Children's Literature

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 **أسئلة للتفكير والتقييم الذاتي.**

 **أنشطة ومهام.**

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INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

When a blunt old sheep breaks the news to Wilbur, a pig, that he's being fattened for slaughter, the distraught Wilbur tears through the barn crying that he does not want to die. Charlotte, a kindly maternal spider, agrees to help him, and days later the farm awakens to find a magnificent web with letters spelling "Some Pig!" woven into it. This scene embodies the magic and fantasy of E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952), which depicts the extraordinary friendship between a pig and a spider while confronting child readers directly with the realities of life and death.

Children's books are full of iconic moments such as this. Think of Alice's falling down the rabbit hole into Wonderland while chasing the White Rabbit, Tom Sawyer's tricking the neighborhood boys into whitewashing Aunt Polly's fence, and Dorothy's walking down the yellow brick road to Oz. We can begin to understand what makes them memorable, and what makes such classics so important and well loved, by learning to read children's literature *critically*. While "critically" may suggest a hostile, fault-finding approach, we mean it in the sense of "critical analysis," the close reading of texts that brings our own and others' perspectives and contexts to bear on them. By reading children's literature critically, we can learn much about ourselves, our society, and indeed, our culture, past and present.

COMMON ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

A number of common assumptions about children's literature can interfere with reading it critically. For example, some readers might assume that children's literature is so simple and obvious that it does not require analysis, or that all children's books are like

Charlotte's Web: fairly short, using simple language, and including fantastical elements. Others might think that children's literature is simply meant to be enjoyed and that treating it seriously is silly or interferes with enjoyment. Still others think they know exactly what children are like, and have not considered that what it means to be a child has changed dramatically over time, affecting how children's literature is written. Other assumptions about children's literature contribute to dismissive attitudes about it, but the following are perhaps the most common:

"Children's literature is too simple and obvious to be read critically." Elizabeth Law, a children's book editor at Viking, notes: "Many writers assume that because children are smaller, and their books are smaller, that children are less complex, easier to please—and therefore easier to write for" (17). She rejects this assumption: for an adult to write for children, which usually involves writing simultaneously for adults, requires the kind of intellectual and creative gymnastics that cannot be described as "easy." Francelia Butler, who helped establish the first scholarly journal devoted to children's literature, wrote about resistance to studying it critically: "Many arguments are advanced to justify this situation. The oft-repeated one is, 'Children's literature is so simple and obvious that any fool can understand it. It doesn't need study'" (8). If children's literature is simple, the argument goes, no special preparation or tools are needed to understand it, and a course or book on children's literature is unnecessary. For some, the very familiarity of children's stories, as represented by the iconic moments listed above, might create the impression of simplicity. However, as we explain throughout this book, children's literature can be linguistically, thematically, and formally complex even while appearing otherwise.

"Children's literature is pure, innocent, and uncontroversial." Another common assumption about children's literature is that it is devoid of elements associated with adults and adult culture, such as sexuality, racial discrimination, class distinctions, or violence and trauma. However, children's literature—in depicting the lives,

pleasures, fears, and anxieties of children—often includes elements that might seem upsetting or too mature in content. The frequent controversies that surround these books, and the numerous attempts to limit children's access to them, point to the inclusion of sophisticated elements some adults find disturbing in works for young people. Children live in a world primarily created by and for adults, so no strict line divides the experiences and environments of younger and older members of a community. We should therefore expect to find elements associated with adults and adult culture in works for and about children.

"Critical analysis takes the fun out of reading children's literature." Finally, some adult readers resist thinking critically about children's literature because they worry that doing so "ruins" the work or their childhood memories of it. Such resistance reflects assumptions that children's literature is only or primarily a source of uncritical pleasure for the child and nostalgia for the adult and that critical thinking interferes with this pleasure. Some readers do not want to discover that they did not understand all the meanings or implications of a text when they were children, or they might not want to create new understandings that could compete with older ones. In this view, children's literature is simply meant to be enjoyed without requiring too much effort. However, understanding how texts work and what they mean can actually contribute to one's reading pleasure, so we encourage readers to be receptive to analyzing children's literature.

WHAT IT MEANS TO READ CRITICALLY

Reading children's literature critically enables us to challenge these assumptions. The analysis of literature—or reading critically—involves investigating what texts mean and how they work, understanding the relationships between texts and significant ideologies or social systems and experiences such as gender or race, placing texts within literary or cultural histories, and examining

specific elements such as a text's themes, literary devices, production, structure, language, uses, or reception. Because no single exercise in analysis or critical reading undertakes all these tasks at once, critics must make difficult decisions about how to focus their attention and about which methodological approach is most effective for a given project. Literary critics read texts closely, learn about the history of literature and literary forms, consider the historical and cultural contexts of works, and use different theoretical concepts and approaches to understand the text, context, and reader.

Reading Closely

The practice of **close reading** involves paying careful attention to the language of the text, including the histories and meanings of words and their connotations. The critic searches for the implications of the use of particular words and explores how language is used to produce different meanings.

For instance, a close reading of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) reveals that scale (size and dimension) and Mary's perception of scale are important to understanding her feelings and actions in the novel. Reading closely, we note that the novel is mostly focalized through Mary (that is, much of the description indicates Mary's perception). When she is led to her room at Misselthwaite Manor, the narrator communicates how immense the house seems to her: "And then Mary Lennox was led up a broad staircase and down a long corridor and up a short flight of steps and through another corridor and another, until a door opened in a wall and she found herself in a room with a fire in it and a supper on a table" (15). The enormity of the house and grounds, from Mary's childhood perspective, and the novelty of the manor and landscape, offer Mary much to explore. Having spaces and mysteries to investigate makes her domestic situation, which might otherwise be dull, an extraordinary adventure. The reader is able to understand Mary and the novel better by reading Burnett's language closely.

Considering Literary History and Forms

Reading critically also involves an awareness of literary history, how literature has changed over time and what defines different movements, forms, genres, or techniques. Being able to situate a text in a particular literary movement or to recognize how it reflects, modifies, or defies the conventions of a specific genre helps direct the reader's attention and prompts discoveries that might otherwise be overlooked.

As an example, readers might note that *The Secret Garden* includes elements of gothic literature, which is characterized by a mood or tone of darkness and mystery; the depiction of large, decaying architectural structures; a focus on emotional or disturbed characters who possess psychological depth; and the intrusion of the past into the present or the experience of being literally or symbolically haunted. Given that gothic fiction is characterized by a sense in which the past lingers too long or haunts the present, we are led to question what plays that role in *The Secret Garden.* Colin, Mary's sickly cousin, and his dead mother could be said to haunt Misselthwaite Manor, creating a mystery for Mary to investigate. Reading the novel in the context of gothic literature prompts us to consider what it means that mother and son both haunt the home or even that the home is a place of fear rather than comfort. An awareness of generic conventions helps the reader make sense of these elements.

Examining Historical and Cultural Contexts

A critical reader of children's literature also examines how the historical and cultural contexts of authors affect the composition of their work and its reception by readers. Ideologies and discourses (ways of thinking and communicating) circulating at a given time and in a given place influence or construct how individuals see the world, making it possible to think in certain ways as well as impossible or difficult to imagine alternatives. Virtually all aspects of culture and society are filtered through, or constructed by,

ideological and discursive frameworks that shape and create thought and perception. We are often influenced by our historical and cultural contexts without being fully aware of those influences. Even what seem like very individual choices, such as what to wear or whom to pursue romantically, are significantly encouraged, enabled, constrained, or prevented by our historical and cultural contexts.

One important way of reading critically consists of analyzing literary texts for the traces of these unacknowledged historical and cultural influences. A critical reader considers how the qualities, events, and ways of thinking and perceiving that characterize a particular historical moment are manifested in the text, constrain its production, or influence what readers notice or understand.

For instance, when Burnett was writing *The Secret Garden* in 1910, the British Empire was still at its height, and that context leaves its traces throughout the novel. M. Daphne Kutzer, considering colonialism as a context for *The Secret Garden,* develops precisely this analysis: "Mary's behavior in the garden echoes that of colonial explorers in India and elsewhere" (59). The facts of the novel also refer more explicitly to colonialism. Mary was born in India because her father held an important position as an agent of the British Empire. Mary's ill temper and disagreeable appearance are attributed to her time in India. The family's Indian servants catered to Mary's every whim, and when she arrives in England after the deaths of her parents, she expects the same treatment from the white British servants. She later refers to her tyrannical cousin as a "Rajah." Both Mary and Colin are associated with India and "Indianness," but working with the English soil and breathing the English air in the secret garden "heals" them, as though England itself heals them. Noting how these elements of the text emerge out of Burnett's historical and cultural context constitutes one of the primary strategies for reading critically.

Using Critical and Theoretical Concepts and Approaches

Since the 1960s, critical approaches to literary analysis have become increasingly diverse, offering critics and scholars a variety of concepts and methods with which to explore literature. These approaches include, among others, deconstruction, feminist and gender theory, historicist and Marxist approaches, reader response theory, psychoanalysis, postcolonial theory, biographical analysis, disability theory, ecocriticism, and queer theory. Each critical approach offers a unique focus and its own set of questions, and each is associated with a vocabulary and set of concepts with which to think and write about literature. These terms and concepts provide a critical framework that gives shape to analysis, helping to direct the critic's attention, generating useful lines of inquiry, and providing tools with which to hypothesize answers and develop explanatory claims. Reading critically benefits from a familiarity with these critical approaches, even if a specific project integrates multiple approaches or undertakes interdisciplinary work.

Critic Jerry Phillips, for example, reads *The Secret Garden* through the lens of social class. He notes, "At the center of *The Secret Garden* is an anatomy of social hierarchy, a laboratory of class relations: the great country house" (172). Phillips pays close attention to how Mary interacts with Martha, a domestic servant, and Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener. Martha, for instance, "refuses to see herself as a mere instrument of her social superiors. She resolves to do her duties, but no more," and Ben similarly refuses to bow to the authority of Mary, who was accustomed to ordering her servants around in India (175). The issues of class and shifting class relations in turn-of-the-century England provide the critical framework for this analysis of the novel, but other critics have approached *The Secret Garden* from feminist, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial perspectives. Complex works such as this novel can be read from multiple perspectives.

WHY READ CHILDREN'S LITERATURE CRITICALLY?

Dual Address and Complexity

We read children's literature critically to understand its complex meanings and operations. One source of complexity is its management of multiple audiences. Many children's books that prove durable, remaining in circulation or print for decades or even centuries, are those that appeal to both children and adults. Barbara Wall coined the term **"dual address"** to describe the way some works for children move between addressing child readers and addressing adult readers (Wall 9), while U.C. Knoepflmacher and Sandra L. Beckett use the term "crosswriting" to refer to the practice of writing for children and adults at the same time (Beckett xi). Because of the dual address or practice of crosswriting, some children's literature appeals to the sensibilities of adult readers and contains allusions or references aimed at the adult audience.

Moreover, the notion of a separate literature for children is relatively recent historically, and Wall finds that Victorian children's literature was often characterized by an "adult narrative voice" that "exhibited strong consciousness of the presence of adult readers" (9). Many literary forms, such as fairy tales and fables, were meant for both adults and children and were constructed to appeal to both. Even now, adults produce and buy almost all the literature destined for child readers. Writers must thus add elements to attract and hold the interest of adults, with the result that seemingly simple books for children contain several layers of complex meaning.

Linguistic and Narrative Complexity

A book such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is clearly a complex work of art with a sophisticated and extensive vocabulary, yet we need to rethink the assumption that books with a limited vocabulary, including picturebooks, are not complex. Iconic children's author Dr. Seuss created *The Cat in the Hat* (1957) from a vocabulary of 250 words and *Green Eggs and Ham* (1960) from a vocabulary of 50 words. Even with a limited vocabulary, though, he managed to communicate complicated thought and expression, such as the uncertain ending of *The Cat in the Hat,* where the children consider whether to tell their mother

what has been happening all day. The short book ends with a question—"What would YOU do / If your mother asked YOU?"—prompting the reader to participate actively in solving a complex ethical dilemma. Seuss's illustrations are dynamic and challenging to the viewer, despite or perhaps because of their roots in the tradition of editorial cartoons. The texts of Seuss's books are their own form of unique, dense, and exhilarating poetry. Despite their immediately recognizable rhyme schemes, they feature unexpected juxtapositions, surprising rhymes, and fantastic situations.

What are the elements that lend an apparently simple and short text a form of complexity? Allan Luke draws attention to the literary depth of Arnold Lobel's Frog and Toad series, which is intended for beginning readers: "While pitched at a primer level audience, Lobel's Frog and Toad stories nonetheless employ such literary devices as stories within stories, dream and stream of consciousness sequences to portray and invite the further construction of imaginative possible worlds" (111). Lobel's Frog and Toad books, like Seuss's works, ask a great deal of their young readers. In his essay "Children, Irony, and Philosophy," Gareth Matthews discovers philosophical dilemmas in *Frog and Toad Together* (1992), such as the nature of bravery as explored in the story "Dragons and Giants." In this story, Frog and Toad wonder whether they are brave, and Frog asserts that climbing a mountain will reveal the truth. On the mountain, they encounter various terrifying perils (a snake, an avalanche, a hawk), but exclaim that they are not afraid. Still, they run away, and when they get back to Toad's house, Frog hides in the closet and Toad cowers under the covers. This story raises a number of questions: What does it mean to be brave? What is the difference between acting brave and *being* brave? Do brave people have to be brave *all the time*?

Likewise, a number of contemporary picturebooks have displayed an impressive level of complexity. For example, in David Macaulay's *Black and White* (1990), four seemingly unrelated narratives are intertwined—each with a separate visual style and story. Readers are encouraged to speculate on the connections between the narratives through subtle clues that they are related, and all offer

different perspectives on the same event. Macaulay's book challenges literary and pictorial conventions and requires an extremely sophisticated engagement with narrative. We study children's literature in order to understand these different kinds of complexity and meaning, as we would with adult literature.

Didacticism and the Lessons of Children's Literature

In addition to being complex, children's literature is a key site for transmitting values and educating children. This fact makes it especially important—it has a profound impact on socialization and society. By better understanding the texts produced and given to children, we gain a stronger understanding of the broader culture in which we live. As Mitzi Myers explains, "Because children's tales perform a variety of cultural functions, they are crammed with clues to changes in attitudes, values, and behavior. Above all, these key agents of socialization diagram what cultures want of their young and expect of those who tend them" (33). Some children's books are intentionally instructional. The term **"didactic"** is used to describe books that are specifically designed to teach a lesson, whether moral, political, religious, social, or practical. Critics such as Myers have demonstrated that even didactic works can be complex, important, and pleasurable (55). As we will discuss in Chapter 2, much of the history of children's literature has been defined by didacticism or by efforts to avoid it.

The Transmission of Cultural Values

Even texts that are not intentionally didactic can teach, influence, or shape readers. Reading children's literature critically can reveal those cultural values and teach us about ourselves. *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1899) is a striking example of a children's book that conveys the norms and assumptions of its time. Helen Bannerman, a Scottish woman living in India, wrote and illustrated the book to amuse her two daughters. The fanciful story of an Indian boy who eludes and ultimately triumphs over a ferocious tiger, *Sambo* has

long been the source of controversy because Bannerman's illustrations are similar to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century racist caricatures of Africans and African Americans. Sambo and his parents are depicted as very dark skinned and as having wooly hair, thick lips, broad smiles, and wide eyes. As Tammy Mielke explains, numerous versions of *Sambo* were published in the United States between 1900 and 1950, and many included new pictures by American illustrators who further exaggerated the characters' racial features, drawing on minstrel traditions that mocked African Americans. Mielke notes that these American illustrations "parallel historical attitudes towards African American people, showing the power of illustration in reflecting cultural attitudes and how African American childhood is constructed through visual means" (3). Though Bannerman's purpose might not have been to inculcate racist stereotypes, her book nonetheless contributed to a wider discourse that presented people of color as ridiculous and inferior. As Mielke demonstrates, a study of the book's changing American illustrations over the course of the twentieth century can illuminate evolving representations of African Americans and broader changes in American culture.

The popularity or reception of works is also indicative of prevailing cultural mores. J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, published between 1997 and 2007, has attained an almost unprecedented worldwide popularity. Combining various genres of children's literature—fantasy, realism, the school story, adventure—the seven-book series follows the exploits of the boy-wizard named Harry and his friends Ron and Hermione as they confront the growing threat of Lord Voldemort, an evil wizard. Given its widespread appeal, the series and readers' response to it provide useful signposts to the state of various cultural concerns. For example, readers have debated the series' representation of girls and girlhood as embodied by Hermione. Hermione appears more knowledgeable about magic than Harry or Ron, and yet her frequent emotional displays and need for rescuing create a complex picture of modern girlhood. The series also raises questions about class-based hierarchies through the treatment of the house-elves, who

serve as mostly dutiful servants to the wizards. In addition, nonwizards, or Muggles, become the object of scorn by some in the wizarding community who believe that Muggles and half-Muggles lack "pure blood." These plot elements parallel aspects of racial politics and racism in Europe and North America. The series continues to engage with issues of race and gender/sexuality. When Noma Dumezweni was cast to play the adult Hermione in the play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child,* Rowling tweeted her support of the casting of a black actor, writing, "Canon: brown eyes, frizzy hair and very clever. White skin was never specified." In 2007, after the publication of the seventh book in the series, Rowling told an audience of fans that she considered Dumbledore to be gay, prompting many readers to revisit their interpretations of the character. Moreover, the controversy surrounding the series because of opposition from some religious communities attests to the continued conflicts between secular and religious cultures, and Rowling herself has received criticism for her appropriation of Native American culture on the Pottermore website where she has continued to expand the world of the series. The changes made to editions or translations of the books for readers in different countries point to assumptions about differences in national tastes or to the operation and effect of language, such as the change from the British "Philosopher's Stone" to the American "Sorcerer's Stone" or the problem of the name Tom Marvolo Riddle as an anagram for "I am Lord Voldemort" for non-English editions.

Children's literature transmits information and values of the culture from which it emerges, and it can influence readers in subtle ways to accept and internalize beliefs, perceptions, and expectations. Narrative and language are chief mechanisms for the transmission of information and values, so literature and our ability to understand it remain vital to society. Children's literature is as diverse in content, theme, plot, character, setting, genre, and style as adult literature; as such, it addresses a wide range of human relationships, social issues, and cultural practices. Writers are always influenced by the culture of the time and place in which they live and write, even in ways that they are unconscious of, and so the

traces of that cultural context can be seen in their work, whether authors intend those elements to appear or not. Critics, too, can sometimes fail to notice such elements of a work at the time, since the ideological traces of the wider culture can become more apparent as time passes and as scholars develop a critical perspective from which to analyze texts and their contexts.

Subversive or Hegemonic?

Does children's literature reinforce dominant, or hegemonic, cultural values, or does it subvert them by offering resistant representations that undermine traditional ways of thinking? Texts rarely just do one or the other, and reading children's literature critically can involve considering how a text reinforces or resists hegemonic values. Jacqueline Rose argues that children's literature imagines and constructs the figure of the child, one that she suggests is a fantasy of and for adults. In her classic study *The Case of Peter Pan, or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984), Rose investigates "what it is that adults, through literature, want or demand of the child" (137). The child of children's literature, she argues, serves as the embodiment of innocence and purity for adults who lack these qualities, and thus in this view children's literature reinforces the hegemonic values of adult culture. Alison Lurie, in contrast, argues that many writers of classic children's literature "tended to overturn rather than uphold the conventional values of their period or background" (xii). In a world dominated by economic and commercial interests, children's literature offers a subversive critique by implying that "what matters is art, imagination, and truth" (Lurie xi). Lurie notes that many child protagonists act rebelliously and question adults and the world around them by imagining different ways of thinking and being. She suggests, in fact, that part of the appeal of children's literature is its subversive or oppositional relationship to dominant, adult cultural values. In their Introduction to *Tales for Little Rebels* (2008), Julia L. Mickenberg and Philip Nel observe that "the very idea of 'radical children's literature' may be surprising, because we do not

commonly think of the connections between children's literature and politics. But children's literature has always been ideological" (1). Mickenberg and Nel confirm this claim with their extensive collection of overtly political children's works, such as an excerpt from *The Child's Socialist Reader* published in 1907. Rarely does a text simply reinforce or resist dominant culture by being either entirely subversive or entirely hegemonic in its representations. To read children's literature critically, we must seek to understand the complex relationship it has to other discourses and practices. We can do so by analyzing the child it imagines and constructs, as well as the adult who participates in this construction, benefits from it, or feels threatened by it.

Literature does not just represent the world, but also constructs the world; it depicts the world not only as it is, but also as it might be. Literature, as a form of art, can help readers see the world differently or anew and thus help them envision alternatives to current or dominant beliefs and ways of living. Because children's literature, like adult literature, ultimately both reflects and constructs the world, the study of children's literature can provide critical insight into many of the most important domains of culture and society and dimensions of identity and experience: race, class, gender, sexuality, age, nation, region, religion, kinship, education, history, and others.

Pleasure and Unpleasure

As a literary art form, children's literature *is* complex, and its complexity is one reason that it is able to give so much pleasure, that it can be read over and over again and be experienced differently each time. The history of children's literature is marked not only by didacticism and the impulse to instruct but also by literary innovation and artistry. Many of the works that remain memorable or mark significant milestones in the history of children's literature are those that demonstrate innovation by expanding the definitions or boundaries of writing for youth, by experimenting with forms and themes, by playing with conventions

and expectations, and by taking creative chances in using words and images in literary and artistic ways.

As we've noted, some readers worry that analyzing cultural texts interferes with pleasure, but we might also note how unsettling it is to be confused by a text or uncertain about its meaning. Learning a new skill or achieving comprehension of ideas can be a source of great relief and satisfaction. Just as understanding the history of art and artistic movements can help a viewer make sense of a work of art in a museum, thereby deriving pleasure from understanding the work's meaning or composition or its place in a larger movement or history, understanding the history of children's literature and how children's literature works can enhance the pleasure of reading it and allow us to reread with pleasure. For instance, a complex work such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* contains numerous allusions to other literary texts and historical events. While the nonsense and strangeness of the book can be enjoyed without recognizing these references, understanding them allows readers to notice jokes they might otherwise miss, allowing new and different pleasures to be discovered.

Children's literature can also be unpleasurable. It can generate anxiety or discomfort or depict frightening and disturbing elements. The disorienting quality of *Alice's Adventures* could be upsetting to some readers, as might the terrifying scissor-man of Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter* (1845), who chops off the thumbs of children who refuse to stop sucking them. The unhappy fates of the children in Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) or in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events: The Bad Beginning* (1999) might be frightening, as might historical fiction for children about war and atrocity, such as Toshi Maruki's *Hiroshima No Pika* (1982), a picturebook about the bombing of Hiroshima, or Myron Levoy's *Alan and Naomi* (1977), a children's novel about a girl traumatized by seeing her father killed in the Holocaust. Readers seek out literature about terrible things for many reasons, including helping them to work through challenging or horrible experiences or feelings.

Children's literature can reveal both our greatest pleasures and our deepest fears or concerns. Understanding what pleases or frightens us the most is absolutely key to understanding what it means to be human and how human beings relate to and treat one another. In evoking childhood memories, children's literature provides access to our most foundational emotions or experiences; it is thus one of the few ways adults can maintain a connection to childhood. Following Jerry Griswold, the scholar and critic, we find the expression in children's literature of basic pleasures and fears to be especially insistent, suggesting that we can learn about some of our most deep-seated needs and pleasures through studying works for children. By examining what it is about childhood that triggers adult nostalgia, we can learn about our most potent and long-term fears, anxieties, pleasures, and desires.

HISTORICIZING CHILDHOOD

Susannah Bricks, one of the children featured in James Janeway's *A Token for Children* (1671), cries out, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me, and I was altogether born in sin!" (59). Fortunately, she repents of her sin before dying at the age of fourteen from the plague. Such naturally sinful children also appear throughout nineteenth-century stories about boys at boarding schools, as in Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), in which the natural wickedness of boys must be constantly policed, managed, and eventually overcome by the good example of their masters and the disciplinary policies of the school. In contrast, the child speaker of William Blake's poem "The Lamb" (1789) sees himself, the lamb, and the baby Jesus as sharing a natural innocence, which the character of Little Eva in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) also embodies. Her father, St. Clare, the owner of a large slaveholding plantation in the American South, wonders when he sees his virtuous daughter enjoying the company of the slave Tom, "What would the poor and lowly do, without children?" (185). St. Clare sees children like Eva as embodying innocence, not sin: "Your little child is your only true democrat… . This is one of the roses of Eden that the Lord has dropped down expressly for the poor and lowly, who get few enough of any other kind" (185).

The history of children's literature cannot be understood fully without considering the history of childhood, and children's literature seems inextricably bound to issues of audience. What kinds of writing are appropriate or inappropriate for children? What is useful for the instruction or education of children? What will children find interesting or enjoyable? What are children of different ages prepared to read or understand? How we answer these questions—which might be asked by adults who write, publish, purchase, recommend, or teach children's literature—depends on how and what we think about children. Are children born into savagery or sin, inclined to delinquency in the absence of proper guidance, and in need of strict discipline? The children in the works just cited represent different models of childhood and ideas about children. While adults read and enjoy children's literature as well, understanding the history of childhood helps us to understand the readers who are presumably the primary audience for children's literature.

As historians of childhood have discovered, the nature of that audience is anything but a simple matter. Since the groundbreaking publication of Philippe Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood* in 1960 (trans. in 1962), researchers have made it clear that how childhood has been defined—indeed, who counts as a child—has often differed at different times and in different places, sometimes radically. Complicating the study of the history of childhood is the fact that at any given moment multiple and even contradictory ideas about children and childhood coexist; what we think about children and childhood and the ways real children actually live do not always correspond. In addition, age intersects with other key dimensions of social experience, such as sex/gender, class, race, nation, region, religion, and ethnicity, so that the lives of children often vary widely even at the same historical moment. Considering all these factors produces a very complex picture of what it means to be a child. What, then, *do* we mean when we speak of children or childhood? Rather than providing a historical chronology, we answer this question in the section that follows by focusing on models of childhood most prevalent in British and US cultural

history since the seventeenth century, and we approach this history in terms of models of childhood in order to distinguish clearly between ideas about "the child" and the experiences of living children.

