texts that appeared after Johannes Gutenberg's fifteenth-century invention and includes handmade as well as printed texts that were concerned primarily with instruction, thus excluding educational textbooks or religious primers.

The twin purposes of instruction and delight have long been accepted as the primary goals of children's literature. John Newbery, a London bookseller, published at least thirty children's books and is recognized as the first British publisher to make children's books a permanent and profitable

branch of the book trade. Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* (1744) is the first significant commercial children's book published in English. Greatly influenced by JOHN LOCKE's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), the frontispiece of *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* features the motto "*Delectando Momenus: Instruction with Delight*," which Newbery borrowed directly from Locke. Locke modified the concept from Horace's *Ars poetica* (c. 19 B.C.E.; *On the Art of Poetry*), which recommended, "He who combines the useful and the pleasing wins out by both instructing and delighting the reader." What Locke theorized, Newbery put into practice. Locke recommended that to encourage reading, a child should be given an "easy pleasant book suited to his capacity." While Locke rejected fairy tales, he felt fables, because they often were coupled with a moral, were appropriate texts for children. He specifically recommended both *Reynard the Fox* (1481) and *Aesop's Fables* (1484), noting "If his *Aesop* has pictures in it, it will entertain him much the better." *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* is a compendium, including an illustrated alphabet, a selection of proverbs, and an illustrated group of Aesop's fables.

Darton was too limiting when he excluded didactic books from his definition of children's literature. Townsend considered the material published prior to Newbery as the prehistory of children's literature. These books were not intended for children, but eventually reached them, particularly chapbooks that featured folk tales or the legends of Robin Hood. Educational texts such as *The Babes Book* (1475), a conduct book for young gentlemen, also contribute to the prehistory of children's literature. William Caxton, the first English printer, published several texts that were not intended specifically for children, but his printings did appeal to them, notably *Aesop's Fables*, *Reynard the Fox*, and Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur* (1485).

An early form of didactic children's literature was the hornbook in which a single sheet of printed text, generally consisting of an alphabet and a prayer, was shared by a group of young scholars. The printed text was attached to a wooden frame and protected by a bit of flatted horn attached to a wooden handle. A later innovation was the battledore, which used parchment or heavy paper instead of wood and therefore allowed for printing on both sides. The Czech theologian and educator JOHANN COMENIUS recognized that children learn both visually and verbally. He published *Orbis sensualium pictus* (1658) in Hungary, and the textbook was translated into English by Robert Hoole as *Visible World* (1659). The first illustrated textbook, *Orbis sensualium pictus* includes simple captions in Latin and in the common language as well as woodcuts that provide a visual encyclopedia of the world. This integration of visual and verbal elements has remained a significant design feature of children's literature, particularly in information and picture books. Another influential children's textbook was the *New England Primer* (c. 1689), compiled by Benjamin Harris. (While no copy of



John Tenniel's illustration of Alice holding a bottle labelled "Drink Me" from the first edition of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Every generation has remade the image of Alice, thereby constantly renewing her relevance. © Bettmar/ CORBIS.

the first edition has been located, a second edition was advertised in 1690 and the earliest surviving American copy is dated 1727.) It also combined significant visual and verbal elements; its most famous section is the illustrated alphabet, which begins "A, In Adam's Fall We Sinned All," linking the teaching of literacy with religious education. The *New England Primer* became the most frequently used schoolbook in North America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Puritan children's literature was intended to provide children with religious and moral education. The most extreme example is James Janeway's *A Token for Children: Being an Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives and Joyful Deaths of Several Young Children* (1672) in which multiple deathbed scenes present children who are physically weak but spiritually strong. While the Puritans were one of the first groups to create a large body of children's books, their doctrine of original sin assumed that all children were damned until they were converted to Christianity. A less harsh version of Puritan theology for children is found in John Bunyan's *A Book for Boys and Girls* (1686), a collection



Stories about animals, such as Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902), were popular during the Victorian era, when children's literature reached a cultural peak. Potter's books were especially renowned for their charming illustrations.

of poems or divine emblems drawn from nature. Bunyan's religious allegory *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) was not written specifically for children but was quickly produced in abridged versions for younger readers along with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). The enduring popularity of *Pilgrim's Progress* with children can be observed in the March sisters "Playing Pilgrims" in the first half of Alcott's *LITTLE WOMEN* (1868).

