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OF
MODERN CULTURE**

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*LITERATURE IN THE CONTEXT
OF
MODERN CULTURE*

STUDENT'S GUIDE ON CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Compiled by:

Jana Grecu, Dr. Associate Professor

Olga Covaliov, asistent univ.

Tatiana Cravenco, asistent univ.

Lilia Petriciuc, asistent univ.

REVIEWERS:

Ecaterina RUGA, Dr. Associate Professor,

International Institute of Management "IMI-NOVA"

Ana BUDNIC, Dr. Associate Professor,

State Pedagogical University “Ion Creangă”

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'Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body'
Richard Steele

Preface

Literature plays a vital role in the process of teaching foreign languages. Being an aspect of Arts and a part of the World Heritage, it can help to understand and appreciate the real values and standards of Beauty.

In the modern society there is an ongoing process of weakening pupils' interest in the classics of world literature. However, it should be noted that it is namely classical literature that contributes to the moral education of children, which is a very important aspect in the process of personality formation and developing literary culture. It should be emphasized that lack of interaction with literature has produced significant deficiencies in the children's use of language resources, imaginative potential and critical thinking skills. Numerous empirical studies reveal that children who are exposed to literature are better achievers than those who are not. They manage to get better results not just in languages or literature, but in mathematics, physics history, etc. as well.

More than that, teaching foreign languages through literature can motivate and stimulate the learners to study the subject more thoroughly. Moreover, utilizing literature in the classroom will restore the balance between the affect and the intellect, the aesthetic and pragmatic, the literal and the figurative, which are all essential aspects of learning.

The Guide corresponds to the university curriculum of the English language for graduate and post-graduate students. It acquaints the learners – English teachers - with different types, genres and forms of literature and contains some pedagogical recommendations on didactic approaches to literature in foreign language education.

The peculiarity of the guide is that it presents literature not in a chronological way, but according to genres, literary forms and themes, that makes it easier for English teacher to select appropriate literary material, taking into consideration the age, grade and psychological characteristics of the pupils.

The Guide can be recommended as the main resource at the lessons on English and American literature for graduate and post-graduate students.

PART 1.

BINDING CLUES OF CULTURE AND LITERATURE

“Knowledge of the world’s languages and cultures is more vital than ever. In order to compete in the global community, we must be able to communicate effectively and to appreciate, understand, and be able to work in the framework of other cultures”.
(D. Shanahan)

- 1.1 Culture and its Dimensions*
- 1.2 Literature as an Aspect of Culture*
- 1.3 The Interplay between Language, Culture and Literature*
- 1.4 Children’s Literature as a Means of Foreign Language Education*
- 1.5 Genres of Children’s Literature*
- 1.6 Suggested Assignments*

1.1. Culture and its Dimensions

Culture" is a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life. It includes everything people learn to do. It is everything humans have learned. Culture shapes our thoughts and actions. According to Brooks, 1975, of its several meanings, two are of major importance to teachers.

- "little-c" culture: *Culture as everything in human life* (also called culture BBV: Beliefs, Behavior, and Values)
- "Big-C" culture: *the best in human life restricted to the elitists* (also called culture MLA: great Music, Literature, and Art of the country).

Culture is a wider concept than literature. On a general level, culture has been referred to as ‘the ways of a people’¹. This view incorporates both ‘material’ manifestations of culture that are easily seen, and ‘non-material’ ones that are more difficult to observe. It can be defined as a framework of beliefs, expressive symbols, and values in terms of which both individuals and groups define and express their judgments and feelings.

Culture means different things to different people. It consists of shared values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and practices that determine the behavior of members of a social group at a particular point in time. It is creative expression, skills, traditional knowledge and resources. These include craft and design, oral and written history and literature, music, drama, dance, visual arts,

¹ Lado, R. *Linguistics Across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers*, University of Michigan Press, 1957, 141p.

celebrations, architectural forms, historic sites, and traditional technologies, traditional healing methods and patterns of social interaction that contribute to group and individual welfare and identity. It is generally accepted that culture embodies the way humans live and treat others and how they develop or react to changes in their environments.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica dedicates a total of 19 pages to the explanation of the concept, definitions and types of culture, and the different approaches to the study of culture. Obviously, future language teachers are not expected to be experts in the theory of culture, but they have to be aware of what this term encompasses and especially what it means in relation to the study of a foreign language. They should know that culture cannot be taught simply through a few explicit lessons about some specific customs, holidays, songs. It is a much broader concept than that, implicitly present in the appropriate use of different linguistic forms as well. Cultural content and cultural awareness have varied along the history of language teaching and within different methods. Culture is everything that is created, made or touched by humans, and this perception may become relevant from the point of view of language teaching. This wide interpretation suggests that teachers can freely choose from various topics and phenomena which can easily meet these requirements.

In this context, culture will be considered in terms of its relationship with literature, i.e. as a combination of literature and culture that interact and contribute to achieving language learning objectives. We should realize that knowing a language, as well as the patterns of everyday life, is a prerequisite to appreciating the fine arts and literature, therefore we need a balanced perspective of culture to be reflected in language learning. Foreign language learning is comprised of several components, including grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, *as well as a change in attitudes towards one's own or another culture. **Cultural competence***- the knowledge of the conventions, customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another country, is indisputably an integral part of foreign language learning, and many teachers see it as their goal to incorporate the teaching of culture into the foreign language curriculum.

1.2. Literature as an Aspect of Culture

Many authors, critics and linguists have puzzled over what literature is. There are various definitions of the term, but none of them seems to be precise and exhaustive and to understand what it really means has always been a challenge for researchers, scientists, teachers and so on.

J. Mayer states that everything could be literature if you want to read it that way. However, there are some particular features that should be considered when referring to a text as belonging to literature: "literary texts are marked by careful use of language, including features such as

creative metaphors, well-turned phrases, elegant syntax, rhyme, alliteration, meter. This, it seems to me, is quite significant in establishing the meaning of the word ‘literature’: on the basis of this criterion, carefully-written personal essays are more likely to be considered literary than are, for example, encyclopedia articles”²[2, p.4].

Literature includes different types of stories, poems, plays especially those that are considered to have value as art and not just entertainment. Literature is creative and imaginative written or verbal production that fulfills certain socially and culturally approved functions³[3]. It means that literature is what the readers feel, think and how they respond to works both in written or oral form.

A broad explanation of literature says that literary texts are products that reflect different aspects of society. They are cultural documents which offer a deeper understanding of a country or countries. Literature can be defined as written texts with artistic value, including the traditional literary genres of poems, fiction and drama. According to Macmillan English Dictionary and the Oxford Basic English Documentary **Literature refers to:**1. *Stories, poems, and plays especially those that are considered to have value as art and not just entertainment.* 2. *Books, plays, novels, and every piece of art that defines a special society.*

Literature is understood in multiple ways: It is a body of written and oral works, like novels, poetry, or drama that use words to stimulate the imagination of the reader and provide him with a unique vision of life. It is a creative work, a global form of expression that addresses spiritual, emotional, and intellectual human concerns. However, this idea is from the XIVth century. In the XVIIIth century literature was viewed as “well-written books of an imaginative or creative kind”. Good literature is believed to demonstrate artistry and to have the power to raise questions and debates, provide new points of view, and let the reader expand his understanding of himself and of the whole world.

To us *Literature* is any creative, factual and imaginative work about people and what they have done, believe, and have created or are willing to create. Literature is a multitude of works, written in books, journals, newspapers and magazines; spoken; acted out; sung; filmed; drawn as cartoons or shown on television. Literature can be experienced through a variety of media; oral, audio, audiovisual and so on. It is an expression of culture because it documents human knowledge, belief and behavior. Literary texts are products that reflect different aspects of society, portraying people’s ideas and dreams set in certain time and space frameworks in the most creative and

² Meyer, J. What is Literature? A Definition Based on Prototypes. In: Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session, vol.41, 1997, 11p.

³ Parkinson B., Thomas, H. R. *Teaching Literature in a Second Language*, Edinburgh University Press, 2000, 205p.

imaginary way. It both depicts and inspires social changes and is often treated as a credible source of culture representation.

It goes without saying that in an ever-changing multicultural society it is vital for educators to have the proper knowledge and understanding of how to implement and utilize literature as a source and model of intercultural communication. They are cultural documents which offer a deeper understanding of a country or countries. Non-fiction narratives such as diaries, autobiographies and letters are included, as well as children's literature and folklore narratives.

In the teaching of culture, literature plays different roles: it serves either as illustration or a starting point for the study and mediation of cultural phenomena. It is understood as part of a foreign civilization, thus by learning about the social, historical, linguistic and other cultural implementations in literary texts, aspects of the foreign culture are being mediated.

Literature and culture are deeply interrelated and both have a strong relationship with each other because for years and from the oldest of time, literature embodied culture; The first literary work in English language that conveys cultural context about life is written in Old English which appeared in the early Middle Age, and here we mean "Beowulf" from Anglo-Saxon literature, which is a heroic epic poem. Stories were and are still having massive and central importance to humans since ancient times. Undisputedly, cultures were built on stories, tales, histories, myths, legends, religious stories and so on.

1.3. The Interplay between Language, Culture and Literature

Language, verbal or non-verbal, is central to the survival of mankind because it is an important tool for communication, negotiation and the transfer or preservation of literary as well as cultural heritage of a people from one generation to the other. The relationship between language, literature and culture is so strong to the extent that a change in one ultimately affects the other two. Every language directly mirrors the culture it serves - a language either enriches or impoverishes the culture it serves. It seems that people agree to at least one fundamental premise: culture is not only inseparably related to language, but also plays an important role throughout the process of language teaching and learning. Learning a language means learning something about the culture as well, the two being interdependent, and as it has already been stated, inseparable.

The question is not whether or not to teach culture, but, rather, what kind of teaching can promote students' understanding of the nature of the language, communication and human relations. Broadly speaking, *foreign language learning is foreign culture learning*, and literature as a social and communicative system, functions like a bridge that connects various cultures and allows learners

to access them and to learn something new about the world and about how language is used to get to understand cultural dimensions of a society.

In a modern, multicultural world, foreign language speakers have to be able to use the language according to the norms of the respective community, and they have to be aware of what may, may not, or should not be said as part of their language behaviour. Speakers must take into consideration the situation, the circumstances, the topic, the expected level of formality, their partner's level of knowledge, and the culture-sensitive scenarios. It is impossible to teach a language without its culture, for "culture is the necessary context for language use [4, p.205]⁴." Cultural aspects need to be integrated into language teaching to avoid misunderstanding even when people are using correct linguistic forms. Foreign culture learning is vital to help users of a foreign language to successfully communicate in different socio-cultural contexts.

Language and culture are so close that these are being identified as synonyms sometimes. On the one hand, language is used to express people's cultural thoughts, beliefs and to communicate; on the other hand, culture is embedded in the language. The relationship between language and culture can be summarized according to D. Brown [5, p.177]⁵: "*A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture.*"

Language is used to participate in the culture, describe the culture, interpret the culture and respond to the culture. It allows people in a cultural group to share ideas and information. Also, it is a method for transmission of culture. Various stories are handed down from one generation to the next and thus they connect us to the past, to the roots of specific cultures. They are repositories of culture and knowing the tales, characters and expressions that are part of our cultural heritage makes us **culturally literate**.

Literature is the aesthetic manifestation of language. The relationship between language and literature can't be separated either, which emphasizes the tight connection between language-literature- culture.

The relationship between language and literature can't be separated either, which emphasizes the tight connection between language- literature- culture.

⁴ Stern, H.H. *Issues and options in language teaching* (edited by Patrick Allen and Birgit Harley). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 404p.

⁵ Brown, D. H. *Teaching by Principles. An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Pearson Longman, 2000, 480p.

Literature is based on both language and culture and it serves them both as well. So, learning a language should not be separated from learning the patterns and values of the culture of which it is a part, which become accessible through different literary creations.

As a vessel for culture, literature reflects a wide range of topics such as divorce, bullying, gender issues, family structures, complex emotions, and tolerance. Engaging children with texts that focus on various real world issues that they can relate to, gives them the opportunity to make connections to their own lives. Through literature, a reader is able to see how others deal with their emotions, frustrations, and fears, while providing them with insight on their personal problems. It is also a way to get students to become more aware of their own cultural models while beginning to understand others in a multicultural society.

Cultural diversity is seen throughout classrooms across the world and is becoming an important part of school curriculums and educators' pedagogies. Educators have the responsibility of using literature within their classrooms in order to help children develop a deeper and more knowledgeable understanding and respect of other cultures. Educators have the responsibility to refine their interpersonal skills, increase their knowledge and awareness of other cultures, and facilitate lessons and activities that include learners from different backgrounds⁶ [6] and exploring a variety of literary genres from various cultural contexts helps them to achieve better educational results and to promote intercultural understanding and communication as they **begin to understand the world better and to deepen their perspectives and outlook on life that facilitates their understanding why people behave in certain ways.**

1.4. Children's Literature as a Means of Foreign Language Education

In a world described by an outburst in technological progress, children prefer experiencing virtual realities to reading. Virtual realities offer them ready made images which do not require too much mental effort to process the information, in contrast with a written text.

It should be noted that all this progress has led to a weakening of young people's interest in world literature which consequently has led to numerous deficiencies in their academic and personal development. In this context, literature as an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use and for introducing cultural aspects, serves perfectly to compensate for the drawbacks.

Utilizing literature is a developmental practice and through the use of certain texts educators help their students grow emotionally while still helping them develop academically.

⁶ Brinson, S. A. (2012). *Knowledge of Multicultural Literature among Early Childhood Educators*. *Multicultural Education*, 19(2), pp. 30-33.

The foreign language teacher should always remember that even when a student does not yet express himself fluently either in writing and speaking, he is still frequently able to comprehend and contribute to a discussion of a piece of literature. He has read and discussed and studied poems, plays, novels or short stories in his own language, and he is familiar with the elements and form of literature written in his native language.

Interacting with literature from an early age is a necessity as it teaches learners, especially children, how to empathize with the characters, thus learning how to deal with real people in a multi-cultural world, which is an essential skill nowadays. Literature has the ability to impact and change children's outlooks through personal connections. Apart from this, literature offers a multitude of contexts through which a variety of cultural dimensions can be accessed and explored.

Carol M. Lynch-Brown and Carl M. Tomlinson in their valuable work *Essentials of Children's Literature*, 9th ed, 2018, define children's literature as "good quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children of those ages, through prose, and poetry, fiction and nonfiction [7, p.20]⁷. It is worth distinguishing between *textbooks* and *trade books*. **A textbook**, by design and content, is for the purpose of instruction. In contrast, **a trade book**, by design and content, is primarily for the purposes of entertainment and information. Currently, many teachers choose trade books to develop different skills in their learners thanks to their being more attractive to young learners than traditional textbooks.

According to *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* Children's literature is defined as "the body of written works and accompanying illustrations produced in order to entertain or instruct young people"⁸[8]. It largely presented in three common forms: poetry, fiction and nonfiction. While nonfiction consists of factual information such as concepts about colors or famous people's biographies, fiction tells stories that can be entirely imaginative, e.g. folktales, mythology and so forth.

The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English edited by Ian Ousby defines children's literature as "stories and poems aimed at children" [9]⁹.

Zena Sutherland, author of *Children and Books*, a course-book for children's literature classes in education explains that there is no precise, exhaustive definition of literature, the opinions of experts being many and various. There are voices stating that everything children read and enjoy is part of their literature.

Zena Sutherland considers that not everything children read can be included into the category of children's literature and it does not refer only to "books that are read and enjoyed, but also that

⁷ Lynch-Brown C. M., Tomlinson C. M. *Essentials of Children's Literature*, 9th ed, 2018, 316p.

⁸ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, V.23, 1993.

⁹ *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*, ed. by Ian Ousby. Cambridge University Press, 1992, 184p.

have been written for children and that meet high literary and artistic standards. A similar opinion is voiced by Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown who clarify that “quality in writing is never easy to define, but it has to do with originality and importance of ideas, imaginative use of language and beauty of literary and artistic style that enable a book to remain fresh, interesting and meaningful for years and years. These books have permanent values” [10, p.6]¹⁰.

Peter Hunt, Senior Lecturer in the School of English at the University of Cardiff and author of “An Introduction to Children’s Literature”, explains that “children’s literature is a remarkable area of writing; it is one of the roots of western culture, it is enjoyed passionately by adults as well as by children, and it has exercised huge talents over hundreds of years. It involves and integrates words and pictures, it overlaps into other modes- video, oral story-telling and other art forms. For both adults and children, literature serves the purpose it is frequently claimed to serve: it absorbs, it possesses and it is possessed; its demands are very immediate. Children’s books are important educationally, socially and commercially”. Further, Peter Hunt emphasizes that children’s literature is a powerful literature, and such power cannot be neutral or innocent, or trivial. It is impossible for a children’s book not to be educational or influential in some way; it cannot help but reflect an ideology and, by extension, didacticism. “Children’s writers are in a position of singular responsibility of transmitting cultural values, rather than simply telling a story.

Children’s books are an important tool in reading education, and are thus pray to a wide area of educational and psychological influences that other literatures escape” [11, pp.1-3]¹¹.

Owing to its authentic language use, appealing story plots and illustrations, children’s literature is a great teaching tool for promoting motivation to read. Such motivation, as attested by many researchers, contributes to one’s overall language and literacy development.

Children's literature builds on background, past experience, and interests of the learner. The literature suggests that the use of children's books in the reading and language art curricula has many benefits. First, the use of children's literature has been shown to facilitate language development. It also has positive effects on reading achievement, as well as on the acquisition of reading skills and strategies. Further, writing skills are improved and writing styles broadened through the use of children's literature.

Children's literature encourages both high-level thinking and learner involvement, important in motivating students to read. Evidence consistently shows that frequent exposure to literature through book sharing and book reading opportunities has a significant impact on children’s oral language development, early reading skills and future reading. In addition, social skills and

¹⁰ Sutherland Z. *Children and books*. Longman, 1981, 678p.

¹¹ Hunt. P. *An Introduction to Children’s Literature*. Oxford University Press, 1994, 258p.

understandings can be developed through book sharing. Examining character traits of key characters in children's books can teach children about important qualities such as friendship, cooperation, perseverance, respect and honesty.

Using literature that represents diversity helps to engender a sense of pride in children and affirms their identity, their families and their communities. Texts are a powerful means of helping children to understand themselves and others as they act as both a 'mirror' of personal identity and experiences and a 'window' onto the diversity of the world, thus supporting cross-cultural understanding and helping children to "make connections, form relationships and create community with others". In addition, literature has the capacity to broaden children's understanding of the world by providing various experiences they otherwise would not have had.

Children's literature can be effectively used for all age range levels to teach and improve integrated foreign language skills, facilitating children's literacy and proficiency. First and foremost, learners explore a wide range of specific vocabulary presented in context, accompanied by attractive images. Properly selected literary texts provide children with contextualized, repeated vocabulary and phrases which facilitates accidental acquisition, which will give them a sense of accomplishment.

When studying literature through different genres, children get familiar with culture features specific to one culture reflected by proverbs; idioms; formulaic expressions which embody culture values; social structures; role and relationship; customs; rituals; traditions; festivals; beliefs; values; superstitions; political, historic, and economic backgrounds; institutions; taboos; metaphorical and connotative meanings; humour, etc. This suggests that the load of culture specific elements in literary texts can open a window to better insights on the target culture that will facilitate their becoming skillful users of the target language.

Exploring literature with children helps them gain an appreciation of the universality of human needs which makes it possible for them to understand that all humans are, to some degree, alike. By introducing children to stories from different lands and cultures, teachers are building a foundation for multicultural understanding: walking in someone else's shoes often helps children to develop a greater capacity to empathize with others.

Children's literature can be effectively used for all age range levels to teach and improve integrated foreign language skills, facilitating children's literacy and proficiency. First and foremost, learners explore a wide range of specific vocabulary presented in context, accompanied by attractive images. Properly selected literary texts provide children with contextualized, repeated vocabulary and phrases which facilitates accidental acquisition, which will give them a sense of accomplishment. It is worthwhile noting that selecting the right literary work is more important than applying the most ultra-fashionable teaching/learning strategies. Picture-books, for example are perfect for learners with a very

low level of language proficiency, regardless of their age. Nursery rhymes and poems are a valuable resource for teaching phonics and some language structures. Fairy tales, particularly illustrated ones, are absolutely suitable for children and adult learners of English as a foreign language since they create image and promote vocabulary and grammar acquisition alongside a variety of cultural aspects, like social norms of behaviour, for example.