HISTORICAL MODELS OF CHILDHOOD

In the modern age, a number of competing models or conceptualizations of children and childhood circulate that affect how children are treated and perceived and how children live and perceive themselves. The history of childhood has not unfolded in a linear way, and newer understandings have not simply replaced earlier ones. Rather, different models of childhood, more or less dominant at different moments and in different places, overlap and intermingle to produce a complex and sometimes contradictory picture of what it means to be a child. We describe some of the most commonly encountered models of childhood separately, but these models rarely operate in isolation. Even seemingly outdated models continue to overlap with others and influence how we think and write about children. Rather than simply being a framework for classifying child characters, these models provide a way to think about the assumptions underlying how children are represented in children's literature so that those representations can be analyzed critically.

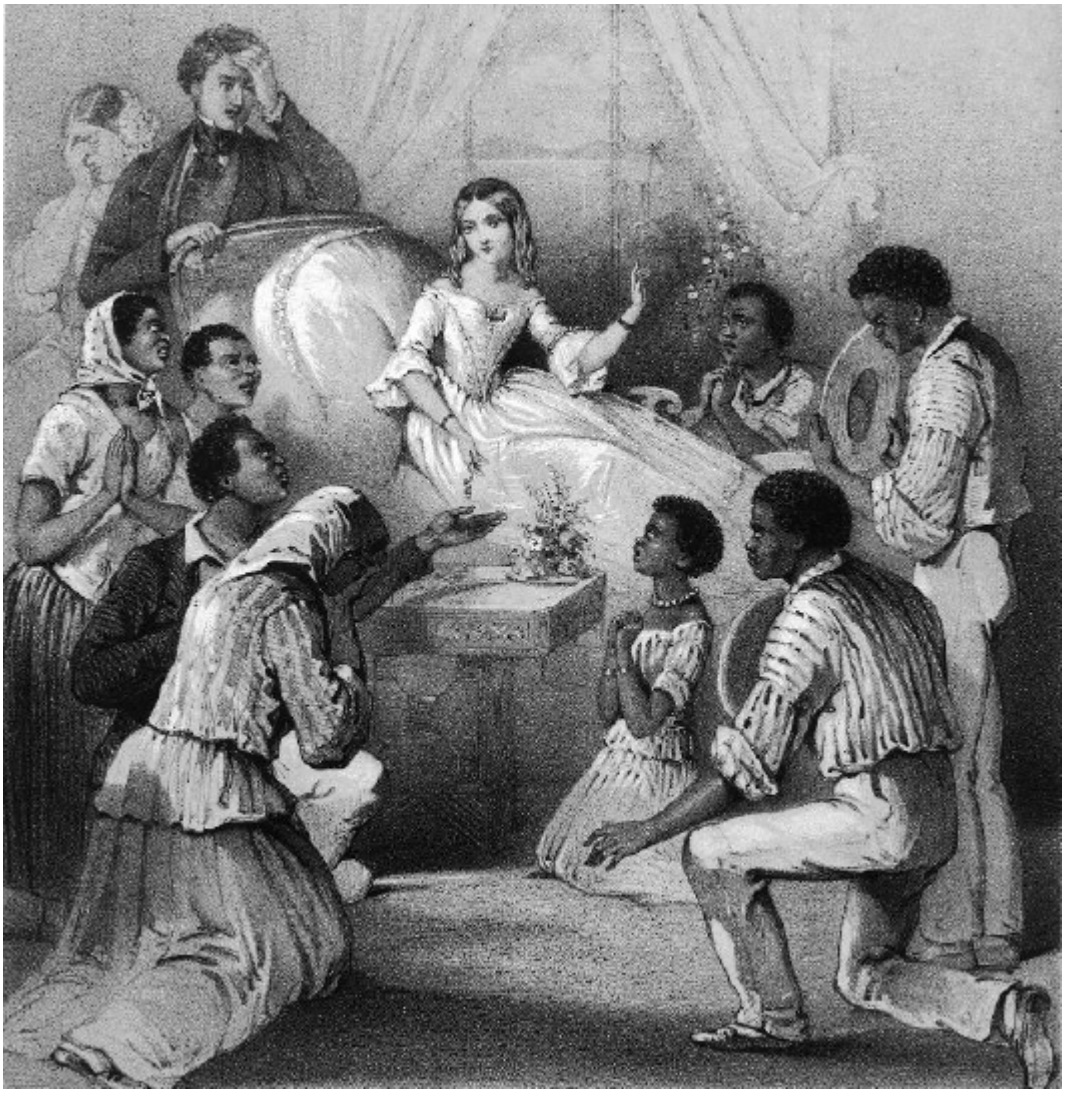
The Romantic Child

One such model is that of the child as the embodiment of innocence, or the Romantic child, such as Little Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) sets forth the *tabula rasa* theory, the notion that the mind of a child is a blank slate: "Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless

variety? To this, I answer in one word, From experience [sic]" (59). Later Locke would write in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) that "the difference to be found in the manners and abilities of men is owing more to their education than to anything else [and thus] we have reason to conclude that great care is to be had of the forming of children's minds" (25). Locke's theory of human nature held practical consequences for the rearing of children, especially in matters of education and discipline. Locke thought that children should be left "free and unrestrained" as much as possible in order to explore the world around them and that they possess a "natural gaiety," which could be spoiled by too much adult interference (39). Similar sentiments were expressed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Emile* (1762), his treatise on education. In Book II, Rousseau exhorts parents to abandon restrictive educational and disciplinary practices that make the lives of children unbearable drudgery:

> Love childhood; promote its games, its pleasures, its amiable instinct. Who among you has not sometimes regretted that age when a laugh is always on the lips and the soul is always at peace? Why do you want to deprive these little innocents of the enjoyment of a time so short which escapes them and of a good so precious which they do not know how to abuse? Why do you want to fill with bitterness and pains these first years which go by so rapidly and can return no more for them than they can for you? (79)

The child as conceived in *Emile* has natural innocence and virtue that must simply be molded by the sensitive guidance of an adult tutor, but Rousseau warns against forcing adult reason onto the child, who is not ready for it. "To know good and bad, to sense the reason for man's duties," he writes, "is not a child's affair. Nature wants children to be children before being men. If we want to pervert this order, we shall produce precocious fruits which will be immature and insipid and will not be long in rotting" (90). In statements such as these, Rousseau works to emphasize the link between childhood and nature.



In Harriet Beecher Stowe's controversial novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Eva is constructed as possessing a racialized childhood innocence denied to African American children.

By the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, Romantic poets such as Blake in *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and William Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey" (1798) further solidified the association of childhood with innocence and purity. Influenced by thinkers such as Locke and Rousseau, they found in children and childhood a contrast to the apparent corruptions of body and soul bred by industrialization. Wordsworth's 1807 publication of "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" reflects this Romantic idealization of childhood:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
  Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
  He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
  Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
  And by the vision splendid
  Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day. (lines 66–76)

This conception of children as somehow purer and more virtuous than adults, closer to nature and God, and beautified by their naïveté persists in contemporary times, both in literary and filmic representations of children and in public policy debates involving the "protection" of children and childhood ignorance. Consider the refrain to "stay gold" in S.E. Hinton's landmark young adult novel *The Outsiders* (1967), in which teenager Johnny encourages his friend Ponyboy to retain his "childlike" wonder, or the public hysteria surrounding Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders's suggestion in 1994 that masturbation might be an acceptable means of avoiding HIV transmission among young people, an idea that clearly conflicted with the conception of childhood innocence and led to Elders's forced resignation. What we like to think about children has practical consequences.

This Romantic conception of childhood can emphasize different qualities and sometimes appears inconsistent. To some Romantics, the minds of children are blank slates, and children must be molded by adults and imprinted with culture. Others influenced by the Romantic tradition see children as naturally happy, carefree, innocent, or pure and thus likely to be disappointed, deformed, or corrupted by experience and maturation. Some Romantic thinkers regard children as savage and uncivilized in their proximity to nature and beasts, in contrast to more cultured and disciplined adults. Others emphasize their natural insights or abilities, which

adults lack or have lost. What these various understandings share is the sense of children as almost superior to adults in some ways and as aligned with nature, beauty, or spirituality.

Many classics of children's literature reflect a Romantic vision of childhood. In Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), the author depicts the three child protagonists as having an affinity with nature: the sickly, upper-class Mary and Colin both find health and vigor by working in the garden, and the kindly, working-class Dickon communes with animals and maintains his hardy constitution by always being outside. The eponymous protagonist of Virginia Hamilton's *M.C. Higgins, the Great* (1974), the first novel by an African American author to win the prestigious Newbery Medal, lives on a mountain and fears the dangers posed to his home and family by the after-effects of strip-mining. The novel's depiction of M.C. as crucial to his family's salvation and as the one most conscious of the dangers of technology links him to the Romantic tradition of seeing children as embodying an earlier, purer, agrarian past amid urbanization and industrialization.

The Sinful Child

Another conceptualization competes with the notion of children as the embodiment of innocence: that of the child as sinful and in need of discipline and training. Puritan theology and social customs have left us with the image of the sinful child born corrupted by the original sin of the biblical Adam and Eve, easily swayed to do wrong, and susceptible to evil. Historian Steven Mintz has examined the diary kept by New England Puritan Samuel Sewall between 1673 and 1729. As Mintz explains,

> Sewall's diary reveals a society that believed that even newborns were innately sinful and that parents' primary task was to suppress their children's natural depravity. Seventeenth-century Puritans cared deeply for their children and invested an enormous amount of time and energy in them, but they were also intent on repressing what they perceived as manifestations

> of original sin through harsh physical and psychological measures. Aside from an occasional whipping, Sewall's primary technique for disciplining his children was to provoke their fear of death, sin, and the torments inflicted in hell. (2)

By the mid eighteenth century, Evangelicals in Britain and the United States had reshaped religious understandings of children. Less severe than their Puritan predecessors, they permitted play and sought to restrict child labor. While the sense of children as born sinful and damned became less pronounced in Evangelical discourse, the need to save, discipline, and educate them remained central. The Sunday School movement emerged in Britain between the 1750s and 1780s in order to address these needs, with Evangelicals such as English-born Robert Raikes establishing Sunday schools to introduce children to Christian thought and provide alternatives to mischief or criminal behavior, especially for poor and working-class children.

Jessica's First Prayer (1867), written by English Methodist Hesba Stretton (penname of Sarah Smith), indicates the Evangelical view of the child in need of both spiritual and economic care. Jess, the protagonist, is dirty, hungry, and miserable, neglected and abused by her drunken mother. When Mr. Daniel Standring, who keeps a coffee stand in London, attempts to catch Jess at stealing by deliberately dropping a penny in front of her, she resists the temptation and returns it to him. She later follows him into a church and learns about God and faith from the minister and his children. Though she needs spiritual salvation and social training, she is not exactly the evil or sinful child described by Puritan writers even if the text implies that her poverty and lack of spiritual education would eventually lead her to depravity, as her mother had been led. Evangelicals, influenced by both religious doctrines and the increasingly popular views of the Romantics, imagined the child as a composite of the sinful and Romantic child.

Today, manifestations of this notion of childhood sin might take more secular forms, couched in the pseudopsychological language of impulse control and developmental immaturity or in the

pseudoanthropological language of savagery or untamed wildness, but they still arise in references to the schoolyard cruelty of children or to the need for teenage curfews as a way to reduce crime. The sinful or depraved child frequently appears onscreen or in written fiction as well, as in William March's 1954 bestseller, *The Bad Seed,* which features an adorable suburban girl in pigtails who turns into a chillingly cold-blooded murderer. *The Bad Seed* was later made into a hit Broadway play and a critically acclaimed film. George R.R. Martin's fantasy novel *A Game of Thrones* (1996) was also a bestseller that was later adapted into a successful television series, and it too features a malevolent boy, Prince Joffrey, who later becomes a tyrannical child king. Clearly, the figure of the evil child still resonates. This image is remarkable for the way it contrasts so strikingly with the image of the child as the embodiment of innocence.

While the model of the sinful or evil child still persists most obviously in works of horror, it can also be seen throughout children's literature even if the child's evil is not attributed to original sin. The character Draco Malfoy in the Harry Potter series belongs to the tradition of the evil child, even though his evil is influenced by his upbringing and his family's service to Voldemort. Another evil child, Paul, in Edward Bloor's *Tangerine* (1997) blinds his younger brother, commands a friend to murder another youth, and steals from his neighbors, and yet the novel provides little explanation for Paul's horrific actions. Though representations of the Romantic or sacred child now appear more frequently and serve as the dominant conceptions of children, the evil or sinful child continues to appear in the form of bullies, criminals, or rivals.

The Working Child

One of the key developments in the history of childhood involves the way children were transformed from economically valuable sources of expendable labor into almost sacred and sentimental objects who actually cost parents money. The model of the working child, which characterized life for most children before the early

twentieth century, cast children as necessary and useful contributors to the household, as practical additions to families, and as sources of labor. The early American colonies, finding themselves in desperate need of able bodies, appealed to England to send over street children. Upon one such request from the Virginia Company in 1619, the Privy Council of England responded,

> Whereas the City of London hath, by an act of the Common Council, appointed one hundred children, out of the multitudes that swarm in that place, to be sent to Virginia, there to be bound as apprentices for certain years with very beneficial conditions for them afterwards … the City deserveth thanks and commendations for redeeming so many poor souls from misery and ruin and putting them in a condition of use and service to the State. ("Declaration" 242)

Hardly precious objects to be coddled, these children of twelve and upward, pressed into "service to the State," were to be rounded up and sent to a faraway land to do the back-breaking work of building the colonies. Not all these children were expected to go happily or voluntarily, and the English government made provisions for such a possibility: "If any of them shall be found obstinate to resist or otherwise disobey such directions as shall be given in this behalf, we do likewise hereby authorize such as shall have the charge of this service to imprison, punish, and dispose of any of those children, upon any disorder by them or any of them committed, as cause shall require, and so to ship them out for Virginia with as much expedition as may stand with conveniency [sic]" ("Declaration" 243).

This way of understanding children as useful labor persisted late into the nineteenth century. In his enormously influential exposé *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), Jacob Riis writes about the "army of homeless boys" living on the streets and working in New York City in the 1880s. He cites as an example the case of two brothers: "John and Willie, aged ten and eight, picked up by the police. They 'didn't live nowhere,' never went to school, could neither read nor

write. Their twelve-year-old sister kept house for the father, who turned the boys out to beg, or steal, or starve" (150). The evidence gathered by Riis and others suggests that this father was no aberration nor unusually heartless; rather, his actions represent a particular way of thinking about children that differs from the image of the sacred child that is currently dominant in Euro American culture.

Nineteenth-century children's literature often described the common experience of child labor, and more contemporary historical novels reflect this earlier model. Horatio

"Street Arabs in Sleeping Quarters," Jacob Riis, 1890.

Alger's iconic rags-to-riches story *Ragged Dick* (1868) depicts orphan bootblacks who live and work on the streets of New York City, and Walter Dean Myers's historical novel *The Glory Field* (1994) includes children and adolescents from different periods who must work to support their families or themselves, such as Lizzy, a thirteen-year-old slave who escapes to freedom during the American Civil War, and fifteen-year-old Elijah, who stands up to a white sheriff and risks being lynched in an effort to help support his family financially

at the turn of the twentieth century. These texts show the working child as fully capable of earning an income, engaging in exhausting physical labor, and acting independently of adults.

The Sacred Child

Sociologist Viviana Zelizer traces the shifting conceptualization of childhood over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when child labor laws sought to remove children from the factories and fields and compulsory education laws relocated them to the classroom as the model of the sacred child took hold. In this model, children are understood as precious and fragile aesthetic objects to admire rather than as practical tools. As such, they must be protected, watched, fussed over. A few dates and figures sketch a picture of how the sacred child emerged in the nineteenth century as child labor declined and education became compulsory:

- In the United States, Massachusetts was the first state to enact a compulsory education law in 1852. It compelled children between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school for some portion of the year.

- The next state to pass such a law was Vermont in 1867, indicating that other states were slow to follow the lead of Massachusetts.

- It was not until the 1870s and 1880s that the trend became decisive. By 1885, twenty-two out of thirty-eight states had compulsory education laws, and by 1900, thirty-four out of forty-five did.

- It took almost sixty years, from the 1870s to the 1930s, to prohibit many forms of child labor in the United States. During this period, a significant percentage of children worked either on family farms or outside the home, including in factories (Zelizer 57).

- Not coincidentally, the 1930s marked the beginning of a shift toward an increase in attendance of secondary schools. While in 1930 the number of teenagers graduating from high school was equal to 29 per cent of seventeen-year-olds in the United States, that figure doubled to 59 per cent by 1950 (Schaller 28).

These trends occurred for a number of reasons. Zelizer cites the rise in real incomes, the institution of the family wage with which men were expected to earn enough to maintain a household, and the growing demand for educated labor in the twentieth-century economy as factors that enabled or compelled children to attend school rather than to work (62–63). In order to free up jobs for adult men and to reduce competition for work, which was heightened by the influx of immigrants during the latter half of the nineteenth century, children were gradually removed from the workforce in significant numbers. Schools evolved to give them someplace to be and something to do.

Two other possible preconditions for this shift to thinking about children as precious objects to coddle and protect were the overall reduction in the number of children born to each family and the declining mortality rate as more children survived into adulthood. As Steven Mintz explains about colonial America, "In New England's healthiest communities, around 10 percent of children died in their first year, and three of every nine died before reaching their twenty-first birthday. In seaports like Boston or Salem, death rates were two or even three times higher" (15). By the early twentieth century, families were having fewer children, which gave parents more time and inclination to invest emotionally in each child, and better public-health education and access to medical care permitted more children to survive into adulthood. As it became easier to keep children alive, parental agency over the fate of their children increased parental responsibility and vigilance over their care.

Whatever the reasons, during this period children became primarily a source of emotional reward to prize and assiduously nurture, sacred objects to protect from every conceivable danger, rather than sources of economic income and parental security in old

age. At first, childhood as a time and space of play, imagination, and formal education was the province of only the most privileged children of the middle and upper classes who could afford to keep these young people out of the workforce and provided with the toys, games, books, leisure, and lack of responsibility that now characterize childhood. Gradually, over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this model of childhood came to be understood as an ideal toward which all families across the economic spectrum could and should aspire.

This marked a radical shift in both the discourse and experience of childhood. The daily routines and schedules, the self-conceptions and thoughts, the interests, the behaviors, and the capacities of the nine-year-old factory worker or farm worker in the first decade of the twentieth century would differ considerably from those of the nine-year-old student who attends a suburban school in the first decade of the twenty-first. The child laborers of the early twentieth century would have dressed exactly like the adults working next to them. They would have eaten the same foods, used the same machines, and passed time alongside fellow workers, some about the same age and some much older. They would have traveled from home to factory or across stretches of land unchaperoned and unsupervised. In contrast, twenty-first-century youth might dress quite differently from adults, attend school during the day rather than work, associate primarily with those of similar ages, eat foods packaged and marketed specifically for young people, watch television programs produced expressly for a younger demographic, and be watched constantly or forced to give an account of every movement. These two cohorts, separated by about a century, had very different lives and thought about themselves in radically different ways.

Because the model of the sacred child serves as one of the more dominant understandings of children, it appears frequently in children's literature. For instance, in Eleanor Porter's *Pollyanna* (1913), Pollyanna's value to her Aunt Polly comes not from paid labor but from how Pollyanna's good behavior reflects on her upbringing. Pollyanna also occupies the center of attention, and the

curmudgeonly Mr. Pendleton wants to adopt her himself because he sees children, and Pollyanna in particular, as able to bring joy into the life of adults. Pollyanna's injury finally makes her the one who needs care, and she is treated like a fragile object to be protected from the full knowledge of her prognosis. Lafayette, the youngest protagonist of Jacqueline Woodson's *Miracle's Boys* (2000), also embodies the model of the sacred child. While his oldest brother, Ty'ree, works to support his younger siblings, and the middle child Charlie works to readjust to life after a stint in a home for delinquent boys, Lafayette focuses on school, television, and dealing with his feelings stemming from the loss of his parents. Lafayette is the child who must be protected from the pain of life, and the tension of the novel springs from the gap between this ideal and the realities of poverty and orphanhood.

The Child as Radically Other

The very different experiences of the sacred child and the working child suggest yet another structuring opposition that underlies modern conceptualizations of childhood and its distinction from adulthood. Are children fundamentally and qualitatively different from adults, or are they merely incomplete or miniature versions? Does the line between childhood and adulthood represent a rupture, marking a radical difference between the child and the adult, or do childhood and adulthood exist as periods that gradually shade into each other along a continuum, with each possessing traces of the other at its fringes? Different responses to these questions produce quite different ways of thinking about various aspects of childhood and children's culture.

One model understands the child as fundamentally different from the adult, or radically Other. For instance, the child at play might represent an experience or imaginative feat unique to childhood and lost to adults, who are much too preoccupied with the empirical or the real. Bill Watterson plays with this notion in his *Calvin and Hobbes* comic strip (1985–1995). When Calvin is alone with his stuffed tiger, Hobbes is real and alive; when one of Calvin's parents

enters the frame, Hobbes reverts into an inanimate toy. His parents cannot see Hobbes the same way Calvin does. Children who playact as kings and queens, then, are perhaps performing in ways unique to children, but few would claim that a performance of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is child's play. The child at play might be imagined as a miniature actor, the playacting of childhood existing along a continuum with the enactment of adult drama. Does the play of eight-year-old Pee Wee football players belong properly to childhood, meaning that the big business of adult football is a holdover of children's culture, or are these boys prematurely enacting an adult sport? These children might be seen as playing at an adult activity, or the adults, by playing, might be seen as performing a childhood pursuit. We do not have to decide which is the case, but we do need to recognize the slippery nature of both childhood and adulthood in order to read literature for children critically.

The Developing Child

Many models of childhood include a sense in which the child is radically Other to the adult, rather than existing along a continuum with people of different ages. One model that does seem to suggest a continuum is that of the developing child. The twentieth century saw the birth of the academic child-study movement. Though philosophers, educators, and others concerned with the care and education of the young had long considered and written about children, childhood, and child-rearing, professional psychologists first turned their attention to the concentrated study of childhood beginning with works such as G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education,* first published in 1904. Kenneth Kidd describes Hall as "the founding father not only of child psychology but of American psychology more generally… . Hall presided over the child study movement at Clark University, where he welcomed Sigmund Freud in 1909 and trained a whole new generation of child experts" (36). Freud, another key pioneer of

psychological child study, saw the child and childhood experiences as absolutely central to the workings of the human psyche, and his work on the psychodynamics of childhood popularized understandings of the child as existing along a continuum of development with the adult. Freud likened childhood in the life of the individual to the "primaeval" period in the evolution of the human species (Freud 39).

By the mid twentieth century, the field of developmental psychology had crystallized around the empirical study of children and their increasing capacities over the course of youth. Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, who began laying out his theory of child development in the 1920s, articulated four periods of cognitive development during which children construct knowledge in different ways: the sensorimotor period from birth to two years, the preoperational period from two to seven years, the period of concrete operations from seven to eleven years, and the period of formal operations from eleven years on. While other psychologists and cultural critics have challenged this emphasis on normative, universal stages of development in recent years, what is important for the student or scholar of childhood and children's literature is that the work of Piaget and other developmental psychologists represents children neither as miniature adults nor as fundamentally different from adults. Rather, the developmental approach understands children as immature or developing beings who are slowly moving toward adulthood in a mostly unbroken line. If this sounds matter of course to the contemporary reader, it might be because this model is currently one of the most prevalent and dominant.

Since the advent of scientific child study, children's literature often conceives of the child in psychological terms and depicts the child's gradual development or maturation. The young Christopher Robin in A.A. Milne's Pooh books possesses the imagination to envision Pooh and the other animals of the Hundred Acre Wood as living beings; yet, at the end of *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928) he must abandon Pooh to go to school and sorrowfully alludes to his own development: "'Pooh,' said Christopher Robin earnestly, 'if I—if

I'm not quite—' he stopped and tried again—'Pooh, *whatever* happens, you *will* understand, won't you?'" (179). Christopher Robin intuits that his growing up will change him and his relationship with his beloved bear. In *Then Again, Maybe I Won't* (1971), Judy Blume describes the physical and psychological development of twelve-year-old Tony, who must deal with common experiences of puberty, such as nocturnal emissions and uncontrollable erections. Both works show childhood as a state of transition.