Newbery's children's books were less overtly religious than those produced by the Puritans. Instead his children's texts appealed to parents drawn to economic and social advancement. Directly aimed at the emerging urban middle classes, these books showed how literacy led to financial success. The most overt example is *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (1765), which is thought to have been written by Oliver Goldsmith, who wrote other children's texts for Newbery. The story features the poor but hard working orphan, Margery Meanwell, who becomes a tutoress and eventually impresses and marries a wealthy squire. Newbery's children's books support a middle-class ideology.

Newbery's genius was not as an author or illustrator but as a promoter and marketer of children's books who was

skilled at convincing middle-class parents of the value of this new product category. His frequent advertisements in the press and his habit of inserting other titles and specific products into the texts of his children's books is a practice that continues in children's publishing. He also developed the custom of coupling children's books with non-book accessories. *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* was available at a slightly higher price when accompanied by either a "Ball and Pin-cushion, the Use of which will infallibly make Tommy a good Boy and Polly a Good girl."

The development of children's literature in England occurred simultaneously with the rise of the English novel. It is worth noting that the first children's novel, *The Governess, or Little Female Academy* (1749) by Sarah Fielding, was published in the same year as *Tom Jones*, which was written by her brother Henry Fielding. *The Governess* introduced the popular genre of the school story, the most celebrated example being Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857). This enduring fascination with the genre is echoed in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series.

Another major educational theorist to have a profound influence on children's literature was JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, whose *Émile* (1762) was published in France and quickly translated into English. In *Émile* Rousseau rejected the Puritan concept of original sin and maintained that children were born innocent but were later corrupted by society. Ironically for a text that was to inspire the publication of many children's books, Rousseau thought children should learn by doing rather than by reading. He argued that children should only be taught to read at age twelve and then be limited to the book *Robinson Crusoe*. The best-known English follower of Rousseau, Thomas Day, wrote *History of Sandford and Merton* (1783–1789), a three-volume comparison between the virtues of Harry Sandford, the poor but virtuous son of a farmer, and Tommy Merton, the spoiled son of a wealthy merchant, who are educated under the constant moralizing of their tutor, Mr. Barlow. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788), illustrated by William Blake, is a similar story for girls, with the rational Mrs. Mason finding object lessons from nature to inform her two charges, Caroline and Mary. Rousseau's belief in the ability to reason with children rather than using physical punishment is exemplified in Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Lessons for Children* books (1778) as well as in Richard Edgeworth's *Practical Education* (1798), written in collaboration with his daughter, and in Maria Edgeworth's *The Parent's Assistant* (1796). Maria Edgeworth, daughter of Richard, was one of the finest writers of moral tales, which were those short domestic stories that encouraged children to focus on self-improvement. Such moral tales were one of the dominant forms of children's literature during the eighteenth century.

Fairy and Folk Tales

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, fairy and folk tales were considered inappropriate reading material for children, especially among the middle class. Puritans viewed them as a form of witchcraft, and both Locke and Rousseau warned against their frightening aspects, preferring stories of daily life. Mary Sherwood was the most strict writer of the moral tale and the author of the popular *The History of the Fairchild Family* (1818–1847), which was intended to provide the reader with religious education. At one point in the book, after the Fairchild children quarrel, to teach them a lesson their father takes them to a gibbet on which hangs the decaying body of a man who was executed for killing his brother. Sarah Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories* (1786) is a tale in which a family of robins teaches moral values. Trimmer also edited *The Guardian of Education* (1802–1806), a journal for parents and tutors, which was one of the first to evaluate children's books and to attempt a history of children's literature.

Attitudes toward fairy tales as children's literature changed during the nineteenth century when Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published their two-volume collection *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812–1815) in Germany. The Grimms were part of the German romantic movement and, with other writers for adults—including Ludwig Bechstein, Clemens Brentano, and E. T. A. Hoffmann—championed the folk tale and the literary fairy tale. The Grimms were attempting to collect and preserve German folklore for other scholars, but when Edgar Taylor translated the tales into English as *German Popular Stories* (1823–1826), he revised and redirected the tales for children. George Cruikshank illustrated the volumes, and his humorous designs were praised by John Ruskin. The popularity of the Grimm's fairy tales as children's literature was buttressed by the 1697 publication of Charles Perrault's *Histoires, ou contes du temps passé, avec des Moralitez* (1697). Perrault's artful and moral collection of eight fairy tales was translated as *Histoires, or Tales of Past Times* in 1729 by Robert Samber. The literary fairy tales written by Perrault are often referred to as *The Tales of Mother Goose* or simply *Mother Goose's Tales*. The phrase *Contes de ma mere l'oye* appeared in the engraving of an older woman telling stories to a group of children that served as the frontispiece of Perrault's collection; the phrase was translated by Samber as "Mother Goose's Tales."