We know books based on a central unifying idea may be written to teach about certain characteristics shared by all humans. Themes such as these are often called universal. Universal themes include ideas such as personal development, overcoming fears and the need for security. Folktales, fairytales, and fables are known for having universal themes. For instance, Cinderella, teaches that good behavior and patience can be rewarded, a theme universal to humanity. Universal themes afford teachers opportunities to discuss with children the characteristics that link people together. Discussions that highlight these aspects are, we believe, a very important part of cultural understanding.

Pedagogically speaking, children's literature has been proven to successfully engage learners in holistic learning experiences in which early literacy and language skills are naturally acquired and practiced. It also has the great potential for constructing and expanding children's knowledge of themselves/ about others, which promotes cross-cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. Universal themes afford teachers opportunities to discuss with children the characteristics that link people together. Discussions that highlight these aspects are a very important part of cultural understanding.

1.5. Genres of Children's Literature

Most children's books are grouped according to form, technique and subject matter into the following genres: poetry, prose and picture books. Poetry is a type of literature in which words are selected for their beauty and power to express feelings. Traditionally poems had a specific rhyme and rhythm, but modern poetry does not necessarily respect these parameters and does not always have a regular beat, rhyme or verse length. Poetry can be lyric, narrative and nursery rhymes. Lyric poetry is descriptive in nature and it captures a feeling, emotion, scene or a moment. Narrative poetry tells a story and includes a sequence of events. Nursery rhymes are verses for children in which simple stories or thoughts are told.

Prose is referred to as written work that is not poetry or song. Prose does not have a regular rhythmic pattern. It has some logical, grammatical order and its ideas are connectedly stated rather than merely listed. Prose is characterized by style and it can be fiction or non-fiction. By fiction prose we refer to prose that is the product of the author's imagination and does not rely on history or facts.

Non-fiction, on the contrary, is a piece of writing that is based on facts, not imaginary scenarios. The purpose of fiction is to entertain whereas that of non-fiction is to inform. Biographies and informational books belong to the category of non-fiction. A biography tells the story of somebody's actual life. Informational books deal with information on a wide range of subjects among which politics, flora, fauna, how laws are made, etc. It is important to note that non-fiction is believed to be the area of children's literature that has changed the most, the range of topics has broadened tremendously, consequently the quality of writing and illustrations has improved considerably.

Fiction can be of two kinds: fantasy and realistic. Fantasy describes a story that takes place in a nonexistent, unreal world and features unreal characters. It can also rely on some scientific principles not yet discovered or contrary to present experience as in science fiction.

In literature realism entails the presentation of things as they are in reality. Realistic fiction includes historical novels, adventure stories, animal stories, stories about animals etc. Even if the characters in this type of stories are fictitious, they display actions and behavior that seem real, like those of real people or animals.

In general, it is not difficult to distinguish between realism and fantasy. The main feature to consider is as follows: if the story takes place in a world that is nonexistent and there are elements not present in real world, then we are dealing with fantasy. If the story takes place in a world where most of the things and characters are somewhat familiar to us, then it is realistic fiction.

Picture books are books in which illustrations are the dominant feature and there is little or no text at all. They include a wide variety of books: from toy or board books for very young children to picture story books for older children. Peter Hunt considers that the genre of illustrated books and picture books should be considered separately as it is "a tremendously varied and complex form which scarcely exists in other literary genres" [11, p.9]¹².

Drama is an important genre in literature, however most textbook authors seem to ignore it as a genre of literature for children. This is believed to be the major reason why drama does not appear among the genres specific to children's literature, although there are some capital works like *Peter Pan*, a play by James Barrie, which are highly enjoyed and are well known as children's literature.

Drama describes a piece of literary creation in which the story is told through words and actions intended to be performed in front of an audience. For this reason, it is deemed that children's literature should include four genres instead of three: poetry, prose, picture books and drama.

¹² Hunt, P. *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford University Press, 1994, 258p.

1.6. Suggested Assignments:

Based on the reading material above, answer the following questions:

1. Why is literature perceived as an aspect of culture?
2. Show how language, culture and literature are interrelated.
3. Choose what you believe is the best definition of children's literature and comment on it.
4. Why is it so difficult to define literature in general and children' literature in particular?
5. Explain why it is not possible to draw a demarcation line between what is considered children's literature and adult's literature.
6. What are the main reasons for not including drama as a genre of children's literature? Give arguments.
7. What are the benefits of exploring children's literature in foreign language education?
8. How can you justify the need for utilizing different genres of children's literature in foreign language learning?
9. Compare a children's book written in Romanian to one written in English. Are there any differences? Explain why.
10. Think about a tale/story you read as a child. What lesson(s) for life did it teach you?

PART 2.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

“A childhood without books – that would be no childhood. That would be like being shut out from the enchanted place where you can go and find the rarest kind of joy.”

— Astrid Lindgren

- 2.1. *The Oral Tradition***
- 2.2. *Early Printed Books***
- 2.3. *The Puritan Influence***
- 2.4. *John Locke’s Influence on Views of Childhood***
- 2.5. *Charles Perrault’s Tales of Mother Goose***
- 2.6. *The Age of Reason***
- 2.7. *The Romantic Wave***
- 2.8 *Suggested Assignments***

2.1. The Oral Tradition

Within the context of human history as a whole, the history of children’s literature is very short. Neither early tales told through the oral tradition, nor early books were created especially for children. When children’s books were eventually written, they usually mirrored the dominant cultural values of their place and time. Thus, a study of children’s literature reflects both changes in society as a whole and changes in social expectations of children and the family.

The European oral tradition reached its climax in the feudal era of the Middle Ages. What are often called castle tales and cottage tales provided people with literature long before those tales were widely accessible in writing or print. In the great halls of castles, minstrels or bards accompanied themselves on lyres or harps while singing tales about noble warriors, such as Beowulf and King Arthur, or ballads of chivalrous love in regal surroundings, such as those found in the French version of Cinderella.

Around cottage fires or at country fairs, humble people had different heroes. Storytellers shared folktales about people much like the peasants themselves, people who daily confronted poverty, mysterious natural phenomena, and unknown spiritual forces. In these tales, even the youngest or poorest person had the potential to use wit or kindness to go from rags to riches and live ‘happily ever after’- Often, such achievement required outwitting or slaying wolves, dragons, evil supernatural beings, or great lords

2.2. Early Printed Books

A significant event occurred in the 1450, when the German Johannes Gutenberg discovered a practical method for using movable metal type, which made possible the mass production of books. After learning the printing process in Germany, William Caxton established England's first printing press in 1476. The use of printing presses led to the creation of hornbooks, which were printed sheets of text mounted on wood and covered with translucent animal horn. Hornbooks were used to teach reading and numbers. The books were in the shape of a paddle. They usually included the alphabet, a syllable, numerals, and the Lord's Prayer.

Caxton's books were beautiful, but too expensive for the common people. Soon, however, peddlers (or 'chapmen') were selling crudely printed chapbooks for pennies at markets and fairs, along with ribbons, patent medicines, and other wares. The content of chapbooks fell into the following categories: religious instruction, interpretations of the supernatural, romantic legends, ballad tales, and historic narratives

2.3. The Puritan Influence

As printing increased and literacy spread, the British monarchy realized the power of the press. In 1637 it decreed that only London, Oxford, Cambridge and York could have printing establishments.

Puritanism was a religious reform movement in the late 16th and 17th centuries which sought to 'purify' the Church of England from remnants of Roman Catholic 'popery'. Puritans became noted for a spirit of moral and religious earnestness that determined their whole way of life, and they sought through church reform to make their lifestyle the pattern for the whole nation. Their efforts to transform the nation led to civil war in England and to the founding of colonies in America as working models of the Puritan way of life. Puritans believed that conversion was necessary to redeem one from one's sinful condition, that God had chosen to reveal salvation through preaching and that the Holy Spirit rather than reason was the energizing instrument of salvation. They believed themselves to be elect spirits chosen by God to revolutionize history.

The philosophy of the Puritans also influenced the literature of the period. Puritans considered the traditional tales about giants, fairies and witches found in chapbooks to be impious and corrupting. They urged that children be not allowed to read such materials and instead be provided with literature to instruct them and reinforce their moral development. Puritans expected their descendants to be children of God first and foremost. Family worship, warnings from elders, home instruction, strict attendance at school and close attention to lessons all were aimed at continuing those ideas and values for which the parents themselves had considerably sacrificed. To the elders,

the important part of education was learning to read, write, and calculate. Only literature that would instruct and warn was tolerated.

In a social environment that viewed children as small adults and expected them to behave accordingly, few considered that children might have interests and educational needs of their own. The Puritans and other Calvinist Christians believed that everyone was born predestined to achieve either salvation or damnation. Thus, all must spend their lives attempting to be saved.

2.4. John Locke's Influence on Views of Childhood

John Locke (1632-1704) was an English political and educational philosopher who laid the epistemological foundations of modern science.

Epistemology is the study or theory of the nature, sources, and limits of knowledge. John Locke was the initiator of the Age of Enlightenment and Reason in England and France, and is still a powerful influence on the life and thought of the West. He imagined the child's mind at birth as *tabula rasa*, a blank page on which ideas were to be imprinted. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, published in 1693, Locke stressed the interrelatedness of healthy physical development and healthy mental development, and he spoke publicly in favour of milder ways of teaching and bringing up children than had been recommended previously. Locke believed that children who could read should be provided with easy, pleasant books suited to their capacities - books that encouraged them to read and rewarded them for their reading efforts but that did not fill their heads with useless ideas or encourage vice.

2.5. Charles Perrault's Tales of Mother Goose

An exciting development in children's literature occurred in seventeenth-century France. Charles Perrault (1628-1703), French poet, prose writer, and story teller, a leading member of the Academie Francaise, played a prominent part in a literary controversy known as the "quarrel of the ancient and the moderns".

Perrault supported the modern view that ancient literature is inevitably coarser and barbarous than modern literature. He is best remembered, however, for his collection of fairy Stories for children called *Tales of Mother Goose* published in 1697, Perrault's charming fairy stories were written to amuse his children. They include such well-known fairy- tales as Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Puss in Boots, Little Red Riding Hood and Blue Beard. Perrault did not create these tales; he retold stories from the French oral tradition that had delighted both children and grown-ups and provided entertainment in the elegant salons of the Parisian aristocracy. Perrault was one of the first writers to recognize that fairy-tales have a special place in the world of children

2.6. The Age of Reason

The eighteenth century known as the Age of Reason was a period when science and philosophy, economics and the arts saw an unusual flourishing. It was a time when reason and its practical good sense were the first court of appeal in matters of belief and conduct of art and literature.

At the beginning of the century there appeared one of the most brilliant groups of writers in English literature. They were primarily concerned with everyday facts and interests of well-ordered, civilized human life. Among them were Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift.

Daniel Defoe (1660-1725) is the first true master of the English novel. His masterpiece *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) became an instant success with both middle class and landed gentry, with adults and children alike.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) is one of the world's greatest artists. He is also one of the greatest masters of English prose. *Gulliver's Travels*, his most famous work, appeared in 1726. The book was written as a satire of government and society and was meant for adult readers but as the time passed it became one of children's favorites.

The 1740's are commonly regarded as the time when the idea of children's books began in Europe. New Ways of thought emerged as the middle class became larger and strengthened its positions. With the growing emphasis on family life, a realization began that children should be children rather than small adults.

By the middle of the 18th century publishers began to specialize in children's books whose first aim was pleasure rather than education or morality. Into this social climate came John Newbery (1713-67), an admirer of John Locke and a supporter of a milder way of educating children. Newbery was also a writer and publisher, who began publishing books for children in 1744. He was one of the earliest and best-known publishers of children's books. *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* by John Newbery published in 1744 was one of the first commercial books for children published in London and a true beginning of children's literature. Newbery's company, set up in London, became a success. It is fitting that an award given annually to the outstanding author of children's literature selection bears Newbery's name.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), French political philosopher and writer, whose *Emile* (1762) decreed that all books for children save Robinson Crusoe were a dangerous diversion, influenced contemporary critics who saw to it that children's literature should be instructive and uplifting. Prominent among such voices was Mrs. Sarah Trimmer, whose magazine *The Guardian of Education* carried the first regular reviews of children's books. She condemned fairy-tales for their violence and general absurdity. Her own stories described talking animals who were always models

of wisdom and politeness. Another children's writer of the time, Mary Sherwood (1775-1851), had in her celebrated novel *The History of the Fairchild Family* (1818-47) stories calculated to show the importance and effects of religious education.

Ardent followers of Jean Jacques Rousseau who battled for 'sensible' stories and didacticism in children's literature continued to influence children's writing well into the nineteenth century.

2.7. The Romantic Wave

The Romantic wave that swept Europe early in the nineteenth century also affected children's literature. In Great Britain, the writings of Sir Walter Scott (1771- 1832), who was noted for his tales of chivalry were read with delight by older children. Walter Scott is the founder of the historical novel in English literature. Drawing on private research, on his considerable learning, and on his wide erudition, he published *Ivanhoe* (1820), *Kenilworth* (1821), *Quentin Durward* (1823) and many other novels that are well known to children all over the world. A revival of interest in the works of English playwright William Shakespeare resulted in one of the most popular children's books, *Tales from Shakespeare*, consisting of versions of Shakespeare's plays by essayist Charles Lamb (1775-1834) and his sister Mary Ann (1764-1847).

Tales from Shakespeare were designed to make Shakespeare's plays familiar to the young. The book presents a prose summary of 20 plays by Shakespeare, prepared by Charles Lamb and his sister Mary and published in 1807. Mary Lamb's name did not appear on the title-page until the edition of 1838, although she was responsible for fourteen of the plays in the book. None of the history plays is included and the selection favours the comedies at the expense of the tragedies. The preface explains that the work was submitted to the young reader as an introduction to the study of Shakespeare, for which purpose his words were used whenever it seemed possible to bring them in. The brother and sister took diligent care to select such words as might least interrupt the effect of the beautiful English tongue in which Shakespeare wrote. Therefore, words introduced into English since his time were as far as possible avoided¹³.

Among the plays retold by Charles and Mary Lamb are: *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Cymbeline*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Measure for Measure*, *Twelfth Night; or What You Will*, *Timon of Athens*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Prince of Denmark*, *Othello*, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*.

¹³ Lamb, Ch. and M., *Tales from Shakespeare*. - Paul Hamlyn LTD, 1968. - p. 7

Charles Lamb believed that their tales were only an introduction into that beautiful world of Shakespeare's plays which he considered to be enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honourable thoughts and actions to teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity; for, of examples teaching these values, his pages are full ¹⁴.

In the United States, James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) wrote with historical vividness about the more recent American past. *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Pathfinder* (1840) and other Leather stocking tales became popular with young readers, and translations of Cooper's works became favourites in Europe.

Renewed interest in folklore, an aspect of the Romantic movement, led to the enrichment of children's literature with myths, legends, and wonder stories. The German brothers Jacob Ludwig Karl Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Karl Grimm (1786-1859) made notable contributions in their volumes of stories known collectively in English as *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (1823), published between 1812 and 1815 and circulated in translations throughout the world, the volumes include such tales as *Hansel and Gretel*, *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs*, *The Valiant Little Tailor*, and *Rapunzel*. More original and stylized versions of folktales were written by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen (1805-63), whose collections appeared between 1835 and 1872, the first English translation being published in 1846. Some of the more famous Andersen stories are *Thumbelina*, *The Little Match-Girl*, *The Nightingale*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Ugly Duckling*, and *The Constant Tin Soldier*.

In the nineteenth century, religious and educational books gradually forced fantasy out of the mainstream, and the religious tractarians who favoured return to early Catholic doctrines in the Church of England placed their stamp on the developing genres of domestic tales for girls and empire-building adventure stories for boys.

2.8. The Golden Age in English Children's Literature

The Golden Age in English children's literature began with the emergence of an intelligent and whimsical children's literature written by Edward Lear (1812-1888) and Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898), who used the pen-name Lewis Carroll. Lewis Carroll's masterpiece *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) not only avoided didacticism but actually made fun of it. From now younger children could expect stories written for their particular interest and with the needs of their own limited experience of life.

¹⁴ Lamb, Ch. and M., *Tales from Shakespeare*. - Paul Hamlyn LTD, 1968. - p. 8

Many other great writers contributed to the development of children's literature of the time, among them George Macdonald, Andrew Lang, Robert Louis Stevenson, Kenneth Grahame and James Barrie. The Age is characterized by a high literary standard; the creation of characters that became permanent dwellers in the child's imagination (Alice, Peter Pan, Long John Silver, Mowell, Mr. Toad and others); the exaltation of the imagination in the works of L.Caroll, MacDonald, R.L.Stevenson, Nesbit, K. Grahame, J. M.Barrie, and the early J. R. R. Tolkien; the establishment of the literary fairy-tale by Oscar Wilde, J. M. Barrie and others; the popularization by A. Langand and J. Jacobs of traditional folk-tales, a growing literary population of real, or at least more real, children by E. Nesbit and A. Ransome. It is further characterized by the rapid evolution of such genres as the historical novel, the school story, the vacation story, the boy's adventure tale, the girl's domestic novel, the animal tale, and the tale of pure whimsy. Literature for pre-readers and beginning readers was created in this period. The period witnessed the growth of an impressive body of children's verse^[15].

During these 80 years (1865-1945), a few dozen creative writers applied to literature for children standards as high as those ordinarily applied to adult literature.

In time, however, adults themselves moved on to a narrower spectrum of imaginative literature, leaving genres they had once freely enjoyed, such as animal or fairy-stories, to a younger audience. In this way, masterpieces, such as *Kipling's The Jungle Book* (1894) or Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) would more often be found on children's than on adult's bookshelf. At the same time, magazines sprang up specifically directed at children both in Britain and America.

The end of the nineteenth century brought a new approach to appreciating childhood, based on smaller families. Both the ways in which children were valued and the relationships between parents and children were altering a good deal.

The following are the milestones of the period:

1864 *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carrol (fantasy)

1868 *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (autobiography)

1871 *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll (fantasy)

1872 *The Princess and the Goblin* by George Macdonald (fantasy)

1876 *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain (adventure story)

1877 *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell (animal story)

1883 *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson (adventure story)

¹⁵ The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 23, Macropaedia. - Boston: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1993. - p. 203

1884 *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (adventure story)
1885 *A Child's Garden of Verses* by R.L. Stevenson (collection of poems about children)
1888 *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* by Oscar Wilde (literary fairy tales)
1890 English Fairy Tales adapted for children by Joseph Jacobs
1894 *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling (fantasy)
1897 *The Nursery Rhyme Book* edited by Andrew Lang
1902 *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling (fantasy)
1904 *Peter Pan* by James Matthew Barrie (fantasy)
1905 *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (fantasy)
1908 *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame (British classic fantasy about animal life)
1912 *Daddy-Long-Legs* by Jean Webster (realistic fiction)
1922 *When We Were Very Young* by Alan Alexander Milne (a collection of poems about children)

Realistic fiction includes two more titles that have endured as childhood classics: *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery, about a spirited orphan growing up on Prince Edward Island; and *The Secret Garden* (1911) by American writer Frances Hodgson Burnett which presents characters with whose development children can identify, as well as a story with a touch of mystery.

The interwar period saw a further consolidation of children's literature as an exclusive empire, a process helped by the growing popularity of children's annuals, children's picture-books, and children's comics. This period saw the publication of *When We Were Very Young*, a collection of poems, in 1924 and of the excellent domestic fantasy *Winnie-the-Pooh* in 1926, both written by A. A. Milne. In 1930, Arthur Ransome published *Swallows and Amazons*, a realistic adventure story, and in 1937, *The Hobbit*, high fantasy by J. R. R. Tolkien appeared.

In two fields, English children's literature of the second half of the twentieth century set new records. These are the historical novel and fantasy, myth and indeed any fiction not rooted in the "there and then".

The following are the milestones of the period:

1951 *Poems for Children* by Eleanor Farjeon
1954 *Lord of the Rings* by J.R. R. Tolkien (fantasy)
1961 *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell (historical fiction)
1997 *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by Joanne Kathleen (wizard fantasy)

2.8. Suggested Assignments

- Read a Victorian Novel. Identify how the book reflects Victorian values, such as fortitude, temperance, prudence, justice, self-reliance and strong family ties.
- Read a novel from the Romantic period. Identify the values it reflects.
- Read a novel written in the second half of the 20th century. What values does it reflect?
- Classify the Tales from Shakespeare into comedies and tragedies. Why do you think comedies prevail?
- Practice the sounds of Shakespearean English.
- Make Shakespearean One-Pagers.
- Design a Mask for the Ball.

PART 3.

TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

“You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.”