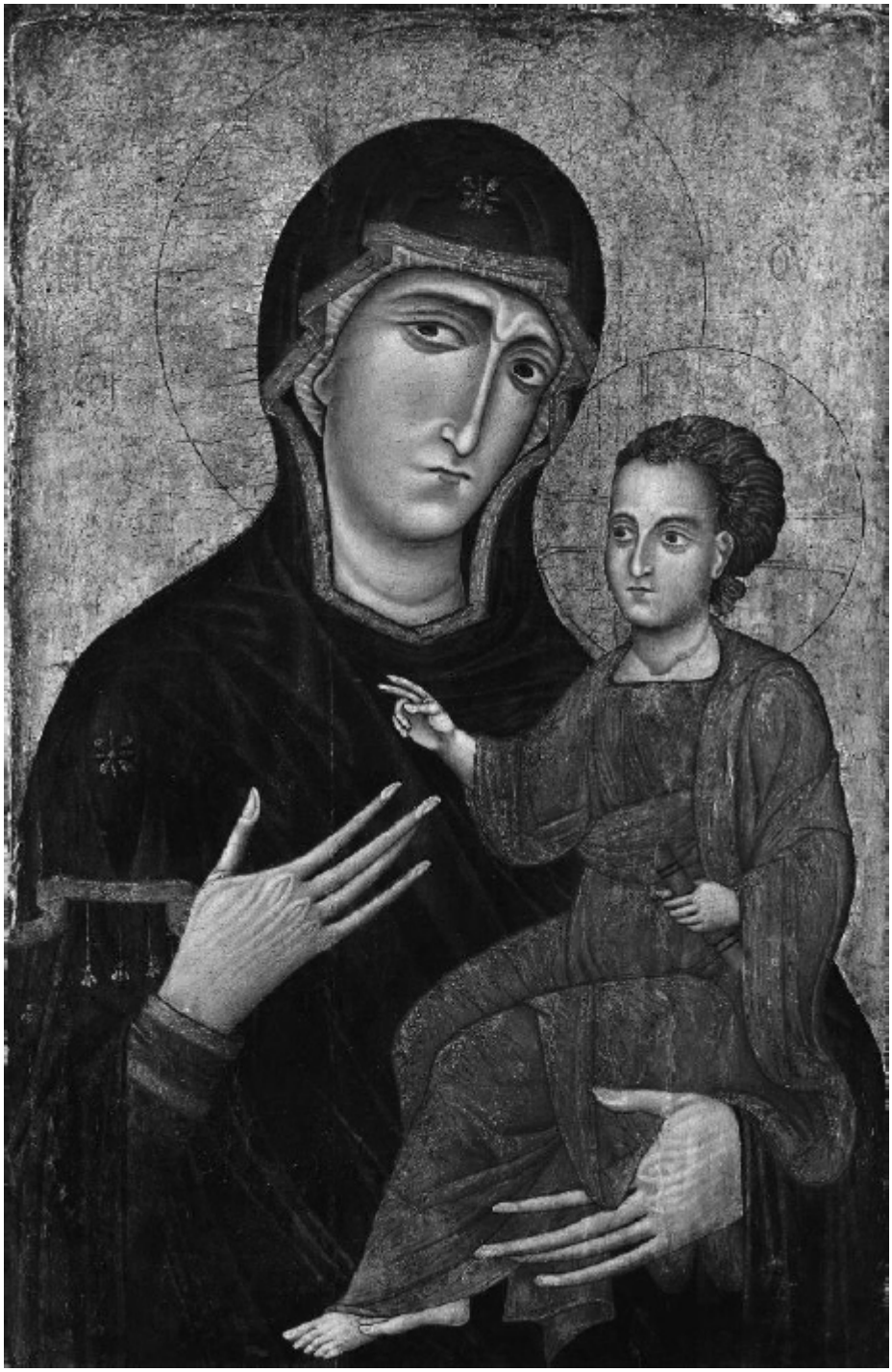
The Child as Miniature Adult

French historian Philippe Ariès argues controversially in *Centuries of Childhood* that the model of imagining children as simply miniature adults prevailed until at least the thirteenth century but persisted well into the seventeenth. He cites as evidence the depictions of children in art:

> An Ottonian miniature of the twelfth century provides us with a striking example of the deformation which an artist at that time would inflict on children's bodies. The subject is the scene in the Gospels in which Jesus asks that little children be allowed to come to Him. The Latin text is clear: *parvuli* [children]. Yet the miniaturist has grouped around Jesus what are obviously eight men, without any of the characteristics of childhood; they have simply been depicted on a smaller scale than the adults, without any other difference in expression or feature. (33)

Ariès claims that "it is hard to believe that this neglect was due to incompetence or incapacity" (33); rather, he believes that this distortion of children's bodies reflects a particular conceptualization of the child, one that would have been consistent with the experience of children whose lives, whose daily existence, were not substantively different from those of the adults around them. Ariès suggests that, to the twelfth-century artist, children were simply smaller adults, not qualitatively different from their older and larger counterparts. Even though his interpretation of the historical

evidence has been contested, Ariès encourages us to think about the remarkable similarities between children and adults. If Ariès were to see an image of Pee Wee football players, he might read the boys as depicting miniature adult athletes. Children's literature—along with comics, television, and film—is replete with independent, autonomous children doing remarkable things such as building elaborate contraptions and researching complex legal loopholes, as the Baudelaire orphans do in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events: The Bad Beginning* (1999); rallying warriors and lords behind a new King in the North, as the fierce Lyanna Mormont does in the *Game of Thrones* television series (2016); or determining whether a particular statue was sculpted by Michelangelo, as eleven-year-old Claudia Kincaid does in E.L. Konigsburg's children's novel *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (1967). While some children might be this precocious or talented, these examples point to a gap between lived experience and representation, which suggests that the artwork examined by Ariès might not tell the whole story about how childhood was experienced in the Middle Ages. Nonetheless, the miniaturization model continues to endure in the many ways children are either treated or expected to act like adults.



The child as miniature adult is reflected in this *Madonna and Child* (1228–36) by Berlinghiero Berlinghieri. Tempera on wood, gold ground.

Using Models of Childhood to Read Critically

Model	Description of Model
The Romantic Child	The Romantic model of childhood prevails when children are imagined or depicted as more innocent or insightful than adults and as closer to the natural or spiritual world, including animals or angels. Since this model emerged by using the child to embody an idyllic past in the face of unsettling trends, we should ask what anxieties or events motivate the appearance of the Romantic child.
The Sinful Child	Since the child is sometimes used to represent the best in humanity, we can understand the evil child as representing cultural fears about the limits or failures of human goodness, selflessness, or self-mastery. When we find examples of the evil or sinful child, we should consider how the text points to what we fear in or about ourselves or our cultures.
The Working Child	The concept of the working child is concerned with the utility of children, or what they are good for. We may like to think about children as ends in themselves, but for most of history children have been practically useful. Examples of the working child might appear in classic books or historical fiction, but they might also appear in contemporary realist texts. The working child in contemporary texts challenges the cherished notion that children do not —and should not—work, raising questions about whether they still can be practically or economically useful.
The Sacred Child	The sacred child appears in characterizations of fictional youth as delicate, valuable objects who confer status or provide emotional payoffs, especially to adults. This child must be carefully safeguarded. Since thinking of children as sacred comes at great financial and emotional cost to adults, readers should consider signs of adult ambivalence or resentment or indications that another model is competing with this one for dominance.
The Child as Radically Other	Depictions of the child as significantly different from adults, rather than as miniature or developing adults,

	can tell us what the broader culture thinks about people across the lifespan. We should ask ourselves what the radically other child suggests about adult characters or adult culture and their limitations or failings. Is the radically other child a figure of hope in the future, condemnation of the past or present, or something else?
The Developing Child	In contrast to the child who is radically other from the adult and who possesses the potential to abruptly transform from one into the other, the developing child slowly becomes the adult over time. Recognizing the figure of the developing child prompts the reader to consider the process whereby the child is transformed and the milestones that mark those transitions. Is the process a smooth or rough one? What makes it so? What happens when a child fails or refuses to develop in expected ways?
The Child as Miniature Adult	The child as miniature adult is one who possesses the abilities, limitations, or privileges of adulthood while retaining youth. What kind of adult does the child resemble? What desires, pleasures, anxieties, or fears about youth and age does the miniature adult embody, provoke, or alleviate?

Children's literature frequently depicts children as acting independently of adults and performing roles more commonly attributed to adults, such as caring for other children or undertaking journeys. These depictions suggest that children embody miniature adults. Both Peter and Wendy in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904) play the role of parents, pretending to be the father and mother of the lost boys, and Peter does battle with Captain Hook, rescuing Wendy and her brothers from pirates. Though Peter is "the boy who wouldn't grow up," he actually appears to function like a smaller or younger man, just as Wendy acts like a little woman. Sometimes a child character embodies the miniature adult model only at particular moments or through specific actions, as in Sharon Creech's Newbery-winning *Walk Two Moons* (1994), in which thirteen-year-old Salamanca travels cross-country with her grandparents, tracing the path her mother took from Ohio to Idaho.

READING CRITICALLY: THE HISTORY OF CHILDHOOD

Anne of Green Gables

When using the history of childhood to read children's literature, we must ask: How does the ideology or experience of childhood as it exists and operates at a given moment in history inform—that is, clarify, explain, or influence—the representation of the child and childhood in the text? To answer this question, investigate the ideology and experience of childhood during the era when the novel is set, the era in which it was written, or both. Are the experiences of the child character like or unlike the ones characteristic of children from a given historical moment? In what ways does the child in the text embody the "typical" experience or depart from it? What do we learn from the fictional child that we do not learn from standard historical narratives about childhood? What does knowing that history help you to notice about the text that you might otherwise have overlooked or not understood?

L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) provides a particularly useful example of how understanding the history of childhood helps readers to understand children's literature, and vice versa. The premise of *Anne* is simple: aging siblings Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert, who live together and run a farm called Green Gables on Canada's Prince Edward Island, send away for an orphan boy to help on the farm. By mistake, Anne is sent instead, and she spends the rest of the novel getting into mischief, softening the edges of the no-nonsense Marilla, and ultimately enlivening the home and lives of the Cuthberts. We can better understand Anne's trajectory in the novel and her effect on other characters by recognizing the way Anne's experience parallels the history of childhood and the changing functions and uses of the child.

Matthew and Marilla initially conceive of their desired adoptee in terms of the working child. Marilla tells her neighbor Rachel, "We thought we'd get a boy. Matthew is getting up in years, you know—he's sixty—and he isn't so spry as he once was. His heart troubles him a good deal. And you know how desperate hard it's got to be to get hired help" (6). The language of the opening section objectifies Anne almost as a tool the Cuthberts have ordered. Matthew and Marilla have gotten the idea to adopt from another neighbor who is adopting a child from the same asylum. "So in the end we decided to ask Mrs. Spencer to pick us out one

when she went over to get her little girl," Marilla explains (7). The Cuthberts are not especially particular about the orphan, except that he be Canadian and "a smart, likely boy of about ten or eleven … old enough to be of some use in doing chores right off" (7). When Matthew arrives at the station to pick up the orphan, the stationmaster reveals that it is a girl who is waiting for him, saying, "Maybe they were out of boys of the brand you wanted" (11). After Matthew explains the situation to Marilla, she exclaims, "Well, this is a pretty piece of business!" (24), and she concludes that "this girl will have to be sent back" (29). It is as if the wrong item has been shipped, or like a damaged product, Anne must be returned for exchange. A little girl is not what they need because, they think, a girl can be of no use. Matthew needs help with the physical work of the farm, but Marilla does not need a girl to help keep the home.

Anne disappoints their expectations by embodying the sacred child rather than the working one. The talkative girl entertains Matthew with her stories all the way from the train station in town to the siblings' country farm, and her theatrics upon arriving even cause the otherwise stoic Marilla to smile. When Matthew suggests that they keep her, Marilla responds, "What good would she be to us?" (29), but Matthew's answer betrays the shift from thinking about their adopted child as one who can benefit *them* to one they can benefit: "We might be some good to her," Matthew tells his sister (30). This view of Anne reflects the model of the sacred child whose function it is to bring parents joy, to be an object of emotional investment rather than an economic contributor, and to be nurtured and served by parents rather than the reverse. Keep her they do, and as predicted, the Cuthberts find Anne of little customary use. Marilla thinks that perhaps she will be able to use Anne in the kitchen, but some of the most comedic episodes in the novel involve Anne's disastrous efforts to cook and entertain, two traditional tasks for girls and women. Much of the humor of the novel comes from precisely this gap between the Cuthberts' expectations of the orphan they plan to adopt and the girl they end up raising, between the child laborer they need and the sacred child they enjoy. Anne does indeed make herself useful, but not in the conventional or practical sense. Matthew is a shy, quiet man, and Marilla, as we have seen, is impassive. The two live routine, uneventful lives as they gradually slip into old age. The exciting and excitable Anne becomes a source of constant amusement and energy, but also a source of parental pride and emotion. At one particularly ebullient moment, when Anne is overjoyed by the prospect of a Sunday-school picnic, she kisses Marilla in her excitement: "It was the first time in her whole life

that childish lips had voluntarily touched Marilla's face. Again that sudden sensation of startling sweetness thrilled her" (91). Ultimately, Anne comes to be of emotional use, filling Matthew and Marilla's life with excitement, affection, and love.

Recognizing the distinction between the laboring child and the sacred one clarifies the trajectory of the novel and the turn of its conclusion. Over the course of the novel, Anne endears herself to the Cuthberts and forms emotional bonds with them as she comes to embody the modern conception of childhood. When Anne graduates from Queen's Academy and wins the Avery Scholarship, which will fund her college education, the Cuthberts beam with pride. "Reckon you're glad we kept her, Marilla?" Matthew asks (290). Nevertheless, near the conclusion, the novel defies this simple sense of historical progression. Matthew dies, killed by the shock of the news that the bank holding their accounts has failed. With their savings gone and Marilla's eyesight failing, Anne decides to forgo her scholarship and college in order to stay home, teach at a school nearby, and care for Marilla: "You surely don't think I could leave you alone in your trouble, Marilla, after all you've done for me… . Oh, I have it all planned out, Marilla. And I'll read to you and keep you cheered up. You shan't be dull or lonesome. And we'll be happy here together, you and I" (304). Anne proves to be a useful child after all, supporting Marilla in her old age and infirmity. Thus, by understanding the history of childhood, we can see that Anne represents a transitional or hybrid figure, both the working and the sacred child—a source of assistance and support, but also of pleasure and companionship. Montgomery, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, provides an index of changing conceptualizations of the child, and recognizing these changes helps us see more clearly the shape and significance of the novel.

This brief analysis points to only one possible reading of *Anne of Green Gables* in relation to the history of childhood. The models of childhood sketched in this chapter represent different frameworks for understanding children that operate simultaneously to shape how children are imagined and treated both as a group and as individuals. Because Anne never embodies only one model, it is possible to read the novel in various ways. Though we suggest that the opposition between the working and the sacred child provides a key structuring principle for *Anne of Green Gables,* others might focus on the ways Anne embodies the Romantic child: she demonstrates an affinity with nature, appears pure and uncorrupted despite her challenging experiences and circumstances, enjoys poetry and storytelling and revels in the imagination, and possesses a special vision of the world that most of

the adults in the novel lack. Anne, like most complex child characters in children's literature, can be understood in multiple ways, and reading children's literature critically involves using the history of childhood to provide that understanding.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Tracing the history of children's literature poses a number of problems, in part because what counts as children's literature is not always clear. Does children's literature comprise what children read, or what is written specifically for children? If the former, then the history of children's literature is largely coextensive or identical with the history of literature more generally, until fairly recently. If the latter—if children's literature is writing that is produced specifically for children—we run into problems as historians and critics with determining the intentions of authors, which are often unclear, as to whether a particular work was only for children, primarily for children, for both children and adults, or not intended for children at all but adopted by them or marketed to them. Does children's literature include educational works, such as primers and textbooks, or by children's literature do we mean only fiction, poetry, and drama? Scholars have different ideas about when the history of children's literature begins and about what counts and what doesn't. In the discussion that follows, we examine different ways of defining children's literature, identify important milestones in its development, and provide tools for understanding its history.

QUESTIONS OF DEFINITION

Defining Literature

The problem of defining children's literature begins with the very definition of literature itself. Literature has often come to be understood as being composed of fictional works of "quality"—literary or artistic writing as opposed to popular genres such as comics or romance novels, informative texts such as newspapers or blogs, disposable products such as pamphlets or magazines, practical guides such as how-to manuals or reference books, and nonfiction works such as medical treatises or histories. However, as literary theorist Terry Eagleton explains, this has not always been the case. While "literature" might long have connoted works of privileged status, it was not always limited to fiction:

> In eighteenth-century England, the concept of literature was not confined as it sometimes is today to "creative" or "imaginative" writing. It meant the whole body of valued writing in society: philosophy, history, essays and letters as well as poems. What made a text "literary" was not whether it was fictional—the eighteenth century was in grave doubt about whether the new upstart form of the novel was literature at all—but whether it conformed to certain standards of "polite letters." (15)

So, in tracing the history of children's literature, especially before the eighteenth century, we have to consider whether to use our contemporary conception of literature or to include what readers of a given era might have termed literature.

Defining Children's Literature

Focusing specifically on children's literature, we are faced with yet another problem of definition, as we note above. Is children's literature defined by what children read or by what is written for children? Does it include practical as well as pleasurable works, or only the latter? Scholars disagree. In his landmark history *Children's Books in England,* first published in 1932, Harvey Darton writes:

> By "children's books" I mean printed works produced ostensibly to give children spontaneous pleasure, and not primarily to teach them, nor solely to make them good, nor to keep them *profitably* quiet. I shall therefore exclude from this history, as a general rule, all schoolbooks, all purely moral or didactic treatises, all reflective or adult-minded descriptions of child-life, and almost all alphabets, primers, and spelling-books. (1)

Darton's definition is the narrowest, limited to books specifically produced for children *and* designed to give them pleasure rather than to instruct. Historian Henry Steele Commager offers a different perspective in his introduction to Cornelia Meigs's *A Critical History of Children's Literature* (1953), in which he, too, questions what "children's literature" means:

> Is it that literature written especially for the young—the fairy and wonder tales, the nursery rhymes and songs, the dull books of etiquette and admonition and moral persuasion, the stories of school and playing field or of far-flung adventure? It is all of this, to be sure, but it is far more. It is the whole vast body of literature that children have adopted, commonly to share with their elders, but sometimes to monopolize. It is, quite literally, *their* literature. (xi)

Commager supports the broadest possible definition: books that are produced for children *and* books children read. Jeanie Watson concurs in her introduction to Warren W. Wooden's *Children's Literature of the English Renaissance* (1986), in which she summarizes Wooden's perspective: "A literary work becomes a 'children's book' when a child finds pleasure in it. Children themselves claim their own literature" (xix). While Wooden emphasizes the child reader's pleasure, Daniel T. Kline argues in his introduction to *Medieval Literature for Children* (2003) that instructional texts should be included because of the prominent didactic streak that runs through the history of children's literature, from the Middle Ages to the present (3). Whether textbooks or novels, children's literature is

often crafted to teach a lesson, and so to exclude didactic works from the history of children's literature is to ignore a significant portion of texts produced for and read by children, Kline concludes.

Peter Hunt complicates these attempts at definition even further, questioning the criteria of "written for" and "read by." He asks:

> Just to unpack that definition: what does *written for* mean? Surely the intention of the author is not a reliable guide, not to mention the intention of the publisher—or even the format of the book? For example, Jill Murphy's highly successful series of picture-books about the domestic affairs of a family of elephants … are jokes almost entirely from the point of view of (and largely understandable by) parents. Then again, *read by*: surely sometime, somewhere, all books have been read by one child or another? And some much-vaunted books for children are either not read by them, or much more appreciated by adults (like *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*), or probably not children's books at all (like *Wind in the Willows*), or seem to serve adults and children in different—and perhaps opposing—ways (like *Winnie-the-Pooh*). (5)

Hunt further questions the criterion of "read by" because so often the books read by children are thrust upon them by parents or teachers who force children to read them. Jack Zipes poses a challenge to the very notion of "children's" literature by noting that "there never has been a literature conceived *by* children *for* children, a literature that belongs to children, and there never will be… . Certainly they participate in children's literature and the process of making it what it is, but children's literature *per se* does not exist" (40). According to Zipes, adults create the institution of children's literature to serve their ideas about children, what children need, or what is best for children, and thus children's literature belongs really to adults.

Teresa Michals turns traditional approaches to children literature on their head by investigating what we mean by *adult* readers. She argues that before "the emergence of the idea of books intended

specifically for adult readers" in the nineteenth century, "the novel was written for a mixed-age audience" (2). When the age-specific marketing category of children's literature developed in the eighteenth century, she claims, it was contrasted with literature for a mixed-age audience, not "adult literature" (2). The more important distinction was one of status, between gentlemen (upper-class men) and everyone else (women, children, servants, etc.). Michals reminds us that "until the early eighteenth century most people in England did not know their numerical age" and society placed far less importance on people's ages than on their social statuses and roles. Following Michals, we might say that early "children's literature" was really a subset of mixed-age literature, the way picturebooks are now a subset of children's literature, and literate children would have read—and been imagined as part of the audience for—much of what was written and published before the end of the nineteenth century. What this means for contemporary scholars and students of children's literature is that we must consider what we mean when we use a phrase like "children's literature" and take care not to impose current categories or assumptions onto the past. We cannot be too quick to dismiss certain works as not being "for" young people just because they do not meet our expectations of children's literature.

It should be clear that the definition of children's literature is an unstable and contested one. Ultimately, the definition one chooses at a given moment—and we must allow for the possibility of making different choices at different moments—will be determined largely by one's purpose. The scholar of "medieval children's literature," the university archivist, the elementary-school teacher, the youth-services librarian, the parent, the gift-buying relative, the professor in an introductory college course on children's literature, and the contemporary child are all likely to approach children's literature with different goals and investments, and thus they will define children's literature in different ways, whether or not they are conscious of the assumptions underlying their choices.

Children's Literature as Genre

Perry Nodelman argues for understanding children's literature as a coherent genre, not just as a disparate set of texts grouped artificially by virtue of their intended audience of child readers: "It might, in fact, be a specific genre of fiction whose defining characteristics seem to transcend specifics of time and place, cut across other generic categories such as fantasy or realism, and even remain consistent despite variations in the ages of intended audiences" (81). A literary **genre** is a category of literature, such as **adventure fiction** or mysteries. Readers recognize or determine whether an individual text belongs to a particular genre based on its possession of common or familiar features, tropes, or patterns associated with that genre. Works for children could be textbooks or primers, cautionary tales, domestic novels, or nonsense verse—different literary genres. Nodelman insists that children's literature itself should be thought of as a genre, as possessing a consistent set of qualities, which include the implication of children as readers, the use of a simple style, the focus on action rather than description, the use of apparent simplicity to mask hidden complexities, a matter-of-fact tone despite the strangeness of the events described, focalization through a child's perspective and the use of child protagonists, a doubleness of perspective created by the differences between the perspective of child characters and the voice of a presumably adult third-person narrator, the focus on innocence and knowledge acquisition as central subjects, a pervasive sense of nostalgia and ambivalence, and the importance of home and leaving home (76–81). According to Nodelman, most children's literature shares this list of features.

Why might these features define literature for children and young adults? Nodelman believes these qualities emerge out of the condition of adult authors writing for an audience of readers younger and less knowledgeable or experienced than themselves. He explains, "Children's literature is that literature that constructs child characters in order to satisfy adult wants and needs in regard to children" (172). In this view, the partial list of qualities just noted

represents a set of "wants and needs" adults have with regard to children. As long as adults maintain this sense that children need something special, in distinction to what adults need, and as long as they believe adults can provide this for them in ways children cannot for themselves, children's literature will exist as defined by these generic conventions (248).

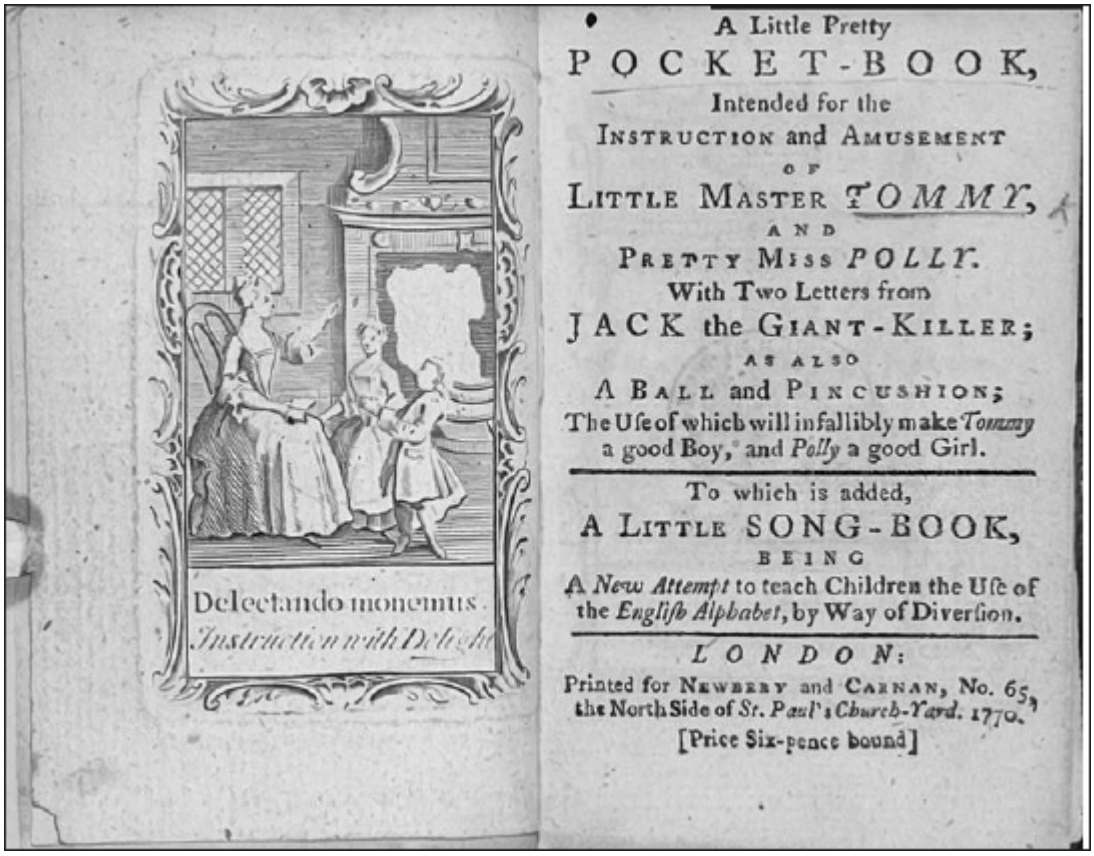
Not all scholars of children's literature share this thinking about children's literature as a distinct genre with a set of consistent qualities, but Nodelman's hypothesis does suggest a way to read children's literature critically. The concept of genre, or the practice of categorization, is most useful for identifying similarities and the meanings of similarities amid apparent difference, and for identifying differences amid apparent similarities. Recognizing when, how, and why individual texts for children may depart from the conventions or expectations of children's literature provides a useful strategy for critical reading.

THE "BIRTH" OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE?