Fairy tales became fashionable among adults in the French court at the end of the seventeenth century as a result of Perrault's publication and of Marie-Catherine Aulnoy's publication in the same year of *Contes de fées* (Stories of the fairies). Aulnoy's collection of literary fairy tales was translated into English in 1699 as *The History of Tales of the Fairies*. Another influential French writer of literary fairy tales was Marie Beaumont, who immigrated to England in 1745, where she published *Magasin des enfans* (1756), which was translated into English as *The Young Misses Magazine* (1757). The work features the conversations of a governess with her



The original teddy bear that inspired A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926). The bear was given as a present to Christopher Robin Milne by his father and was immortalized in Milne's text, as well as Ernest Shepard's illustrations and later Disney's. AP/World Wide Photos.

pupils and includes a number of fairy tales, the best known being her version of "Beauty and the Beast."

Perrault's fairy tales gradually were adopted as children's texts known collectively as tales of Mother Goose. Aulnoy's fairy tales were identified as the tales of Mother Bunch and became the basis for many pantomines, a Victorian family theatrical entertainment.

Henry Cole, under the pseudonym Felix Summerly, edited the influential series of children's books, *The Home Treasury* (1843–1847), which helped rehabilitate the reputation of fairy tales as appropriate children's fare. Cole wanted the series to develop imagination in children and also to counteract the attacks on fairy tales by writers such as Trimmer and Sherwood. Moreover, the series was intended as an alternative to the enormously popular information books written by Peter Parley. Parley was the pen name of Samuel Goodrich, a prolific American writer of information books who considered fairy tales and nursery rhymes coarse and vulgar. *The Home Treasury*, with its numerous fairy tales and works of imaginative literature, was conceived by Cole as anti-Peter Parleyism. The constant battle over fairy tales, an impulse that pits the value of stories of ordinary life against imaginative and fantastical texts, is a debate that regularly appears in the history of children's literature.



"I know it is wet
And the sun is not sunny.
But we can have
Lots of good fun that is funny!"

7

Dr. Seuss's classic *The Cat in the Hat* (1957) was written as a reading primer for younger children, using a vocabulary of just over 200 words. The most popular of Dr. Seuss's books, *The Cat in the Hat* sold over 7 million copies by the year 2000. Geisel, Theodor, illustrator. TM and copyright © 1957 and renewed 1985 by Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. Reproduced by permission of Random House, Inc.