Ray Bradbury

- 3.1. Definition of Traditional Literature*
- 3.2. Types of Traditional Literature*
- 3.3. Origins and Values of Folk-tales*
- 3.4. Widespread Use of Folk tales*
- 3.5. Folk-tales from the British Isles. Joseph Jacobs*
- 3.6. Predominant Types of Folk-tales*
- 3.7. Suggested Assignments*

3.1. Definition of Traditional Literature

Traditional literature is the body of the ancient stories and poems that was preserved through time by the oral tradition of storytelling before being eventually written down. Having no known authors, these stories and poems are attributed to entire groups of people or cultures.

Traditional literature connects people to their past, to the roots of their specific cultures and the human condition. Traditional stories are highly entertaining. Their brevity, immediate action, easily understandable characters, chants, fantastic elements, and happy endings make them particularly appealing to children. Hearing traditional tales helps children to develop a strong sense of story, which in turn provides them with a good foundation for understanding other literary genres. Knowing the characters and situations of traditional literature is part of being culturally literate.

Traditional stories help children to develop a sense of morality. Because characters in traditional stories are clearly good or bad and because evil in these stories is finally punished, traditional literature helps children to sort out good and evil in the world and to identify with the good.

3.2. Types of Traditional Literature

Myths are stories that recount and explain the origins of the world and the phenomena of nature. Myths may have originated in ancient religious rituals. The characters in these stories are mainly gods and goddesses, with occasional mention of humans, and setting is high above earth in the home of gods. Though often violent, myths nonetheless mirror human nature and the essence of our sometimes primitive emotions, instincts, and desires. Some folklorists believe that myths

are the foundation of all other ancient stories. The best-known mythologies are of Greek, Roman, and Norse origin.

Long, long ago the Greeks used to tell stories to explain the marvels of the world around them. When it thundered, they said that Zeus, the king of the gods, was hurling his bolts about the heavens. The Greeks pictured the gods and goddesses as taller and stronger and wiser and more beautiful than mortals. They believed that the gods possessed magical powers that no mortal could ever hope to have. They believed, too, that sometimes the gods left their home on Mount Olympus and mingled with the people of the earth. Then they helped mortals to perform tasks requiring great bravery and skill. They rewarded goodness and punished evil. They sometimes played tricks on people to teach them a lesson. There are many of these old Greek tales. They have been retold many times, but they are still some of the most wonderful stories in the world. *The Wonderful Pitcher*, *The Golden Touch*, *Pandora's Box*, *Demeter and Persephone*, *The Winged Horse* are some of the myths loved and admired by English readers.

Epics are long stories of human adventure and heroism recounted in many episodes. Some epics are told in verse. Epics are grounded in mythology, and their characters can be both human and divine. However, the hero is always human, or, in some cases, superhuman, as was Ulysses in the *Odyssey*; Beowulf in the epic with the same name, and Roland in *The Song of Roland*. The setting is earthly but not always realistic.

Beowulf, an old English poem of 3,182 lines, tells about the major events in the life of the Geatish hero Beowulf: first when, in his youth, he fights and kills first Grendel, a monster who has been attacking the hall of the Danish king Hrothgar, and then Grendel's mother who comes the next night to avenge her son. The second event happens 50 years later; when Beowulf, who has been king of the Geats for a long time, fights a dragon which has attacked his people, in a combat in which both Beowulf and the dragon are mortally wounded. The historical period of the poem's events can be dated in the sixth century, but much of the material of the poem is legendary and paralleled in other Germanic historical-mythological literature in Norse, Old English, and German. *Beowulf*, the most important poem in Old English and the first major poem in a European vernacular language, is remarkable for the grandeur of tone and for the brilliance of its style.

Legends are stories based on either real or supposedly real individuals and their marvelous deeds. Legendary characters such as King Arthur, Lancelot, and Merlin, and legendary settings such as Camelot are a tantalizing mix of realism and fantasy. Although the feats of the heroes of legend defy belief today, in ancient times these stories were considered factual. Other legends from the British Isles tell about Robin Hood, the protector of the poor in the Middle Ages.

Tall tales are highly exaggerated accounts of the exploits of persons, both real and imagined,

so they may be considered a subcategory of legends, though of much more recent origin. In the evolution of the tall tale, however, as each teller embroidered upon the hero's abilities or deeds, the tales became outlandishly exaggerated and were valued more for their humor and bragging than for their factual content.

Folk-tales are stories that grew out of the lives and imaginations of the people. One of the most interesting and important characteristics of these tales is their universality. No theory adequately explains this phenomenon, but the folk-tales of all cultures, regardless of geography or their surfaces, are remarkably similar.

Folk-tales vary in content as to their original intended audiences. Long ago, the nobility and their courtiers heard stories of the heroism, valor, and benevolence of people like themselves - the ruling classes. In contrast, the stories heard by the common people portrayed the ruling classes as unjust or hard taskmasters whose riches were fair game for those common folk, who were quick-witted or strong enough to acquire them. These class-conscious tales are sometimes referred to as **castle** and **cottage** tales, respectively.

The most prevalent kinds of folk-tales are cumulative, humorous, beast, magic, and realistic tales.

Fables are simple stories that incorporate characters - typically animals - whose actions teach a moral lesson or universal truth. Often the moral is stated at the end of the story. Throughout history, fables have appealed to adults as well as to children, for the best of these stories are both simple and wise. Moreover, their use of animals as symbols for human behaviour have made them safe, yet effective, political tools. Perhaps because of their adult appeal, fables were put into print far earlier than other forms of traditional literature. Aesop's fables compose the best-known collection of fables in the Western world.

3.3. Origins and Values of Folk-tales

The problem of why and how folk-tales originated has given rise to many conflicting theories. There is a theory of a single origin and a theory of many origins. Anyway, folklorists have discovered about 500 variants of *Cinderella* in different Western languages with all the wide range of customs and emotional reactions of different people. Over 900 versions of this story have been found throughout the world.

The most conclusive explanation of folk-tale origin has grown out of the findings of social anthropology. In the light of their studies of modern folk societies, many anthropologists conclude that folk-tales were the cement of society, the carriers of the moral code. Folk-tales taught kindness, industry and courage by dramatic stories revealing the rewards of these virtues. They showed

meanness, laziness, and deceit exposed at last and well punished. By creating these dramatic examples of good and bad behaviour, properly rewarded or punished, they helped to cement society together with a common body of social and moral standards.

Modern children learn from these old tales something about their own behaviour in relation to other people. They learn that it's good to use their head. Henny Penny was punished for her gullibility, but the third little pig prospered because he had courage and used his wits. Children learn that you must look beyond appearances which do not always reveal character. The prince discovered this to his sorrow when he accepted the false maid as his princess in *The Goose-Girl*. Beauty found her true love because she looked beyond the ugliness of the poor beast to his kindness. And Boots accomplished the impossible because he had the courage to wonder, to investigate, and to tackle things for himself. Children need this cement of society to be found in folk-tales, a belief in the moral code of decency, courage, and goodness.

In his psychoanalytical study of fairy-tales, *The Uses of Enchantment, The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Bruno Bettelheim, an educator and therapist, writes that "nothing can be as enriching and satisfying to child and adult alike as the folk fairy tale." [14, 5].¹⁶ Bettelheim explains further that the more he tried to understand why these stories are so successful at enriching the inner life of the child, the more he realized that these tales, in a much deeper sense than any other reading material, start where the child really is in his psychological and emotional being. "They speak about his severe inner pressures in a way that the child unconsciously understands, and - without belittling the most serious inner struggles which growing up entails - offer examples of both temporary and permanent solutions to pressing difficulties" [14, 6].

Bruno Bettelheim is sure of the "message that fairy tales get across to the child in manifold form: that a struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, is an intrinsic part of human existence - but that if one does not shy away, but steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and at the end emerges victorious." [14, 8].

Bettelheim thinks that "while it entertains the child, the fairy tale enlightens him about himself, and fosters his personality development. It offers meaning on so many different levels, and enriches the child's existence in so many ways, that no one book can do justice to the multitude and diversity of the contributions such tales make to the child's life" [14, 12].

Bruno Bettelheim is undoubtedly right in stating that "fairy tales are unique, not only as a form of literature, but as works of art which are fully comprehensible to the child, as no other form of art is. As with all great art, the fairy tale's deepest meaning will be different for each person, and

¹⁶ Bettelheim B., *The Uses of Enchantment, The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. - Vintage Books, 1989.

different for the same person at various moments in his life. The child will extract different meaning from the same fairy tale, depending on his interests and needs of the moment. When given the chance, he will return to the same tale when he is ready to enlarge on old meanings, or replace them with new ones” [14, 12].

3.4. Widespread Use of Folk-tales

Folk-tales are legacy from anonymous artists of the past, the old wives or grannies as well as professional storytellers. They were first created orally and passed on by word of mouth for generations before they were printed. Soldiers, sailors, slaves, traders, monks, and scholars carried these stories from one country to another and, of course, the stories were changed in the process. A story passed on orally, from memory, is bound to vary with each new telling. This collecting of stories from oral tradition of old storytellers is still going on today. Missionaries, marines, teachers, and scholars are still finding and preserving the old tales. Written versions of some of the folk-tales began to circulate in Europe in the twelfth century. Merchants and crusaders brought the talking beast tales from India, in Arabic or Persian translations and these were soon turned into Latin.

In the sixteenth century, Caxton’s fine translations of Aesop’s fables, the King Arthur legends, and the Homeric epics appeared. Although these are not folk tales, they are, like the ballads, a part of the rich stream of literature known as folklore. In France, in the seventeenth century, Charles Perrault (1628-1703) gave his name to a collection of eight famous folk-tales which delighted the French court in Perrault’s time. The majority of French folk-tales portray splendid royal castles rather than humble peasant cottages. Charles Perrault, a member of the Academic Francaise, collected and transcribed many of these tales. In 1697, he published a collection of folktales called *Tales of Mother Goose*, which included *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Puss in Boots*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Blue Beard*, *Little Thumb*, *Requet with the Tuft*, and *Diamond and the Toads*. These stories had entertained children and adults of the Parisian aristocracy and, consequently, are quite different from tales that stress wicked, dishonest kings being outwitted by simple peasants. Perrault’s eight tales marked the beginning of a great interest in folklore collecting which has gone on ever since.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, two German brothers, Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859) Grimm, collected a great number of folk-tales and published them. The Grimm brothers made scrupulous records of German tales from the lips of old storytellers, not for children’s entertainment but as a serious study of the German language (both Jacob and Wilhelm were students of the German language). The result is that these German stories, even in translation, have the authentic spellbinding quality of great storytelling. The tales are dramatic, exciting, full of suspense and smashing climaxes that make children eager to hear more of them. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*,

Hansel and Gretel, and several others are still among the best known and the most continuously popular fairy-tales ever told to children. Many adults considered the folk-tales, with their adult themes, their alarming frankness and violence, unsuitable for children. But the exciting, fast-paced, and imaginative stories captivated young readers, as they still do today.

In 1846, Hans Christian Andersen's *Fairy Tales* were first published in English and have remained popular ever since. By the end of the nineteenth century, the collectors Joseph Jacobs (*English Fairy Tales*) and Andrew Lang (*The Blue Fairy Book*, *The Red Fairy Book* and other books from his twelve anthologies of fairy tales from all over the world) were making available a wealth of folk-tales. Disputes still arise over the appropriateness of folk-tales for children's reading - although the disputes are always among adults, never among the children themselves who continue to read and love the old tales.

As the nineteenth century progressed, other important collections of traditional literature appeared in Europe for the first time. In Norway, Peter Christian Absjornson and Jorgen Moe collected national folk-tales and in 1851 published them in book form under the title *The Norwegian Folk-tales*.

When in 1890 Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916) published *English Fairy Tales*, his objective was different from that of the Grimm brothers. Jacobs obtained most of his tales from printed sources and he intended his collection for the immediate enjoyment of English children. So, he omitted incidents that were unduly coarse or brutal, adapted the language, and even deleted or changed occasional episodes. He was scrupulous in recording at the back of his books all the changes he made.

William Butler Yeats, whose work is now considered to be the most important in the revival of Irish literature, published several anthologies of Irish folklore, including *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) and *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales* (1894).

Andrew Lang (1844-1912), English poet and scholar, did not share the common belief of his time that all fairy-tales originated in Central Asia and were spread by travellers over the rest of the world. Instead, he thought such tales to be relics of savage customs and thoughts common to early man. He began his famous collections of fairy-tales from all over the world with *The Blue Fairy Book* in 1889. Eleven more volumes, known by the colours in their titles, enjoyed great popularity, the last appearing in 1910. Taken from many different sources, these stories were rewritten by Lang's wife and a committee of ladies. They omitted pieces unsuitable in their mind for children. In the same spirit they altered *Arabian Night's Entertainments* (1898) to omit pieces suitable only for old gentlemen.

3.5. Folk-tales from the British Isles. Joseph Jacobs

British folk-tales about ogres, giants, and clever humans were among the first stories published as inexpensive chapbooks in the 1500s. In 1890, Joseph Jacobs published over eighty of them as *English Fairy Tales*. In 1892, he published a collection of Celtic fairy-tales. These books, in reissue of modern editions, are still available today. The fast plots and unpromising heroes of British tales are popular with children. For example, the various *Jack tales*, including *Jack the Giant Killer* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*, develop plots around villainous ogres or giants who terrorize a kingdom and the heroes who overcome their adversaries with trickery and cleverness rather than magical powers.

In addition to clearly defined good and bad characters, repetitive language in many British folk-tales appeals to storytellers and listeners. In *The Three Little Pigs* the wolf threatens, “I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house in”, and the pig replies, “Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin.” *The Three Bears* repeats chairs, bowls of porridge, and beds, and the three bears’ questions: “Who has been sitting in my chair? Who has been eating my porridge? Who has been sleeping in my bed?” British folk literature is filled with tales that stress human foolishness, making a point about human foibles.

A Cinderella-type story is found in several British folk-tales. In *Tatter coats*, recorded by Joseph Jacobs in *More English Fairy Tales*, the heroine is mistreated by her grandfather, who mourns his daughter’s death in childbirth and rejects the child who survived, and by the grandfather’s cruel servants. In this British version, the prince invites her to attend the ball even though she is dressed in her rags. Only after she is at the ball does the gooseherd transform her into a beautifully dressed lady.

Peasants rather than royalty are usually the heroes and heroines in folk-tales of the British Isles. Consequently, readers or listeners can learn much about the problems, beliefs, values, and humour of common people in early British history. Themes in British folk-tales suggest that intelligence wins over physical strength, that hard work and diligence is rewarded, and that love and loyalty are basic values for everyone.

Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916) was one of the most popular nineteenth century adapters of children’s fairy-tales. After attending primary school in Sydney, Jacobs immigrated to England in 1872. A graduate of the University of Cambridge, he was secretary (1882-1900) of the Russian - Jewish Committee in London, formed to improve the wretched social and political conditions of Jews in Russia. He edited the journal *Folk-Lore* from 1889 to 1900. A prolific author, Jacobs is generally best known for such scholarly and popular works on folklore as *The Fables of Aesop* (1894), *English Fairy Tales* (1890), *Celtic Fairy Tales* (1892), *Indian Fairy Tales* (1892), *More Celtic Fairy Tales* (1894), *Europa’s Fairy Book* (1915), *The Book of Wonder Voyages* (1896).

In 1900 he immigrated with his family to the United States, where he worked as revising editor of Jewish Encyclopedia. He later taught literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and edited the magazine *American Hebrew* (1906-1916).

3.6. Predominant Types of Folk-tales

Cumulative or repetitive stories appeal to young children. In these stories, plot is at a minimum and action takes its place. The episodes follow each other in logical order and are related in a repetitive rhythm that is almost like a patter-song (rapid speech). It proceeds smoothly along until the spiral action ends abruptly or runs backwards to its beginning. *The Old Woman and her Pig* is an example of running up the spiral and back, but *Henny-Penny* comes to a sudden and surprising end at the top of the spiral.

Talking beast stories are usually prime favourites. Sometimes the animals talk with human beings, and sometimes they just converse with other animals. Their talk betrays their folly, foolishness, or wisdom just as human talk does. Children feel superior when they sense the absurdity of Henny Penny's meditations, and they identify themselves with the wise and witty remarks of Padre Porko. Occasionally there is a talking beast who is no beast at all but an unhappy prince or princess under a wicked spell. That is, of course, quite a different matter.

Drolls or humorous stories were obviously told for sheer entertainment. A humorous tale revolves around a character's incredibly stupid and funny mistakes.

Tales of magic are the heart of folk-tales. Fairies and fairy godmothers, giants, impossible tasks which are enthusiastically performed, three wishes, three trials, enchanted men or maidens - these are just a suggestion of fairy-tale motifs and atmosphere. These give the tales an unearthly quality, often so beautiful that it comes close to poetry. They have humour, nonsense, romance, and poetic beauty. They also say again and again moral truths that are important for children to know.

3.7. Suggested Assignments

1. Read biographical information about Andrew Lang and Joseph Jacobs and make a report about their contribution to English children's literature.
2. Make a report about the contribution of Petre Ispirescu, Ion Creanga, and Grigore Botezatu to Romanian and Moldovan children's literature.
3. How do Petre Ispirescu, Ion Creanga, and Grigore Botezatu compare with brothers Grimm and Joseph Jacobs? Give arguments to support your opinion.
4. What efforts have been made by Dionisie Badarau to popularize Moldovan folk-tales by means of translation? Report your findings to the class.

5. Read the stories included in Charles Perrault's *Tales of Mother Goose* and some tales collected by the Brothers Grimm. Note similarities and differences in the characterizations, settings, and actions. Describe the people for whom you believe the stories were written.
6. Read a cumulative tale, a humorous tale, a beast tale, and a magic tale. Compare the characterizations, settings, themes, and styles.
7. Choose an animal that is often found in traditional literature. Is the animal revered or despised? How would you account for this?
8. Find examples of settings, plot developments, or characterizations found in British folk-tales.
9. Investigate the information you can learn about the culture, people, and country from the British folk-tales. Share your findings with the class.
10. Investigate the information about the culture, people and the country found in English and Moldovan folk-tales.
11. Investigate the information about the animals in English and Moldovan folk-tales. Find similarities and differences in treatment.
12. Find similarities and differences in the treatment of Cinderella theme in Moldovan and English folk-tales. How do the stories develop cultural characteristics?
13. Find common themes in English and Moldovan folk-tales. Point out similarities and differences in treatment.

PART 4.

POETRY AND VERSE

*'There is no frigate like a book
To take us far away
No any courses like a page
Of magic poetry'
Emily Dickinson*

- 4.1. *Definition of Poetry and Verse*
- 4.2. *Poetry Types and Forms*
- 4.3. *Nursery Rhymes*
- 4.4. *The Language of Nursery Rhymes*
- 4.5. *Limericks. Edward Lear*
- 4.6. *Lyric Poetry*
- 4.7. *Famous Poets of Childhood*
- 4.8. *Suggested Assignments*

4.1. Definition of Poetry and Verse

Poetry is a natural beginning to literature for young children and an enjoyable literary form for all ages.

A Handbook to Literature by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon defines **poetry** as "a term applied to the many forms in which human beings have given rhythmic expression to their most intense perceptions of the world, themselves, and the relation of the two" [15, 365].

The same source states that **verse** is used in two senses: 1) as a unit of poetry, in which case it has the same significance as stanza or line; and 2) as a name given generally to metrical composition. **Poetry** or **poem** is of high merit. **Verse** is of lower order than **poetry**. **Verse** is used in association with such terms as **society verse** and **light verse**, which are rarely applied to great poetry [15, 494]

17

Donna E. Northon, the author of a college textbook *Through the Eyes of a Child, An Introduction to Children's Literature*, states that "**poetry** is not easily defined; it is not easily measured or classified. There is no single accepted definition of poetry. Some definitions specify the characteristics of poetry, including the poetic elements and the function of words, while other definitions emphasize the emotional impact of poetry" [16, 357] 18

15. Holman, C. H. and Harmon, W., *A Handbook to Literature*. - Macmillan, 1992.

16. Norton, D. E., *Through the Eyes of a Child, An Introduction to Children's Literature*. - USA: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991.