John Newbery

While remaining attentive to these uncertainties, we can sketch a rough outline of the history of children's literature. Alec Ellis adopts the standard narrative about the history of children's literature and states it boldly: "There were no children's books in England before 1600 (although there were numerous schoolbooks and guides to conduct), nor were they recognized as an identifiable branch of English literature until approximately 1700" (3). The person who is most often credited with the "invention" of children's literature is John Newbery, a London bookseller and publisher who lived from 1713 to 1767, and 1744 is often cited as the year children's literature was born. That year John Newbery published *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book,* a work recognized as igniting the children's book industry for two reasons. First, in contrast to most of the children's books that preceded it, it was advertised and designed not only for

instruction but also for pleasure. Children were meant to enjoy it, not just to learn from it. Second, Newbery began to think about children and their parents as a distinct consumer group. He designed and marketed *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* to be especially appealing to children through its elaborate and attractive cover and binding and by such features as a letter from Jack the Giant-Killer, a youthful hero of folkloric fame, addressed to the boy or girl reader, and its teaching of the alphabet through descriptions of games. As Peter Hunt observes, it was also "a commercial, mixed-media text" (42), for it was accompanied by an object that could be described as a pincushion for girls or a ball for boys. This rethinking of children as a distinct market, the strategies to incite children's interest—including the increased attention to packaging and pleasure—along with Newbery's established printing and bookselling business poised him to influence the future of the market and garner the credit for having created it.



Often cited as the "inventor" of children's literature, John Newbery published his *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* in 1744 and packaged it with a toy.

Newbery's Contemporaries: Thomas Boreman and Mary Cooper

Although *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* was indeed innovative, and Newbery himself was influential, this conventional history understates the work of others who came before him. Newbery was actually not the first to publish children's books that attended to the child's pleasure; he has largely overshadowed others who worked in the business during this critical period. Newbery was preceded by Thomas Boreman, another London printer and bookseller, who appears to have begun publishing exclusively for children as early as 1730. *The Gigantick Histories of the Curiosities of London,* a series of small books sized to fit in the child's hand, was Boreman's most successful; it was published in ten volumes between 1740 and 1743. After Newbery's appearance in London in 1743, Boreman disappears from the historical record, probably because of his death (Gillespie

8, 98; Demers 120; Darton 355). Another important innovator was Mary Cooper, who ran a publishing business. A year before Newbery published his first book for children, Cooper's *The Child's New Plaything* was already in its second edition. The book contained an alphabet, traditional medieval tales, and spelling lessons. Cooper's second book, *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book,* published in 1744, is considered the first collection of nursery rhymes in English. Though there were others who also contributed to the invention of commercial publishing for children, Newbery, Boreman, and Cooper signal the significant emergence of a more coherent market for children's books and a revolution in thinking about the possibilities of a distinct literature for children.

Sarah Fielding and the First Children's Novel?

One other milestone in the mid-eighteenth-century birth of children's literature was Sarah Fielding's 1749 publication of *The Governess; or, The Little Female Academy,* the first work that can be described as a novel for children. Sarah was the sister of Henry Fielding, one of the writers who, along with Samuel Richardson, pioneered the English novel in the 1740s. Richardson was Sarah Fielding's friend and her publisher for *The Governess,* a book that involves a group of young schoolgirls who take turns telling their life stories, which are interspersed with fairy tales and the moral advice of their governess, Mrs. Teachum. Though little holds the disparate elements of *The Governess* together and many contemporary readers might find it a strange amalgamation, the notion of a full-length fictional work for children was unheard of, and the novel itself was still evolving when Fielding wrote. Her relationships with key innovators of the novel directly link the history of children's literature with the history of English literature more generally. The publication of *The Governess,* along with the work of Boreman, Newbery, and Cooper, marks the birth of children's literature as we have come to know it.

With the 1740s established as a flashpoint in the history of children's literature, we turn now to the works produced before the

mid eighteenth century and the developments that followed. In doing so, we show why the innovations of the 1740s proved so important and how those who came after built on the work of Cooper, Newbery, and others. Children's literature before the eighteenth century can be divided roughly into two groups:

1. General-audience and crossover texts (those written for everyone, both adults and children, or those written for a mixed-age audience but now widely associated with children).

2. Educational books (textbooks, primers, and conduct manuals), including religious texts (catechisms, books of martyrs, children's Bibles, and religious instructions), and didactic poetry and stories (imaginative works whose primary purpose is to teach a specific lesson).

GENERAL-AUDIENCE AND CROSSOVER WORKS

In the traditional history of children's literature, we would talk about adult works that "crossed over" from adult literature to children's literature, but Michals compels us to rethink "adult" works before the twentieth century as actually for a mixed-age audience. By implication, **"crossover"** works are never really "adult" works; rather, these books were always imagined as for a general audience but became increasingly associated with children over time, sometimes to the exclusion of adults. This section describes some of the most prominent of what have traditionally been called crossover literature, a term we retain because it continues to be widely used to refer to such texts.

Aesop's Fables

General-audience and crossover texts included fables and chapbooks, and their history as children's literature is really the history of literature more broadly. Such works date to antiquity, as

do instructional texts for children. The fables attributed to Aesop from the sixth century BCE came to be associated with child readers, though they were not intended only for children or enjoyed only by children. Eight years after he introduced the printing press to England in 1476, William Caxton published the first English translation of *Aesop's Fables* (1484), which includes the well-known tales of the tortoise and the hare and the boy who cried "wolf." Although Caxton did not conceive of the book as specifically for children, *Aesop's Fables* began to be used in schools as a way of teaching Greek and Latin and useful life lessons, especially after its recommendation by John Locke in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* in 1693. During the nineteenth century, many new translators and illustrators produced editions of *Aesop* for children, ensuring that fables would come to be thought of as children's literature.

Richard Heighway's drawing of "the fox and the crow" from *The Fables of Aesop* (1894), by Joseph Jacobs. Though associated with child readers, Aesop's fables were not intended only for children.

Chapbooks

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, **chapbooks** became popular. These were small booklets, ranging anywhere from eight to twenty-four pages, made by folding a single large sheet of paper. Cheap and disposable, chapbooks contained ballads; folk tales; illustrated tales of adventure, romance, mystery, and crime; and other such popular forms of textual entertainment. As with fables, chapbooks were produced for the general public with no initial distinction made between child and adult audiences. One popular chapbook tells the story of Tom Thumb, the member of King Arthur's court who, only several inches tall, manages to be heroic and dashing despite his diminutive size. Another chapbook was *The Interesting Story of the Children in the Wood,* or *The Babes in the Wood,* which first appeared in some form between 1593 and 1595. It tells the story of two young children who are left in the care of an uncle when their father dies of illness and their mother dies of grief after their father's death. The children are left an inheritance, which they can claim at the age of twenty-one, but their uncle soon conspires to claim it for himself. He hires two "ruffians" to take them into the woods and murder them, but one takes pity on them, murders his fellow thug instead, and abandons the children in the woods to fend for themselves. However, their fate hardly improves:

> Their pretty lips with blackberries
> Were all besmeared and dy'd,
> And when the shades of night arose,
> They sat them down and cry'd.
>
> These pretty babes thus wandered long,
> Without the least relief,
> The woods, the briers, and thorns among,
> Till death did end their grief. (Rusher 11)

Although *The Babes in the Wood* is about children, it is addressed to adults, as indicated by the opening line: "Now ponder well, ye parents dear." The tale functions in part as a warning to choose the guardian of one's children carefully. At the end of the story, the

uncle is racked with guilt, confesses, and dies in prison; and the narrator concludes:

> Ye guardians, warning take hereby
> And never prove ingrate.
> To helpless infants still be kind,
>
> And give to each his right;
> For, if you do not, soon you'll find
> God will your deeds requite. (Rusher 12)

Children are frequently endangered in children's literature, and the appeal to children of a story about the murder of helpless babes by a relative would be peculiar if not for the appreciation some children hold for the macabre. We can suppose that part of the attraction to such chapbook stories was the fact that most omitted any moral, at least for children. Being designed primarily for a mixed-age audience, they represented an exciting transgression for child readers.

Folk and Fairy Tales

Although today folk and fairy tales are often imagined as specifically for children, they both originated in the orally transmitted tales of peasant folk and in the parlor games of the social elite. Ruth B. Bottigheimer makes a distinction between folk and fairy tales. Folk tales, passed down and modified through generations, provided a way for ordinary people who may not have been literate to entertain themselves. They featured very ordinary protagonists and often ended unhappily (Bottigheimer 4). These tales made little distinction between child and adult listeners and were not specifically for children. Some fairy tales, which often include magical elements and happier endings, may have had their origins in orally transmitted folk tales, while others were original compositions by writers such as Giovanni Francesco Straparola (1480–1557) and Giambattista Basile (1575–1632), who wrote and

published some of the first fairy tales in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy.

Near the end of the seventeenth century, inventing or retelling fairy tales at private gatherings of aristocratic women, called "salons," became a popular parlor game in France. The practice might have been initiated by the Countess d'Aulnoy, who settled in Paris in 1690 and is thought to have coined the term "fairy tales" (Gillespie 44). Several figures capitalized on the fad by transcribing and publishing collections of such tales, including d'Aulnoy herself, who published *Les contes des fées* (*Tales of Fairies*) in 1697, and Charles Perrault, who published *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (*Stories or Tales of Past Times*) that same year (Zipes 20). Perrault's collection was translated into English in 1729 and included such tales as "Cinderella" and "Little Red Riding Hood." Perrault's fairy tales usually had more grisly parts than the versions in circulation today. "Little Red Riding Hood," as written by Perrault, concludes with Red Riding Hood being gobbled up by the wolf. Unlike in later versions, no woodsman comes to slice open the wolf's belly and free her. In "Bluebeard," Bluebeard's wife opens the forbidden chamber and finds the corpses of his former wives, whom he has murdered. Perrault's "Donkeyskin" is a tale much like "Cinderella," except the heroine of this story has a different suitor. The heroine's mother, the queen, commands her husband on her deathbed not to remarry unless he finds a woman more beautiful than she. The king finds the search challenging, but he eventually stumbles upon a solution:

> Every day, he studied charming portraits of suitable princesses but not one of them was half as pretty as his dead queen had been. Then he looked at his own daughter and saw she had grown up. Now she was even lovelier than her mother had been when the king first met her and he fell head over heels in love with her and proposed. The princess was filled with horror. (Carter 62)

As Jack Zipes emphasizes, Perrault's tales "were *not* told or written for children" (23, emphasis in original). Yet over the course of the

eighteenth century, fairy tales such as these were retold for children. Like fables, they enjoyed a renaissance in the nineteenth century through the publication of such works as Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm's first collection of German fairy tales in 1812, first translated into English in 1820, and Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889), which included versions of several of Perrault's tales. While older variants of the tales sometimes employed bawdy folk humor, including sexual innuendoes, scatological references, and gruesome violence, fairy tales were increasingly domesticated and sanitized for the nursery. We discuss folk and fairy tales in more detail in Chapter 4.

Mixed-Age Works as Children's Classics

The last kind of crossover texts are those like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), which, though written for mixed-age readers, were read and enjoyed by children and came to be associated with them. Another such crossover hit was Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), but Defoe's work proved particularly resonant, spawning an entire genre called the "Robinsonade." Some of the more prominent Robinsonades include Johann Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812), which Wyss wrote to teach his children useful lessons about family and survival, and R.M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1857), an adventurous and optimistic castaway novel for children parodied by William Golding in his much darker *Lord of the Flies* (1954). Works such as these can now frequently be found in both the adult and children's sections of libraries and bookstores in both complete and abridged versions. New Robinsonades continue to be popular among both children and adults. In addition to many books in the genre, at least four twenty-first century television programs—*Survivor* (2000–present), *Lost* (2004–2010), and *Crusoe* (2008–09) for adults and *Flight 29 Down* (2005–07) for children—have been broadcast in the United States in recent years, and films such as *Cast Away* (2000) have also been popular. Crossover hits such as *Robinson Crusoe* and its imitators raise questions about crossover fiction, such as why these narratives

would be either popular with children or thought to be popular with children; why some works cross over to child readers while others don't; and how to classify such works once they have crossed over. Moreover, crossover texts again raise the question of whether children's literature is defined by what is written for children or by what children read.

Almost from the beginning, children's literature and the popularity of crossover works met with resistance. Harvey Darton refers to "the general Puritan discouragement of light reading" (94), which we might take to mean anything not explicitly religious in nature. One of the best-known critics of children's literature along these lines was Sarah Trimmer (1741–1810), a mother of twelve who wrote a number of children's books in addition to being a leader of the movement to establish Sunday schools in England. Under her editorship, *The Guardian of Education* (1802–06) became one of the first periodicals to regularly review children's books and to establish a canon of its best exemplars. In *An Essay on Christian Education,* published posthumously in 1812, Trimmer writes, "Novels certainly, however excellent, should not be read by young persons, till they are in some measure acquainted with real life" (310). Trimmer warns against tales that work "too powerfully upon the feelings of the mind" or give "false pictures of life and manners" (310). The opposition to J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series can be understood in terms of this long tradition of skepticism about fiction and fantasy for children. While the condemnation of secular or imaginative literature represents one strand of resistance, another comes from those who, influenced by Locke and Rousseau, thought fantasy and fairy tales would mislead children and deform their sense of reality. According to Darton, this "fear or dislike of fairy tales … involves the belief that anything fantastic on the one hand, or anything primitive on the other, is inherently noxious, or at least so void of good as to be actively dangerous" (99). Maria Edgeworth espouses such a view in *Practical Education* (1798), co-written with her father.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The Growth of the Children's Literature Industry

With the advent of a distinct market for children's literature during the mid eighteenth century, a struggle ensued within the enterprise of children's literature between the adult belief that children's books should be educational and the creative and commercial impulse to entertain children and to craft literary works for them. Many societal changes that occurred during the nineteenth century led to a greater emphasis on innovation and imagination: children's culture expanded with the spread of industrialism and the rise of mass production, more children attended school and learned to read, more families attained middle-class status and could afford books for children, children themselves came to be seen as precious objects to spoil, and more writers looked to children as a viable audience. Although traces of didacticism would remain, children's literature would come to emphasize pleasure and creative expression in addition to instruction. Freed from the demand to craft stories or poems that taught lessons, writers were able to chart new literary paths, explore new genres and forms, and plumb more complex characters or emotions. Though we can trace the beginning of the Golden Age as far back as the 1850s, Lewis Carroll's 1865 publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* a highly imaginative and complex work that uses nonsense and humor to lampoon didacticism and delight child readers, can stand in as one starting

point for it. A significant break from the ongoing tendency to use children's literature to instruct, *Alice's Adventures* highlights the aesthetic and creative possibilities of writing for youth. While didacticism continued to be a prominent feature of children's literature after *Alice,* and remains so today, it no longer dominates writing for youth. Rather, didacticism occurs in tension with pleasure and artistry, as we discuss below.

The Tensions that Define Children's Literature

A defining feature of the Golden Age of children's literature is that, on the whole, works published during this period emphasize pleasure and creativity, not just didacticism and education. As we have seen, the history of children's literature, both before and after the Golden Age, can be understood in terms of three sets of competing or overlapping functions:

1. Didacticism, education, and practicality: Some believed that children's literature, even fiction and poetry, should fulfill the practical function of socializing children to behave or to think properly by providing models of good behavior or by teaching children specific lessons.

2. Pleasure, popularity, and profitability: Others were primarily concerned with establishing children's literature as a commercial, money-making enterprise, and thus they were interested in producing works for children that would be pleasurable and popular.

3. Aesthetics, innovation, and literariness: Some understood children's literature as a form of creative and artistic expression and were motivated by the desire to produce aesthetic and innovative literary works for children.

The complex and layered qualities of children's literature are produced by the tensions between these different and sometimes contradictory impulses and functions. As writers and publishers attempt to negotiate between these three approaches to children's literature, individual works bear the traces of the choices or compromises made among the impulses to instruct, to please, to profit, to innovate, or to create something "serious" or "literary."

For instance, in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* Carroll stresses the pleasure of the reader and the practice of literary experimentation. *Alice* is full of jokes and whimsical uses of language that work to delight readers, and Carroll experiments with children's literature by insisting on nonsense or pushing the boundaries of traditional children's fare. In these ways, the book emphasizes pleasure and craft over instruction, even if some instruction remains. Kate Greenaway's picturebook *A Apple Pie* (1886) combines prominent images of the alphabet with richly illustrated scenes and short phrases highlighting each letter. Designed to teach children the alphabet, it appears to be primarily didactic, but the illustrations, completed by Greenaway herself, are so noteworthy for their distinctiveness and merit that we cannot ignore the artistry and craft of *A Apple Pie.* Other works, such as Horatio Alger's series books, tend to follow a formula in which a poor boy, often an orphan, manages to advance in the world through a mixture of luck and pluck. These popular works often emphasized the reader's pleasure rather than literary innovation, while instruction remained a secondary motive.

All works for children represent complex negotiations between these different functions. In the chapter on censorship (Ch. 12), we will discuss how many of the controversies surrounding children's literature can be understood in terms of conflicting ideas about which set of functions should be emphasized in writing for children. During the Golden Age, pleasure and aesthetics came to the fore for the first time. Understanding this early history of children's literature and the tensions and controversies that shaped it are crucial to the study of more current works for children.

The Second Golden Age

By the twentieth century, children's and young adult literature had come into their own, and many "contemporary classics" such as C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952), Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958), Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), and S.E.

Hinton's *The Outsiders* (1967) would come to be added to the distinguished list of works written during the earlier Golden Age. The mid-twentieth-century boom in the publication of beloved children's books was referred to by John Rowe Townsend in 1965 as the Second Golden Age, which spanned the years after World War II through the 1970s (151). Townsend and, more recently, Lucy Pearson both credit professional children's book editors in mid-twentieth-century Britain, such as Eleanor Graham and her successor Kaye Webb at Puffin, with promoting the publication of quality children's books during the Second Golden Age. Many of these important editors were women (Pearson 76–77). In the United States, the Second Golden Age was presided over by influential book editors such as Ursula Nordstrom, the editor in chief of the children's book division of Harper & Brothers in New York. During her tenure between 1940 and 1973, when she rose to a position as Vice President at Harper, she edited and published works by Laura Ingalls Wilder, E.B. White, Margaret Wise Brown, Maurice Sendak, and many others. According to Leonard Marcus, it was Nordstrom's "irreverent view of the field" of children's literature and her "profound contempt for its more precious tendencies" that allowed her to see the merit in what became some of the most important children's classics of the period (Marcus 160), such as Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* (1963), and enabled the field to escape further the constraints of strict didacticism. The 1997 publication of the first book in the Harry Potter series might be said to have ushered in the Third Golden Age of Children's Literature, which continues to be defined by the tensions between didacticism, pleasure, and aesthetics.

READING CRITICALLY: THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is often taken as a starting point for the Golden Age because it seems to mark a rupture in the history of children's literature by dramatically breaking from the tradition of didacticism in works for children. *Alice's Adventures* has its origins in a story Charles Dodgson told in 1862 to ten-year-old Alice Liddell and her sisters, Edith and Lorina, the daughters of the dean of Christ Church College at Oxford University, where Dodgson taught logic and mathematics. After writing down and revising the original version, Dodgson had the tale published in 1865 under the pen name Lewis Carroll. Conceived during a series of summer afternoons and designed to amuse the Liddell sisters, *Alice's Adventures* focuses primarily on providing pleasurable entertainment while lampooning moralistic or instructional children's books. Thus, like much of children's literature, *Alice's Adventures* negotiates between the impulse to instruct child readers and the impulse to delight them. What makes the work notable is its strong emphasis on the latter. Writing children's literature without succumbing to the temptation to impart lessons required Carroll to draw upon a number of strategies, including the innovative use of nonsense, the linguistic playfulness of jokes and puns, and the explicit mockery of education and didacticism.

Part of what generations of readers have found most delightful about the work is its insistent nonsense, a literary form that plays with and defies conventional uses of language, sense, and logic. Carroll employs nonsense both as a source of amusement and as a technique for short-circuiting the coherence and sense on which instruction rests. The nonsense of *Alice's Adventures* takes a number of forms. One is Carroll's use of puns, such as when the Mouse tells Alice that his history is "a long and sad tale," and Alice replies, "It *is* a long tail, certainly … but why do you call it sad?" (28). Carroll frequently plays with language like this to humorous effect, as in the Mock Turtle's description of what he has learned in school: "Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with … and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision" (85). The riddle proposed by the Hatter—"Why is a raven like a writing-desk?"—is another

example of nonsense; it is designed to have no answer (60). Carroll frequently includes nonsense verse throughout *Alice's Adventures,* as when the Mock Turtle sings to Alice:

> "Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to a snail,
> "There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail." (89)

The notion of a whiting, a type of fish, walking and being tread upon by a porpoise is absurd. Moreover, the very structure of the text, which shifts erratically from scene to scene, also constitutes the nonsense of Wonderland. In the first several chapters, Alice falls down a rabbit hole while playing outside, finds herself indoors somewhere but unable to get out through a tiny door, cries so much she is forced to swim in a large pool of her own tears, meets a number of animals swimming in the pool who appear out of nowhere, makes it to shore, and eventually resumes her chase of the White Rabbit, which takes her outside again, with the overly small door and its challenges having been forgotten. Characters appear and disappear, behave oddly, and speak incoherently. The sheer strangeness of the events, details, dialogue, and characters make it extremely difficult to extract morals or lessons from the work.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a funny book, and its frequent use of humor works to emphasize pleasure over instruction. Some of that humor is grim and even mean-spirited, providing opportunities to delight child readers, for whom grimness and meanness are often taboo. Many of these jokes are at Alice's expense, such as this one, which appears to allude to Alice's death: "'Well!' thought Alice to herself. 'After such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling down-stairs! How brave they'll all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house!' (Which was very likely true.)" (10). (Alice wouldn't cry or complain after falling off the top of the house because she would be dead.) Later, when Alice finds herself growing and shrinking without any control, she begins to wonder who she is and whether she is still Alice or one of her child acquaintances. She comforts herself by thinking, "I'm sure I can't be Mabel, for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh, she knows such a very little!" (18). When Alice quotes a poem incorrectly, she thinks, "I must be Mabel after all" (19). Alice is effectively calling her friend Mabel stupid or uneducated, which is itself funny, but doubly so because seven-year-old Alice is so conscious of Mabel's and her own intellectual capacities. Alice's running monologue is precocious in its

properness and diction, while simultaneously riddled with absurdities and mistakes, further adding to the humor. As Alice finds herself getting taller and taller, she begins to worry about her feet: "'Oh, my poor little feet, I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings for you now, dears? I'm sure *I* shan't be able! I shall be a great deal too far off to trouble myself about you: you must manage the best way you can—but I must be kind to them,' thought Alice, 'or perhaps they won't walk the way I want to go!'" (16). Alice appears to have internalized an adult voice; we can hear an adult encouraging a child to be independent and responsible in Alice's earnest and ridiculous comments to her own feet. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is composed of joke after joke, emphasizing the pleasure of readers who are free to delight in Alice's absurdity and absurd situation.

In addition to nonsense and humor, one last key way in which Carroll's landmark work breaks from the didactic tradition of children's literature is through its outright mockery of education and didacticism. This ridicule can be seen throughout the text. Alice frequently calls upon her education at the most inopportune moments—in addition to being poorly timed, her attempts to seem educated only highlight her ignorance. For instance, as she falls down the rabbit hole at the very outset of her adventures, Alice uses the opportunity to recollect her geography lessons:

"You're nothing but a pack of cards!" John Tenniel's illustration from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) by Lewis Carroll depicts the moment reality destroys fantasy.

> "I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time?" she said aloud. "I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think—" (for, you see, Alice had learnt several things of this sort in her early lessons in the school-room, and though this was not a *very* good opportunity for showing off her knowledge, as there was no one to listen to her, still it was good practice to say it over) "—yes, that's about the right distance—but then I wonder what Latitude or Longitude I've got to?" (Alice had not the slightest idea what Latitude was, or Longitude either, but she thought they were nice grand words to say.) (10–11)

This passage suggests that the knowledge of little girls is most useful for "showing off" rather than for any sort of practical application, and the narratorial aside about saying it over to herself being "good practice" alludes to the common educational technique of having children learn by rote memorization and recitations. Carroll mocks these ideas and practices by having Alice call upon her education while falling perilously down a deep hole, oblivious to the danger of her situation or the futility of her (partial) knowledge. When she finally does land safely and discovers a bottle marked "DRINK ME," Alice is again given the opportunity to draw upon her education. Here, Carroll explicitly refers to the tradition of didactic children's literature represented by works such as Elizabeth Turner's *The Daisy; or Cautionary Stories in Verse* (1807), which illustrates the dangerous consequences for children who engage in such bad behavior as playing with hot pokers or climbing up on wells. Alice attempts to use what she has learned from this kind of instruction to help her decide whether to drink what is in the bottle:

> It was all very well to say "Drink me," but the wise little Alice was not going to do *that* in a hurry. "No, I'll look first," she said, "and see whether it's marked '*poison*' or not"; for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild animals, and other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that, if you cut your finger *very* deeply with a knife, it usually bleeds; and she had never forgotten that, if you drink much from a bottle marked "poison," it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later. (13)

The humor here is partly in Alice's understated recollection of the lessons of these stories—a red-hot poker will burn if you hold it *at all,* and drinking poison will more than "disagree with you"—but also in her very limited application of those lessons and her failure to transfer them beyond the specific scenarios of the stories. Thus, Alice has learned that she should not drink from a bottle marked "poison," but she mistakenly concludes that if a bottle is *not* marked "poison," it must be safe to drink. On another occasion, she misremembers Sir Isaac Watts's "Against Idleness and Mischief" (1715), quoted correctly in its entirety here:

> How doth the little crocodile
> Improve his shining tail,
> And pour the waters of the Nile
> On every golden scale! (19)

Carroll thus transforms a didactic verse into one of nonsense, and the fact that Alice misremembers it suggests that such works are hardly effective.

The nonsense and humor of *Alice's Adventures* make more sense, ironically, if understood both as part of the larger tradition of children's literature and as Carroll's resistance to that tradition. Of course, the fact that we are able to make partial sense of *Alice's Adventures* by reading the text in terms of the tensions between didacticism and pleasure and the fact that Carroll's allusions might occasion our learning about the original works he lampoons indicate that it is extremely difficult to avoid sense and education completely. *Alice's Adventures* and its sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), are puzzles, and solving them requires the reader not only to draw on prior knowledge but also to seek out new information or practice new skills. In these ways, even nonsense can promote instruction. Nonetheless, Carroll's work clearly inclines toward pleasure and away from didacticism, and his use of nonsense, linguistic humor, and literary allusion represents the kind of innovation, creativity, and complexity that ushered in the Golden Age of children's literature.