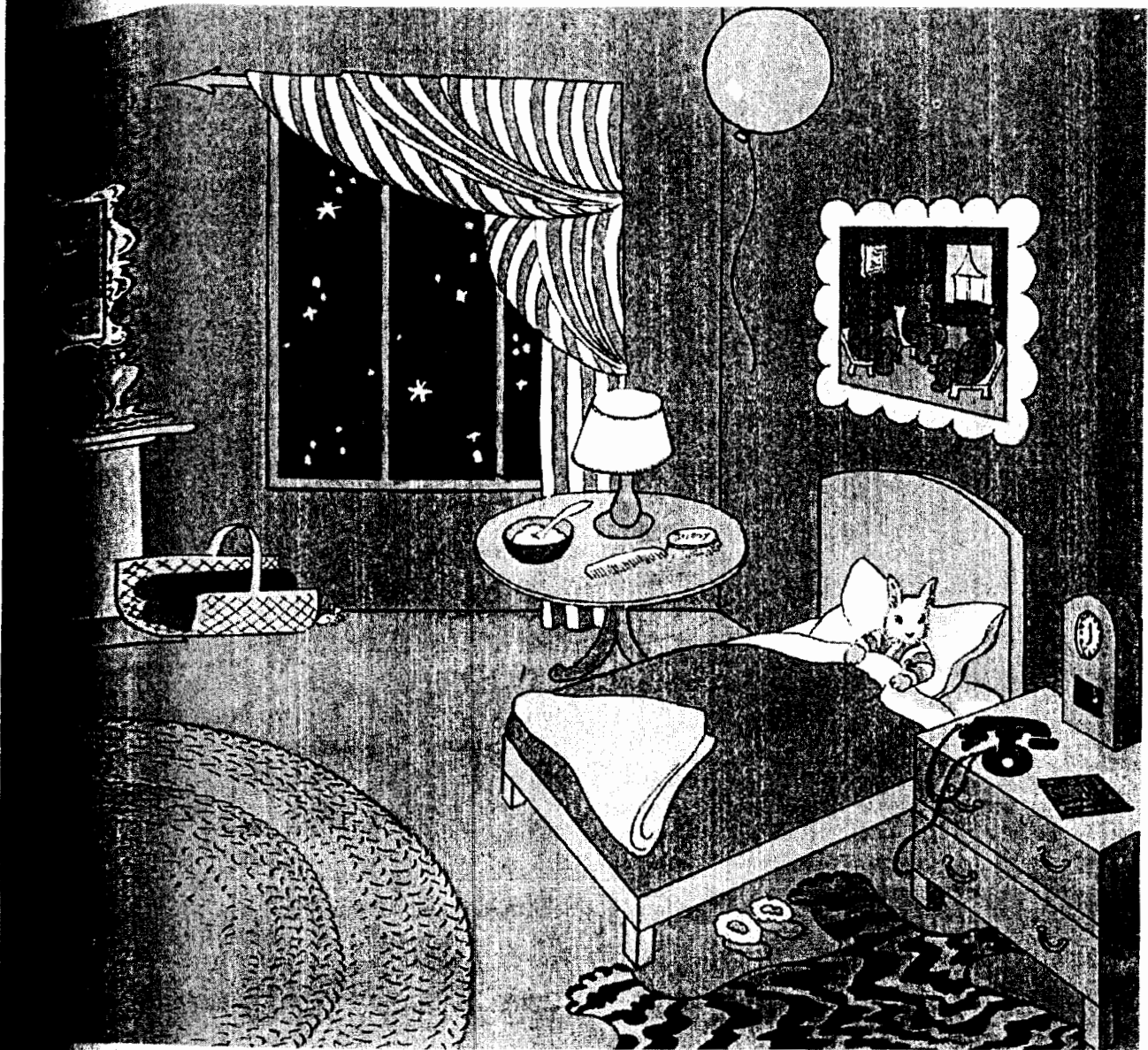
With the publication of HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S *Eventyr, fortalte for børn* (Tales, told for children; 1835, 1843, 1858, 1861) into English in 1848, the triumph of the fairy tale as legitimate children's literature was complete. Shortly thereafter, collections of folk tales and literary fairy tales, which were written in the manner of folk tales by a specific author, tended to dominate children's literature until the end of the Victorian period. The most popular literary fairy tale of the Victorian period was Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), which was followed by its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (1872); both were illustrated by John Tenniel. Carroll's imaginative novels are often credited with changing the emphasis of children's literature from instruction to delight. When compared with the majority of the children's books that preceded the Alice books, Carroll's works are remarkably free of religious or social lessons. Carroll even gently parodied Isaac Watts's poem "Against Idleness and Mischief" from *Divine Songs* (1715), yet the allusion also confirms the continued popularity of Watts's religious

work. Religious lessons, such as those found in George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), or social lessons, as those emphasized in Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1874), remained significant features of children's literature during the Victorian period.

Carroll's Alice books did not single-handedly cause a shift in children's literature. Catherine Sinclair's *Holiday House* (1839), which describes the frolicsome adventures of Laura and Harry Graham, reintroduced noisy, mischievous children into the world of children's books. Heinrich Hoffmann's *Lustige Geschichten und drollige Bilder* (Merry stories and funny pictures) was published in Germany in 1845 but since the third edition, which appeared in 1847, was known as *Struwwelpeter*. It featured illustrations and poems that mocked the excesses of Puritan cautionary tales for children. Edward Lear's *Book of Nonsense* (1846) is another celebrated collection of nonsense verse with comic illustrations that rejects the impulse to be morally improving or didactic. Lear specialized in the limerick although he also was skilled at writing longer poems, such as "The Owl and the Pussy-cat" and "The Dong with a Luminous Nose," which are tinged with melancholy. Carroll and Lear are often paired as the two great writers of nonsense literature. Both authors were influenced by those anonymous comic verses known in England as nursery rhymes and in the United States as Mother Goose rhymes. There have been countless publications of collections of Mother Goose rhymes. One of the most notable is *Mother Goose's Melodies* (1833), published by Munroe and Francis of Boston, in which Mother Goose proudly announces herself to be one of the great poets of all ages and on a first name basis with Billy Shakespeare. James Orchard Halliwell's *Nursery Rhymes and Tales of England* (1845) provided the respectability for nursery rhymes that fairy tales had already achieved.