Peter Hunt points out that "in conventional literary thinking, poetry for children is another contradiction in terms. This is an interesting area where, on the one hand, the weakness of value-centered criticism is exposed, and, on the other hand, a genre has become public property: children can write poetry too. Is *When We Were Very Young* by A. Milne poetry or verse? Literary criticism falters here." [17] 19

Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown explain the difference between poetry and verse in the following way: "Not all rhyming, rhythmical language merits the label of poetry. **Verse** is a language form in which simple thoughts or stories are told in rhyme in a distinct beat or meter. Nursery rhymes are a good example of well-known simple verses for children. And of course, there is **jingle**, a catchy repetition of sounds heard so often in commercials. The most important feature of verses and jingles is their strong rhyme and rhythm. Content is light or even silly. Although verses and jingles can be enjoyable and have a place in the classroom, poetry can enrich children's lives by giving them new insights and fresh views on life's experiences and by bringing forth strong emotional responses."²⁰

Among the literary genres used in language teaching, poetry is one of frequent appearance. Due to their short length, perfectly suitable for a single classroom lesson, their peculiar structure, their characteristic linguistic features (unusual syntactic patterns, polysemy of words, alliteration, etc.) poems become favourite tools for language teachers. The evocative character of poetry, its imagery, its appeal to feelings and personal experience make it very interesting and enjoyable for the second language learner. Especially, poetry can lead to a desirable creative expression in the foreign language and they usually provoke a strong response from the reader which will motivate further reading [20, p.226]. The importance of poetry and its usefulness in language classroom lies in the fact that poetry deviates from normal language in that it has some unusual ways of ordering words, or it attributes particular, imaginative meanings to words or combines sounds in a musical, non-ordinary way (phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, graphological, and style deviation [21, p36]. The language teacher should exploit the deviancies of the poetic language in order to arise the language awareness of the learners towards the way in which language can be adapted or changed to fulfill different communicative purposes.

¹⁷Hunt, P., *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. - Oxford University Press, 1994. - p. 9

¹⁸Tomlinson, C. M., Lynch-Brown C., *Essentials of Children's Literature*. - Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995 - p. 42

¹⁹Llach, P.A. *Teaching Language through Literature*: 2007, Odisea, nr 8, pp. 7-17.

²⁰Collie, J., Slater, St. *Literature in the Language Classroom. A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*. OUP, 1987, 272p.

²¹Ramsaran, S. *Poetry in the Language Classroom*. *ELT Journal*, 1983, nr.37 /1, pp.36-43.

4.2. Poetry Types and Forms

Poetry can be classified in many ways. Traditionally it falls into two types: **lyric** and **narrative** poetry. **Lyric** poetry captures a moment, a feeling, or a scene, and is descriptive in nature. It is often a short poem expressing the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker. **Narrative** poetry tells a story or includes a sequence of events.

Poetry can also be categorized by its form, which refers to the way it is structured. Here we differentiate **limericks**, **ballads**, **free verse**, and **concrete poetry**. A **limerick** is a humorous, one-stanza, five-line verse. A **ballad** is a fairly long narrative poem, usually adapted to singing. **Free verse** is unrhymed poetry with little or light rhythm. **Concrete poetry** is written and printed in a shape that signifies the subject of the poem.

4.3. Nursery Rhymes

Nursery rhymes are simple traditional poems or songs for children. They are light, rhythmical, and often nonsense verses shared with younger children.

Nursery rhymes touch upon a variety of subjects: people, children's pranks, animals, birds and fowl, finger plays, riddles, counting rhymes, alphabets, counting out, proverbs, time verses, days of the week, verse stories, dialogues, street cries, weather, tongue twisters, cumulative stories, nonsense, lullabies. A simpler classification divides the nursery rhymes into rhymes about animals, rhymes about people, jingles and wonders, songs and riddles.

Rhymes about people

Little Betty Blue

Little Betty Blue,
Lost her holiday shoe.
What will poor Betty do?
Why, give her another,
To match the other,
And then she will walk in two.

The Old Woman in a Shoe

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe
She had so many children, she didn't know what to do;
She gave them some broth without any bread;
Then whipped them all soundly and put them to bed.

Dame Trot

Dame Trot and her cat
Sat down for to chat;
The Dame sat on this side.
And Puss sat on that
"Puss," says the Dame,
Can you catch a rat
Or a mouse in the dark?"
"Purr," says the cat.

Georgie Porgie

Georgie Porgie, Puddin' and Pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry,
When the boys came out to play
Georgie Porgie ran away.

Rhymes about animals and birds

Baa, Baa, Black Sheep

Baa, baa, black sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes, sir, yes, sir,
Three bags full;
One for the master,
And one for the dame,
And one for the little boy
Who lives down the lane.

Three Little Kittens

The three little kittens they lost their mittens,
And they began to cry,
Oh, mother dear, we sadly fear
Our mittens we have lost
What? Lost your mittens, you naughty kittens!
Then you shall have no pie.
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.
We shall have no pie.
Our mittens we have lost.

The three little kittens they found their mittens,
And they began to smile,
Oh, mother dear, see here, see here,
Our mittens we have found
What? Found your mittens, you good little kittens,
And you shall have some pie.
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.
We shall have some pie.
Let us have some pie.

The three little kittens put on their mittens,
And soon ate up the pie;

Oh, mother dear, we greatly fear
Our mittens we have soiled
What? Soiled your mittens, you naughty kittens!
Then they began to sigh,
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.
Our mittens we have soiled.
Then they began to sigh.

The three little kittens they washed their mittens,
And hung them out to dry;
Oh! mother dear, look here, look here,
Our mittens we have washed
What? Washed your mittens, you good little kittens,
But I smell a rat close by.
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.
We smell a rat close by.
Let's all have some pie.

Traveller

Pussycat, pussycat
Where have you been?

I've been up to London
To visit the Queen.

Pussycat, pussycat
What did you there?

I frightened a little mouse
Under her chair.

Little Bird

Once I saw a little bird
Come hop, hop, hop;

So I cried, "Little bird,
Will you stop, stop, stop?"
And was going to the window
To say, "How do you do?"
But he shook his little tail,
And far away he flew.

Games and finger plays

Head and Shoulders

Head and Shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes, knees and toes,
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
We all turn around
Touch each part of the body as it is mentioned and turn around.

Tommy Thumb

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb,
Where are you?
Here I am, here I am,
How do you do? Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer,
Where are you?
Here I am, here I am,
How do you do? Toby Tall, Toby Tall,
Where are you?
Here I am, here I am,
How do you do? Ruby Ring, Ruby Ring,
Where are you?
Here I am, here I am,
How do you do? Baby Small, Baby Small,
Where are you?
Here I am, here I am,
How do you do? Fingers all, Fingers all,
Where are you?
Here we are, here we are,

How do you do?
Here we are, here we are,
How do you do?

Two Fat Gentlemen

Two fat gentlemen
Met in a lane
Bowed most politely
And bowed once again
"How do you do?"
And "How do you do?"
And "How do you do?" again
Riddles and tongue twisters
Two fegs sat upon three legs
With one leg in his lap;
In comes four legs
And runs away with one leg;
Up jumps two legs,
Catches up three legs,
Throws it after four legs,
And makes him bring back one leg.
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers
I have a proper cup of coffee in a proper coffee-cup.

Alphabets and counting rhymes

A was an apple pie
B bit it,
C cut it,
D dealt it,
E eat it,
F fought for it,
G got it,
H had it,
I inspected it,

J jumped for it,
K kept it,
L longed for it,
M mourned for it,
N nodded at it,
O opened it,
P peeped in it,
Q quartered it,
R ran for it,
S stole it,
T took it,
U upset it,
V viewed it,
W wanted it,
X, Y, Z and ampersand
All wished for a piece in hand
One, two, three, four,
Mary's at the cottage door;
Five, six, seven, eight,
Eating cherries off a plate;

Time Verses

Days in the Month

Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November;
All the rest have thirty-one -
Except February, alone,
Which has four and twenty-four,
And every fourth year, one day more.

A Week of Birthdays

Monday's child is fair of face
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,

Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for a living,
But the child who is born on the Sabbath Day
Is bonny and blithe and good and gay.

Verse stories

The Little Woman and the Pedlar

There was an old woman, as I've heard tell,
She went to market her eggs to sell;
She went to market all on market-day,
And she fell asleep on the King's highway.
There came by a pedlar whose name was Stout,
He cut her petticoats all round about;
He cut her petticoats up to the knees,
Which made the old woman to shiver and freeze.
When the little old woman first did wake,
She began to shiver and she began to shake;
She began to wonder and she began to cry,
Lord a mercy on me, this can't be I!
But if I be I, as I hope it be,
I've a little dog at home, and he'll know me;
If it be I, he'll wag his little tail,
And if it be not I, he'll bark and wail.
Home went the little woman all in the dark;
Up got the little dog, and he began to bark;
He began to bark, so she began to cry,
Lord a mercy on me, this is none of I!

Street cries

The Gingerbread Man

Smiling girls, rosy boys,
Come and buy my little toys:
Monkeys made of gingerbread,

And sugar horses painted red.

Rhymes about the weather

Rain, rain, go away,
Come again another day,
Little Johnny wants to play
Rain, rain, go to Spain,
Never show your face again.

Cumulative stories

This is the house that Jack built
This is the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the cat
That killed the rat that ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the dog that worried the cat
That killed the rat that ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog that worried the cat
That killed the rat that ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog that worried the cat
That killed the rat that ate the malt

That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the man all tattered and torn

That kissed the maiden all forlorn

That milked the cow with the crumpled horn

That tossed the dog that worried the cat

That killed the rat that ate the malt

That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the judge all shaven and shorn

That married the man all tattered and torn

That kissed the maiden all forlorn

That milked the cow with the crumpled horn

That tossed the dog that worried the cat

That killed the rat that ate the malt

That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the rooster that crowed in the morn

That woke the judge all shaven and shorn

That married the man all tattered and torn

That kissed the maiden all forlorn

That milked the cow with the crumpled horn

That tossed the dog that worried the cat

That killed the rat that ate the malt

That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the farmer sowing his corn

That kept the rooster that crowed in the morn

That woke the judge all shaven and shorn

That married the man all tattered and torn

That kissed the maiden all forlorn

That milked the cow with the crumpled horn

That tossed the dog that worried the cat

That killed the rat that ate the malt

That lay in the house that Jack built

This is the horse and the hound and the horn
That belonged to the farmer sowing his corn
That kept the rooster that crowed in the morn
That woke the judge all shaven and shorn
That married the man all tattered and torn
That kissed the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog that worried the cat
That killed the rat that ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the key of the kingdom.
In that kingdom there is a city.
In that city there is a town.
In that town there is a street.
In that street there is a lane.
In that lane there is a yard.
In that yard there is a house.
In that house there is a room.
In that room there is a bed.
On that bed there is a basket.
In that basket there are some flowers.

Flowers in a basket,
Basket on the bed,
Bed in the room,
Room in the house,
House in the yard,
Yard in the lane,
Lane in the street,
Street in the town,
Town in the city,

City in the kingdom.
Of that kingdom this is the key.

Nonsense

Three wise men of Gotham,
They went to sea in a bowl,
And if the bowl had been stronger
My song would have been longer.

4.4. The Language of Nursery Rhymes

In many nursery rhymes there are lexical and grammatical archaisms. In early works of nursery rhymes they are preserved as the tokens of those times, but in more recent works they are used for stylistic purposes. Many archaisms became a part of poetic diction. The most wide-spread lexical archaisms are: *woe* for *sorrow*; *maid, maiden* for *girl*; *morn* for *morning*; *eve, even* for *evening*; *naught* for *nothing*, *ere* for *before*, *off* for *often*; *whither* for *to what place*.

There was a man, and he had naught,
And robbers came to rob him;
He crept up to the chimney top
And they thought they had him.

Grammatical archaisms include: *thou* for *you* singular; *thee* object form of *you*, *thy* for *your* before a consonant; *thine* for *your* before a vowel and for *yours*; *thyself* for *yourself*; *ye* for *you* plural; *hath* for *has*; the third-person singular verb forms in *-eth* for *-(e)s*; verb forms in *-(e)st* used with *thou*.

The Milkmaid

Little maid, pretty maid,
Whither goest thou?
Down to the meadow
To milk my cow
Shall I go with thee?
No, not now
When I send for thee
Then come thou.

In many texts the old form of verbs is to be found: *a-sailing* instead of *sailing*, *a-hunting* instead of *hunting*, etc.:

The cock's on the wood pile a-blowing his horn,
The bull's in the barn a- threshing of corn,
The maids in the meadows are making of hay,
The ducks in the river are swimming away.

Before the infinitive used in the function of the adverbial modifier of purpose, in old texts the preposition *for* is to be found: She went to market her eggs *for* to sell.

Simple Simon went a-fishing
For to catch a whale,
All the water he had got
Was in his mother's pail.

In some cases, the peculiarities of verbal government are not typical of the modern language: to consider *of* it; the man in the wilderness asked *of* me.

In affirmative sentences one can find the auxiliary verb *do*: the north wind *doth* blow. Till the 17th century such a usage was typical of the English language, but now it has turned into stylistic means.

In nursery rhymes the method of syntactic tautology is preserved. This means, that any member of the sentence (usually the subject) which is expressed by a noun is repeated in the form of a pronoun:

The Queen of Hearts she made some tarts Little King Boggen.
He built a fine hall;
Pie-crust and pastry-crust,
That was the wall.

4.5. Limericks. Edward Lear

Another specific poetic form frequently found in English children's poetry is limerick. It is a humorous, one-stanza five-line verse form (usually a narrative), in which lines 1, 2 and 5 rhyme and are of the same length and lines 3 and 4 rhyme and are of the same length but shorter than the other lines. The following are examples of limericks by Edward Lear, the poet who popularized this poetic form in the nineteenth century.

There was a young lady of Firle,
Whose hair was addicted to curl;
 It curled up a tree,
 And all over the sea,
That expansive young lady of Firle.

There was an old man on the Border,
Who lived in the utmost disorder;
 He danced with the cat,
 And made tea in his hat,
Which vexed all the folks on the Border.

There was an Old Man in a tree,
Who was horribly bored by a bee;
When they said, "Does it buzz?"
 He replied, "Yes, it does!
 It's a regular brute of a bee!"

There was an Old Man with a nose,
Who said, "If you choose to suppose
 That my nose is too long,
 You are certainly wrong!"
That remarkable man with a nose.

Edward Lear (1812 - 1888) was born to the family of a stockbroker. He was the youngest of 20 children and was obliged to start earning his living at the age of 15. He was commissioned to make drawings of parrots in the Zoological Gardens, and this led to his being engaged as an artist by the Earl of Derby, who kept a menagerie. Lear's task was to produce illustrations for a description of the inhabitants. Successfully establishing himself as an accomplished artist, Lear was eventually engaged to give drawing lessons to Queen Victoria. He travelled extensively in the Mediterranean and visited India and Ceylon, finally settling at San Remo in Italy.

While working at the menagerie Lear wrote nonsense poetry for the Earl of Derby's children. Later he made nonsense drawings to accompany them. This singular talent produced some of his most enduring work. Lear's verse was published as *A Book of Nonsense* (1845), *A Book of Nonsense and More Nonsense* (1862). After that came *The Nonsense Songs* (1871) and *Laughable Lyrics* (1877). His posthumous reputation as a watercolorist has risen steadily and as writer he is

remembered for his nonsense verses, with their linguistic fantasies and their occasional touches of underlying melancholy.

4.6. Lyric Poetry

A lyric poem is like a song. Lyric poems are frequently set to music and they generally express very clearly and directly one particular feeling or thought. This poetry is characterized by the mood that is evoked through well-known words and phrases.

Who has seen the wind?

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Who has seen the wind?

Neither I nor you:

But when the leaves hang trembling,

The wind is passing through

Who has seen the wind?

Neither you nor I:

But when the trees bow down their heads,

The wind is passing by.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) provided young children with an ideal introduction to lyric poetry in the verses of *Sing Song*, published in 1872. Many of her verses have homely, familiar subjects, but they are written with lyric grace and with a subtle simplicity in the choice of words. Her technical virtuosity is considerable, and her use of short irregularly rhymed lines is distinctive. Here is another lyric poem by Christina Rossetti from her *Sing-Song* collection:

All the bells were ringing

And all the birds were singing,

When Molly sat down crying

For her broken doll:

O you silly Moll!

Sobbing and sighing

For a broken doll,

When all the bells are ringing

And all the birds are singing.

4.7. Narrative poetry

When a poem tells a story, it is narrative poetry. With rapid action and typically chronological order, story poems have long been favourites of both children and adults. There are two masterpieces well known to English children: *A Visit from St. Nicholas* written in 1823 by Clement Moore and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* by Robert Browning which appeared in 1886. Other narrative poems long popular with youngsters are poems about great events in history. Henry Wordsworth Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride* and *The Song of Hiawatha* are among these poems.

A Visit from St. Nicholas

Clement C. Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there; The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap, When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer, With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name; "Now, DASHER! now, DANCER! now,
PRANCER and VIXEN!
On, COMET! on CUPID! on, DONNER and BLITZEN!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!" As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,

So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
 With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too
 And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
 The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
 As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,
 Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
 He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
 And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
 A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
 And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
 His eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
 His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
 His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
 And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow; The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
 And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
 He had a broad face and a little round belly,
 That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.
 He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
 And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
 A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
 Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread; He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
 And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
 And laying his finger aside of his nose,
 And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose; He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
 And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
 But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
 HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD-NIGHT!

4.8. Famous Poets of Childhood

Poetry for children began centuries ago in the form of nursery rhymes that were recited to babies and toddlers. These verses were passed by word of mouth. The earliest published collection of nursery rhymes that survives today in *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book* (1744), which is housed in the British Museum. This book contains familiar rhymes such as *Hickory Dickory Dock* and *Mary Quite Contrary*.

Robert Louis Stevenson

In spite of his poor health (he suffered from a chronic bronchial condition), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) travelled a lot and was a prolific writer. The title 'poet laureate of childhood' was given to Stevenson for his *A Child's Garden of Verses* which appeared in 1885. This beautiful collection of sixty-seven poems describes the deeds, thoughts, and feelings of a small boy who was Stevenson himself in his early childhood.

The reader is impressed with the author's genuine understanding of children. The opening poem, *Bed in Summer*, is every child's complaint.

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

His children get up shivering with cold on winter mornings; they yearn to travel; they discover the sea miraculously filling up their sand holes on the beach; they struggle with table manners; they wonder why they can't see the wind; and they enjoy a world of play and imagination as well. Here are real children, many-sided and with many interests.

The Wind

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass--
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all--
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

Eleanor Farjeon

A major writer of classic English children's literature, Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965) began to write tales, verses, and fairy tales from the age of six. Her first book was the amusing *Nursery Rhymes of London Town* (1916), for which she wrote her own music. It was followed by the lively historical nonsense, *Kings and Queens*, and from then on she wrote prolifically, both prose and poetry. Her first novel, *Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard* (1921), mixed prose with verse, each story steeped in folksong and traditional country lore.

Over the Garden Wall (1933), *Poems for Children* (1951), and *The Children's Bells* delight children, whether nonsense or serious lyric poems, are skillfully written. Her rhythms are varied and interesting; and her subject matter has exceptional range. Her imaginative poems are extremely powerful.

The Night Will Never Stay
The night will never stay,
The night will still go by,
Though with a million stars
 You pin it to the sky;
Though you bind it with the blowing wind
And buckle it with the moon,
The night will slip away
 Like sorrow or a tune.

In Eleanor Farjeon's poems, *Boys' Names* and *Girls' Names*, the charm lies in the unique tone colour produced by the vowel sounds of certain first names.

Girls' Names

What lovely names for girls there are!
There's Stella like Evening Star,
And Sylvia like a rustling tree,
And Lola like a melody,
And Flora like a flowery morn,
And Sheila like a field of corn,
And Melusina like the moan
Of water. And there's Joan, like Joan.

Boys' Names

What splendid names for boys there are!
There's Carol like a rolling car
And Martin like a flying bird,
And Adam like the Lord's First Word,
And Raymond like the Harvest Moon,
And Peter like a piper's tune,
And Alan like the flowing on
Of water. And there's John, like John.

Eleanor Farjeon was the first writer for children to receive the Hans Christian Andersen Award when it was established in 1956, and each year in her memory the *Children's Book Circle* in England presents the Eleanor Farjeon Award for distinguished services to children's books.

Alan Alexander Milne

Alan Alexander Milne (1882-1956) wrote plays, novels, poetry, short stories, and essays for adult readers, all of which have been overshadowed by his children's books. Zena Sutherland considers it is quite probable that his reputation as a writer will rest more securely upon his two books of verse for children (*When We Were Very Young* and *Now We Are Six*) and his two books of stories about Pooh (*Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*) than upon any of his adult stories and dramas. *When We Were Very Young*, published in 1924, was a major sensation in

children's books, both in Great Britain and the U. S. A. It shares with the second book, *Now We Are Six*, an undiminishing popularity year after year.²¹

Hoppity

Christopher Robin goes
Hoppity, hoppity,
Hoppity, hoppity, hop.
Whenever I tell him
Politely to stop it, he
Says he can't possibly stop.