3

Fairy Tales and Folk-tales

Ruth B.Bottigheimer

Tales about Fairies and Fairy Tales

Tales about fairies are elaborate narratives that depict the fairy kingdom and elfland; the leprechauns, kobolds, gnomes, elves, and little people (Briggs 1976, 1978) that populate its stories are authors of unintelligible actions that often have no moral point and frequently lead to troublingly amoral consequences and conclusions. Based on surviving Celtic lore, tales about fairies flowered in ornate seventeenth-century versions composed during the reign of Louis XIV by the French *précieuses* and their followers. Their fairies and giantesses, invented for literate adult aristocratic French audiences, soon found favour among children. A representative example, Mme d'Aulnoy's *Yellow Dwarf,* opens with a princess disdainful of her suitors and continues with an unfortunate promise of betrothal to a physically deformed yellow dwarf. When the princess finally meets and falls in love with the valorous and virtuous King of the Gold Mines, a worthy suitor, the yellow dwarf kills him and the princess swoons and dies in sympathy. The tale ends in a manner hardly calculated to delight seventeenth- and eighteenth-century moralists: 'The wicked dwarf was better pleased to see his princess void of life, than in the arms of another' (1721 vol. 1, story VII; here Opie 1974:80).

Humble people had also become familiar with the fairy world, and in the same period used simple stories of the fairy world to frighten children. John Locke decried this practice and urged readers of his *Thoughts on Education* to eschew hobgoblins and their ilk altogether (Locke 1693:159). Despite his influence in other educational questions, his advice was often ignored, and tales about fairies specifically for children began to appear after 1700 as part of the chapbook trade (Darton 1932/1982:94).

Fairy tales, unlike tales about fairies, more often than not, do not include fairies in their cast of characters and are generally brief narratives in simple language that detail a reversal of fortune, with a rags-to-riches plot that often culminates in a wedding. Magical creatures regularly assist earthly heroes and heroines achieve happiness, and the entire story is usually made to demonstrate a moral point, appended separately, as in Perrault, or built into the text, as in Grimm.

In terms of the history and development of children's literature, tales about fairies and fairy tales postdate the earliest writing for children—instructional manuals, grammars, school texts and books of courtesy. Bible stories, too, regularly preceded the appearance

of fairy tales, and in the eighteenth century were often intermixed with them, as in Mme Leprince de Beaumont's *Magasin des Enfans* (1756).

The magic of modern fantasy fiction is an offspring of the joint parentage of tales about fairies and fairy tales; born in the second half of the nineteenth century, fantasy fiction matured in the twentieth century.

Both tales about fairies and fairy tales demonstrate the phenomenon of readership boundary cross-over. The content of tales about fairies that were originally composed by and for adults often passed, in simplified form, into the domain of children's reading. Mme d'Aulnoy's *Yellow* Dwarf provides an example of this process: published with its tragic conclusion throughout the eighteenth century for adults and for children, it was altered to end happily for nineteenth-century child readers (Warner 1994:253).

For centuries, discrete narratives, whether tales about fairies, fairy tales or secular tales, had been embedded within overarching story-telling narratives, like that provided by the pilgrimage in the *Canterbury Tales*. The French *précieuses*' tales about fairies maintained this narrative tradition, but Perrault's *Contes* broke with it. His structural innovation, the free-standing fairy tale, became the norm in children's literature, although the embedded fairy tale periodically returned, for example, in Sarah Fielding's eighteenth-century novel, *The Governess,* and in a nineteenth-century English reformulation of *Grimms' Tales* into a twelve-night cycle between Christmas and Twelfth Night told by Gammer Gurton.

France

Charles Perrault's *Contes du Temps Passé* (1697) and Madame d'Aulnoy's *Contes des Fées* (4 vols., 1710–1715) sowed the seeds for early modern and modern fairy tales and tales about fairies. At a very early point tales about fairies and certain kinds of fairy tales were identified as the products of women's imaginations; and indeed there seem to be qualitative differences between the tales women tell and those that men recount (Holbek 1987:161 ff.). Whether children were ever significant contributors to the fairy tale tradition, as the Abbé de Villiers suggested in 1699 (Warner 1991:11) is doubtful.

For the French book buying public in the eighteenth century, fairy tales existed in three forms. The first consisted of chapbooks of the *bibliothèque bleue,* which foraged among seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tales about fairies and fairy tales in search of fodder for their hungry presses and for an even more ravenous humble public, and delivered French tales about fairies and fairy tales to a semiliterate and illiterate public in France (Tenèze 1979:283–287). It was a population that provided nurses who told fairy tales to children put in their care and who were, in part, responsible for the myth of fairy tale orality. The second form comprised fantasy tales about fairies. These tales, with little or no moral or moralising component, had been composed for adult readers and often offered distinctly dystopic views of the human condition. Hence, their suitability for children was highly problematic. There existed a third form, however, intensely moralised fairy tales that were intended for child readers. Enlightenment pedagogy remained dissatisfied with magic in any form, and by the late 1770s and early 1780s Rousseau and Locke had 'gradually alienated the child from the world of Perrault's fairies …and Mme Leprince de Beaumont's "Beast", and indeed, Mme de la

Fite had openly attacked the highly moralised fairy tales of Mme Leprince de Beaumont' (Davis 1987:113).

In nineteenth-century France the market for fairy tales for children was limited to Perrault (Caradec 1977:53 ff.) and a few translations of *Grimms' Tales*. In general, France's educational system, and hence its book market, was firmly closed against fantasy.

Germany

The fairy tale in Germany derived almost completely from the French tradition. For a century, translations and borrowings had enabled German booksellers to repeat the French model: the writings of Charles Perrault, Charlotte de la Force, Suzanne de Villeneuve, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy and the *Cabinet des Fées* supplied middle- and upper-class German adults and children with tales about fairies and fairy tales, and the *bibliothèque bleue* had delivered chapbook versions of the same material (Grätz 1988:83 ff.) to the lower orders.

The French had ascribed fairy tales to women's authorship, despite the manifest participation by many men such as Perrault. German intellectuals took a circuitous route to arrive at the same conclusion. First, they developed a theory of the fairy tale (Märchen) that linked it with ancient history, which they defined as the childhood of the human race. Then the childhood of the human race was equated with childhood *per se*. Because of fairy tales' simple structure and plot lines (so different from the tales about fairies of *the précieuses*) J.G.Herder further equated fairy tales with nature. And finally, because a body of gender theory had developed in eighteenth-century Germany that defined women as the incarnation of nature, fantasy and non-rational cerebration, and because—in the same theory—women's natural state was motherhood, the establishment of the two fairy tale correlates, childhood and nature, forged a theoretical linkage between fairy tales and women. (A belief in that conclusion endures in many quarters to the present day.) Enlightenment pedagogues thus denigrated fairy tales as stories told by ignorant nursemaids, or by women, who were understood to be incapable of intellection, and sought, unsuccessfully, to eradicate fairy tales from the nursery and classroom. None the less, fairy tales entered the precincts of some privileged German homes just as they had in England: Mme de Beaumont's *Magasin des Enfans* was translated into German as *Lehrreiches Magazin für Kinder* and published for girls' reading in 1760, and Sarah Fielding's *Governess,* with its fairy tale inclusions, was translated into German and published in the following year.

With the rise of German Romanticism, fairy tales were proposed as a paradigm for educating the imagination (Steinlein 1987:115 ff.), and when Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm published their *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* (1812 *et seq.*), they labelled it a child-rearing manual (Grimm 1812: preface). The collection eventually contained over two hundred tales, culled from friends, acquaintances, country informants, children's almanacs and old books. The 'Twelve Brothers' (no. 9) may be taken as typical. Twelve brothers face relinquishing their patrimony and losing their lives should their mother bear them a sister. When that happens, they flee to the forest and vow blood vengeance on every girl they might encounter in the future. A full complement of fairy tale situations ensues,

and although the tale ends happily, the sister is first exposed to the threat of her brothers' violence and her mother-in-law's hatred.

Even before Wilhelm and Jacob published their collection, Albert Ludwig Grimm had turned against Enlightenment children's literature and had issued a call for a revival of the tales like 'Cinderella', 'Hansel and Gretel', and 'Snow White' ('Aschenpittchen', 'Hänsel und Gretel', 'Schneewittchen') which he included in *Kindermärchen* (1808), his collection of children's fairy tales. In a later book, *Linas Märchenbuch* (1827), A.L.Grimm scolded Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm for the 'unchild-like style of their fairy tales'.

Eventually, fairy tales came to form the nucleus of German romantic children's literature: Wilhelm Hauff's *Märchen Almanacke* (1822–1828), E.T.A.Hoffmann's fairy tales (especially the Nutcracker cycle) (Ewers 1984:195), and the fairy tales of Contessa and Fouqué.

The runaway fairy tale bestseller of the mid-to-late-nineteenth century in Germany, however, was Ludwig Bechstein's *Deutsches Märchenbuch [German Fairy-tale Book]* (1845 *et seq.*). Bechstein's tales differed from contemporaneous collections of fairy tales by his playful prose style, by the loving and unified families they depicted, and above all, by the ethic of self-reliance they described in their characters and fostered in their readers. Bechstein's twelve brothers, for example, are overjoyed rather than inclined to homicide when they find their sister in their midst. His fairy tales exemplified bourgeois behavioural norms and social expectations, while *Grimms' Tales* expressed values that paralleled those of an agrarian proletariat. However, with the wholesale republication and recirculation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century German chapbooks in nineteenth-century Germany, the ethic of *Grimms' Tales* was reinforced, and that of Bechstein's *Deutsches Märchenbuch* denigrated, with consequential results for German children's literature (Bottigheimer 1990:84–85; 1992:473–477).

In the late nineteenth century *Grimms' Tales* began to dominate the fairy tale market in German children's literature. Their eventual hegemony owed much to newly developed nationalist theories of pedagogy, but even after these were displaced in the mid-twentieth century, *Grimms' Tales* reigned supreme until they were attacked as fundamentally flawed in the aftermath of German university unrest in 1968. They re-emerged, however, with much of the stories' primitive violence removed, a process that had occurred twenty years before in West Germany's then sister state, the German Democratic Republic.

Britain

English Puritans had been deeply antipathetic to tales about fairies, which they considered relics of pagan, pre-Christian thought. In their view, tales about fairies and fairy tales were non-Christian in content and anti-Christian in intent. 'And yet, alas!' one committed Christian wrote, 'how often do we see Parents prefer Tom Thumb, Guy of Warwick, Valentine and Orson, or some such foolish Book …Let not your children read these vain Books… Throw away all fond and amorous Romances, and fabulous Histories of Giants, the bombast Achievements of Knight Errantry' (Fontaine 1708: vii).

Popular taste did not concur with Puritan antipathy, however, and when *Tales of the Fairies* (1699) was published in England, and when Galland's *Mille et Une Nuits* (12 vols,

1704–1717) was translated into English as *Arabian Nights,* chapbook purchasers immediately signalled their approval of magic by buying them in large numbers. Similarly, subsequent translations of Madame d'Aulnoy's *Contes des Fées,* which appeared in English translation as *Diverting Works* (1707) and *A Collection of Novels and Tales* (1721) became well-known in English: for example, 'The Yellow Dwarf', 'Finetta the Cinder-girl', and 'The White Cat'.

In 1729 Robert Samber translated Perrault's fairy tales as *Histories, or Tales of Past Times* and completed the early eighteenth-century inventory of tales about fairies and fairy tales in England. In his dedication to the Countess of Granville, mother of Lord Carteret, Samber discussed the fairy tale as an improvement on Aesop's fables: 'stories of human kind', he wrote, 'are more effectively instructive than those of animals' (A 3v). Perrault's fairy tales', he continued, were 'designed for children' yet the stories themselves 'grow up…both as to their Narration and Moral' because 'Virtue is ever rewarded and Vice ever punished in these tales' (A 4r). Samber meant his book to be morally instructive, and he licensed no 'poor insipid trifling tale in a tinkling Jingle' with a 'petty Witticism, or insignificant useless Reflection'. Samber bridged the cultural gap between France and Britain by giving some of Perrault's characters English names (Red Riding Hood's Christian name became Biddy, and the bad girl in 'The Fairy' was called Fanny), by defining an ogre ('a giant that has long teeth and claws, with a raw head and bloody bones, that runs away with naughty little boys and girls, and eats them up' (43)), and by offering a recipe for Sauce Robert in 'Sleeping Beauty' (51).

Eighteenth-century English fairy tales specifically for children also existed in chapbooks. Their format dispensed with frame tales and particularised vocabulary to produce simplified narratives like 'Bluebeard', 'Red Riding Hood', and 'The Blue Bird' along with 'Aladdin' and 'Sindbad' to a broad reading public (Summerfield 1984:45, 55, 57).

When children's literature was formally and self-consciously instituted in the mid-eighteenth century, fairy tales remained an integral component of the moral lessons composed for children. Thomas Boreman's tiny four-penny book, *The History of Cajanus, the Swedish Giant* (1742) offered a tongue-in-cheek biography of a seven-foot tall Finnish giant, capable of remarkable fairy tale-like acts. Sarah Fielding also used tales about fairies for *The Governess*—'the story of the cruel giant Barbarico, the good giant Benefico, and the pretty little Dwarf Mignon' and 'Princess Hebe… To cultivate an early Inclination to Benevolence, and a love of Virtue, in the Minds of young Women' (Fielding 1749: A 2r). Mrs Teachum, the governess of the title, viewed fairy tales with some alarm and cautioned that 'Giants, Magic, Fairies, and all sorts of Supernatural Assistances in a Story, are only introduced to amuse and divert…' and presented them as 'figures of a sort' that stood for virtuous or vicious conduct (Fielding 1749:68).

Fairy tales had long been securely harnessed to moral education, as the full title of Henry Brooke's 1750 collection indicated: they contained 'many useful Lessons [and] Moral Sentiments' (cited in Kamenetsky 1992:222). And although the word 'moral' was absent from its title, *Robin Goodfellow, a Fairy Tale* (1770) did the same.

In this period a new visual code was in the process of being established in Europe, in part codified by Lavater's study of physiognomy. Lavater aimed to demonstrate that character could be read from countenance, and in children's literature that perception

translated into an equation of virtue with beauty. One stylistic consequence was that the authors of fairy tales for girls increasingly described the facial appearance of characters in their books.

Mme Leprince de Beaumont, whose arrival in England coincided with the commercial development of books for children, elevated tales about fairies and fairy tales to religious company in her *Magasin des Enfants* (1756). 'La Belle et la Bête' appeared between the stories of 'Adam and Eve', and 'Noah'. Like her predecessor, Sarah Fielding, she employed the device of a frame tale: conversations between pupils and a governess. Eleanor (or Ellenor) Fenn, the author of *The Fairy Spectator* (1789), in the guise of Mrs Teachwell, used fairy tales for equally high moral ends. By the late eighteenth century, primers began to include fairy tales as reading exercises for children, and children's magazines mixed fairy tales into a pot-pourri of rhymes, stories, and anecdotes (MacDonald 1982:45, 110). Even the thoroughly amoral tales of *The Thousand and One Nights* were transformed by the earnest efforts of English educators into books with titles like Cooper's *Oriental Moralist* (1790). The stories themselves, quite different from the unobtrusive, almost logical metamorphoses of Western convention, restocked the European inventory of the fantastic with new magic objects, enchanted places and a dazzling array of startling transformations (Jan 1974:35). In the *Enchanted Mirror, a Moorish Romance* (1814), for example, the properties of traditional magic mirrors were adapted to the requirements of moral improvement, so that this one returned viewers' gazes with images of how they *were* rather than how they appeared (cited in Pickering 1993:188), a further indication of the formative power of physiognomic thought on literature.

Despite the scoffing dismissal of fairy tales by official pedagogy in the eighteenth century—the Edgeworths commented in 1798 that they did not 'allude to fairy tales, for we apprehend these are not now much read' (cited in Opie 1974: 25)—fairy tales continued to grow in popularity (Pickering 1993:187). Even Sarah Trimmer, who would later turn against fairy tales, acknowledged in *The Guardian of Education* that she had enjoyed them as a child (Goldstone 1984:71).

The most frequently published individual fairy tale, 'Cinderella', provided a satisfying rags-to-riches plot that answered a longing felt in many segments of society: for example, among the newly literate but still poor buyers of chapbooks, as well as among the the middle-class children who aspired to inclusion in yet more elevated social classes. The 'Cinderella' paradigm was as evident in *Goody Two-Shoes* (1765) as it was in *Primrose Prettyface* (1785) but the tale contained within itself not only the hopeful promise of social elevation, but also disturbing possibilities for frightening social inversion. The French Revolution of 1789 and the bloody executions of the 1790s aroused suspicion about 'Cinderella' plots suggesting rags-to-riches and evoked violent reaction. Sarah Trimmer now criticised fairy tales, and especially Cinderella, whom she 'accused of causing... the worst human emotions to arise in the child' (Goldstone 1984:71), and conservative educators excised first Cinderella plots and then fairy tales themselves from books of moral improvement. One result was that post-1820 editions of *The Governess* appeared shorn of their fairy tale interludes.

These attacks on fairy tales echo those that occurred a hundred years before, but a telling distinction separated criticisms of fantasy for children at the beginning and at the

end of the eighteenth century. A hundred years before, John Locke had warned against elves, gnomes and goblins (in tales about fairies), but by the end of the century, it was fairy tales that came under attack, as in Mrs Trimmer's essay, 'Mother Goose's fairy tales', in her magazine *The Guardian of Education* (1803:185–186).

Enlightenment pedagogical principles left little room for imaginative constructs (Steinlein 1987:115) and led to the 'censorship of everything fanciful', yet many authors recognised that imaginative tales induced a love of reading in children, and that, furthermore 'much good advice and information can be conveyed in a Fable and a Fairy Tale' (dedication of *Oriental Tales* [1802] cited in Jackson 1989:195– 196).

All of the practices and controversies that centred on fairy tales marked the genre in nineteenth-century English children's literature. For instance, the question of the educational value of fairy tales versus their putatively damaging consequences met head on in the Peter Parley-Felix Summerly debate. Samuel Griswold Goodrich's Peter Parley books (1827 *et seq*.) grew directly out of eighteenth-century utilitarian principles and were relentlessly useful and didactically informative. Sir Henry Cole, under the pen name of Felix Summerly, opposed Goodrich's objections with the playful fantasy of stories in his *Home Treasury* (1843–1845) (Darton 1932/1982:219–251). This debate was never resolved, and both of these trains of thought survived into the twentieth century.

The maternality that had been imputed to fairy tales by both French and German theoreticians, if one may dignify the rank sexism that passed for reasonable fact with that word, lived on in the titles of fairy tales for children. Perrault's tales were attributed to Mother Goose and Mme d'Aulnoy's to Queen Mab or Mother Bunch, and along the way, other fictive female relatives took their place among the authors of fairy tales: Aunt Friendly, Aunt Louisa and Mme de Chatalain.

National identity played a far smaller role in the project of valorising fairy tales in England than it did in Germany and in other countries that were either emerging from domination by foreign governments, like Finland and Norway, or amalgamating from disparate units, like Italy and Germany. But the dynamics of the publishing trade played a very large part in determining the contents of the scores, perhaps hundreds, of fairy tale collections that English booksellers purveyed to the English child.

Chapbooks remained a feature of nineteenth-century fairy tales for English children. Ross's Juvenile Library delivered small two-penny 48-page books like *Fairy Tales of Past Times from Mother Goose* (1814–1815) into young hands. The wolf became Gaffer Wolf, Blue Beard's wife used part of the estate she inherited on the death of her uxoricidal husband to marry her sister to a young gentleman and to buy military commissions for her brothers.

Moralisation continued to mark nineteenth-century fairy tales, but it was far more limited than it had been in the eighteenth century. For example, Cruikshank used 'Cinderella' as an anti-drink platform and Charles Dickens credited fairy tales with inculcating 'forbearance, courtesy, consideration for the poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, the love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force' (cited in Townsend 1974:92).

Translations of other national fairy tale collections poured into England, enriching its store of available fairy material. In 1749 *The Fairy Tales of all Nations* entered England

from a German collection that was itself based on French publications, and in 1823 Edward Taylor continued the importation of German fairy tale narrative when he translated and published the first of two volumes of the Grimm's tales as *German Popular Stories*. Illustrated by Cruikshank and provided with scholarly notes, its lively stories enchanted children, and the Grimm's scholarly reputation overcame the objections of doubting parents. In 1848 Taylor also translated Giambattista Basile's Neapolitan *Pentamerone* (1634, 1636 *et seq.*), which like *German Popular Stories,* was illustrated by Cruikshank. He edited both the German and the Italian fairy tales heavily to remove objectionable features, some violent episodes in the case of Grimm, sexual references in the case of Basile.

Hans Christian Andersen's Danish tales entered the English tradition in 1846 and soon gathered a large and enthusiastic English following. Norse material entered in 1857 when the *Heroes of Asgard* was printed, and Asbjørnsen and Moe's enchanting Norwegian fairy tales were translated in 1859 as *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon*. There had also been imports from other parts of the British Isles, like Crofton Croker's Irish fairy tales (1825–1828) and various collections of Scottish tales.

Each of the translations listed above represented a form of republication, but true republication began in earnest with renamed and reprinted collections of stories and fairy tales containing material taken from English-language books already published in England. Benjamin Tabart's *Popular Tales* (1804 *et seq.*) was one such early republication, and the genre flourished increasingly as the century wore on. The *Fairy Tales of All Nations* (1849) reappeared as *The Doyle Fairy Book* (1890), while Mrs D.M.Craik's *Fairy Book* (1863) retold stories from Perrault, d'Aulnoy and Grimm.

When Andrew Lang's colour Fairy Books appeared between 1889 and 1910, they codified fairy tale narrative in English. The formative importance of Lang's books for the English can hardly be overestimated, for they became a mother lode for many twentieth-century 'authors' of fairy tales for children. Lang himself firmly believed that fairy tales represented an 'uncontaminated record of our cultural infancy' (cited in Rose 1993:9), and all twelve of his fairy volumes—Blue, Brown, Crimson, Green, Grey, Lilac, Olive, Orange, Pink, Red, Violet, and Yellow —were 'intended for children', whom he hoped would like 'the old stories that have pleased so many generations' (*Blue Fairy Book*: preface).

Concurrent with Lang's colour Fairy Books were Joseph Jacobs's *English Fairy Tales* (1890) and *More English Fairy Tales* (1894) which were followed by *Celtic Fairy Tales* (1892, 1894) and *Indian Fairy Tales* (1892), but ultimately Lang's fairy tales, with their more accessible prose style, dominated English fairy tale tellings and writings.

The nineteenth century had also seen a return to tales about fairies. John Ruskin can be said to have initiated the movement with his extraordinary fantasy, *The King of the Golden River* (1851). The story's three German-named protagonists, Hans, Schwartz and Gluck, suggest Germanic imaginative ancestry for the book, while its elaborate plot and magical devices link it to French tales about fairies, that flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies* (1863), another quasi-tale about fairies, united adventure tale qualities to fairyland characteristics and 'seems like a prospectus for future generations of children's fiction' (Carpenter 1985:38). The alternative reality it

delineated came alive in George MacDonald's classic tales about slightly allegorised fairy-tale-like worlds, *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), and *The Princess and Curdie* (1882). With these books, nineteenth-century tales about fairies had transformed themselves into forms that would serve as models for nineteenth- and twentieth-century high fantasy.

In the twentieth century, fairy tales in England's children's literature derived largely from the canon established in the nineteenth century. Modern fairy tales of that pattern can be said to have originated with 'Uncle David's nonsensical story' in Catherine Sinclair's *Holiday House* (1839) (Townsend 1974:93).

USA

America's English-language children's books were almost exclusively of English parentage until about 1850, yet fairy books remained conspicuously absent from children's reading, because American intellectuals, and especially the teachers among them, rejected their magic as contradictory to the enlightened rationalism that underlay and guided American political thought. Consequently, they equated tales about fairies and fairy tales with Old World superstition, and held their kings and queens to be antithetical to the concepts of equality on which the new country had been founded. Hence, Perrault's fairy tales remained unavailable in any American printing until Peter Edes's Haverhill edition of 1794, two full generations after their introduction into England.

Italy, Spain, Portugal

In Italy Basile's tales were published throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Naples and several times in the eighteenth century in Bologna. Every printing of fictional narrative provided material for the Italian chapbook trade, and many of Basile's tales found their way into the cheap press and thence to the semiliterate and illiterate population, where they reinforced existing oral tradition and created new narrative lines.

In Spain and Portugal, however, religious regulation and a rigid system of imprimaturs proscribed publication of tales of magic from the early seventeenth century until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Readership

From the eighteenth century onward, frontispiece illustrations always included both boys and girls listening raptly to a woman telling, or sometimes reading, fairy tales, or to a man, who was usually shown reading aloud. In the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, the frontispiece was the only illustration to have formed an integral part of books whose illustrations were otherwise sold separately and only bound in when the text was taken to the bindery for finishing. Picturing boys as well as girls in these pictures, the first a potential buyer would see, can be construed as a marketing device to double the potential buyership, for, in fact, there is much evidence that eighteenth-

4

Folktales from Around the World

FOLKTALES OFFER MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE cultural traditions. They also allow readers to compare and contrast, to analyze plot sequence, to demonstrate comprehension, and to understand the characteristics of this genre. Since they are part of the oral tradition of literature, they are great for retelling, dramatization with props, and the development of presentation skills.

In this chapter there are traditional stories from around the world. Some are familiar, such as versions of Cinderella and the Gingerbread Man. Others are less well known—for example, *The Great Ball Game*, a pourquoi story from the Muskogee people, and *The Hungry Coat*, a noodlehead story from Turkey. There are fables, cumulative tales, stories of trickery, and stories of strength. Find a globe and begin a trip around the world with these wonderful stories.