Victorian Children's Literature

Victorian children's literature reflected the culture's separate spheres for men and women with different types of books written for girls and boys. Stories for girls were often domestic and celebrated the family life, such as Alcott's *Little Women* or Kate Douglas Wiggin's *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903). Stories for boys, such as MARK TWAIN'S *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), encouraged boys to have adventures. While Victorian children's literature developed the character of the good and bad boy, female characters were allowed less flexibility. Adventure stories—such as R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), and RUDYARD KIPLING'S *Kim* (1901)—became a popular genre for boys. Girls were encouraged to read moralistic and domestic fiction such as Charlotte Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* (1856) and the extremely popular girls' school stories by L. T. Meade, begun with *The World of Girls* (1886). Animal tales, such as Anna Sewall's *Black Beauty* (1877) and Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) and



by Clement Hurd for Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon* (1947). Intended for children under the age of six, Brown's book has become a bedtime classic for generations of children. Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975. Illustrations copyright renewed 1975 by Clement Hurd, John Thacher Hurd, and George Hellyer.

The Book (1895), were thought to appeal to both sexes. This tradition continued into the twentieth century with J. K. ROWLING's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902), Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), and E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952) as some of the most memorable children's stories. Stuffed animals became the characters in *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928), which are illustrated admirably by Ernest

Hickory. Children's literature also began to segment itself in terms of social class as penny dreadfuls, or dime novels, were produced for the working class and more high-minded literature was produced for the middle and upper classes.

The Victorian era is considered a golden age for book illustration and picture books. In the first half of the nineteenth century most children's books were illustrated with woodcuts or printed on wood blocks and then hand-colored,

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Hilary Knight's whimsical illustrations helped make *Eloise*, Kay Thompson's story about a little girl living in a hotel in New York City, a favorite among children since the mid-twentieth century. Simon & Schuster, 1983. Copyright © 1955 by Kay Thompson. Copyright renewed © 1983 by Kay Thompson. Reproduced by permission.

but later innovations in printing allowed for the widespread use of color. By the 1850s the master color printer Edmund Evans worked with some of the most capable picture book illustrators of the age—including Randolph Caldecott, Walter Crane, KATE GREENAWAY, Beatrix Potter, and Richard Doyle—to produce brilliant picture books and illustrated texts.

Contemporary Children's Literature

Twentieth-century children's literature was marked by increased diversity in both characters and authors. Earlier popular children's books—such as Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings* (1880); Helen Bannerman's *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1899); Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Dr. Dolittle* (1920); Jean de Brunhoff's *Histoire de Babar, le petit éléphant* (1931), translated by Merle Haas from the French as *The Story of Babar, The Little Elephant* (1933); and Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964)—have since been judged racist. Most children's literature prior to the twentieth century embodied a white ideology that was reflected in both the text and illustrations. From the 1920s on, there have been attempts to provide a more multicultural approach to children's literature. W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Brownies Book* (1920–1921) was the first African-American children's magazine. It featured stories, poems, and informational essays by authors such as Langston Hughes and Jessie Fauset. Over time publishers became more concerned with multiculturalism and issues of diversi-

ty. Notable African-American writers—such as Arna Bon-temps, Lucille Clifton, Mildred Taylor, Virginia Hamilton, and John Steptoe—and Asian-American writers—including Laurence Yep, Allen Say, and Ken Mochizuki—have forever changed the once all-white world of children's literature.

On the other hand, children's literature has become more segmented in terms of age appropriateness. In the 1940s Margaret Wise Brown, inspired by the education theories of Lucy Sprague Mitchell, the founder of the Bank Street College of Education, began to produce picture books intended for children under age six. Brown's best-known picture books for the very young are *The Runaway Bunny* (1941) and *Goodnight Moon* (1947), both illustrated by Clement Hurd. Mitchell also promoted stories that reflected the real world in collections such as her *Here and Now Storybook* (1921). This newfound interest in age-specific material led to the creation of the widely used Dick and Jane readers (1930–1965) developed by William S. Gray and Zerna Sharp and distributed by Scott Foreman and Company. DR. SEUSS's *The Cat in the Hat* (1957) was written as a creative alternative to such basal readers, although it was also designed as a controlled vocabulary book.

While Lothar Meggendorfer developed the movable picture book at the end of the nineteenth century with tabs and pullouts, pop-up books, shaped books, and tactile books did not achieve widespread popularity until the twentieth century. The best known of these books is Dorothy Kunhardt's interactive *Pat the Bunny* (1940). More contemporary texts, such as Jan Pienkowski's pop-up books *Haunted House* (1979) and *Robot* (1981), blur the distinctions between book and toy. Board books are available for infants and toddlers; some of the most imaginative are the series of Rosemary Wells's *Max* books, beginning with *Max's Ride* (1979), which provide compelling stories for preschoolers.