If he stopped hopping,
He couldn't go anywhere,
Poor little Christopher
Couldn't go anywhere...
That's why he always goes
Hoppity, hoppity,
Hoppity,
Hoppity,
Hop.

But best of all childish meditation is expressed in *Halfway Down*. In the first stanza, notice **It** which sits as firmly in the middle of the verse as Christopher on the stair.

Halfway Down

Halfway down the stairs
Is a stair
Where I sit.
There isn't any
Other stair
Quite like
It.
I'm not at the bottom,
I'm not at the top;
So this is the stair

²¹ Sutherland Z., *Children and Books*. - Longman, 1996. - p. 292

Where
I always
Stop.
Halfway up the stairs
Isn't up
And it isn't down.
It isn't in the nursery,
It isn't in town.
And all sorts of funny thoughts
Run round my head.
It isn't really
Anywhere!
It's somewhere else
Instead!

“Halfway Down” is a poem written from a child’s perspective about the special spot in the middle of the staircase. What makes it special is it’s not at the top or bottom, it’s not upstairs or downstairs. It’s in a place all its own. Children have a wonderfully unique way of looking at the world.

Vespers

Little Boy kneels at the foot of the bed,
Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!
Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.
God bless Mummy. I know that's right.
Wasn't it fun in the bath to-night?
The cold's so cold, and the hot's so hot.
Oh! God bless Daddy - I quite forgot.

If I open my fingers a little bit more,
I can see Nanny's dressing-gown on the door.
It's a beautiful blue, but it hasn't a hood.
Oh! God bless Nanny and make her good.

Mine has a hood, and I lie in bed,

And pull the hood right over my head,
And I shut my eyes, and I curl up small,
And nobody knows that I'm there at all.

Oh! Thank you, God, for a lovely day.
And what was the other I had to say?
I said "Bless Daddy," so what can it be?
Oh! Now I remember it. God bless Me.

Little Boy kneels at the foot of the bed,
Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!
Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.

"Vespers" was the first poem published by Alan Alexander Milne. Christopher Robin Milne, A.A. Milne's son, was the inspiration for this poem, and it showcases him saying his prayers before going to bed.

4.8. Suggested Assignments

1. Find more definitions of poetry by different authors. How do these definitions complement each other?
2. Give examples of Romanian or Russian nursery rhymes that are familiar to you since childhood.
3. Make a selection of poems to illustrate different poetic forms, such as limerick, ballad, free verse, and concrete poetry. Share your information with the class.
4. Find examples of inverted word order in nursery rhymes. Report your findings to the class.
5. Find examples of lexical archaisms in nursery rhymes. Report to the class.
6. Find examples of grammatical archaisms in nursery rhymes. Share your information with the class.
7. Recite a lyric poem and read aloud a narrative poem in class.
8. Make a fact book about your favorite character.
9. Write an adventure story starring your own favourite stuffed animal.
10. Write fan letters.
11. Look for vocabulary words from Winnie the Pooh.

PART 5.

FANTASY

“Without this playing with fantasy, no creative work has ever come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of the imagination is incalculable.” Carl Jung

- 5.1. *Definition of Fantasy***
- 5.2. *Historical Overview of Fantasy***
- 5.3. *Types of Fantasy***
- 5.4. *Gulliver’s Travels by Jonathan Swift***
- 5.5. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll***
- 5.6. *The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame***
- 5.7. *The Happy Prince and Other Tales by Oscar Wilde***
- 5.8. *Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie***
- 5.9. *The Jungle Books, Just So Stories by Rudyard Kipling***
- 5.10. *The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien***
- 5.11. *Suggested Assignments***

5.1. Definition of Fantasy

Fantasy refers to the body of literature in which the events, the settings, or the characters are outside the realm of possibility. A fantasy is a story that cannot happen in real life, and for this reason this genre has been called the literature of the fanciful impossible. In these stories, animals can talk, inanimate objects come to life, people are giants thumb-sized, imaginary worlds are inhabited, and future worlds are explored. Fantasies are written by known authors, and this distinguishes the genre from traditional literature in which the tales are handed down through the oral tradition and have no known author. Although the events could not happen in real life, fantasies often contain truths that help the reader to understand today’s world. Fantasy may be written for whimsical delight, or it may be the medium for serious comment on reality.

When reading a work of fantasy, children can delight in imagining other worlds and the limitless possibilities that can be opened up in the human mind. Fantasy enables the reader to see the realities that extend beyond the normal range of human vision.

In fantasies the normal rules of the physical are excluded, permitting the reader to gain a new perspective on the world of reality.

5.2. Historical Overview of Fantasy

Fantasy takes its beginning in the eighteenth century. That century saw the rise of the novels, sophisticated political satire, and journalism.

Gulliver's Travels (1726) by the Irish clergyman, Jonathan Swift, is one of the most noteworthy books of the period in England. These stories were not intended primarily for children but were political satires that came to be enjoyed by children as well as adults. In 1865, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, an Oxford don who used the pen name Lewis Carroll, wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* that tells a fantastic journey Alice takes to an imaginary world. In 1894 Rudyard Kipling wrote *The Jungle Book*, a sequence of stories about the boy Mowgli, who was raised by the animals of the jungle.

Science fiction, the most recent development in modern fantasy, is said to owe its birth to the nineteenth-century novels by Jules Verne (*Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864)), *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1869), and H.G. Wells (*Time Machine* (1895)).

This early development of fantasy for children in England was unrivaled by any other country and established the standard for the genre worldwide.

Fantasy continued to thrive in England during the twentieth century. *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling and *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter appeared in 1901, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* by J.M. Barrie was published in 1904, *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame appeared in 1908.

In 1926 A. A. Milne wrote *Winnie-the Pooh*, stories about a bear that are so popular with children. In 1937 J. R. R. Tolkien published *The Hobbit* which became popular with both children and grown-ups and is now a classic. It is quite possible that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* written by J.K. Rowling in 1997 would become a milestone in English children's literature.

The United States also produced some outstanding fantasies, beginning with *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) by Frank Baum, which is considered to be the first classic of U.S. fantasy for children. *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White appeared in 1952; *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss appeared in 1957; *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle appeared in 1962; Ursula Le Quin's outstanding *Earth sea* trilogy was written in 1967-72; *Stranger in a Strange World* by Robert Heinlein was published in 1962.

5.3. Types of Fantasy

In her ninth edition of *Children and Books* designed particularly for children's literature classes in education in English departments, Zena Sutherland distinguishes the following types of

fantasy for children: fantasy with folktale elements, tales of pure imagination, modern stories of talking beasts, personified toys and other inanimate objects, humorous fantasy, science fiction.

In her third edition of *Through the Eyes of a Child, An Introduction to Children's Literature*, Donna E. Norton points out that “in many ways, fantasy stories are direct descendants of the folktales, fables, myths and legends of the oral tradition... The bridges between traditional fantasy and modern fantasy are evident in many contemporary tales of wonder, but they are especially strong in literary folktales, allegories and tales about mythical quests and conflicts.”³³ Donna E. Norton distinguishes literary folk-tales, religious and ethical allegory and mythical quests and conflicts as bridges between traditional and modern fantasy. Among the categories of fantasy are names: articulate animals, toys that become alive, preposterous characters and situations, strange and curious worlds, friendly and frightening spirits, time warps and science fiction.

In their second edition of *Essentials of Children's Literature*, Carl M. Tomlinson and Carol Lynch-Brown state that “in fantasy, as in other genres, the distinctions between types are not totally discrete. The types of fantasy listed below are at starting point for thinking about the variety of fantastic stories, motifs, themes and characters that brilliant authors have created.

Additional categories could be listed and you will find that some stories may fit appropriately in more than one category.”³⁴ The types of fantasy that the authors analyze in their books are: modern or literary folk-tales, animal fantasy, personified toys and objects, unusual characters and strange situations, worlds of little people, supernatural events and mystery fantasy, historical fantasy, quest stories, science fiction and science fantasy.

If we compare the three lists given above and keep in mind that the distinctions between types are not totally discrete, we may have the following classification of fantasy: literary folk-tales, unusual characters and strange situations, modern stories of talking beasts, personified toys and other inanimate objects, science fiction.

Literary Folk-tales. Among the greatest writers that excelled in this genre are Oscar Wilde and Rudyard Kipling, Herbert Wells and James Matthew Barrie, J.R.R. Tolkien and Charles Dickens, to name but a few.

³³ Norton, D.E. *Through the Eyes of a Child, An Introduction to Children's Literature*. - New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991.-p.297

No other fantasy of our time has appealed to as broad an age range of readers as has *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. Children are enthralled by it; and adults probe and discuss the inner meanings of the book and of its companion tale, *The Lord of the Ring*, a complex three-volume sequel.

Unusual Characters and Strange Situations. While many writers of fantasy have chosen to use motifs from folklore in their work, others have created magical and unusual characters and happenings which seem unlike anything that has been written before.

Lewis Carroll and Sir James Barrie wrote fantasies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll are full of pure nonsense and rare humor. Barrie's *Peter Pan* has been the most popular of his plays for almost a century. The book based on that play, *Peter and Wendy*, has perennial characters like the boy who won't grow up and the evil Captain Hook.

Philippa Pearce won the Carnegie Medal for *Tom's Midnight Garden*, an engrossing fantasy with time as a theme.

Though *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift was written as political satire, it became very popular with children for its unusual characters and strange situations.

No other fantasy has been more popular with children than *Harry Potter* series by Joanne Kathleen Rowling. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was published in 1997 and achieved almost instant success. The American edition retitled *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* appeared in 1998.

Harry Potter quickly climbed to the top of all the bestseller lists for children's books. The story of the boy wizard and his adventures at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry caught the imagination of young readers.

Modern Stories of Talking Beasts. Beatrix Potter, an English novelist of nursery, is the author of one of the talking-beast masterpieces *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. The stories are carefully plotted with plenty of suspense to bring sighs of relief when the conclusion is finally reached.

Just So Stories by Rudyard Kipling is a collection of explanatory tales. These are stories to be read aloud. They are cadenced, rhythmic, and full of beauty, high-sounding words which are both mouth-filling and ear-delighting. In contrast to *Just So Stories*, Kipling's animals in *The Jungle Book* may talk but they remain true to their natures.

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame is another talking-beast masterpiece. There are no hidden meanings or didacticism here, just reassurance and comfort.

³⁴ Tomlinson, C. M. and Lynch-Brown, C. *Essentials of Children's Literature*. -Boston: Allyn and Bacon 1995.-p.127

Charlotte's Web is one more talking-beast masterpiece written by Elwin Brooks White, essayist and editorial writer for the New Yorker.

Personified Toys and Other Inanimate Objects. *Winnie-the-Pooh* was first told by A. A. Milne to his son Christopher Robin. Christopher's stuffed bear Pooh became the main character of these stories. *The Wizard of Oz* by Frank Baum undoubtedly belongs here.

Science Fiction. Science fiction has always been popular with adolescents. The first successful English author of science fiction was Herbert George Wells whose stories include several of the themes that would later dominate science fiction writing: invasion from outer space (*The War of the Worlds*) and time travel (*The Time Machine*).

Robert Heinlein wrote in this genre. *A Stranger in a Strange World* is one of his best works. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle is a well-known contemporary science fiction story.

5.4. Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was born in Dublin and died there, Dean of the Cathedral. But between his birth and death, he spent considerable time in London and took an active part in the political life of the times. Recognized today as one of the greatest satirists in English literature, Swift wrote his book in Ireland as a satire on English government and society. Worried about the reception of the book, he published it anonymously in 1726 as *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the world. in four parts, by Lemuel Gulliver*. To Swift's surprise and relief, London society, the very society he was making fun of, was highly amused. In these tall tales the humor sometimes overshadowed the satire. The book was an immediate and great success, and has been one of the great classics of English prose ever.

In the first part Lemuel Gulliver, a surgeon on a merchant ship, relates his shipwreck on the island of Lilliput, the inhabitants of which are six inches high. Owing to this diminutive scale, the group of the emperor, the civil feuds of the inhabitants, and the war with their neighbors across the channel, are made to look ridiculous. The English political parties and religious dissensions are satirized in the description of the wearers of high heels and low heels, and the controversy on the question whether eggs should be broken at the big or small end.

In the second part Gulliver is accidentally left ashore on Brobdingnag, where the inhabitants are as tall as church steeples, and everything else is in proportion. Here Gulliver, an eighteenth-century man who believes in the power of reason, is made to feel petty.

In the third part Gulliver is shipwrecked on the flying island of Laputa, where the inhabitants are absorbed in ridiculous forms of scientific enquiry and philosophical speculation. Here the satire is directed against philosophers, men of science and historians. Gulliver is enabled to call up the great men of old, and discovers the deceptions of history. The Struldbrugs, a race endowed with immortality, turn out to be the most miserable of mankind.

In the fourth part Swift describes the country of the Houyhnhmns, who are horses endowed with reason. Their rational, clean, and simple society is contrasted with the filthiness and brutality of the Yahoos, beasts in human shape whose human vices Gulliver is reluctantly forced to recognize.

The last voyage is almost a nightmare; the return home when Gulliver cannot endure the sight and smell of his wife and family, is even worse, as if the author was glaring like a madman at us.

In his excellent book *Literature and the Western Man*, J. B. Priestley noted that “Jonathan Swift had one of the most formidable intellects of the age; he had perhaps the best plain prose style in all English literature: he had in a large measure both wit and imagination... As it is, the world remembers him for his *Gulliver’s Travels* but rarely reads this masterpiece as he intended it to be read. Swift is a master of irony, but Fate, a greater master of it, so decided that Gulliver should be kept alive and in favor by children, who read with delight Gulliver’s adventures among the tiny Lilliputians, and then among the giants of Brobdingnag. Is there any other instance of a savage satire being transformed into a nursery favourite? But that it should give so much pleasure to children, with their sharp eye for detail, is a tribute to the quality of Swift’s imagination. It was a stroke of satirical genius to realize that you have only to alter the scale to make humanity seem contemptible: make people small enough, and all their affairs of state, their armies, and navies are ridiculous; turn them into giants and observe them closely, and they seem disgusting”³⁵

5.5. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

Lewis Carroll (1832-1898) was the pen-name of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a university lecturer in mathematics and writer of children’s literature. The child of a scholarly country parson, he was born at Daresbury in Cheshire and attended a Yorkshire grammar school and Rugby Public School (one of the nine most prestigious private or Public schools for boys in England, situated in Rugby, Yorkshire, founded in 1567, with about 700 pupils). At home during his holidays he took a leading part in family amusements, producing a home-made magazine largely consisting of his own comic verse.

³⁵ Priestley, J. B. *Literature and the Western Man*. - London: Penguin Books, 1960-p.63

At the Christ Church, Oxford (one of the largest aristocratic colleges of Oxford University, founded in 1525), he studied mathematics, obtaining a university post but lecturing and teaching with difficulty because of his habitual shyness and bad stammer.

For the same reasons, he preached only occasionally after his ordination in 1861. He produced mathematical textbooks and some occasional comic writings. The instant success of his masterpiece,

Alice's Adventures Under Ground (now usually known as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865), still came as a surprise both to his friends and to Dodgson himself, who had no idea he had written a book that would revolutionize children's literature, putting all previous literary pieties at risk and opening the door to entertainment in literature for its own sake. Later successes were equally original, notably *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) and a long nonsense poem, *The Hunting of the Shark* (1876). After these Dodgson's genius faded, although his fame continued to grow.

Today, while his life has become a quarry for psychological speculations, his best works remain as fresh, original and ultimately elusive as they have always been.

One summer day on the river at Oxford, a thirty-year-old lecturer of mathematics at the Christ Church, was taking the three daughters of his Dean, Edith, Lorina and Alice, out for a row. His name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. The day was hot and the children wanted to have a story told to them, a thing they had come to expect from Mr. Dodgson. So the young lecturer agreed, relaxing his mind in the drowsy heat and his thoughts, which did not tire so easily, were following the paths of their own making.

The paths led directly down the rabbit hole and into adventures in Wonderland with the Cheshire Cat, the Queen of Hearts, and the Mad Hatter. The story told that that afternoon, in 1862, made such an impression on Alice that she pestered Dodgson to put it down. He wrote it for her and gave her as a present and after it had been thoroughly enjoyed by many people, it was published for others under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll.

In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice begins her adventures on a realistically peaceful river bank in the nineteenth-century England, then travels down a rabbit hole into a unique world quite different from her normal one, which Carroll describes as being full of details from her point of view.

Plunging down a rabbit hole, the seven-year-old Alice grows firstly too large, then too small. When asking for help or enlightenment from the strange characters around her, she usually becomes caught up in logic -chopping parody or pun, whether this is going on together with the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter or the King or Queen of Hearts. Finally, she loses her temper and brings down this dream world and awakens. Being illustrated by Sir John Tenniel, this unique book was a success and became immediately a best-seller to a great surprise because of his being shy and reclusive. Its effect upon children's literature, in particular the way it favored good-humored public, attacks on popular beliefs at the expense of the conventional didacticism of the time, can hardly be exaggerated. Favorite moments include the parodies *You are old, Father William* and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Bat*, the Lobster Quadrille, the Hatter's Tea Party and Alice's own understandable comment 'Curiouser and curiouser.'

Cheshire Cat is a character in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Cheshire is a county in England. A kind of hard cheese was traditionally made in that county and it was known as Cheshire cheese. It used to have the form of a smiling cat, hence the expression 'to grin like a Cheshire cat'. Cheshire cat has also a figurative meaning of something elusive, appearing all of a sudden and disappearing completely.

Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There was a fantasy written in 1871. This sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was also very successful. In this story, Alice passes through a mirror to the land behind, where everything happens back and forth. Here she meets more memorable characters caught up like herself in a cosmic chess game. The famous ones among these are the Red Queen and the White Queen, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the White Knight and the Walrus and the Carpenter. Humpty Dumpty also makes an appearance, with his oft-quoted remark 'When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less'⁵. There is also Carroll's memorable and at times slightly sinister poem, *Jabberwocky*. The book was vividly illustrated by Sir John Tenniel, despite his previous determination to have nothing in common with such a temperamental author.

5.6. *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame

The only children's book by Kenneth Grahame (1859 -1932) *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) is among the half-dozen most famous books for young people in England. *The Wind in the Willows* was written for Kenneth Grahame's only child, Alistair. After its publication it became world famous, securing a position shared only by such works as *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling.

Kenneth Grahame's story is unlike any other ever written. On the surface, it is an animal story concerned with the small creatures of field, of the woods and of river bank. Aside from their ability to talk and a brief mix of mysticism in which the great God of nature makes his presence known, it is a world of fable perceived as if it was reality. Published at the beginning of the twentieth century in England, it still outreaches the peaks of fantasy and casts a large shadow across the future years. What gives the tale, its enduring quality, is the depth of feeling which the author brings through it and the extent of his own commitment to the world that he reveals here, for this is a world with a distinctive aura, its characters, the creatures of an immense individuality. It is a prose poem spoken in praise of the commonplace; a pastoral set in an English landscape which sings the grace of English life and custom.

The book chronicles the adventures of four animals living the easy lives of Edwardian

England, in Thames Valleys. The timid but friendly Mole moves in with his new acquaintance, the Water Rat, a forceful character, worrying every time about the owner of the local great house, Toad Hall. Overwhelmed by a sudden enthusiasm, Toad engages himself in dangerous events and he is finally sent to prison, and Toad Hall is invaded by the stoats and weasels who normally live in the Wild Wood. Escaping from prison dressed as a washerwoman, Toad recaptures his ancestral home with his two friends and the bad-tempered Badger. The book ends with Toad back to the residence and promising to change - a vain hope, according to a letter Grahame sent to a child admirer.

The strong point of the book lies in its animal characterization whereas their adventures are loaded with charming descriptions of the countryside and the meeting with the god Pan, here depicted as a friend to all dumb animals.

The Wind in the Willows is a book for those who keep the spirit of youth alive in them, of life, sunshine, running water, woodlands, dusty roads, winter firesides. So, Kenneth Grahame wrote his tale of Toad, Mole, Badger, and the Rat in their beautiful and benevolently ordered world. But it is also a world under siege, threatened by dark and unnamed forces and defended by the mysterious Piper at the gates of Dawn. *The Wind in the Willows* has achieved an enduring place in English children's literature. A. A. Milne said about the book: "It is a Household Book: a book which everybody in the household loves and quotes continually, a book which is read aloud to every new guest and is regarded as the touchstone of his worth."