1.6 Folk tales

Stories about ordinary people ('Folk') abound in every culture but operate at a lower level than myth or legend, giving insights into life and human nature through tales about the adventures of animal or human characters. Common characters are people with exaggerated human foibles, coming from countryside, city or castle: farmers, weavers, shoemakers, kings, princes and princesses. Reflecting their oral genesis, these tales give little detail regarding character and setting, just the information that is essential to the plot, one which is characterised by challenge, conflict and action. The result is a satisfying, easy-to-listen- to, simply-told story wherein good is rewarded, evil is punished and the foolish exposed; whereby contrasts are demonstrated between good and evil, wisdom and folly, cowardice and bravery, and laziness and resourcefulness. The effect draws in a circle of listeners, and when it is applied in print carries a charmed young reader on to the always marvellous and predictable conclusion.

We can understand children's fascination for stories that end happily ever after, with their rightful consequences achieved, when we balance this view alongside Piaget 's stages of Morality Development. He saw the early stage of Heteronomous Morality as operant between the ages of four to seven years, when young children believe that justice and rules are unchangeable properties, over which people, especially children, have no control. This attitude changes slowly as the growing child experiences education and more of the world, so that by about ten years of age, children reach the stage of Autonomous Morality. Now they realise that rules and laws are created by people themselves and that consequences result if obeyed or broken. From this age on, folk tales will be taken less seriously, rather like Santa Claus, though the references will never be completely forgotten, perhaps continuing in the mind as part of the universal collective unconscious on which Jung laid considerable stress:

> *It has contents that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrata of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us.*
>
> *Jung 1968, 4.*

O'Connor explains further:

> *The mind, through its physical counterpart the brain, has inherited characteristics or innate predispositions with which to respond to*

> *life's experiences . . . Through the collective unconscious, each individual is linked not only with his own past, but the past of the species . . . It can also be seen as a reservoir of latent images.*
> *O'Connor 1985, 21.*

There are elements that repeat over and over again in the Folk Tale genre. These are called motifs. Some of these, with examples from well-known stories, are

(i) Beings who hinder: ogres, witches or giants as in Jack the Giant Killer.

(ii) Beings who help: seven dwarfs, elf shoemakers.

(iii) Extraordinary animals such as the cat in the French Puss in Boots and the wolf who eats up Red Riding Hood's grandmother and then impersonates her.

(iv) Magical spells and transformations, as in Grimms' story of The Frog Prince, or The Sleeping Beauty.

(v) Quests to fulfil and rewards, as with The Little Hen and the Grain of Wheat (from the English collection of Joseph Jacobs) and The Twelve Dancing Princesses (from the German Grimm Brothers).

(vi) Repetition of key sentences, as with the wolf who will huff and puff and blow down little pig's house; with the Story of the Three Bears.

(vii) Use of the numbers three (pigs, bears, billy-Goats, sisters etc.) and seven (dwarfs, days, years).

(viii) Kindness brings rewards. From the brothers Grimm is the story of the Golden Goose and the despised third son whose simple-mindedness, which is really virtue, is rewarded when he marries the King's daughter and at the King's death, becomes King of the realm.

1.7 Cumulative Tales

For simplification, the principal divisions of Folk Tales are : firstly Cumulative Tales that keep adding characters or speeches in a sequential way. For example,The Gingerbread Boy who runs away from the little old woman and the little old man, shouting

> *Run! Run! as fast as you can*
> *You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!*

He uses this rhyme to taunt other pursuers: cow, horse, threshers, mowers, while their names get added, one by one, to the record of each

sequence of his running away. To the last group, the mowers, the boy again addresses his teasing lines, saying:

> *I have run away from a little old woman, a little old man,*
> *a cow, a horse, a barn full of threshers,*
> *And I can run away from you, I can!*
>
> *Bryant 1974, 7.*

Only the fox outwits him and discloses the comeuppance and naivety of a Gingerbread Boy who can never run again.

The cumulative technique is used by authors today, such as John Burningham, for example in *The Shopping Basket*, a story in which young Steven meets a bear, a monkey, a kangaroo and other animals that accost him in a similar, repetitive manner. *Mr Gumpy's Outing* is his earlier example, about Mr Gumpy and his boat. "May we come with you?" ask some children, with the same request repeated by a rabbit, cat and other animals, all of whom are told how to behave, which of course they do not do. So into the water they fall and must walk across the fields to have their tea – told in the twentieth century in an age-long tradition.

1.8 Wonder Tales

form a second category. These are frequently called 'fairy tales' and tell of extraordinary, often magical happenings. *Cinderella* is such a tale, one that, like creation myths, appears in many parts of the world and is frequently retold for today's children. Back in 1893 Marian Cox found 345 variants of the Cinderella motif dating back to China in the 9th Century. Here is the theme of rags-to-riches transformation by a fairy godmother, but it may also be, at a deeper level, an exploration of sibling and sexual rivalry, as Bruno Bettelheim points out in his book, *The Uses of Enchantment*.

To many children the Cinderella story will be one of simple pleasure as a pumpkin becomes a golden coach – according to the Charles Perrault version from France in the late seventeenth century – and six mice become horses, and a rat and lizards turn into footmen . . . Other children may receive subliminal messages, sensed only dimly, but important to their development as individuals.

> *Applying the psychoanalytic model of the human personality, fairy tales carry important messages to the conscious, the preconscious*

> *and the unconscious mind, on whatever level each is functioning at the time. By dealing with universal human problems . . . these stories speak to his budding ego . . .*
>
> *Bettelheim 1976, 6.*

Cinderella is popular as a classic fairy tale, and, as John Gough points out, is the progenitor of many modern stories which he sees as falling under the theme of 'Rivalry, Rejection and Recovery.' As examples he refers to Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, *A Little Princess* and *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. He also cites examples by Kipling, Nesbitt, Hoban, Mahy and others, pointing out that at the root of these stories is a character's concern regarding parental acceptance, a distress that Bettelheim drew to attention in his work, *The Uses of Enchantment*.

Other fairy stories feature giants and dwarfs, elves and goblins, witches and demons, monsters and dragons, all scary characters, briefly. At a safe distance to consider and accept, they represent powerful human emotions that even young children have experienced, sensed or observed: insecurity, sibling and other rivalry, jealousy, how it feels to be a loser or winner, and how love makes living joyful. Yet the important feature of fairy tales is their resolution, so that fear can be endured and even enjoyed, for 'they lived happily ever after,' which children soon learn to chorus. Acquaintance with the fairy tale genre and its far-removal from reality, carries along with it prediction of outcome. There is also the reassuring certainty that goodness and the ever important hero can overcome evil.

1.9 Beast Tales

These appear in every culture, usually with animals that can speak. Their identity is determined often by the country of origin of the tale, for hippopotomi, elephants or wolves are not inhabitants everywhere! English Fairy Tales collected by Joseph Jacobs, include English animals as in *The Three Little Pigs*, *Henny Penny*, *Dick Whittington and his Cat*, *The Fish and the Ring* and *The Magpie's Nest*. *Little Red Riding Hood* is an example where a beast interacts with a child and her grandmother, killing and consuming the latter. As Peter Hunt comments:

> *It is a sociological and historical oddity that children's literature has come to include and absorb these (initially) crude, violent and sexu-*

> *ally-charged texts, but by understanding their structures, and then relating them to broader cultural movements, they may be seen as other than they are generally supposed to be.*
>
> *Hunt, 1999, 10.*

Hunt also refers to Zipes' reading of *Little Red Riding Hood*, one that links with psychoanalytical theory, described in Chapter 1. Zipes claims it is a reflection of men's fear of male and female sexuality; that one positive feature of the story is that it warns about possible sexual molestation, which in a time of an increase in pedophiles is very relevant.

1.10 Humorous and Noodlehead stories

are another subset of fairy tales which depict foolishness and are early versions of cautionary tales. An example from Garner's collection from England and Wales is the tale of *Loppy Lankin* where the witch's daughter measures the inside of the oven where Loppy is to roast, but ends up with a push from Loppy, inside the oven herself, while he escapes. Told with cumulative use of rhyme, the tale also rings with the recognisable device of pantomime, as shown in the dialogue:

> *"Where shall you do for your roasting?" Loppy said . . .*
> *"I'll use the oven," says the daughter.*
> *"I'm too long to fit in the oven," says Loppy.*
> *"No, you're not," says the daughter.*
> *"Yes, I am," he says.*
>
> *Garner, 1992, 139.*

Hans in Luck, told by the Brothers Grimm, is another such folktale. Hans earns a piece of silver after working at a job for seven years. He exchanges it for a horse, the horse for a cow, the cow for a wheelbarrow, and so on, each time thinking how lucky he is. Ultimately he has nothing but a common rough stone that he throws into a pond. Now he is free of worry and exults in his good luck. The tale raises the question whether it was really good luck or the outcome of foolishness? Likewise, *Lazy Jack*, from Jacobs' English collection, in which Jack may seem to behave very foolishly, yet his act of carrying a donkey on his shoulders rather than riding it causes a rich man's mute daughter to laugh and recover her speech. Hence the happy ending in

which Jack becomes son-in-law to the rich man and marries his daughter. That story is full of humour, and the ironic twist at the end may seem, in modern terms, as good as winning a lottery. It leaves the question, does laziness and noodleheadedness pay? It can certainly prompt laughter.

Hans Christian Andersen is one notable writer who built on the fairy tale foundation, writing many stories that have become absorbed into its tradition, for example, *The Tinder Box*, *The Emperor's new Clothes*, and *The Ugly Duckling*, some that are favourites. From Margaret Mahy's *The Other Side of Silence* comes a more contemporary, less obvious example. Here the hero is a girl called Hero who becomes a regular visitor to eerie Credence House which contrasts with another house, called home. The sparseness of detail, but the subtlety and wit, along with the depth of insight into family relationships, have many resonances of the root of fairy tale, now seen flowering into a novel.

1.11 Fables

The most well-known collection is associated with the name of Aesop, perhaps a Greek slave, six centuries B.C. There are numerous editions and retellings available, with or without illustrations, some as a complete set, others as single stories. They are about animal characters which talk and act as if they were humans, as in Aesop's fable of the *Fox and the Grapes'* about a hungry fox who tries to reach some grapes, finds them too high to reach, then consoles himself, by suggesting that the fruit was probably very sour. A satire of human behaviour, the conclusion is that 'Some people pretend to despise the things they cannot have.' Some of Aesop's fables focus on people to make a moral point, as with the story of the shepherd boy who called "Wolf", deceiving his hearers several times, so that when a wolf really came:

> *The boy screamed and called for help. But all in vain! The neighbours, supposing him to be up to his old tricks, paid no attention to his cries, and the wolf devoured the sheep*
>
> *MORAL:*
> *Liars are not believed even when they tell the truth.*
>
> *Bloomsbury 1994, 97.*

CINDERELLA

THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF CINDERELLA STORIES from around the world and many have been made into picture books. A program or study unit could focus on these stories. Readers could examine each story for common elements and create a chart to answer "What Makes a Cinderella Story?" Possible categories are:

- What is the character's name?
- Where does the story take place?
- Does she live in the ashes or cinders and/or work as a servant?
- Does she have a stepmother and/or stepsisters?
- Is there a magical creature (like a fairy godmother)?
- Is there a ball or dance or party?
- Is there a time limit at the party?
- Is there a slipper or lost object?

Children can add other categories as they read more stories. Four recent Cinderella stories are listed below and additional versions and variants are included.

220 dePaola, Tomie ✶ *Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story*
Illus. by the author ✶ Putnam, 2002 ✶ 0-399-23866-2
MEXICAN ✶ GRADES 2–4

Adelita's mother dies after she is born and her father remarries. Shortly after the marriage, Adelita's father dies and Doña Micaela and her two daughters take over the house. Adelita becomes a servant, working in the kitchen with her nurse Esperanza. When Señor Gordillo plans a *fiesta* for his son Javier, Adelita is kept too busy to prepare herself to go. Esperanza helps her and she arrives at the party as the beautiful C*enicienta*—Cinderella. Javier falls in love with her but she leaves the fiesta and returns home. Javier searches for her, finds her, and they are married. The text of this folktale includes many Spanish phrases that are explained in context as well as in a glossary following the story.

221 McClintock, Barbara, reteller; from the Charles Perrault version ✶ *Cinderella*
Illus. by the reteller ✶ Scholastic, 2005 ✶ 0-439-56145-0
EUROPEAN—FRANCE ✶ GRADES 2–4

Charles Perrault retold many classic folktales for the French court in the late 1600s. This European version is often the one children are familiar with. There is the gentle daughter of a noble family whose mother dies and whose father remarries. The stepmother relegates her to the life of a servant. She dresses in rags and does the bidding of her stepmother and two stepsisters. There are two grand balls and a fairy godmother and a lost glass slipper, which, of course, fits the servant girl, Cinderella.

222 San Souci, Robert D. ✶ *Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella*
Illus. by Brian Pinkney ✶ Simon & Schuster, 1998 ✶ 0-689-80668-X
CARIBBEAN ✶ GRADES 2–4

When her father remarries a proud and vain woman (Madame Prospèrine), young Cendrillon becomes a servant in her father's home. Cendrillon's godmother uses her magic to send Cendrillon to the birthday celebration for handsome Paul. There, Paul sees her and falls in love but, like Cinderella, Cendrillon leaves the party, loses her slipper, and is reunited with Paul who loves her even in her rags.

223 Sierra, Judy ✶ *The Gift of the Crocodile: A Cinderella Story*
Illus. by Reynold Ruffins ✶ Simon & Schuster, 2000 ✶ 0-689-82188-3
ASIAN—INDONESIA—SPICE ISLANDS ✶ GRADES 2–4

Set in the Spice Islands in Indonesia, this folktale has many elements of a traditional Cinderella: a stepmother and stepsisters as well as a girl who does all the work and sleeps in the ashes. Damura's kindness toward an ancient crocodile ("Grandmother Crodocile") brings her good fortune and the prince. In an unusual ending, Princess Damura is eaten by a crocodile only to be spit out and brought back to life by Grandmother Crocodile. A Folklore Note describes the origin of this retelling.

Additional Cinderella versions and variants:

Climo, Shirley. *The Egyptian Cinderella*. Illustrated by Ruth Heller. Crowell, 1989. 0-690-04822-X

Climo, Shirley. *The Irish Cinderlad*. Illustrated by Loretta Krupinski. HarperCollins, 1996. 0-06-024396-1

Climo, Shirley. *The Korean Cinderella*. Illustrated by Ruth Heller. HarperCollins, 1993. 0-06-020432-X

Climo, Shirley. *The Persian Cinderella*. Illustrated by Robert Florczak. HarperCollins, 1999. 0-06-026763-1

Huck, Charlotte. *Princess Furball*. Illustrated by Anita Lobel. Greenwillow, 1989. 0-688-07837-0

Louie, Ai-Ling, reteller *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China*. Illustrated by Ed Young. Philomel, 1982. 0-399-20900-X

Martin, Rafe. *The Rough-Face Girl*. Illustrated by David Shannon. Putnam, 1992. 0-399-21859-9

Pollock, Penny. *The Turkey Girl: A Zuni Cinderella Story*. Illustrated by Ed Young. Little, Brown, 1996. 0-316-71314-7

San Souci, Robert D., reteller. *The Talking Eggs: A Folktale from the American South*. Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Dial, 1989. 0-8037-0619-7

Steptoe. John. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughter: An African Tale*. Illustrated by the author. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1987. 0-688-04045-4

GINGERBREAD MAN

THE POPULAR GINGERBREAD MAN STORIES can be used in many creative ways. Young children can chart the sequences of various versions; they can also make puppets and scenery that enhance the retellings. These books can be used to highlight different cultural elements; they are also helpful in teaching different presentation skills. Children have the opportunity to speak and to perform. They learn the conventions of a "cumulative" folktale—stories that add on. Many children like to try to write their own cumulative stories, using the folktale as a model.

Using these books connects with several content areas, including writing, analyzing literary texts, sequencing, genres, and studying cultural traditions. Recent Gingerbread Man stories include *The Gingerbread Man* (Aylesworth) and *The Gingerbread Boy* (Egielski). Jan Brett's *The Gingerbread Baby* is a popular picture book story with an original ending, while *The Runaway Latkes*, *The Runaway Rice Cake*, and *The Runaway Tortilla* bring in elements from different cultures. Make a sequence chart of what the runaway item meets along the way, what the refrain is, and what happens at the end of the story. Make props and encourage retelling.

224 Aylesworth, Jim, reteller ✶ *The Gingerbread Man*
Illus. by Barbara McClintock ✶ Scholastic, 1998 ✶ 0-590-97219-7
EUROPEAN ✶ GRADES PRESCHOOL–2

The well-known cumulative story of the gingerbread man who runs away is presented with colorful illustrations. In this version, there are two main repeated phrases that could be compared with the phrases in other versions. This little man runs away from a husband, a wife, a butcher, a cow, and a sow until he is eaten by a fox. Children will enjoy the illustrations depicting humans and animals dressed in old-fashioned clothing.

225 Brett, Jan ✶ *The Gingerbread Baby*
Illus. by the author ✶ Putnam, 1999 ✶ 0-399-24166-3
European—Switzerland ✶ Grades Preschool–2

When Matti and his mother make a gingerbread man, Matti opens the oven before the cooking time is completed and a gingerbread baby jumps out. Matti's mother begins the chase and is joined by other characters. Matti stays in the house where he makes a gingerbread house for the baby. This book can be used as a model for how a folktale can be the springboard for a new original tale.

226 Compestine, Ying Chang ✶ *The Runaway Rice Cake*
Illus. by Tungwai Chau ✶ Simon & Schuster, 2001 ✶ 0-689-82972-8
Asian—China ✶ Grades 2–4

This original story has elements of the gingerbread man folktale. The Chang family has only enough rice flour to make one *nián-gäo*, the New Year's rice cake. When Mama opens the steamer, the rice cake runs away. It runs past chicks, pigs, and villagers but it cannot be caught. Finally it bumps into an old woman and Mama Chang catches the cake. Even though they are very hungry, the Changs decide to share the cake with the old woman. The nián-gäo is so delicious that the old woman eats it all and runs away in embarrassment. The Changs return home with nothing. Their neighbors have heard of their kindness and come to share their food, but there is still not enough for all. The two older brothers decide to let their younger brother eat first and when he uncovers the food, more food magically appears. There is a celebration for everyone, ending with the parade, dragons, and firecrackers for Chinese New Year. A Note describes "Celebrating Chinese New Year" and there are two recipes for nián-gäo. After reading this book it would be fun to celebrate with this sweet treat.

227 Egielski, Richard ✶ *The Gingerbread Boy*
Illus. by the author ✶ HarperCollins, 1997 ✶ 0-06-026030-0
European American ✶ Grades Preschool–2

The setting for this book is an urban apartment, so when the gingerbread boy runs away, he encounters appropriate characters. He runs

away from a woman and a man, a rat, construction workers, musicians, and a policeman. In the park zoo, he encounters a fox and meets his fate. The unusual setting and characters make this version a great choice for comparison activities.

228 Kimmel, Eric A. ✶ *The Runaway Tortilla*
Illus. by Randy Cecil ✶ Winslow Press, 2000 ✶ 1-890817-18-X
MEXICAN AMERICAN ✶ GRADES PRESCHOOL–2

In Texas, Tía Lupe and Tío José make delicious tortillas that are so light that one tortilla rolls away. The characters chase after her, including familiar animals of the Southwest such as rattlesnakes, jackrabbits, and donkeys. In the end, Señor Coyote tricks her into being eaten.

229 Kimmelman, Leslie ✶ *The Runaway Latkes*
Illus. by Paul Yalowitz ✶ Albert Whitman, 2000 ✶ 0-8075-7176-8
JEWISH AMERICAN ✶ GRADES PRESCHOOL–2

On the first night of Hanukkah, Rebecca Bloom is at the synagogue making potato pancakes (latkes). Three of her latkes jump out of her pan and roll away saying a rhyming refrain. Many people, including the rabbi and the cantor, chase after them. The latkes jump into the river, which miraculously changes into applesauce. Rebecca and all who have been giving chase enjoy a bite of the delicious potato pancakes. After reading this book, children may want to explore the traditions of Hanukkah.

SYMBOLS OF STRENGTH

MANY CULTURES HAVE STORIES AND LEGENDS about individuals with special talents. From China, *The Sons of the Dragon King* features nine sons searching for their strengths. From Ghana in West Africa, there is the story of *Anansi the Spider*. Each of Anansi's six sons uses his skill to help rescue Anansi. Native American totem poles also provide symbolic images that connect to stories. In *Whale in the Sky*, Thunderbird saves the salmon from Whale. After hearing stories from different cultures, readers will enjoy creating their own symbols that highlight their strengths. If a reader enjoys reading, football, running, and music, the design might incorporate a book, a football, a sports shoe, and a musical note. Children can discuss using symbols to represent activities and emotions. In Ed Young's *Voices of the Heart*, Chinese characters provide the inspiration for images of emotions such as "shame," "respect," and "mercy." Learning about the Chinese Zodiac is another extension.

230 Demi ✶ *The Dragon's Tale: And Other Fables of the Chinese Zodiac*

Illus. by the author ✶ Henry Holt, 1996 ✶ 0-8050-3446-3

ASIAN—CHINA ✶ GRADES 2–4

The 12 animals of the Chinese Zodiac are featured with a detailed illustration, a fable, and a phrase. "The Rat's Tale" describes the importance of appreciating what you are. "The Tiger's Tale" shows how a fox (or any small creature) must think quickly to survive. "The Rabbit's Tale" connects with Henny Penny and Chicken Little stories in which "the sky is falling." The phrases, like those from Aesop, teach a lesson. For example, after "The Rabbit's Tale" is the phrase "If someone tells a falsehood, one hundred will repeat it as true." A book of *Aesop's Fables* would be another connection. See the section on Fables later in this chapter.

231 Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane ✶ *Totem Pole*

Photographs by Lawrence Migdale ✶ Holiday House, 1990 ✶ 0-8234-0809-4

NATIVE AMERICAN—TSIMSHIAN ✶ GRADES 2–4

David's family belongs to the Eagle Clan of the Tsimshian people. In this nonfiction photoessay, David describes his father's work as a

woodcarver working on a totem pole. David and his father talk about the process of carving. There is a spirit in the wood, and the woodcarver must reveal the hidden spirit. Carving is an important part of the heritage of the Tsimshian people. David's father teaches David about other traditions—songs, dances, legends, and ceremonial clothing. Color photographs show the totem pole being carved while the text explains each element of the pole and why it has been selected. For example, Raven is included because he brought light to the Indian people. Finally, the pole is done and there is a ceremony for "Raising the Pole." There is a glossary and a folktale, "The Legend of the Eagle and the Young Chief," is included in the text.

232 McDermott, Gerald, adapter ✶ *Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti*

Illus. by the adapter ✶ Henry Holt, 1972 ✶ 0-8050-0310-X

AFRICAN—GHANA ✶ GRADES 1–4

Anansi the spider leaves his six sons and falls into trouble. Each of his sons uses his special skill to rescue Anansi. See Trouble sees the trouble and alerts Road Builder, who builds a road. River Drinker drinks the river so that Game Skinner can cut open the fish that has swallowed Anansi. Once Anansi is released from the fish, Falcon snatches him up. Stone Thrower hits Falcon. Anansi falls out of the sky but lands on Cushion. On the way home from the rescue, Anansi and his sons find a beautiful globe of light that is taken into the sky to be the moon. This book received a Caldecott Honor Award.

233 Siberell, Anne ✶ *Whale in the Sky*

Illus. by the author ✶ Dutton, 1982 ✶ 0-525-44021-6

NATIVE AMERICAN—NORTHWEST COAST ✶ GRADES 1–3

This legend from the Northwest Coast Indians uses woodcuts to depict the story of Salmon's rescue. Long ago, Thunderbird watched over all the creatures. When Whale tried to swallow salmon and chase them out of the sea and into the river, Thunderbird grabbed Whale and lifted him into the sky. He dropped Whale on a mountain. Whale promised to stay out of the river, so Thunderbird allowed him to return to the sea. The story was carved into a totem pole with Thunderbird on the top. The woodcut illustrations are a perfect complement to this story of carving a totem pole.

234 Young, Ed ✶ *The Sons of the Dragon King: A Chinese Legend*
Illus. by the author ✶ Atheneum, 2004 ✶ 0-689-85184-7
ASIAN—CHINA ✶ GRADES 2–4

The Dragon King observes each of his nine sons to discover his special gift. Bei-She spends his days proving his strength, and the Dragon King gives him the job of supporting the roofs of buildings. The symbol for Bei-She can be found carved on the columns of China's greatest buildings. Chi Wen, the second son, seems to just stand on the roof and stare into the distance. The Dragon King realizes that Chi Wen would be an excellent sentinel and now his image is seen on the tops of buildings. Finally, the Dragon King finds a role for each son that matches his ability. The illustrations combine ink-and-brush paintings with intricate cut-paper designs.

235 Young, Ed ✶ *Voices of the Heart*
Illus. by the author ✶ Scholastic, 1997 ✶ 0-590-50199-2
ASIAN—CHINA ✶ GRADES 2–4

Focusing on 26 Chinese characters that use the symbol of the heart, Ed Young creates new images that represent emotions and virtues. Words such as *contentment*, *respect*, *panic*, *rudeness*, *mercy*, and *loyalty* are presented. The concepts may seem abstract to many children; however, the beauty of the illustrations and book design encourage readers to reflect and savor the thoughtful presentation. Calligraphy and cut paper provide a counterpoint to the brief descriptions of each word.

FOLKTALES FROM SIX CONTINENTS

SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAMS FOCUS on cities, states, countries, and continents. Using folktales, librarians and teachers can explore continents and demonstrate how stories often reflect regional language, topography, and art.

Folktales are part of the oral tradition of a native people. They often teach a lesson or explain a natural phenomenon, and children will enjoy identifying the characteristics of these tales. Find a folktale from each inhabited continent. (Of course, there are no folktales from Antarctica because of its inhospitable climate. When you communicate this information to children, be sure to show informational books about Antarctica.) Then share these folktales, focusing on the elements that connect each story to its place of origin. In *Moon Rope* from Peru, for example, the story takes place in the mountains. Use a globe, preferably one with raised relief features, to show how the Andes Mountains dominate the topography of Peru. In *The Biggest Frog in Australia*, explain that the animals are native to Australia—koalas, kookaburras, wombats, and more.