While many twentieth-century children's texts appealed to and explored the lives of older children, most critics point to Maureen Daly's *Seventeenth Summer* (1942) and J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) as the beginning of adolescent literature as a genre separate from children's literature. More recently, middle school literature has emerged as a distinctive category. Texts such as Beverly Cleary's *Ramona* series, which began with *Beezus and Ramona* (1955), Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* (1964), and Judy Blume's problem novels, such as *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* (1970), have attracted readers too old for picture books but not ready for the adolescent novel.

SERIES BOOKS remain a larger, but contested, segment of children's literature. Books that follow the same set of characters or repeat an established formula have been an important part of children's literature since the nineteenth century with the publication of Horatio Alger's novels, which feature plucky boys who go from rags to riches, or Martha Finley's series on the pious but popular Elsie Dinsmore. Early in the

twentieth century Edward Stratemeyer's syndicate of anonymous writers wrote books for multiple series under various pseudonyms, including the Nancy Drew series as CAROLYN KEENE, the Hardy Boys series as Franklin W. Dixon, and the Tom Swift series as Victor Appleton. While librarians and critics have tended to dismiss the repetitive nature of series books, some series books—such as Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House series, begun with *Little House in the Big Woods* (1932), and C. S. Lewis's collection *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950–1956), which started with *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950)—have been recognized as outstanding works of literature. Nonetheless, most series fiction—such as L. Frank Baum's Oz series, begun with *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900); R. L. Stine's Goosebumps series, begun with *Welcome to the Dead House* (1992); and Anne Martin's Baby-Sitters Club series, begun with *Kristy's Great Idea* (1986)—have been embraced by older children but generally dismissed by adults and critics as insubstantial.

Media adaptation of children's books as films or as TELEVISION series has become an increasingly important aspect of children's literature. Popular television series have been based on books such as Wilder's Little House series and Marc Brown's Arthur Adventure series, begun with *Arthur's Nose* (1976). Walt DISNEY has dominated the field of film adaptation of children's texts into cinema, beginning with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), the first feature-length animated film. Best known for animated films based on fairy tales, Disney has produced a number of live-action films, such as *Mary Poppins* (1964), based on P. L. Travers's *Mary Poppins* (1934), as well as animated features based on Carlo Collodi's *Le avventure di Pinocchio* (1882) and T. H. White's *The Sword in the Stone* (1939). As is the case with Victor Fleming's film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), based on L. Frank Baum's 1900 novel, or Alfonso Cuarón's film *A Little Princess* (1995), based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's 1905 novel, film adaptations often change, if not revise, the original text. This complicates the meaning of a children's text when children are more familiar with a text through viewing a media adaptation than through reading the book.

Since the 1960s, an increasing number of well-designed picture books have been produced. Such book illustrators as Maurice Sendak with *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), Chris Van Allsburg with *Jumanji* (1981), and Anthony Browne with *Gorilla* (1983) have created highly imaginative picture books. Talented graphic designers—such as Eric Carle with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969), Leo Lionni with *Swimmy* (1963), and Lois Ehlert with *Color Zoo* (1989)—have provided bold new approaches to creating picture books.

Despite the recent trend of categorizing children's literature by age, an increasing number of adults have begun reading children's books, blurring the boundaries between children's and adult texts. J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series,

begun with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (1997), has wide appeal with both child and adult readers. Francesca Lia Block's postmodern fairy tales, such as *Weetzie Bat* (1989), and the darkly ironic A Series of Unfortunate Events series by Lemony Snicket, which began with *The Bad Beginning* (1999), both have strong adult readership. Picture books have always been a showcase for designers and illustrators to display their talents. Increasingly sophisticated picture books—such as David Maccaulay's *Black and White* (1990) or the postmodern revisions of fairy tales written by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith in *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Fairy Tales* (1992)—appeal as much to adults as to children. Contemporary children's literature continues to be a highly innovative and challenging field. As children's literature has become an increasingly financially profitable business, more successful writers who have first established themselves as writers for adults, such as Carl Hiaasen (*Hoot* [2002]) and Michael Chabon (*Summerland* [2002]), are choosing to write for children.

See also: **ABC Books; Comic Books; Juvenile Publishing; Movies.**

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