5.7. *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* by Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was an English playwright, novelist, essayist, poet, and epigrammist. He was born in Dublin, the son of Sir William Wilde and lady Jane Francesca Wilde. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and later at Magdalen College, Oxford. A brilliant classicist, he won the Newdigate Prize for his poem *Ravenna* in 1878. He made himself conspicuous by despising athleticism and espousing the Aesthetic Movement: he collected blue china and peacock's feathers, declared himself a disciple of Walter Pater and the cult of Art for Art's sake.

In 1884 he married and in 1888 published *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, fairy-stories written for his two sons. In 1891 he wrote another book of fairy tales, *A House of Pomegranates*. *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* have become classics of their kind. They also have been dramatized endlessly.

O. Wilde's tales revolve round the dilemma of art and beauty. In *The Happy Prince* the statue becomes outwardly uglier as the Prince achieves spiritual beauty. The Swallow also achieves perfect beauty by sacrificing its life for the love of the Prince - in each case love and sacrifice are the saving

forces, and indeed in the first four stories in the collection sacrifice is constantly offered as a good, but with all sorts of warnings in the telling. O. Wilde wrote that he liked to fancy that there may be many meanings in his tales, for in writing them he did not start with an idea and clothe it in form, but began with a form, and strove to make it beautiful enough to have many secrets and many answers.

5.8. *Peter Pan* by Sir James Matthew Barrie

Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937) was a Scottish playwright and novelist. He began to publish journalistic criticism while he was at Edinburgh University and worked as a journalist in Nottingham and London from 1883 to 1890. *Peter Pan*, written in 1902 and staged in London in 1904, was one of the plays that made Barrie famous. *Peter Pan* was an overwhelming triumph from the very beginning and now established as an annual favourite, with a long succession of well-known actresses in the little role. *Peter Pan* occupies a vague place between drama and pantomime, though it began its life quite simply as a play for children. This internationally famous children's play grew from stories he had made up for the five sons of his friends Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davis to whom he gave a home on their parents' death.

The play begins in the Bloomsbury flat of the Darlings, which is visited by Peter Pan, a boy who ran away on the day he was born when he heard his parents talking about what might happen to him when he grew up. The Darling's dog frightened Peter, and he flew away, leaving his shadow behind him. Unreasonably jealous of the dog's hold on his children, Mr. Darling chains her in the yard before taking his wife out to dinner, with the result that Peter can return to find his shadow without intervention. He teaches the three Darling children to fly, after Wendy Darling has sewn his shadow on him and they accompany him to the Never Land, where he lives with all the lost boys, protected by a tribe of Red Indians. The threat to the children comes from a pirate gang, led by Captain Hook. The gang overcomes the Red Indians while Peter is away, and Wendy, who has become mother to the lost boys, is captured along with all her 'family'. Peter arrives just in time to prevent Captain Hook from making them walk the plank, defeats the villainous pirate in a duel and sees him eaten by the crocodile that has stalked him for years. He then takes Wendy and her brothers back home.

Barrie's settings and characters seem real. They seem especially real to children who have limitless imagination and can easily stretch the borders of the physical world. The reader sympathizes with the adult Wendy, who longs to accompany Peter Pan but cannot. The book closes on a touch of nostalgia, as Peter Pan returns to claim each new generation of children who are happy

and innocent. *Peter Pan* was followed by a story, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (1906) and by the play in book form in 1911.

5.9. *The Jungle Book, Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling (1856-1936) is an English poet, novelist, and short - story writer. He was born in Bombay, where his father taught at a school of art before becoming Director of the Lahore museum. In 1871 Kipling and his sister were sent to England to study. Moving back to India in 1882, he began his early career as a journalist in Lahore. His familiarity with all ranks of the Anglo-Indian community contributed to the freshness of the poems and tales that he began to write. In 1892 Kipling married and the young couple spent the years 1892-1896 near his wife's family in Vermont, U.S.A. Stories from *The Jungle Book* (1894) were written here.

The elder of Kipling's daughters died in 1899 on a return visit to the U.S.A. By the time his son John was born in 1897, the family had moved back to England, settling in Sussex in 1902. His best-known novel, *Kim* was published in 1901.

Kipling began to visit South Africa regularly after 1898, including a period during the Boer war. Here he began *Just So Stories* (1902). In 1907 he became the first English writer to receive the Nobel Prize for literature.

The early years Rudyard Kipling spent in Bombay had a great influence on his later writing. He spent much time in the company of Indian nurses who told him native tales about the jungle animals. His own young children were the first to hear his most famous stories about the man-cub Mowgli and his brothers, Akela the wolf, Baloo the bear, and Bagheera the panther, published in *The Jungle Book* in 1894.

The story *Mowgli's Brothers* is one of Kipling's most popular. Kipling develops animal characters as diverse as the man-eating tiger Shere Khan, who claims the young Mowgli as his own, and Mother Wolf, who demonstrates her maternal instincts as she protects the man-cub and encourages him to join her own cubs. The law of the jungle is a strong element in the story, as the animals sit in council to decide Mowgli's fate. This story has the flavour of a traditional tale. The suspense rises until old Baloo the bear finally speaks for the man-cub. As in traditional tales about articulate animals, powerful feelings of loyalty grow as Mowgli saves the life of his old friend Akela, the Wolf.

The characters, plot, and language of *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi* make it an excellent choice for oral story telling. The wicked cobras Nag and Nagama live in the garden of a small boy and his parents. They plan a battle against the humans and the heroic mongoose, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, a hunter with eyeballs of flame and the sworn enemy of all snakes. In keeping with the oral tradition, the action develops

rapidly. The boy's loyal mongoose kills Nag. Then, he faces the deadliest peril, a female cobra avenging her mate and protecting her unborn babies. Kipling's language is excellent for oral recitation. A happy-ever-after ending has Rikki-Tikki-Tavi defeating his enemy and remaining on guard so there will not be another threat in the garden.

Humorous incidents and language that is most effective when shared orally are characteristics of Kipling's *Just So Stories*. Young children enjoy the language in such favourite tales as *The Elephant's Child*, the story of an adventurous young animal who lives near the banks of the "great, grey-green greasy Limpopo River."

Just So Stories is a collection of 12 stories and 12 poems. This is the only book for which Kipling supplied his own illustrations. It was written to be read aloud by adults to children. The interplay between the human and the animal worlds in the first seven stories is a simpler and more playful device than in the earlier *Jungle Book*. The language made appropriate for the animals' changes between the childlike and the (usually pompous) diction of a grown-up world. The humour of these stories can satisfy both children and adults.

The merry *Just So Stories* cause amusement but may also be seen as the beginning of science fiction. Probably only adults will fully appreciate Kipling's amusing parodies on processes of evolution, but children enjoy them as fantastic and funny stories. The element of teasing is most obviously apparent in such stories as *How the Leopard Got Its Spots*, where Kipling parodies the Darwinian notion of evolutionary progression. It is not surprising that *Just So Stories* has taken its honorable place number two in English Children's literature. (Number one belongs to *Alice in Wonderland*.) *Just So Stories* contains realistic implications and contributes to the improvement of the mind and character. The author has confidence in his young readers. He shows great respect for them. His books develop children's wit, sense of humour, and imagination.

5.10. *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) was a professor of English language and literature at Oxford from 1945 till 1959. He published a number of philological and critical studies, and became internationally known for two books based on a mythology of his own: *The Hobbit* (1937) and its sequel *The Lord of the Rings* (three volumes, 1954-1955).

The hero of *The Hobbit* is Bilbo Baggins, a little creature who is neat and quiet, who loves his material comforts, and who has no desire to do great deeds. When he is tricked into going along on a quest, however, the little hobbit rises to the occasion, showing that even the common person (or hobbit) is capable of heroism.

There are several qualities that contribute to the stature of *The Hobbit*. The adventures are exciting, the characters are differentiated and distinctive, and the book bubbles with humor. One of the amusing qualities is the aptness of the invented personal and place names. Bolbo's mother's unmarried name was Belladonna Took, perfectly in accord with her reputation as a hobbit that had had a few adventures before she settled down as Mrs. Baggins. And what an admirable name for a dragon - Smaug, and what an equally appropriate name for his lair - the Desolation of Smaug! Perhaps a special appeal lies in the very fact that Bilbo Baggins is a quiet little creature whose achievements are due to a stout (brave and determined) heart, tenacity and loyalty to his friends rather than to great strength or brilliance. He puts heroism within the grasp of each reader. Many folktale elements are present - beasts, elves, the enchanted artifact - all woven naturally into the tale.

Tolkien's writings form a continuation of the mythic tradition into modern literature. In no other literary work has such careful balance of mythic tradition and individual imagination been maintained. This balance between myth and imagination is not accidental in Tolkien's writing.

Tolkien studied mythology for most of his life; he was a linguistic scholar ¹ and professor of Anglo-Saxon literature at Oxford University. His chill interest was the literary and linguistic tradition of the English West Midlands, especially as revealed in *Beowulf*. Tolkien respected the quality in myths that allows evil to be unexpectedly averted and good to succeed. He masterfully develops this battle between good and evil in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lord of the Rings*. According to Tolkien, these stones were at first a philological game in which he invented languages: *The stories were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. I should have preferred to write in 'English'*. This creation of languages with their own alphabets and rules helps make Tolkien's characters believable.

Careful attention to detail and vivid descriptions of setting in Middle Earth also add credibility to Tolkien's stories. For example, he introduces the reluctant Bilbo Baggins to the challenge of a quest to regain the dwarfs' treasures by using a dwarfs' chant:

Far over the misty mountains cold
To dungeons deep and caverns old
We must away ere break of day
To find our long-forgotten gold.

As Bilbo, the wizard Gandalf, and the twelve dwarfs proceed over the mountains toward the lair of the evil dragon Smaug, Tolkien describes a lightning that splinters the peaks and rocks that shiver. When Bilbo descends into the mountain dungeons to confront Smaug, Tolkien's setting befits the climax of a heroic quest: Red light, wisps of vapor, and rumbling noises gradually replace the subterranean darkness and quiet. Ahead, in the bottom, lies a huge red - golden dragon surrounded

by precious gold and jewels. As in traditional tales, the quest is successful, the dragon is slain, and the goblins are overthrown. The hero retains his decency, his honor, and his pledge always to help his friends.

It is not surprising that *The Hobbit* was one of the major best sellers of the 20th century. It has the classic ‘circular’ plot of the adventure story for children, a shape echoed by the gradual change of tone as Bilbo gets further from home and meets trolls and dragons. The creation of the hobbits - child-like adults - and the feeling of completeness in the world that surrounds them made the book a hard act to follow. This is demonstrated by the hundreds of imitations of *The Lord of the Rings* in the 1960s and 1970s without being able to match the depth and detail of his invention. The ring found during the hobbit’s quest becomes the basis of *the plot in the ring trilogy: The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, and The Return of the King*.

Many secondary-school pupils, college and university students, and other adults enjoy reading Tolkien’s books.

5.11. Suggested Assignments

1. Read *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling. Choose an animal character. What human characteristics can you identify in this animal? What animal characteristics can you identify? Has the author developed a credible character? Why or why not?
2. Read *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* by Oscar Wilde. How did Oscar Wilde balance reality and fantasy by allowing the animals to talk and behave like people but still retain some animal characteristics?
3. Read *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. Try to explain why this book is considered by many critics Number One in English children’s literature.
4. Compile a list of stories or scenes from longer stories by English and American writers that might be appropriate for children’s puppetry production. Select one to develop as a puppet presentation.
5. Share a modern fantasy selection that lends itself to artistic interpretations. Interpret a story through a mural (a picture designed on a long piece of paper placed on the floor or long tables so that children or students can work together on it), a collage (a picture made by pasting different shapes and textures of materials onto a surface), a montage (a composite picture created by bringing together into a single composition a number of different pictures or parts of pictures and arranging them to form a blended whole), or a mosaic (a design or picture that results from gluing small objects of different colors onto a surface).

PART 6.

SCIENCE FICTION

“We all have our time machines, don't we? Those that take us back are memories...And those that carry us forward, are dreams.”,
H. G. Wells

- 6.1. Definition of Science Fiction**
- 6.2. Milestones in Science Fiction**
- 6.3. The War of Worlds by G. Wells**
- 6.4. A Wrinkle in Time by Madeline L' Engle**
- 6.5. Suggested Assignments**

6.1. Definition of Science Fiction

Science fiction is a form of imaginative literature that provides a picture of something that could happen based on real scientific facts and principles. Therefore, story elements in science fiction must have the appearance of scientific plausibility or technical possibility. Hypotheses about the future of humankind and the universe presented in science fiction appear possible to the reader because settings and events are built on extensions of known technologies and scientific concepts.

In novels of science fiction such topics as mind control, genetic engineering, space technologies and travel, visitors from outer space, and future political and social systems all seem possible to the readers. These novels especially fascinate many young people because, they feature characters who must learn to adjust and to become new people, two aspects of living that adolescents also experience. In addition, science fiction stories may portray the world, or one very much like it, that young people may one day inhabit.

6.2. Milestones in Science Fiction

Some critics identify Mary Goldwin Shelley's *Frankenstein*, published in 1817, as the earliest science fiction story because the protagonist is a scientist, not a wizard, and the central theme is the proper use of knowledge and the moral responsibility of a scientist for his discovery.

Jules Verne is considered to have written the first major science fiction novel, *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, in 1863. That book and especially *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870) are still enjoyed by older children and adults.

The first successful English author of science fiction was Herbert George Wells (1866 -1946). He was a scientific visionary and social prophet whose stories include several of the themes that later became dominant: invasion from outer space (*The War of the Worlds*, 1898), biological change or

catastrophe (*The Food of the Gods*, 1904), time travel (*The Time Machine*, 1895), and air warfare (*The War of the Air*, 1908).

After World War II, as technology advanced at a fast pace, an increasing number of authors began to write science fiction stories. These stories were more suited to older children and young adults than to young children, because the plots often relied on a developed sense of time, place and space.

Ballantine editor Judy Del Ray said in 1983, that defining science fiction is simply saying three names – Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, and Arthur C. Clarke, one could almost add Bradbury. The four of them established touchstones for those who are to come.

Writers like Ursula Le Quin, Anne Mccaffrey, and Madeline L'Engle write in both fields, science fiction and fantasy.

Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) is widely known and taught in secondary schools. The novel, really a collection of some good, some excellent, short stories tied together, is an important work, whether it is science fiction or not. In a preface to Bantam's 1954 paper-back edition of *The Martian Chronicles*, Clifton Fadiman perceptively writes that Bradbury has caught hold of a simple, obvious but overwhelmingly important moral idea, and, quite properly, he will not let it go. That idea is that we are in the grip of a psychosis, a technology-mania, the final consequence of which can only be universal murder and quite conceivably the destruction of our planet.

His colonizers — not all, but the majority — cannot help destroying the magnificent civilization of Mars. Bradbury said he didn't try to predict the future, he tried to prevent it.

Bradbury's only true science fiction novel is *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), a warning about a world to come so anti-intellectual that firemen are trained to burn books, not protect the world from fires.

Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* (1953) is frequently listed among the great science fiction novels. It is a story of aliens who take over the Earth's problems and ultimately the Earth itself is utopian science fiction. Under the guidance of Chief Overlord Karallen, aliens develop what seems to be a perfect society for humans. For the first time in human history, no one worked at tasks they didn't like. Ignorance, disease, poverty, and fear had virtually ceased to be. *The City and the Stars* (1956) is set a billion years from now with the last people living in a sand – surrounded city. *Rendezvous with Rama* (1973) is set in 2130 as humans investigate a hollow, fifty – kilometer long cylindrical alien spaceship called Rama and inhabited by robots.

Isaac Asimov remains one of the most popular writers in the field. Author of an incredible number of books, all revealing a curious and perceptive mind, he is best known for his *Foundation* trilogy (1942-1950). *Foundation* prophesies the doom of the Empire. Twenty-nine years later, in

1982, Asimov wrote the fourth in the series, *Foundation's Edge*. Set in 498 years since the reestablishment, of the First Foundation, the book carries the story further.

The Caves of Steel (1954) is a story about a human and a robot detective who join forces to solve a crime. *I, Robot* (1950) is a classic collection of short stories reprinted from the science fiction magazine *Astounding*.

Robert A. Heinlein is the giant of science fiction writers. He began publishing science fiction stories in the pulp magazines in 1939, and was the first writer to fit a number of stories together into a coherent future history - all of the relevant stories were assembled into the Collection *The Past Through Tomorrow* (1967) and that history features as an 'alternate world' in some of his other novels. Heinlein's understanding of technology and enthusiasm for the myth of the conquest of space made him an outstanding pulp writer, and he was one of the first science fiction writers to break into more respectable markets. In the 1950s he wrote many novels aimed at teenagers. *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1962) is a best — selling novel with a messianic hero whose promotion of libertarian politics and morals managed to anticipate both the 1960s counter-culture and the right- wing backlash of the 1970s. In the last phase of his career, his work became increasingly idiosyncratic, extensive elaboration of his personal preoccupations largely displacing plot and invention.

Madeleine L'Engle is the author of more than forty books for children, including the 1963 Newbery Medal winner *A Wrinkle in Time* 1962 and its sequels, *A Wind in the Door* (1973), *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* (1978) and *Many Waters* (1986), collectively known as *Time Quartet*.

6.3. *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells

The first successful English author of science fiction was Herbert George Wells (1866 -1946). He was a scientific visionary and social prophet whose stories include several of the themes that later became dominant: invasion from outer space (*The War of the Worlds*, 1898), biological change or catastrophe (*The Food of the Gods*, 1904), time travel (*The Time Machine*, 1895), and air warfare (*The War of the Air*, 1908).

His literary output was vast and extremely varied. Herbert G. Wells was one of the most widely read British writers of his generation. He explored the new territory of science fiction and crusaded for a new social order in more than forty-four novels and social and historical books. As a novelist he is perhaps best remembered for his science fiction books. The first, *The Time Machine* (1895), is a social allegory set in the year 802701, describing a society divided into two classes, the subterranean workers, called Morlocks, and the decadent Eloi. This was followed by *The Wonderful Visit* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), and others.

The War of the Worlds is a powerful apocalyptic vision of the world invaded by Martians. The first part of the novel describes how missiles fired from Mars land in England, arousing only mild interest until they disgorge fearful war machines to devastate the country. Panic spreads as resistance fails and London is destroyed. In the second part survivors of the catastrophe live in hiding. In the end, the loathsome Martians are unprotected by their armored weapons against the ravages of earthly bacteria, which succeed where men's efforts failed in destroying them.

This daring portrayal of aliens landing on English soil, with its theme of interplanetary imperialism, technological holocaust and chaos, is central to the career of H. G. Wells, who died at the dawn of the atomic age.

6.4. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

Madeleine L'Engle was born in 1918 in New York. Zena Sutherland notes that Engle's books are complicated in their blend of science, philosophy, religion, satire and allegory, but her ability to draw character and adventurous situations attract readers.

In *A Wrinkle in Time* everything begins on a dark and stormy night. Meg Murry, her brother Charles Wallace, and their mother are in the kitchen for a midnight snack when a most disturbing visitor arrives, Mrs. Whatsit. She explains that she was caught in a down draft and blown off course. But having finished her cocoa, she departs with the final word to the mother, *there is such a thing as a tesseract*. That is what the children's scientist father had been working for the government when he disappeared. The children are warned that their father is in grave danger and that only they can save him and only if they are willing to tesser. This involves the 'fact' that the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line, but a fold or wrinkle. The children prove to be only too willing to try it. There follows in the complex course of the rest of the book a battle between good and evil, love and hate. This space story is written in terms of the modern world in which children know about brainwashing an insidious, creeping corruption of evil.

L'Engle creates characters who are different from the people around them. Meg Murry and Charles Wallace are the children of eminent scientists. Meg worries about the way the people in their town make of her brother as backward and strange. Her father consoles her by telling her that her brother is doing things in his own way and time. In fact, Charles has very special powers: he can probe the minds of his mother and sister, and he is also extremely bright. Meg is taken by her brother to meet mysterious women. (Mrs. Who, Mrs. Which, and Mrs. Whatsit), and with them travels through time and space to search for their missing father. Meg, Charles and their friend Calvin travel in the fifth dimension to a dark planet, where their father has been imprisoned by the evil power of **It**. L'Engle states that this villain is naked brain because the brain tends to be vicious when it's not

informed by the heart. The heart proves more powerful than the evil **It** in the story: Meg's ability to love deeply saves her father and Charles.