Africa

236 Bryan, Ashley ✶ *Beautiful Blackbird*
Illus. by the author ✶ Atheneum, 2003 ✶ 0-689-84731-9
AFRICAN—ZAMBIA—ILA ✶ GRADES 2–4

Long ago in Africa, all of the birds were very colorful but they had no markings on their feathers. Blackbird was considered the most beautiful. Ringdove asks Blackbird to mark his feathers with black, giving him a ring around his neck. Blackbird agrees and soon all of the birds want black markings, and he obliges them. Blackbird also stresses the importance of being proud of who you are and how you look. His message, "Color on the outside is not what's on the inside," is one that many children will relate to. This book received the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration.

South America

237 Ehlert, Lois ✶ *Moon Rope: A Peruvian Folktale / Un lazo a la luna: Una leyenda peruana*
Illus. by the author ✶ Harcourt, 1992 ✶ 0-15-255343-6
SOUTH AMERICAN—PERU ✶ GRADES 2–4

Fox wants to go to the moon and he convinces Mole to go too. The birds take their grass rope up to the moon and the two start to climb. Mole loses his grip on the rope and falls. He is rescued by the birds, but he is mocked by the animals who have been watching. Now, Mole stays deep in his hole and only comes out when he will be alone. Fox continues up to the moon. When there is a full moon, you can see his face looking down. The big full moon on the last page of the story is printed in silver ink. When you tip the book, you can see a face in the moon. In a Note, Lois Ehlert explains that the color and design of Peruvian textiles, ceramics, etc., were an inspiration for the illustrations in this book. This is a "pourquoi" folktale that answers the "why" questions of why moles stay underground and why there is a face in the moon.

Europe

238 Lunge-Larsen, Lise ✶ *The Race of the Birkebeiners*
Illus. by Mary Azarian ✶ Houghton Mifflin, 2001 ✶ 0-618-10313-9
EUROPEAN—NORWAY ✶ GRADES 3–6

This vibrant, legendary account tells of the danger and difficulty in the safe delivery of Prince Hakon of Norway from his family's enemies. The infant prince and his mother are aided by the Birkebeiners, a group of men loyal to the former king. Their dangerous nighttime journey across the icy mountains is dramatically portrayed in the colored woodcuts by Caldecott-winning artist Mary Azarian. This folktale portrays the spirit of Norway's people and the challenge of survival.

North America

239 McDermott, Gerald, reteller ✶ *Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest*
Illus. by the reteller ✶ Harcourt, 1993 ✶ 0-15-265661-8
NATIVE AMERICAN—PACIFIC NORTHWEST ✶ GRADES 2–4

Raven is sad that the people live in darkness so he steals a ball of light from the home of the Sky Chief. The light becomes the sun and the people are thankful. This book is part of a collection of trickster tales from Gerald McDermott, including *Zomo the Rabbit: A Trickster Tale from West Africa* (Harcourt, 1992), *Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the American Southwest* (Harcourt, 1994), and *Jabuti the Tortoise: A Trickster Tale from the Amazon* (Harcourt, 2001).

Australia

240 Roth, Susan L. ✶ *The Biggest Frog in Australia*
Illus. by the author ✶ Simon & Schuster, 1996 ✶ 0-689-80490-3
AUSTRALIAN ✶ GRADES 1–3

In Australia, the biggest frog drinks up all of the water. Other animals—Koala, Wombat, Echidna—try to get the water back. When the eels make Frog laugh, all of the water spills back out into the world. Illustrated with bold, colorful collages, this book includes a glossary describing some of the Australian terms, animals, and plants.

Asia

241 Young, Ed ✶ *The Lost Horse: A Chinese Folktale*
Illus. by the author ✶ Harcourt, 1998 ✶ 0-15-201016-5
ASIAN—CHINA ✶ GRADES 2–4

A wise man named Sai owns a fine horse. During a storm, the frightened horse runs away. Sai's neighbors are upset about his loss, but Sai is philosophical. When the horse returns, bringing a mare, the neigh-

bors are pleased for Sai, but he is still philosophical. With each new development, Sai maintains his equanimity. A version of this folktale is also included in *Zen Shorts* (see under "Making Choices" below).

Reflections

Norway—a land just as beautiful and pristine as it looked on the cover of my fifth-grade social studies book! It is a country I have always thought I would like to visit, and on this trip as a precursor to the IFLA meeting in Oslo in the summer of 2005, I was not disappointed. The train ride from the city of Bergen on the west coast to the capital city of Oslo displayed the beauty of the mountains, the deep gorges, the glorious fjords, the charming villages, and the absence of traffic and neon lights.

All this beauty and tranquility is in sharp contrast to the traditional literature and stories filled with frightful tales of trolls—big trolls, clever trolls, hidden trolls, and ugly trolls. Of course in these stories the trolls are outsmarted by people, who are always more clever!

—Kathy East

Norway and Its Trolls

Here are books that focus on Norway and trolls. Hand out outline maps of the country of Norway. Allow youngsters to move that shape around until it becomes a part of a sleeping troll, or a part of the caves in which trolls live, or use the shape to make troll faces. The only requirement is that each troll have wild hair, a long nose, and an ugly face!

Look for other unusual creatures in folktales from around the world—the Hairy Man in *Wiley and the Hairy Man* or perhaps the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. How many creatures can you find?

242 Batt, Tanya Robyn ✶ *The Princess and the White Bear King*

Illus. by Nicoletta Ceccoli ✶ Barefoot Books, 2004 ✶ 1-84148-339-7

EUROPEAN—NORWAY ✶ GRADES 2–5

In this folktale, a princess dreams of a beautiful golden crown and then finds it when she is carried off by the great white bear. She briefly returns to her family, and her mother gives her a knife and a candle. Back with the bear, the princess lights the candle in her bedchamber and discovers the bear is a handsome prince under the spell of the Troll Queen. Now that his secret is known, he must marry the Troll Queen. The princess follows him east of the sun and west of the moon to the great glass mountain. After three trials, she outsmarts the Troll Queen and the princess and prince are married and live happily ever after.

243 Lunge-Larsen, Lise ✶ *The Troll with No Heart in His Body and Other Tales of Trolls, from Norway*

Illus. by Betsy Bowen ✶ Houghton Mifflin, 1999 ✶ 0-395-91371-3

EUROPEAN—NORWAY ✶ GRADES 2–5

Each story in this collection is introduced by a storyteller—the Troll Lady. She says "Like fire, a good troll story is slightly dangerous, spellbinding, and warming." The trolls in these stories are quarrelsome, ugly, boastful, and tricky. This is an authentic collection made more dramatic by the woodcuts used to create landscapes, creatures with lots of sharp teeth, and visual images of those mean and frightening trolls.

POURQUOI STORIES

AFTER READING FOLKTALES FROM DIFFERENT CONTINENTS, a classroom or library program can focus on elements found in many traditional stories. For example, the number three is often seen in folktales—three bears or three billy goats. And folktales often have unusual creatures—trolls, mermaids, or hairy men.

Pourquoi stories explain why things happen in nature. *The Great Ball Game*, tells why birds fly south in winter. *Jabutí the Tortoise* explains why the tortoise has a cracked shell. And do you know why snakes cannot be trusted? *The Singing Snake* explains this, while another tale, *Coyote Steals the Blanket*, demonstrates the trickiness of the coyote. *The Hatseller and the Monkeys* is from West Africa and tells why nutrition is important to learning.

Moon Rope and *Raven* (featured in the section "Folktales from Six Continents" above) could fit in this program too.

Make a list of the "why" statements that are found in folktales and identify the origin of each story, too. Children will learn that the "why" convention is often used in folktales. They will enjoy trying to write their own "why" stories.

244 Bruchac, Joseph, reteller ✶ *The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story*

Illus. by Susan L. Roth ✶ Dial, 1994 ✶ 0-8037-1539-0

NATIVE AMERICAN—MUSKOGEE ✶ GRADES 2–4

When the Birds and the Animals had an argument, they decided to play a game to settle the issues. Bat could not decide which side was right for him. The Birds sent him away, so the Animals allowed him on their team. The game began and both teams played well. As the sun set, the Birds looked as if they would win until Bat swooped out, took the ball, and won the game. As a penalty, the Birds had to leave the area for half of each year. The collage illustrations use paper col-

lected from around the world. And the ball game depicted is lacrosse, a game that originated among the Native Americans.

245 Czernecki, Stefan, and Timothy Rhodes ✶ *The Singing Snake*
Illus. by Stefan Czernecki ✶ Hyperion, 1993 ✶ 1-56282-399-X
AUSTRALIAN ✶ GRADES 2–4

Old Man organizes a contest to find the animal with the most beautiful singing voice. Snake wants to win but realizes his voice is only average. When he hears the beautiful song of Lark, he swallows her and, holding her in the back of his throat, he allows her song to come from his mouth. He wins the contest, but, because he cheated, the animals refuse to speak to him again. His voice becomes a "hiss" that answers the pourquoi—why do snakes make a hissing sound. Also, all cheaters are now known as "snakes in the grass." Australian animals including Dingo, Kookaburra, and Wallaby are among the participants in the contest. The colorful art is reminiscent of the patterns of aboriginal paintings.

246 Diakité, Baba Wagué, reteller ✶ *The Hatseller and the Monkeys: A West African Folktale*
Illus. by the reteller ✶ Scholastic, 1999 ✶ 0-590-96069-5
AFRICAN—WEST AFRICA ✶ GRADES 1–3

From the continent of Africa comes this story with a familiar plot. BaMusa joyfully sells hats, walking from town to town and carrying the hats on his head. One day, he hurries off without eating and becomes so tired he must stop and rest under a mango tree. The monkeys in the tree steal his hats. BaMusa awakes and must outwit the monkeys, but he is so tired he cannot think straight. He eats some mangoes and, with a full stomach and a clear head, he tricks the monkeys into throwing him his hats. He reaches his destination and sells all the hats. The lesson in this story is "it is with a full stomach that one thinks best." An Author's Note explains that this story

has been retold around the world, including *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina.

247 McDermott, Gerald, reteller ✶ *Jabutí the Tortoise: A Trickster Tale from the Amazon*

Illus. by the reteller ✶ Harcourt, 2001 ✶ 0-15-200496-3
SOUTH AMERICAN ✶ GRADES 2–4

Jabutí, the tortoise, plays songs that are enjoyed by most of the animals in the rain forest. Animals that Jabutí has tricked, however, are not amused. The birds love Jabutí's music—except for Vulture. Vulture is jealous of Jabutí and wants to harm him. When the birds fly to a festival with the King of Heaven, Vulture agrees to take Jabutí there too. On the journey, Vulture drops Jabutí, who falls to the earth and cracks his smooth shell. Three birds help find the pieces and put them together. Now tortoises have cracked-looking shells and those three birds, Toucan, Macaw, and Hummingbird, have bright, colorful feathers. A Note from the reteller provides some background on the "Jabutí" stories, linking them to the stories of Brer Terrapin seen in African American stories as well as in stories from Aesop.

248 Stevens, Janet, reteller ✶ *Coyote Steals the Blanket: A Ute Tale*

Illus. by the reteller ✶ Holiday House, 1993 ✶ 0-8234-0996-1
NATIVE AMERICAN—UTE ✶ GRADES 2–4

Coyote is always causing trouble. One day, he sees some blankets spread out on rocks in the desert. They are so beautiful he must have one. He grabs one only to be chased by the rock. No matter what he does, Coyote cannot escape the rolling rock. Mule Deer, Big Horn Sheep, and Hummingbird try to help but nothing works until Coyote returns the blanket. Then, Hummingbird whirs her wings and cracks the rock into pieces. Coyote still does not learn his lesson. He steals more blankets and the chase begins again. This is why coyotes cannot be trusted.

NOODLEHEADS

MANY FOLKTALES FEATURE "NOODLEHEADS." These characters are usually sweet and simple-minded. They often follow every instruction literally. Readers laugh at their mistakes; they enjoy the silly situations. *Goha the Wise Fool* includes several stories about Goha's foolishness, and many of the stories in *Kibbitzers and Fools* could be classified as "noodlehead" stories. Another popular story of silliness features *Epossumondas*. These stories are great for creative dramatics. Children enjoy acting out the preposterous circumstances. In several of the stories, as in *Epossumondas* and *The Six Fools*, the plot is episodic with lots of opportunities for visual humor.

How many silly people (or animals) are there in the world? Just read these books and begin making a list.

249 Demi ✶ *The Hungry Coat: A Tale from Turkey*
Illus. by the author ✶ Simon & Schuster, 2004 ✶ 0-689-84680-0
EURASIAN—TURKEY ✶ GRADES 2–6

Here is a tale from the Turkish folk philosopher Nasrettin Hoca. In this story, Nasrettin is invited to a banquet. Along the way there are a series of misfortunes and when he arrives he is dirty and smells like a goat. The guests shun him and Nasrettin leaves. He hurries home, bathes, and dresses in a beautiful silk coat with golden threads. Returning to the party, he is given food and beverages. To the amazement of the other guests, Nasrettin puts everything into his coat. He explains that the guests shunned him when he arrived in shabby clothes, but they welcome him in this coat, so it must be that the coat is really the honored guest. His friends understand his lesson and celebrate his wisdom. An Afterword explores the roots of this story.

250 Hurston, Zora Neale, collector; adapted by Joyce Carol Thomas ✶ *The Six Fools*
Illus. by Ann Tanksley ✶ HarperCollins, 2006 ✶ 0-06-000646-3
AFRICAN AMERICAN ✶ GRADES 2–6

A young man realizes that his fiancee and her parents are fools. In frustration, he says he will search the world for three equal fools. If

he succeeds, the wedding will go ahead. It is no surprise to the reader that there are plenty of fools for him to find. He finds a man trying to jump into his trousers, a farmer trying to lift his cow to eat the grass growing on the barn roof, and a woman trying to catch sunshine with a wheelbarrow. An Adapter's Note looks at the tradition of laughing at the foolishness of others.

251 Johnson-Davies, Denys ✶ *Goha the Wise Fool*
Illus. by Hag Hamady and Hany ✶ Philomel, 2005 ✶ 0-399-24222-8
EURASIAN—TURKEY; MIDDLE EASTERN ✶ GRADES 3–6

Stories about Goha are prolific throughout the Middle East. In many stories, he is a fool; in others, he displays great wisdom. These 15 stories show the strengths and weaknesses of this humorous character. In "Goha Counts His Donkeys" and "Goha Buys a New Donkey," he is a classic "noodlehead"—a character whose behavior is absurd. In "Goha Outthinks the Three Wise Men," Goha shows his mettle by answering three impossible questions. The illustrations are striking. They are colorful fabric designs appliqued on a textured beige background cloth. A Note following the stories describes their origin and shows the illustrators at work. They are tentmakers who work in a small store in the Old Islamic Quarter in Cairo. Information about the history of tentmaking and about the Goha stories is also included.

252 Montes, Marisa ✶ *Juan Bobo Goes to Work: A Puerto Rican Folktale*
Illus. by Joe Cepeda ✶ HarperCollins, 2000 ✶ 0-688-16234-7
CARIBBEAN—PUERTO RICO ✶ GRADES 2–5

Juan Bobo tries to do things right, but when his mother sends him out to earn money, he proves to be a hard worker who can't get his day's earnings safely home to his Mama. She tells him to hold the coins in his hands, but he puts the coins in his pockets, full of holes! And he puts milk the farmer gives him as pay in a burlap bag and, of course, it all drips out by the time he gets home. One day a sick girl who is the daughter of a rich man sees Juan Bobo dragging a ham on the ground behind him. All the cats and dogs are nibbling on the

meat. The girl laughs and laughs—just what she needs to do to recover. It turns out that Bobo's foolishness proves rewarding for him and his mama. The brightly painted illustrations capture this boy's antics and add to the humor of each of the situations. This book was selected as an Honor Book for Illustration for the Pura Belpré Award.

253 Salley, Colleen ✶ *Epossumondas*
Illus. by Janet Stevens ✶ Harcourt, 2002 ✶ 0-15-216748-X
AMERICAN ✶ GRADES K–3

Epossumondas is a sweet little possum whose mama and auntie (both human females) dote on him. When Epossumondas visits his auntie, she gives him something to take home. But by the time he gets there, the item is almost unrecognizable. His mama tries to give him instructions about what to do, but he is always one step behind. Children love hearing what Epossumondas will do next. The sequential events in this story make it great for retelling or acting out. *Epossumondas* is a retelling of a classic story from the American South. Companion volumes with this character are *Why Epossumondas Has No Hair on His Tail* (Harcourt, 2004) and *Epossumondas Saves the Day* (Harcourt, 2006).

254 Stewart, Dianne ✶ *Gift of the Sun: A Tale from South Africa*
Illus. by Jude Daly ✶ Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996 ✶ 0-374-32425-5
AFRICAN—SOUTH AFRICA ✶ GRADES 2–4

Thulani looks for the easy way out. Milking his cow is too much work so he sells the cow and gets a goat. The goat eats his dried corn so he gets a sheep. After shearing the sheep, he decides that three geese will be easier, but his wife, Dora, makes him sell the geese and buy seeds for planting. Thulani buys seeds but they are sunflower seeds. Dora thinks they are worthless. As the sunflowers grow, they produce many seeds and Thulani collects the seeds and feeds the chickens, who lay extra eggs. With the eggs, he buys another sheep and then another cow. Lazy, foolish Thulani is now successful!

255 Taback, Simms ✶ *Kibitzers and Fools: Tales My Zayda Told Me*
Illus. by the author ✶ Viking, 2005 ✶ 0-670-05955-2
JEWISH—EUROPEAN—EASTERN EUROPE ✶ GRADES 3–6

The 13 stories in this collection are from traditional stories from the Jewish people in Eastern Europe. Many Yiddish words are included in the text and the pictures and several of the stories are accompanied by sayings that capture the essence of the tale. For example, in "The Umbrella," two friends go for a walk when it begins to rain. One has an umbrella that is full of holes. His friend asks why he brought such a useless item only to be told that the umbrella's owner did not think it would rain. The saying "Be with a fool and you will suffer the consequences" is a perfect end to this silly story. In another "noodlehead" story, Hershel sees a man he believes he recognizes but he is wrong. Instead of acknowledging his mistake, he comments that the man has changed—even his name! There is a lot of fun in this collection. *Kibitzers and Fools* received a Sydney Taylor Book Honor Award for Younger Readers in 2005.

MAKING CHOICES

THE STORIES IN THIS SECTION TEACH PHILOSOPHICAL lessons about choices and values. Some are folktales while others are retellings of traditional tales. All feature characters faced with dilemmas. Demi is an author/illustrator whose books encourage readers to reflect on the behavior of the characters in the story. The story then becomes a springboard to reflect on your own actions and decisions. *The Greatest Power* and *The Hungry Coat* (which is featured in the section on Noodleheads above) are just two examples from Demi that can generate discussions about such topics as honesty, beauty, friendship, and what is important to you.

Two books from John J. Muth offer similar opportunities for reflection and discussion. *The Three Questions* and *Zen Shorts* are great choices for a response journal activity. Readers write their insights into the meaning of the questions or the short stories. Ed Young's *The Lost Horse*, which is another version of one of the stories in *Zen Shorts*, could also be used here (see the section on "Folktales from Six Continents" above).

In *Mr. Peabody's Apples*, lessons from the past are applied to the present. (Although the illustrations show an idyllic small town of a bygone era, they are more "present day" than the other stories in this section.) Actually opening a feather pillow to watch the feathers scatter really makes the connection about the danger of spreading rumors.

256 Demi ✶ *The Greatest Power*
Illus. by the author ✶ Scholastic, 2004 ✶ 0-689-84503-0
ASIAN—CHINA ✶ GRADES 2–6

In Demi's *The Empty Pot* (Holt, 1990), Ping's honesty was rewarded and he was chosen to be the next emperor. In *The Greatest Power* Ping is now the emperor and this time he sets the challenge for the children, asking them to find the greatest power in the world. After one year has passed, the children bring him a variety of interpretations of "power" including weapons, beauty, technology, and money. Only one little girl, Sing, brings him a lotus seed, which contains the power to be planted, grow, create more seeds, and begin again. The

power of eternal life is "the greatest power" and Ping selects Sing to be his prime minister.

257 Madonna ✶ *Mr. Peabody's Apples*
Illus. by Loren Long ✶ Callaway, 2003 ✶ 0-670-05883-1
EUROPEAN AMERICAN ✶ GRADES 3–6

Mr. Peabody, an elementary school teacher, coaches a Little League team in Happville. His team does not win many games, but they enjoy playing. One day Tommy Tittlebottom watches Mr. Peabody walking home. Mr. Peabody walks by the fruit market, selects a beautiful apple, and continues on his way. Tommy tells his friends that Mr. Peabody is a thief. When it is time for another baseball game, no one comes to play. Billy Little comes to the baseball field and tells Mr. Peabody what Tommy has said.

Tommy goes to Mr. Peabody's home and Mr. Peabody explains that he is not stealing apples; he has paid for his apple earlier in the day. Tommy is chagrined and wants to make amends. Mr. Peabody asks Tommy to bring a feather pillow to the baseball field. They climb to the top of the bleachers, cut open the pillow, and shake all the feathers out. Then, Mr. Peabody tells Tommy to collect the feathers—a task that is as impossible as undoing the damage from the rumor Tommy started. The final picture shows a pillow that is nearly full of feathers and has been stitched back together, although there are still a few feathers floating in the air. An Author's Note describes how this story is based on a 300-year-old tale.

258 Muth, Jon J ✶ *The Three Questions: Based on a Story by Leo Tolstoy*
Illus. by the author ✶ Scholastic, 2002 ✶ 0-439-33911-1
UNIVERSAL ✶ GRADES 3–6

Nikolai is a boy who wants to do his best. He believes that the answers to his three questions—"When is the best time to do things?", "Who is the most important one?", and "What is the right thing to do?"—will help guide him. His friends the heron, the monkey, and the dog try to answer his questions but Nikolai is not satisfied. Finally he goes to Leo, the old turtle. While Leo thinks, Nikolai

helps the turtle by digging in his garden. A storm rises and Nikolai rescues an injured panda and then retrieves her child from the forest. The next morning, the panda and her child leave. Nikolai still wants an answer to his three questions. Leo helps Nikolai understand that his actions with the pandas help answer the questions. What you do now is the most important time. The one you are with is the most important one. And doing good is the most important thing to do. An Author's Note describes how Jon J. Muth came upon this story and how it is connected to Zen philosophy and to the writings of Leo Tolstoy.

259 Muth, Jon J ✶ *Zen Shorts*
Illus. by the author ✶ Scholastic, 2005 ✶ 0-439-33911-1
UNIVERSAL ✶ GRADES 3–6

Three children discover they have a new neighbor—a panda named Stillwater. Each child goes to visit Stillwater and he tells a thought-provoking story. When Addy visits, she hears about "Uncle Ry and the Moon." In this story, Uncle Ry wishes he had more to give the robber who came to his home. Uncle Ry enjoys the beauty of the moon and appreciates the natural world. Next, Michael goes to visit and finds Stillwater high up in a tree. The story for Michael is "The Farmer's Luck." In this story, events happen that may seem lucky or unlucky, but the farmer is not impressed by the idea of luck. Finally, Karl goes to visit and learns about carrying "A Heavy Load." An Author's Note describes the Japanese tradition of meditation or Zen. The three stories in this book are meant to provoke thought and discussion and come from Zen Buddhist and Taoist literature. For another version of "The Farmer's Luck," see Ed Young's *The Lost Horse* (under "Folktales from Six Continents" above). *Zen Shorts* was a Caldecott Honor Book.

FABLES

READING LITERARY TEXTS IN MANY GENRES is a component of English and Language Arts standards, and children are expected to be familiar with fables. Jerry Pinkney's beautifully illustrated collection of *Aesop's Fables* and Doris Orgel's selections in *The Lion and the Mouse* can lead to a discussion of these stories and the moral lessons they are designed to teach. After reading stories from this collection, readers may want to explore the tales in *Doctor Coyote*. The preface to *Doctor Coyote* describes how the Aztec Indians were exposed to the traditional Aesop fables by the European explorers. The Aztec adapted these stories to reflect their own culture and made Coyote the central figure. Look for similarities between the Aztec and ancient Greek tales.

After reading *Doctor Coyote*, children can look at other Native American stories featuring Coyote, such as *Old Bag of Bones*. They can identify him as a trickster and then look for other trickster stories, such as those featuring Rabbit (*Rabbit Makes a Monkey of Lion*, for example), Anansi (*Ananse and the Lizard*), and Raven (*Raven*; see under "Folktales from Six Continents"). *Just a Minute* is a trickster tale from Mexico featuring an old lady who tricks a skeleton.

Christopher Wormell's *Mice, Morals, and Monkey Business* is a dramatic presentation of the morals of several fables from Aesop. Children could create their own illustrations using a variety of media or could even try wood cut/engraving like Wormell.

260 Aardema, Verna ✶ *Rabbit Makes a Monkey of Lion: A Swahili Tale*

Illus. by Jerry Pinkney ✶ Dial, 1989 ✶ 0-8057-0297-3

AFRICAN—SWAHILI ✶ GRADES 2–4

Rabbit follows a honey guide bird to the bees' nest and enjoys the sweet honey. Unfortunately, the nest belongs to Lion, who is angry with Rabbit and chases after her. Rabbit tricks Lion and escapes, but she cannot stay away from the honey. She returns to the nest only to have to use trickery to escape from Lion again. Jerry Pinkney's dramatic artwork for this book could connect with the paintings in *Aesop's Fables* and be part of an art study.

261 *Aesop's Fables*
Illus. by Jerry Pinkney ✶ SeaStar Books, 2000 ✶ 1-58717-000-0
GREEK, ANCIENT ✶ GRADES 2–5

Nearly 60 Aesop's fables are presented here with outstanding illustrations from Jerry Pinkney. Readers will recognize many of these tales, but there are many that are less familiar. The morals are clearly presented; children would enjoy trying to "guess" the moral.