On the pages of *Through Eyes of a Child, An Introduction to English Literature* Madeleine L'Engle discusses scientific theories in science fiction saying that in her own fantasies she was very excited by some of the new sciences; in *A Wrinkle in Time* it is Einstein's theories of relativity and Planck's Quantum theory; tesseract is as real word, and the theory of tessering is not as far-fetched as at first it might seem. Just as we've broken the sound barrier, so, one day, we'll break the light barrier, and then we'll be freed from the restrictions of time. We will be able to tesser. In *A Wind in the Door*, she turns from the macrocosm to the microcosm, the world of the cellular biologist. Indeed, there are mitochondria, and they live within us; they have their own DNA, and we are their host planet. And they are as much smaller as we are as galaxies are larger than we are.

Madeleine L'Engle explains that concepts that are too difficult for adults are open to children, who are not yet afraid of new ideas, who don't mind having a new rocket, or new door opened, or mixing metaphors. The author believes that only children are open enough to understand science fiction. She appeals to the reader never to underestimate the capacity of the child for a wild and glorious imagination, an ability to accept what is going on in our troubled world, and the courage to endure it and respond to it with a realistic hope.

6.5. Suggested Assignments

- 1. As a class make a time capsule for the future generation in which you will describe your society, your occupation, things you value etc.*
- 2. Discuss the possibility of living in a space colony. How would colonists control their environment? How would they communicate with other colonies? Consider scientific principles and the ways authors of science fiction stories solve their problems.*
- 3. Choose a piece of fiction from English literature and discuss it with the class. Highlight its strongest points and consider how you could use it as language learning material.*

PART 7.
REALISTIC FICTION

“Love, genuine passionate love, was his for the first time.”

— Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*

- 7.1. *Definition of Realistic Fiction*
- 7.2. *Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe*
- 7.3. *Treasure Island by R. L. Stevenson*
- 7.4. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by M. Twain*
- 7.5. *The Call of the Wild by Jack London*
- 7.6. *Swallows and the Amazons by Arthur Ransome*
- 7.7. *Suggested Assignments.*

7.1. Definition of Realistic Fiction

Realistic fiction refers to stories that could indeed happen. The characters of these stories are fictitious, but their actions and reactions are quite like those of real people or animals. Sometimes events in these stories may be exaggerated or outlandish—hardly probable but definitely possible.

Realistic fiction for children includes historical novels, adventure stories, animal stories, and stories about contemporary life. Such books help children better understand the problems and issues of their own lives, empathize with other people, and see the complexities of human relationships.

The difference between modern fantasy and realistic fiction is clearly seen if we compare two popular animal stories: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter and *The Incredible Journey* by Burnford.

Peter Rabbit thinks, talks, acts and dresses like an inquisitive, sometimes greedy, sometimes frightened human child who needs his mother’s love and care. While the garden in the story is realistic, Peter’s home is furnished with human furniture. And the rabbit in this fantasy demonstrates believable childlike desires.

The Incredible Journey is a detailed account of three heroic animals who travel through 250 miles (400 km) of Canadian wildness to the place and people who mean home and love to them. A trained hunting dog leads his companions across the wildness. An English bulldog who is a cherished family pet, seeks people to give him food; and a Siamese cat retains her feline independence. Burnford does not give them human thoughts, or other human characteristics. The characters and settings are not only believable; they are also completely realistic by the standard of what we know and expect in our everyday world.

In his *Introduction to Children's Literature* Peter Hunt raises several important questions concerning realism in children's literature. First of all, he notes that realism is for adults, who since 1850s no longer believe in the marvels of fantasy. So fantasy has been given a lower and less important rank and has been transferred to a 'lower' division, to the nursery. In British children's literature, though, realism has lacked prestige, and until recently has not attracted its share of the ablest writers.

Then Peter Hunt asks if it could be that the adults are more afraid of reality than children. How do adults present the unpleasant truth about humanity? Recent books that treat realism deal with some very hard aspects of the world, from child abuse and mass destruction to such taboos as sex and death.

Further Peter Hunt gives his own vision of realism as compared to fantasy and romance and adventure. He says that realism sits uncomfortably between fantasy (where the rules of the world are suspended) and romance or adventure (where the rules are bent). Fantasy has the advantage that it can handle large, rather than local, problems; it can overcome difficulties (evil, death) by changing the rules; the romance and the adventure, on the other hand, are set in a recognizable world, but one which simplifies or ignores the problems. Fantasy is sometimes discredited (by, perhaps, a puritanical turn of mind) as being a cheat, but it can deal with the universal. Romance/ adventure may mislead and confuse because of its ostensible relationship to the 'real' world. Thus one of the major differences between realism and fantasy is not that, in the latter, the physical laws of the world are suspended; certain moral and ethical ones are too.

Peter Hunt asks two questions at once. Can we have realism in fiction at all; and then, can we have realism in children's literature in particular? These are not easy questions to answer as in Tallis' words realism takes up the challenge of all literary art most directly and most compendiously: to discover a significant order (or disorder) in common experience; to deepen and sharpen our sense of reality; and ultimately, to mediate between the small facts and engage us and the great facts – that we are unoccasioned, that we are transient, that we nonetheless make sense of the world.

Peter Hunt is of the opinion that many of the most interesting examples of realism lie on the borderline between realism and fantasy; each contributes to the life of the other. He considers it could be said that realism is a matter of degree, a matter of where the lens is pointed.

Realistic fiction adventure stories permit children to see how other people live and how they solve their problems. By understanding human relationships through stories, children can come to a better understanding of themselves and their relationships with others. Themes in realistic stories often convey moral values, such as the rewards of kindness and generosity to others.

7.2. *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe

Daniel Defoe (1659-1731) wrote on all sorts of social problems. He rose to wealth and fame and sank to extreme poverty and prison more than once. Writing was his passion, and few men have written more continuously. Defoe produced some 560 books, pamphlets, and journals, but the works for which he is best known belong to his later years. His most famous book *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* appeared in 1719, when Defoe was sixty and nearing the end of his turbulent career.

Defoe's influence on the evolution of the English novel was enormous, and many regard him as the first true novelist. He was a master of plain prose and powerful narrative, with a journalist's curiosity and love of realistic detail; his peculiar gifts made him one of the greatest reporters of his time, as well as a great imaginative writer who in *Robinson Crusoe* created one of the most familiar and resonant myths of modern literature.

Robinson Crusoe was addressed to adults and originally contained masses of moral thoughts that children must have skipped. Most children's editions today omit these tiresome reflections and get on with the story.

It is a book that satisfies children's hunger to achieve competence. Identifying with Robinson Crusoe, they win an ordered, controlled place in the world by their own efforts and foresight.

The author tells us how the shipwrecked Crusoe built himself a house, domesticated goats, and made himself a boat. He describes the perturbation of his mind caused by a visit of cannibals, his rescue from death of an indigenous inhabitant he later names Friday, and finally the coming of an English ship whose crew are in a state of mutiny, the subduing of the mutineers, and Crusoe's rescue. The theme itself is irresistible: man pitted against nature, one man with a whole world to create and control. He must obtain food, provide himself with clothes and shelter, fight off wild animals, reckon time, keep himself civilized and sane.

7.3. *Treasure Island* by R. L. Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) was a romance writer, essayist and poet. He was born in Edinburgh, the son of an engineer. He entered Edinburgh University in 1867 to study engineering but, since he had no interest in his father's profession, changed to law and was admitted advocate in 1875. He showed his interest in a literary career as a student.

Even in his childhood his health was extremely poor; as an adult, there were times when he could not even wear a jacket for fear of bringing on a hemorrhage of the lungs. In spite of all this, he was all his life an enthusiastic traveler. He made a tour of France and Belgium and he travelled to California.

In America he married Mrs. Fanny Osbourne, whom he had previously met in France. It was for her young son Lloyd, that *Treasure island* (1883) was originally devised.

Stevenson left England in search of health in 1888 and never returned. After sailing for a while among the pacific islands, he settled in Samoa. Here he enjoyed a period of comparative good health and literary productivity. He died suddenly from a cerebral hemorrhage and was buried on the island.

Long categorized merely as a belletrist and writer for children, Stevenson is now being widely revalued. His novels are beginning to take their rightful place in the adult tradition of early modernism.

R. L. Stevenson wrote *Treasure Island* in enormous, excited haste in 1881: in a letter to his friend he said that it begins in the *Admiral Benboe* public house on the Devon coast...

It's all about a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny, and a derelict ship, and a current, and a fine old Squire Trelawney, and a doctor, and a sea-song with the chorus, which is a real buccaneer's song, only known to the crew of the late Captain Flint and no more need be said: except that the crew of the treasure ship *Hispaniola* are led into mutiny by Long John Silver, the one-legged cook; and at a desperate moment after they've reached the island, Jim Hawkins finds the *Hispaniola* adrift. Of the two watchmen left aboard by the mutineers, one lies dead, killed in a drunken brawl by the other, the coxswain Israel Hands. Badly wounded, Hands promises to help Jim sail the ship to a safe anchorage.

The core of children's literature rests on those books that are primarily for children, but which satisfy adults as well. Perhaps the greatest classic examples are Beatrix Potter, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Rudyard Kipling and Robert Louis Stevenson.

Treasure Island is a genuine landmark. It draws together traditions from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and upsets them.

7.4. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain

Mark Twain, whose real name was Samuel Clemens. Apprenticed first to a printer, he became a Mississippi River pilot (where he picked up the name Mark Twain) and a newspaper reporter before becoming, simply, one of the most famous writers of his time. Mark Twain was one of the cries shouted when a marked line was lowered into the water to measure its depth. The Mississippi boatmen used the phrase to signify 3.6 meters of water, the depth needed for a boat's safe passage.

In *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1885), Mark Twain looked back on the days of his own childhood on the banks of the Mississippi, in the 1840s: a rough, tough, marvelous world, dominated by the wide river. Tom is a willful boy, with an imagination that runs away with him more often than not. Tom's closest friend is Huck Finn, who was to become the hero of *The Adventures of*

Huckleberry Finn (1885), the sequel to *Tom Sawyer*. Abandoned by his drunken father, Huck lives the life of an outcast and wouldn't swap his barrel, his idle days, and his freedom to smoke and swear for all the schools and respectable homes in existence. The boys of the village are forbidden to associate with him and so, of course, are very keen to do so.

Although the novel is widely considered to be one of the greatest American works of art, *Huckleberry Finn* was condemned by many reviewers in Twain's time as coarse and by many American commentators in the 20th century as racist. In 1885, the novel was banished from the shelves of the Concord Public Library for its foul language.

It took Twain eight years to finish the novel that would become a turning point in American literature. For some reason never explained, he got stuck in the middle of the writing and set the book aside until 1883. At that point, pressured by financial needs, he once again took up the manuscript and pushed through until it was completed.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is the story of death, rebirth and initiation. In deciding to save the escaped slave Jim, Huck grows morally beyond the bounds of his slave-owning society. Mark Twain uses slavery as the metaphor for all social bondage and accepted injustice and inhumanity. The Mississippi River in the book is a state of mind as much as a body of water. It represents freedom and unifies the novel. Freedom exists on the raft and the river, not in the North or the South.

7.5. *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London

Jack London (1876-1916) lived hard and died young. He was born in San Francisco to Flora Wellman. Later she married John London, giving her son the name that he would make famous. Jack left school at 14 to try various jobs. He began publishing his stories in 1899 and produced more than 50 volumes of stories, novels and political essays. His most famous books are *The Call of the Wild* (1903), *White Fang* (1906), and *The Sea Wolf* (1904).

Jack London was always astonished by the marvel of life, and of human strength, and by the desperate nature of struggle to stay alive. In *The Call of the Wild* and in *White Fang* he expressed these feelings in stories about animals. Buck, a dog, is stolen from his owner on a comfortable estate in California, and sold in Alaska. This was the time of the great gold rush, when dogs were immensely valuable. Buck passes from bad owners to good ones, faces death a score of times, and in the end escapes to the wild life that has always been a calling to him.

The Call of the Wild is not really a novel. It is more like seven short stories, each with its own characters, plot, and climax. Buck is the central character in each chapter. And each chapter is an episode in the story of his return to the primitive state.

On the surface, the book tells the story of Buck, the dog who learns to survive by returning to his wolf roots. Politically and philosophically, the novel exemplifies the naturalist's theory of Social Darwinism - only the fittest survive.

7.6. *Swallows and the Amazons* by Arthur Ransome

Arthur Michel Ransome (1884-1967) was a distinguished foreign correspondent and writer. He produced twelve books in the 'Swallow and Amazons' series to add to more than twenty volumes of travel, novels, and political writing. He went to Russia in 1913, covered the revolution at first hand for the *Daily News*, and published a collection of Russian legends and fairy tales, *Old Peter's Russian Tales* (1916).

He is best remembered for his classic sequence of twelve novels for children, which reflect his keen interest in sailing, fishing and the countryside. Most of the books are set in English Lake District, on the Norfolk Broads, and around Harwich. All are concerned with the same families of children, with traditional outdoor activities-sailing, fishing and camping- all lovingly and expertly described. The first book, *Swallows and Amazons*, appeared in 1930. It was followed by eleven other books: *Swallowdale*, a perfect book for children of all ages; *Peter Duck*, one of those rare books which come from time to time to enthrall grown-up people and children at once with the spell of true romance; *Winter Holiday*, an excellent book about children; *Coot Club*, a book written with a charm and accuracy that only this author probably could bring to bear; *Pigeon Post*, which stands head and shoulders above the average adventure book for and of children; *We didn't Mean to Go to Sea* (1937) follows three children as they drift out into the North Sea on a yacht; *Secret Water* in which once more the Swallows and Amazons have a magnificent exploring adventure; *The Big Six* (1941), a detective story enjoyed by every boy; *Missee Lee* that features a super female pirate; *The Picts and the Martyrs*, published in 1947, is a perfect boat and bird story for any age. The children enjoy holiday freedom, practical adventures, absorbing activities, all this within a secure family framework.

Peter Hunt considers that the set of twelve books functions as the characters gradually develop towards adulthood: the first book, *Swallows and Amazons*, is a perfect example of a 'circular' story, beginning and ending in the same place, with the same characters. As the series progresses, the endings become less 'closed', and more adult. The characterization becomes more perfunctory, and the children's personal behavior more improbable, as the books go by, and Ransom's functional, Defoe-like prose, concentrating on primary features of things rather than on emotive or value-laden words, reflects his limitations as well as his strength as a writer.

Swallows and Amazons describes the adventures of the walker (Swallow) and Blackett (Amazons) children in the Lake District in England. The book is about fishing, swimming, sailing, camping and practical exploits on a lake. In the book Ransome celebrated the place where he, his brother and sisters used to spend most of their holidays.

In the boathouse below the farm there was the Swallow, a sailing boat, a very little one, and there was also a big, heavy rowing-boat. But no one wants to row who has ever sailed. If there had been no island, no sailing-boat, and if the lake had not been so large, the children, no doubt, would have been happy enough to paddle about with oars in the bay by the boathouse. But with the lake as big as a small sea, a fourteen- foot dinghy with a brown sail waiting in the boathouse, and the little wooded island waiting for explorers, nothing but a sailing voyage of discovery seemed worth thinking about.

7.7. Suggested Assignments

1. Compile an annotated bibliography of books that show problem situations appropriate for:
 - a) Elementary-school children
 - b) Secondary-school children
2. Make a list of realistic books or stories by English or American writers. What issues are treated in these books? How are they treated? How are these issues treated in realistic fiction by Moldovan writers?
3. Compare the professional roles of fathers and mothers in literature published in the last decades of the 20th century with the professional roles of fathers and mothers in literature published in earlier periods.
4. Compare the characteristics of a specific type of animal in a modern fantasy story with the characteristics of the same type of animal in a realistic animal adventure story.

PART 8.

HISTORICAL FICTION

“For he that does good, having the unlimited power to do evil, deserves praise not only for the good which he performs, but for the evil which he forbears.”

Walter Scott, Ivanhoe

- 8.1. *Definition of Historical Fiction***
- 8.2. *Ivanhoe by Walter Scott***
- 8.3. *Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O’Dell***
- 8.4. *Suggested activities***

8.1. Definition of Historical Fiction

Historical fiction is realistic fiction set in a time before the birth of the author. It recreates a particular historical period with or without historical figures as incidental characters. It is generally written about a time period in which the author has not lived or no more recently than one generation before its composition. Typically, historical fiction books are written at least 30-50 years after the event or time period has taken place. Although historical fiction is imaginary, it is within the realm of possibility that such events could have occurred.

In these stories historical facts blend with imaginary characters and plot. In the most common form of historical fiction, the main characters of the story are imaginary, but some secondary characters may be actual historical figures. In another form of historical fiction, the past is described complete with the social traditions, customs, morals, and values of the period but with no mention of an actual historical event or actual historical figures as characters.

Historical fiction brings history to life by placing characters in accurately described historical settings. By telling the stories of these characters’ everyday lives as well as presenting their triumphs and failures, authors of historical fiction provide young readers with the human side of history, making it more real and more memorable. Children who read historical fiction gain an understanding of their own heritage. The considerable research that precedes the writing enables an author to incorporate information about the period naturally into the story. Children gain knowledge about the people, values, beliefs, hardships, and physical surroundings common to a period. They discover the events that preceded their own century and made the present possible. Through historical fiction, children can begin visualize the sweep of history. As characters in historical fiction from many different time periods face and overcome their problems, readers may discover important universal truths, identify feelings and behaviors that encourage them to consider alternative ways to handle their own problems, empathize with viewpoints

that are different from their own, and realize that their own history consists of many people who have learned to work together. Through the pages of historical fiction, the past becomes alive. It is not just dates, accomplishments and battles, it is people, both famous and unknown.

8.2. *Ivanhoe* by Sir Walter Scott

The historical novel became popular in the 1800 with the publication of stories by Sir Walter Scott (1771 - 1832). Scott's story of medieval English life, *Ivanhoe*, was often used as a school assignment for older children.

Walter Scott was educated at Edinburgh High School and University. He was called to the bar in 1792. He devoted much of his leisure time to the study of romantic poetry of France, Italy, and Germany, he made anonymous translation from Goethe and other German poets. For some fifteen years he wrote and published his own poetry.

In 1813 he refused the offer to the laureateship and recommended somebody else for the honor. Eclipsed in a measure by Byron as a poet in spite of the great popularity of his romances, he now turned his attention to the novel as a means of giving play to his wide erudition, his humor and his sympathies. His novels appeared anonymously. Among his 28 novels are: *Waverly* (1814), *Rob Roy* (1818), *Ivanhoe* (1819), *Kenilworth* (1821), *Quentin Durward* (1823). Scott was created a baronet in 1820 and avowed of the novels in 1827. Scott's influence as a novelist was incalculable. He established the form of the historical novel so emphatically that its influence spread throughout Europe, and it continued to flourish for the rest of the century in England in the works of William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy etc.

Ivanhoe is Walter Scott's most popular novel and the first of his works to be set in England. The period is the reign of Richard I (1189- 99). Scott was severely criticized by historians for his inaccurate account of Saxon-Norman enmity persisting into the 12th century. But the success of his novel lies with its skillful blend of fact, myth and romance, combined with a vivid, if fanciful, interpretation of medieval life.

Kenilworth (1821) is set in Elizabethan England (1533-1603). The story is Scott's interpretation of the events which led to the mysterious death of the beautiful Amy Robsart in 1560.

Introducing historical personages into his narration, Scott not only depicts their role in social life, but portrays their personalities. Queen Elizabeth's speech characterization is managed with great depth of insight. Her manner is highly emotional and her mood ever changing. The fiery temper of the Queen, who is shown not only as the daughter of Henry VIII, but the daughter of her epoch as well, is revealed with great skill.

8.3 *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell

Scott O'Dell is one of America's leading writers of books for young readers. In 1972 he was the first American to receive the Hans Christian Andersen Medal, the highest international recognition for a body of work by an author of children's books.

Island of the Blue Dolphins (1960) is one of the most powerful realistic stories about native Americans set in the past. The book won the Newbery Medal in 1961. Scott O'Dell, who is best known for his historical novels, established the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical fiction in 1981.

The island called in this book the Island of the Blue Dolphins was settled by Indians, but was not discovered by white men until 1602. In that year the Spanish explorer Sebastian Vizcaino set out from Mexico in search of a port where treasure galleons from the Philippines could find shelter in case of distress. Sailing north along the California coast, he sighted the island, sent a small boat ashore and named it La Isla de san Nicolas, in honor of the patron saint of sailors, travelers, and merchants.

As the centuries passed, California changed from Spanish to Mexican hands, the Americans arrived, but only occasional hunters visited the island. Its Indian inhabitants remained in isolation. There are no Indians on the Island now. It is a secret base of the United States Navy.

In the early 1800s, a twelve-year-old Indian girl from the Island of Blue Dolphins boards a ship that is to carry the tribe away from their island where they are being destroyed by Aleutian seal hunters. But when Karana sees that her little brother has accidentally been left behind, she jumps off the moving ship and swims back to him and their island home. The two are left stranded. A pack of wild dogs kills her brother and begins to stalk the solitary girl. Year after year, she watched one season pass into another and waited; she kept herself alive by building a shelter, making weapons, finding food, and fighting her enemies, the wild dogs. Karana spent 18 years on the island. It is not only an unusual adventure of survival, but also a tale of natural beauty and personal discovery. The woman whose story Scott O'Dell attempted to recreate lived alone upon that island from 1835 to 1853 and is known to history as 'The Lost Woman of san Nicolas'.

8.4. Suggested Assignments

1. Read a historical novel written by an English or American writer. Find additional information about the period. Make a chart to show what you have learned about the period from the book and what you have learned about it from other sources.
2. Compile an annotated bibliography of historical fiction by English and American writers. What historical periods do they describe?
3. One value of reading historical fiction is the development of an understanding that certain human qualities persist through each century and tie the past to the present. Read a historical novel and make a list of values. Explain why these values are important now, in the twenty-first century.

PART 9.

PICTURE BOOKS

'What is the use of book', thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?'

Lewis Carroll

- 9.1. *Definition of Picture Books***
- 9.2. *Types of Picture Books***
- 9.3. *Outstanding Illustrators of Children's Books***
- 9.4. *Beatrix Potter***
- 9.5. *Dr. Seuss***
- 9.6. *Suggested Assignments***

9.1. Definition of Picture Books

Picture books are books with little or no text in which the illustrations are the dominant feature. The illustrations are essential to the enjoyment and understanding of the story.

The illustrations in the picture books are integral to the story. They provide actual plot or concept information as well as clues to character traits, settings, and moods. Without the illustrations, therefore, these books would be of no value, and in some cases the story would make no sense. In many picture books the writer and the illustrator may be the same person.

Just as the body of writing for children developed slowly, with children at first simply reading those adult books that had some interest for them, so has the illustration of children's books developed slowly, bursting into the wealth and variety of art in the twentieth century.

Picture books enable children to enjoy literature from their earliest years, since they can 'read' the illustrations to follow the story or to name the objects or characters depicted.

Hearing good picture books read aloud can help children learn to read and value reading. Reading and discussing picture books bring young children and adults together for an enjoyable shared activity. Of particular value is the practice of rereading picture books aloud. Young children often ask to read the same book time after time, because they love the story and the pictures. Quite naturally, they memorize the text and, in this way, learn many of the fundamentals of reading. Sharing picture books with children fosters language development. They stimulate children's imagination and curiosity, and provide them with rich vocabulary. Picture books can foster children's appreciation of art. The picture book affords opportunities for self-discovery experiences. The eye appeal of books is of tremendous importance, and the artists play a significant role in books for children. In the picture book, children's books have found their own individual voice and have influenced literature in general.

9.2. Types of Picture Books

Picture books cover a wide variety of children's books, ranging from nursery rhymes books and toy books for very young children to picture storybooks with plots that satisfy more experienced, older children.

Carl M. Tomlinson and Carol Lynch Brown distinguish the following types of picture books: baby books, interactive books, toy books, Mother Goose and Nursery Rhyme books, nursery and folk songbooks, alphabet books, counting books, concept books, wordless books, picture storybooks, easy-to-read books, picture books for older readers, transitional books.

Baby books, for use with children aged 0 to 2. These books have little or no text. **Interactive books**, for children aged 2 to 6. These books have little text. Both baby and interactive books stimulate a child's verbal or physical participation by asking direct questions, encouraging clapping or moving to the rhythm of the words, or requiring the child to touch or manipulate the book or find objects in the illustrations. **Toy books** are sometimes called engineered or mechanical books. Toy books can be found for all ages. These books use paper that has been engineered (i.e., cut, folded, constructed) to provide pop-up, see-through, movable, changeable, or three-dimensional illustrations. **Mother Goose and Nursery Rhyme books** are heavily illustrated collections of traditional verse. **Alphabet books** present the alphabet letter by letter in order to acquaint young children with the shapes, names, and sounds of the twenty-six letters. **Counting books** present numbers, usually from 1 to 10, to acquaint young children with the numerals and their shapes, the number names, the concept of how many each numeral represents, and the counting sequence. **Concept books** explain an idea or concept (e.g., opposites), an object, or an activity. **Wordless books** depend entirely on carefully sequenced illustrations to present a story. In **picture storybooks** both illustrations and text are equally responsible for telling the story. **Easy-to-read books** use large print, much space between lines, and limited vocabulary. **Picture books for older readers** are generally more sophisticated, abstract, or complex in theme, stories, and illustrations, and are suitable for children aged ten and older. **Transitional books** lie somewhere between picture books and full-length novels.

Zena Sutherland, in *Children and Books*, ninth edition, distinguishes eight types of books for the very young: Mother Goose books, ABC books, counting books, concept books, wordless books, books for beginning readers, picture storybooks, and toy books. Zena Sutherland explains further that "although books for younger children are usually more heavily illustrated, there are many profusely illustrated books that are most appropriate for older children because of their subjects, complexity, or sophistication. These are also, if one uses the term in a broader sense, picture books."

9.3. Outstanding Illustrators of Children's Books

There are so many creative twentieth century illustrators of children's books that it is impossible to discuss them all - even briefly. Our list includes just a few great names. They are: **Beatrix Potter**, whose books mark the beginning of the modern picture story; **Arthur Rackham**, whose distinctive work is easily recognized; **Ernest Shepard**, whose pen-and-ink sketches are widely and affectionately known; **Garth Williams**, who illustrated E.B. White's famous *Charlotte's Web* and Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* books; **Maurice Sendak**, the first American artist to receive Hans Christian Andersen Medal (1970) for his illustrations; **Theodore Geisel**, who, as 'Dr. Seuss', used cartoon art with great skill.

From the 1950s onwards, the picture book, in all forms from the very junior board books to books which are actually for teenagers or adults, increased in quality and quantity. Peter Hunt mentions such influential illustrators of the second half of the twentieth century as **Brian Wildsmith** with his *ABC* (1961), **John Burningham** who became one of the foremost experimenters in the form with *Come away from the water, Shirley* (1977), the 'realist' artist **Shirley Hughes**, and **Quentin Blake** who has worked on nearly 200 books.

The works of some great illustrators of the nineteenth and twentieth century are well-known to the readers. One of them is Sir **John Tenniel** (1820-1914), who illustrated *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. He rose to prominence during the golden age of children's literature. That period, between 1860 and outbreak of the First World War, saw some dramatic social and political changes. Families became smaller and more stable, the respectable middle-class began to expand rapidly and books became cheaper. Sir John Tenniel was a cartoonist for *Punch*, an illustrated weekly comic periodical. But he is best known for his illustrations for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). His serious, pinafores, long-haired Alice, the smartly dressed, White Rabbit, and all the other mad, topsy-turvy characters of the Wonderland and the Looking Glass World are unforgettable. Strong in line and composition, drawn with beautiful clarity and poker-faced drollery, these illustrations enhance the fantasy and give it convincing reality.

Arthur Rackham's (1867-1939) first major success, an edition of Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, was published in 1900. *Mother Goose: The Old Nursery Rhymes* illustrated by Arthur Rackham is a splendid edition. The illustrations are of three types: pen-and-ink sketches, silhouettes, and full-page colour. The silhouettes are amazingly effective and the colour plates display many moods. These are pictures by an artist with imagination and a knowledge of folklore. His pictures for *The Fairy Tales of Grimm* made an immediate impression. There are no fluttering fairies to be found on his pages; instead, there are earthly gnomes, ogres, and witches, eerie, mysterious, and sometimes menacing.

In black and white or full colour his pictures are alive with details that the casual observer may miss - small, furry faces or elfin figures peering out from leaves or half hidden in grass. Rackham drew his pictures before painting them, a technique that seems to strengthen them, because whether the colours are dark and sombre or clear and light they have body and vitality. There is no denying Rackham's brilliant use of light and shade, but his tendency for sinister detail was sometimes thought too frightening for very young audiences, even though much of his work appeared in limited editions to be treasured as gifts rather than used for casual reading.

Arthur Rackham illustrated well over fifty books, and *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* by Barrie is one of them. I would like to draw your special attention to his illustrations for *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame. His characterizations of Mole, Ratty, Toad, and all the others are inimitable, and the details of picnics and cozy rooms enhance the warmth of that story. Here is an artist with unique gifts, which he devoted almost entirely to the illustration of books for children.

Ernest Howard Shepard (1879-1976) began drawing and painting as a small child. Later he studied at the Royal Academy. He became widely and affectionately known as a children's illustrator for his sketches to A. A. Milne's books in 1924 - 1928. These pen-and-ink sketches of Christopher Robin, Pooh, and their companions show mood and character. Even more successful were his illustrations for a new edition of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* in 1931. His pictures of Mole, Toad and other characters are sheer perfection.

Maurice Sendak (born in 1928) is an American children's writer and illustrator. Born in New York, the son of poor Jewish immigrants, he went to work as a window dresser after leaving school. His talents as an artist were soon noticed. After illustrating the books of others he began supplying his own texts. His most famous book, *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) was highly controversial, dividing critics between those who thought it too frightening and those who championed its imaginative brilliance.

9.4. Beatrix Potter

Writer and illustrator of children's literature, Beatrix Potter (1866- 1943) has a unique place in English literature. Born the only daughter of well-to-do parents in Kensington, she was taught at home by a governess. To enliven her otherwise dull and sheltered life, she kept a journal in code, drew, and painted, often using specimens from the nearby Natural History Museum. Her first book *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* was privately printed in 1901. Subsequent picture-books for the very young, issued during a long and profitable association with the publisher Frederick Warne include: *The tale of Squirrel Nutkin* (1903), *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggly-Winkle* (1905), *The Tale of Jeremy Fisher* (1906), *The Tale of Tom Kitten* (1907), *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck* (1908) and others. Her tales range from stories of escape from near-death to charming, eventless catalogues of animal domesticity. Each one, however, was written with

a natural ear for what she described as ‘fine-sounding words’. Her illustrations usually showed animal characters wearing human clothes but otherwise treated without sentimentality. After her marriage in 1913, Beatrix Potter went to live to Lake District, which she had learned to love during childhood holidays and which she made the setting for many of her books.

In this period there was a shift in the way in which children were addressed and among those who made this change most effectively, was the individual Beatrix Potter. Her contribution to the language of children’s literature is that of irony pitched at a level that the youngest can understand - for example, Peter Rabbit’s fears at the beginning of *Benjamin Bunny* or Jemima’s failure to recognize the true nature of the ‘furry, whiskered gentleman’ in *Jemima Puddle-Duck*. Potter combines this with a straightforwardness and lack of sentimentality.

She gave her readers credit for being able to cope unsentimentally with subjects like death. She showed her children as rebellious and naughty, and did not avoid loneliness or fear. Even a cursory look at her books demonstrates the subtlety of her dry humour, and the carefully constructed prose that reads easily aloud. The world she described and painted may be child-and animal-sized, but the codes of behaviour are those of an adult world.

Beatrix Potter’s *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, a milestone in children’s literature, marks the beginning of the modern picture story - the book in which pictures are so integral a part of the story that the non-reading child can soon ‘read’ the story from the pictures. Her clear watercolours show small animals dressed like human country folk. The pictures are as beautifully composed as the texts, and in her little books there is a perfect union of the two arts.

9.5. Dr. Seuss

Dr. Seuss is the pen-name of the American children’s writer, illustrator and publisher Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904-1991). He was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, and educated at Dartmouth College and at Oxford University, as a student of English literature. A self-taught sketch artist, for almost a decade Geisel earned a living as a cartoonist until, in 1937, using the pen name Dr. Seuss, he wrote and illustrated his first children’s book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. Its simple rhymed text and whimsy made it an instant success. It was followed soon after by books such as *The King’s Stilts* (1939) and *Horton Hatches the Egg* (1940), the story of an elephant duped by a bird to sit on her egg. During the World War II (1939-1945), Geisel wrote films for the war effort, winning an Academy Award in 1947 for *Design for Death*, a documentary about the Japanese people.

Geisel returned to writing children’s books with *McElligott’s Pond* (1947), and for the next several decades he produced about 40 books in all, including such perennial favorites as *Horton Hears a Who* (1954), *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957), the first-grade reader *The Cat in the Hat* (1957), *Green*

Eggs and Ham (1970), the environmentally concerned book *The Lorax* (1971), and the nuclear-war-related work *The Butter Battle* (1984). He is also remembered as the creator of the animated cartoon character Gerald McBoing, for which he won an Academy Award in 1951. He received a special Pulitzer Prize citation in 1984 for his lifetime contribution to the education and enjoyment of America's children and their parents. His last books - *You're Only Old Once* (1986) and *Oh, the places You'll Go!* (1990) - were written for adult audiences and were also best-sellers. The children's book *Daisy-Head Maysie* was published posthumously in 1995 based upon sketches and dialogues Geisel had created for an animated television special.

Dr. Seuss emerged as one of the great classics of children's literature. There is something about his books – a swing to the language, a deep understanding of the playful mind of a child, an indefinable something that makes Dr. Seuss a genius pure and simple. In his first book *And to think that I saw it on Mulberry Street*, a small boy sees only a horse and a wagon on the street:

All the long way to school
And all the way back,
I've looked and I've looked
And I've kept careful track,
But all that I've noticed
Except my own feet,
Was a horse and a wagon
On Mulberry Street.

The boy begins working up a bigger and bigger yarn to tell his father:

That can't be my story. That's only a start.
I'll say that a ZEBRA was pulling that cart!
And that is a story that no one can beat,
When I say that I saw it on Mulberry Street.

Each succeeding page pictures the next addition to his tale until, finally, two pages across are necessary to include everything:

He swung 'round the corner
And he dashed through the gate,
He ran up the steps
And he felt simply GREAT
For he had a story that NO ONE could beat!
And to think that he saw it on Mulberry Street!

Then his father fixes him with a cold stare and his tale diminishes suddenly, leaving only a

horse and a wagon on Mulberry Street:

But Dad said quite calmly,

“Just draw up your stool

And tell me the sights

On the way home from school.”

There was so much to tell, I just COULDN'T BEGIN!

Dad looked at me sternly from there in his seat,

“Was there nothing to look at...no people to greet?

Did nothing excite you or make your heart beat?”

“Nothing”, I said, growing red as a beet,

But a plain horse and wagon on Mulberry Street.

Dr. Seuss had the cartoonist's gift for expressing a great deal of humour in a single line or word, or picture. He had the ability to create in uncluttered pictures and text the kind of humour young children enjoy best of all - endless word play, strange situations, and much action.

9.6. Suggested Assignments

- 1.** Choose one of the greatest twentieth-century English or American artists who made an impact on children's illustrations. Read biographical information and find examples of their illustrations. Report your findings to the class.
- 2.** Choose several different editions of nursery rhymes. Compare the artists' interpretations of characters.
- 3.** Find several picture books that develop a story about an animal. Compare the ways different artists depict the animal through illustrations.
- 4.** Make a list of Moldovan illustrators of children's books. What books have they illustrated? Find information about the artists. Share your information with the class.

SELECTED WORKS

Listed under the date of the first publication, with short titles

- 1719 Daniel Defoe, *Robison Crusoe*
- 1726 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*
- 1806 Charles and Mary Lamb, *Tables from Shakespeare*
- 1820 Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*
- 1823 James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*
- 1826 James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*
- 1846 Edward Lear, *A Book of Nonsense*
Harriet Beecher-Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- 1864 Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
- 1868 Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*
- 1871 Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*
- 1872 George Macdonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*
- 1876 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
- 1877 Anna Swell, *Black Beauty*
- 1883 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*
- 1884 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- 1885 Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses*
- 1888 Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince*
- 1889 Joseph Jacobs, *English Fairy Tales*
- 1894 Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book*
- 1895 Kenneth Grahame, *The Golden Age*
- 1898 Herbert G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*
- 1899 E. Nesbit, *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*
- 1900 Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*
- 1901 Walter de la Mare, *Songs of Childhood*
Rudyard Kipling, *Just So Stories*
E. Nesbit, *Five Children and It*
Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*
- 1903 Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*
Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*
- 1904 James M. Barrie, *Peter Pan* (first performance)
- 1905 Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess*

- 1906 James M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*
- 1908 Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*
- 1908 L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*
- 1911 Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*
- 1912 Jean Webster, *Daddy-Long-Legs*
- 1916 Eleanor Farjeon, *Nursery Rhymes in London Town*
- 1926 A. A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh*
- 1930 Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*
- 1932 Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House in the Big Woods*
- 1933 John Steinbeck, *The Red Pony*
- 1934 P. L. Travers, *Mary Poppins*
- 1935 Eve Garnett, *The Family from One End Street*
- 1937 J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*
 Dr. Seuss, *And to Think that I Saw it on Mulberry Street*
- 1951 J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*
- 1952 E. B. White, *Charlotte's Web*
 Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*
- 1954 Meindert De Jong, *The Wheel on the School*
- 1955 Peter and Iona Opie, *The Oxford Rhyme Book*
 Eleanor Farjeon, *The Little Book Room*
- 1957 Dr. Seuss, *The Cat in the Hat*
- 1958 Philippa Pearce, *Tom's Midnight Garden*
 Elizabeth George Spare, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*
- 1960 Scott O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphin*
 Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*
- 1961 Sheila Burnford, *The Incredible Journey*
- 1962 Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*
- 1976 Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*
- 1977 Katherine Paterson, *Bridge of Terabithia*
- 1991 Beatrice Siegel, *Faithful Friend. The Story of Florence Nightingale*
- 1997 J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*
- 1998 J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

Glossary

Culture. It is a term used by scientists for a people's way of life. It may refer to activities in such fields as art, literature and music. It consists of all the ideas, objects and ways of doing things created by the group. *Culture* includes arts, beliefs, customs, invention, language, technology and traditions.

Literature. Through *literature* – which includes plays, poems, novels – people write about their thoughts, ideas and hopes. But not everything that is written down is *literature*. Writing becomes *literature* only if it is well written, corresponds to the best standards of Art and covers subjects of lasting interest to people of all societies.

Plot. The main events of a play, novel, film, or similar work, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence.

Characters. The essential part of most literature is the writer's description of the *characters* – the people who take part in the plot. The writer shows the personality of the *characters* by writing about how they react to events in the story.

Theme. The plots and characters in literature can be entertaining, but writers use them to give the reader a much more general *message*. Theme is defined as a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work, which may be stated directly or indirectly. It is often about a social or political subject.

Oral literature. People created stories long before writing was invented. *Oral literature* is literature that is spoken or sung as opposed to that which is written, though much oral literature has been transcribed.^[1] There is no standard definition, as folklorists have varying descriptions for oral literature or folk literature. A broad conceptualization refers to it as literature characterized by oral transmission and the absence of any fixed form. It includes the stories, legends, and history passed from generations in a spoken form.

Epics and Sagas. *Epics* and *sagas* tell the story of legendary heroes and their deeds. An *epic* tells the story as a long poem; *saga* is in prose – it does not rhyme as the verses of a poem do.

Poetry. *Poetry* is different from other forms of literature because it usually has rhythm and rhyme. In a poem with rhythm the accents or beats in each line follow a pattern that is repeated in each verse, like the verses of a song. In poems that rhyme, lines end with words that sound similar.

Stories present a connected series of events told through words (written or spoken), imagery (still and moving), body language, performance, music, or any other form of communication. Most *stories* describe a single incident or cover a short period time. There are children's *stories* about every subject from adventure and animal stories to ghosts.

Novel- a relatively long work of narrative fiction, normally written in prose form, and which is typically published as a book. The present English word for a long work of prose fiction derives from the Italian: *novella* for "new", "news", or "short story of something new". Today, *novels* are the most popular form of literature.

Biography or simply **bio**, is a detailed description of a person's life. It involves more than just the basic facts like education, work, relationships, and death; it portrays a person's experience of these life events. In an *autobiography* the writer tells the story of his or her own life.

Drama. Literature that is written to be performed by actors is called *drama*. Different countries have their own forms of *drama*. Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance: a play, opera, mime, ballet, etc., performed in a theatre, or on radio or television. Considered as a genre of poetry in general, the dramatic mode has been contrasted with the epic and the lyrical modes ever since Aristotle's *Poetics* (c. 335 BC)—the earliest work of dramatic theory.

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A successful book is not made of what is *in* it,
but of what is left *out* of it.

Mark Twain