262 Bierhorst, John, reteller ✶ *Doctor Coyote: A Native American Aesop's Fables*
Illus. by Wendy Watson ✶ Macmillan, 1987 ✶ 0-02-709780-3
NATIVE AMERICAN ✶ GRADES 3–6

Read these fables and try to find the connection with the original Aesop's fables. When Coyote meets White Beard (the goat) and they jump into the well, readers could compare it to "The Fox and the Goat." The story about Coyote hunting with Puma and Donkey could be linked to "The Stork and the Cranes." How many other connections can you find?

263 Cummings, Pat, reteller ✶ *Ananse and the Lizard: A West African Tale*
Illus. by the reteller ✶ Henry Holt, 2002 ✶ 0-8050-6476-1
AFRICAN—GHANA ✶ GRADES 2–4

Ananse reads a notice posted on a tree and decides to try to guess the name of the Chief's daughter and win her hand in marriage. Ananse overhears the Chief's daughter and her servants talking and he learns her name. Lizard tricks Ananse into telling him the name. Lizard goes to the palace, tells the name, and marries the Chief's daughter. Ananse, the trickster, has been tricked!

264 Morales, Yuyi ✶ *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book*
Illus. by the author ✶ Chronicle Books, 2003 ✶ 0-8118-3758-0
MEXICAN ✶ GRADES 1–3

Señor Calavera, a skeleton, has arrived at Grandma Beetle's door. He wants her to go with him. Grandma Beetle finds many things to do

so that she does not have to go. She sweeps one/*uno* house, boils two/*dos* pots of tea, makes three/*tres* pounds of corn into tortillas, and so forth. She continues until she reaches ten/*diez*—the number of guests at her birthday party. Señor Calavera enjoys the party and he leaves without taking Grandma Beetle—but he promises to return for her next birthday party. This book received the Pura Belpré Award for Illustrations as well as an Américas Book Award and the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award.

265 Orgel, Doris, reteller ✶ *The Lion and the Mouse and Other Aesop's Fables*
Illus. by Bert Kitchen ✶ DK, 2000 ✶ 0-7874-2665-X
GREEK, ANCIENT ✶ GRADES 2–5

There are 12 fables in this collection. Some are familiar, such as "The Fox and the Goat," "The Hare and the Tortoise," and the title story. Others are less familiar. The introduction explains who Aesop was and what purpose the fables served. The moral lesson is not stated with each story, which will spur discussion. Readers will want to compare some of these with the stories in *Doctor Coyote*.

266 Stevens, Janet, reteller ✶ *Old Bag of Bones: A Coyote Tale*
Illus. by the reteller ✶ Holiday House, 1996 ✶ 0-8234-1215-6
NATIVE AMERICAN—SHOSHONI ✶ GRADES 2–4

Coyote is old. He asks Young Buffalo to share some of his youth and Young Buffalo agrees. Coyote is transformed into a young buffalo, and is now called "Buffote," but he remains a powerless coyote on the inside. "Buffote" promises to share his youth with Old Rabbit, Old Lizard, and Old Rat. Instead, they all remain old and "Buffote" is back to being Coyote, an old bag of bones.

267 Wormell, Christopher ✶ *Mice, Morals, and Monkey Business: Lively Lessons from Aesop's Fables*
Illus. by the author ✶ Running Press, 2005 ✶ 0-7624-2404-4
GREEK, ANCIENT ✶ GRADES 1–4

Beautiful engravings illustrate these fables from Aesop. Each double-page spread features a moral lesson from a fable and the title of the

fable opposite a striking illustration of the moral. The bold lines of the engraving are enhanced with shades of color. For "The Lion and the Mouse," a large lion (shaded in brown, tan, and gold) dominates the page. The small brown mouse in the bottom corner of the illustration stands in front of a gnawed rope, proving that "Little friends may prove great friends." A brief retelling of the fable follows the illustrated collection of morals.

Selected Readings

CINDERELLA

I guess you think you know this story.
You don't. The real one's much more gory.
The phoney one, the one you know,
Was cooked up years and years ago,
And made to sound all soft and sappy
Just to keep the children happy.
Mind you, they got the first bit right,
The bit where, in the dead of night,
The Ugly Sisters, jewels and all,
Departed for the Palace Ball,
While darling little Cinderella
Was locked up in a slimy cellar,
Where rats who wanted things to eat,
Began to nibble at her feet.
She bellowed 'Help!' and 'Let me out!'
The Magic Fairy heard her shout.
Appearing in a blaze of light,
She said, 'My dear, are you all right?'
'All right?' cried Cindy. 'Can't you see
'I feel as rotten as can be!'
She beat her fist against the wall,
And shouted, 'Get me to the Ball!
'There is a Disco at the Palace!
'The rest have gone and I am jealous!
'I want a dress! I want a coach!
'And earrings and a diamond brooch!
'And silver slippers, two of those!
'And lovely nylon panty-hose!
'Done up like that I'll guarantee
'The handsome Prince will fall for me!'
The Fairy said, 'Hang on a tick.'
She gave her wand a mighty flick
And quickly, in no time at all,

Cindy was at the Palace Ball!
It made the Ugly Sisters wince
To see her dancing with the Prince.
She held him very tight and pressed
herself against his manly chest.
The Prince himself was turned to pulp,
All *he* could do was gasp and gulp.
Then midnight struck. She shouted, ‘Heck!
‘I’ve got to run to save my neck!’
The Prince cried, ‘No! Alas! Alack!’
He grabbed her dress to hold her back.
As Cindy shouted, ‘Let me go!’
The dress was ripped from head to toe.
She ran out in her underwear,
And lost one slipper on the stair.
The Prince was on it like a dart,
He pressed it to his pounding heart,
‘The girl this slipper fits,’ he cried,
‘Tomorrow morn shall be my bride!
‘I’ll visit every house in town
‘Until I’ve tracked the maiden down!’
Then rather carelessly, I fear,
He placed it on a crate of beer.
At once, one of the Ugly Sisters,
(The one whose face was blotched with blisters)
Sneaked up and grabbed the dainty shoe,
And quickly flushed it down the loo.
Then in its place she calmly put
The slipper from her own left foot.
Ah-ha, you see, the plot grows thicker,
And Cindy’s luck starts looking sicker.
Next day, the Prince went charging down
To knock on all the doors in town.
In every house, the tension grew.
Who was the owner of the shoe?

The shoe was long and very wide.
(A normal foot got lost inside.)
Also it smelled a wee bit icky.
(The owner's feet were hot and sticky.)
Thousands of eager people came
To try it on, but all in vain.
Now came the Ugly Sisters' go.
One tried it on. The Prince screamed, 'No!'
But she screamed, 'Yes! It fits! Whoopee!
'So now you've got to marry me!'
The Prince went white from ear to ear.
He muttered, 'Let me out of here.'
'Oh no you don't! You made a vow!
'There's no way you can back out now!'
'Off with her head!' The Prince roared back.
They chopped it off with one big whack.
This pleased the Prince. He smiled and said,
'She's prettier without her head.'
Then up came Sister Number Two,
Who yelled, 'Now I will try the shoe!'
'Try this instead!' the Prince yelled back.
He swung his trusty sword and *smack* -
Her head went crashing to the ground.
It bounced a bit and rolled around.
In the kitchen, peeling spuds,
Cinderella heard the thuds
Of bouncing heads upon the floor,
And poked her own head round the door.
'What's all the racket?' Cindy cried.
'Mind your own bizz,' the Prince replied.
Poor Cindy's heart was torn to shreds.
My Prince! she thought. He chops off *heads!*
How could I marry anyone
Who does that sort of thing for fun?
The Prince cried, 'Who's this dirty slut?

‘Off with her nut! Off with her nut!’
Just then, all in a blaze of light,
The Magic Fairy hove in sight,
Her Magic Wand went *swoosh* and *swish!*
‘Cindy!’ she cried, ‘come make a wish!
‘Wish anything and have no doubt
‘That I will make it come about!’
Cindy answered, ‘Oh kind Fairy,
‘This time I shall be more wary.
‘No more Princes, no more money.
‘I have had my taste of honey.
‘I’m wishing for a decent man.
‘They’re hard to find. D’you think you can?’
Within a minute, Cinderella
Was married to a lovely feller,
A simple jam-maker by trade,
Who sold good home-made marmalade.
Their house was filled with smiles and laughter
And they were happy ever after.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Jack's mother said, 'We're *stony broke!*
'Go out and find some wealthy bloke
'Who'll buy our cow. Just say she's sound
'And worth at least a hundred pound.
'But don't you dare to let him know
'That she's as old as billy-o.'
Jack led the old brown cow away,
And came back later in the day,
And said, 'Oh mumsie dear, guess what
'Your clever little boy has got.
'I got, I really don't know how,
'A super trade-in for our cow. '
The mother said, 'You little creep,
'I'll bet you sold her much too cheap.'
When Jack produced one lousy bean,
His startled mother, turning green,
Leaped high up in the air and cried,
'I'm *absolutely stupefied!*
'You crazy boy! D'you really mean
'You sold our Daisy for a bean?'
She snatched the bean. She yelled, 'You chump.
And flung it on the rubbish-dump.
Then summoning up all her power,
She beat the boy for half an hour,
Using (and nothing could be meaner)
The handle of a vacuum-cleaner.
At ten p.m. or thereabout,
The little bean began to sprout.
By morning it had grown so tall
You couldn't see the top at all.
Young Jack cried, 'Mum, admit it now!
'It's better than a rotten cow!'

The mother said, ‘You lunatic!
‘Where are the beans that I can pick?
‘There’s not *one bean!* It’s bare as bare!’
‘No no!’ cried Jack. ‘You look up there!
‘Look very high and you’ll behold
‘Each single leaf is solid gold!’
By gollikins, the boy was right!
Now, glistening in the morning light,
The mother actually perceives
A mass of lovely golden leaves!
She yells out loud, ‘My sainted souls!
‘I’ll sell the Mini, buy a Rolls!
‘Don’t stand and gape, you little clot!
‘Get up there quick and grab the lot!’
Jack was nimble, Jack was keen.
He scrambled up the mighty bean.
Up up he went without a stop,
But just as he was near the top,
A ghastly frightening thing occurred -
Not far above his head he heard
A big deep voice, a rumbling thing
That made the very heavens ring.
It shouted loud, ‘FEE Fl FO FUM
‘I SMELL THE BLOOD OF AN ENGLISHMAN!’
Jack was frightened, Jack was quick,
And down he climbed in half a tick.
‘Oh mum!’ he gasped. ‘Believe you me
‘There’s something nasty up our tree!
‘I saw him, mum! My gizzard froze!
‘A Giant with a clever nose!’
‘A clever nose!’ his mother hissed.
‘You must be going round the twist!’
‘He smelled me out, I swear it, mum!
‘He said he *smelled* an Englishman!’
The mother said, ‘And well he might!

‘I’ve told you every single night
‘To take a bath because you smell,
‘But would you do it? Would you hell!
‘You even make your mother shrink
‘Because of your unholy stink!’
Jack answered, ‘Well, if you’re so clean
‘Why don’t you climb the crazy bean.’
The mother cried, ‘By gad, I will!
‘There’s life within the old dog still!’
She hitched her skirts above her knee
And disappeared right up the tree.
Now would the Giant smell his mum?
Jack listened for *the fee-fo-fum.*
He gazed aloft. He wondered when
The dreaded words would come... And then ...
From somewhere high above the ground
There came a frightful crunching sound.
He heard the Giant mutter twice,
‘By gosh, that tasted very nice.
‘Although’ (and this in grumpy tones)
‘I wish there weren’t so many bones.’
‘By Christopher!’ Jack cried. ‘By gum!
‘The Giant’s eaten up my mum!
‘He smelled her out! She’s in his belly!
‘I had a hunch that she was smelly.’
Jack stood there gazing longingly
Upon the huge and golden tree.
He murmured softly, ‘Golly-gosh,
‘I guess I’ll *have* to take a wash
‘If I am going to climb this tree
‘Without the Giant smelling me.
‘In fact, a bath’s my only hope ...
He rushed indoors and grabbed the soap
He scrubbed his body everywhere.
He even washed and rinsed his hair.

He did his teeth, he blew his nose
And went out smelling like a rose.
Once more he climbed the mighty bean.
The Giant sat there, gross, obscene,
Muttering through his vicious teeth
(While Jack sat tensely just beneath),
Muttering loud, ‘FEE FI FO FUM,
‘RIGHT NOW I CAN’T SMELL ANYONE.’
Jack waited till the Giant slept,
Then out along the boughs he crept
And gathered so much gold, I swear
He was an instant millionaire.
‘A bath,’ he said, ‘does seem to pay.
‘I’m going to have one every day.’

when little Snow-White's mother died,
The king, her father, up and cried,
'Oh, what a nuisance! What a life!
'Now I must find another wife!'
(It's never easy for a king
To find himself that sort of thing.)
He wrote to every magazine
And said, 'I'm looking for a Queen.'
At least ten thousand girls replied
And begged to be the royal bride.
The king said with a shifty smile,
'I'd like to give each one a trial.'
However, in the end he chose
A lady called Miss Maclahose,
Who brought along a curious toy
That seemed to give her endless joy -
This was a mirror framed in brass,
A MAGIC TALKING LOOKING-GLASS.
Ask it something day or night,
It always got the answer right.
For instance, if you were to say,
'Oh Mirror, what's for lunch today?'
The thing would answer in a trice,
'Today it's scrambled eggs and rice.'
Now every day, week in week out,
The spoiled and stupid Queen would shout,
'Oh Mirror Mirror on the wall,
'Who is the fairest of them all?'
The Mirror answered every time,
'Oh Madam, you're the Queen sublime.
'You are the only one to charm us,
'Queen, you are the cat's pyjamas. '

For ten whole years the silly Queen
Repeated this absurd routine.
Then suddenly, one awful day,
She heard the Magic Mirror say,
‘From now on, Queen, you’re *Number Two.*
‘Snow-White is prettier than you!’
The Queen went absolutely wild.
She yelled, ‘I’m going to scrag that child!
‘I’ll cook her flaming goose! I’ll skin ‘er!
‘I’ll have her rotten guts for dinner!’
She called the Huntsman to her study.
She shouted at him, ‘Listen buddy!
‘You drag that filthy girl outside,
‘And see you take her for a ride!
‘Thereafter slit her ribs apart
‘And bring me back her bleeding heart!’
The Huntsman dragged the lovely child
Deep deep into the forest wild.
Fearing the worst, poor Snow-White spake.
She cried, ‘Oh please give me a break!’
The knife was poised, the arm was strong,
She cried again, ‘I’ve done no *wrong!’*
The Huntsman’s heart began to flutter.
It melted like a pound of butter.
He murmured, ‘Okay, beat it, kid,’
And you can bet your life she did.
Later, the Huntsman made a stop
Within the local butcher’s shop,
And there he bought, for safety’s sake,
A bullock’s heart and one nice steak.
‘Oh Majesty! Oh Queen!’ he cried,
‘That rotten little girl has died!
‘And just to prove I didn’t cheat,
‘I’ve brought along these bits of meat.’
‘The Queen cried out, ‘Bravissimo!

‘I trust you killed her nice and slow.’
Then (this is the disgusting part)
The Queen sat down and ate the heart!
(I only hope she cooked it well.
Boiled heart can be as tough as hell.)
While all of this was going on,
Oh where, oh where had Snow-White gone?
She’d found it easy, being pretty,
To hitch a ride in to the city,
And there she’d got a job, unpaid,
As general cook and parlour-maid
With seven funny little men,
Each one not more than three foot ten,
Ex horse-race jockeys, all of them.
These Seven Dwarfs , though awfully nice,
Were guilty of one shocking vice -
They squandered all of their resources
At the race-track backing horses.
(When they hadn’t backed a winner,
None of them got any dinner.)
One evening, Snow-White said,
‘Look here, ‘I think I’ve got a great idea.
‘Just leave it all to me, okay?
‘And no more gambling till I say.’
That very night, at eventide,
Young Snow-White hitched another ride,
And then, when it was very late,
She slipped in through the Palace gate.
The King was in his counting house
Counting out his money,
The Queen was in the parlour
Eating bread and honey,
The footmen and the servants slept
So no one saw her as she crept
On tip-toe through the mighty hall

And grabbed THE MIRROR off the wall.
As soon as she had got it home,
She told the Senior Dwarf (or Gnome)
To ask it what he wished to know.
‘Go on!’ she shouted. ‘Have a go!’
He said, ‘Oh Mirror, please don’t joke!
‘Each one of us is stony broke!
‘Which horse will win tomorrow’s race,
‘The Ascot Gold Cup Steeplechase?’
The Mirror whispered sweet and low,
‘The horse’s name is Mistletoe.’
The Dwarfs went absolutely daft,
They kissed young Snow-White fore and aft,
Then rushed away to raise some dough
With which to back old Mistletoe.
They pawned their watches, sold the car,
They borrowed money near and far,
(For much of it they had to thank
The manager of Barclays Bank.)
They went to Ascot and of course
For once they backed the winning horse.
Thereafter, every single day,
The Mirror made the bookies pay.
Each Dwarf and Snow-White got a share,
And each was soon a millionaire,
Which shows that gambling’s not a sin
Provided that you always win.

GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS

This famous wicked little tale
Should never have been put on sale.
It is a mystery to me
Why loving parents cannot see
That this is actually a book
About a brazen little crook.
Had I the chance I wouldn't fail
To clap young Goldilocks in jail.
Now just imagine *how you'd* feel
If you had cooked a lovely meal,
Delicious porridge, steaming hot,
Fresh coffee in the coffee-pot,
With maybe toast and marmalade,
The table beautifully laid,
One place for you and one for dad,
Another for your little lad.
Then dad cries, 'Golly-gosh! Gee-whizz!
'Oh cripes! How hot this porridge is!
'Let's take a walk along the street
'Until it's cool enough to eat.'
He adds, 'An early morning stroll
'Is good for people on the whole.
'It makes your appetite improve
'It also helps your bowels to move.'
No proper wife would dare to question
Such a sensible suggestion,
Above all not at breakfast-time
When men are seldom at their prime.
No sooner are you down the road
Than Goldilocks, that little toad
That nosey thieving little louse,
Comes sneaking in your empty house.

She looks around. She quickly notes
Three bowls brimful of porridge oats.
And while still standing on her feet,
She grabs a spoon and starts to eat.
I say again, how *would* you feel
If you had made this lovely meal
And some delinquent little tot
Broke in and gobbled up the lot?
But wait! That's not the worst of it!
Now comes the most distressing bit.
You are of course a houseproud *wife*,
And all your happy married life
You have collected lovely things
Like gilded cherubs wearing wings,
And furniture by Chippendale
Bought at some famous auction sale.
But your most special valued treasure,
The piece that gives you endless pleasure,
Is one small children's dining-chair,
Elizabethan, very rare.
It is in fact your joy and pride,
Passed down to you on grandma's side.
But Goldilocks, like many freaks,
Does not appreciate antiques.
She doesn't care, she doesn't mind,
And now she plonks her fat behind
Upon this dainty precious chair,
And crunch! It busts beyond repair.
A nice girl would at once exclaim,
'Oh dear! Oh heavens! What a shame!'
Not Goldie. She begins to swear.
She bellows, 'What a lousy chair!'
And uses *one* disgusting word
That luckily you've never heard.
(I dare not write it, even hint it.

Nobody would ever print it.)
You'd think by now this little skunk
Would have the sense to do a bunk.
But no. I very much regret
She hasn't nearly finished yet.
Deciding she would like a rest,
She says, 'Let's see which bed is best.'
Upstairs she goes and tries all three.
(Here comes the next catastrophe.)
Most educated people choose
To rid themselves of socks and shoes
Before they clamber into bed.
But Goldie didn't give a shred.
Her filthy shoes were thick with grime,
And mud and mush and slush and slime.
Worse still, upon the heel of one
Was something that a dog had done.
I say once more, what *would* you think
If all this horrid dirt and stink
Was smeared upon your eiderdown
By this revolting little clown?
(The famous story has no clues
To show the girl removed her shoes.)
Oh, what a tale of crime on crime!
Let's check it for a second time.
Crime One, the prosecution's case:
She breaks and enters someone's place.
Crime Two, the prosecutor notes:
She steals a bowl of porridge oats.
Crime Three: She breaks a precious chair
Belonging to the Baby Bear.
Crime Four: She smears each spotless sheet
With filthy messes from her feet.
A judge would say without a blink,
'Ten years hard labour in the clink!'

But in the book, as you will see,
The little beast gets off scot-free,
While tiny children near and far
Shout, ‘Goody-good! Hooray! Hurrah!’
‘Poor darling Goldilocks!’ they say,
‘Thank goodness that she got away!’
Myself, I think I’d rather send
Young Goldie to a sticky end.
‘Oh daddy!’ cried the Baby Bear,
‘My porridge gone! It isn’t fair!’
‘Then go upstairs,’ the Big Bear said,
‘Your porridge is upon the bed.
‘But as it’s inside mademoiselle,
‘You’ll have to eat *her* up as well.’

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

AND THE WOLF

As soon as Wolf began to feel
That he would like a decent meal,
He went and knocked on Grandma's door.
When Grandma opened it, she saw
The sharp white teeth, the horrid grin,
And Wolfie said, 'May I come in?'
Poor Grandmamma was terrified,
'He's going to eat me up!' she cried.
And she was absolutely right.
He ate her up in one big bite.
But Grandmamma was small and tough,
And Wolfie wailed, 'That's not enough!
'I haven't yet begun to feel
'That I have had a decent meal!'
He ran around the kitchen yelping,
'I've *got* to have another helping!'
Then added with a frightful leer,
'I'm therefore going to wait right here
'Till Little Miss Red Riding Hood
'Comes home from walking in the wood.'
He quickly put on Grandma's clothes,
(Of course he hadn't eaten those.)
He dressed himself in coat and hat.
He put on shoes and after that
He even brushed and curled his hair,
Then sat himself in Grandma's chair.
In came the little girl in red.
She stopped. She stared. And then she said,
'What great big ears you have, Grandma.'
'All the better to hear you with,' the Wolf replied.
'What great big eyes you have, Grandma,'

said Little Red Riding Hood.
‘All the better to see you with,’ the Wolf replied.
He sat there watching her and smiled.
He thought, I’m going to eat this child.
Compared with her old Grandmamma
She’s going to taste like caviare.
Then Little Red Riding Hood said, *‘But Grandma,*
what a lovely great big furry coat you have on.’
‘That’s wrong!’ cried Wolf. ‘Have you forgot
‘To tell me what BIG TEETH I’ve got?
‘Ah well, no matter what you say,
‘I’m going to eat you anyway.’
The small girl smiles. One eyelid flickers.
She whips a pistol from her knickers.
She aims it at the creature’s head
And *bang bang bang,* she shoots him dead.
A few weeks later, in the wood,
I came across Miss Riding Hood.
But what a change! No cloak of red,
No silly hood upon her head.
She said, ‘Hello, and do please note
‘My lovely furry WOLFSKIN COAT.’

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

The animal I really dig
Above all others is the pig.
Pigs are noble. Pigs are clever,
Pigs are courteous. However,
Now and then, to break this rule,
One meets a pig who is a fool.
What, for example, would you say
If strolling through the woods one day,
Right there in front of you you saw
A pig who'd built his house of STRAW?
The Wolf who saw it licked his lips,
And said, 'That pig has had his chips.'
'Little pig, little pig, let me come in!'
'No, no, by the hairs on my chinny-chin-chin!' '
Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in!'
The little pig began to pray,
But Wolfie blew his house away.
He shouted, 'Bacon, pork and ham!
'Oh, what a lucky Wolf I am!'
And though he ate the pig quite fast,
He carefully kept the tail till last.
Wolf wandered on, a trifle bloated.
Surprise, surprise, for soon he noted
Another little house for pigs,
And this one had been built of TWIGS!
'Little pig, little pig, let me come in!'
'No, no, by the hairs of my chinny-chin-chin!' '
Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in!'
The Wolf said, 'Okay, here we go!'
He then began to blow and blow.
The little pig began to squeal.
He cried, 'Oh Wolf, you've had *one* meal!

‘Why can’t we talk and make a deal?’
The Wolf replied, ‘Not on your nelly!’
And soon the pig was in his belly.
‘Two juicy little pigs!’ Wolf cried,
‘But still I am not satisfied!
‘I know full well my Tummy’s bulging,
‘But oh, how I adore indulging.’
So creeping quietly as a mouse,
The Wolf approached another house,
A house which also had inside
A little piggy trying to hide.
But this one, Piggy Number Three,
Was bright and brainy as could be.
No straw for him, no twigs or sticks.
This pig had built his house of BRICKS.
‘You’ll not get *me!’* the Piggy cried.
‘I’ll blow you down!’ the Wolf replied.
‘You’ll need,’ Pig said, ‘a lot of puff,
‘And I don’t think you’ve got enough.’
Wolf huffed and puffed and blew and blew.
The house stayed up as good as new.
‘If I can’t blow it *down,’* Wolf said,
‘I’ll have to blow it *up* instead.
‘I’ll come back in the dead of night
‘And blow it up with dynamite!’
Pig cried, ‘You brute! I might have known!’
Then, picking up the the telephone,
He dialled as quickly as he could
The number of Red Riding Hood.
‘Hello,’ she said. ‘Who’s speaking? *Who?*
‘Oh, hello Piggy, how d’you do?’
Pig cried, ‘I need your help, Miss Hood!
‘Oh help me, please! D’you think you could?’
‘I’ll try, of course,’ Miss Hood replied.
‘What’s on your mind?’ *‘A Wolf!’* Pig cried.

‘I know you’ve dealt with wolves before,
‘And now I’ve got one at my door!’
‘My darling Pig,’ she said, ‘my sweet,
‘That’s something *really* up my street.
‘I’ve just begun to wash my hair.
‘But when it’s dry, I’ll be right there.’
A short while later, through the wood,
Came striding brave Miss Riding Hood.
The Wolf stood there, his eyes ablaze
And yellowish, like mayonnaise.
His teeth were sharp, his gums were raw,
And spit was dripping from his jaw.
Once more the maiden’s eyelid flickers.
She draws the pistol from her knickers.
Once more, she hits the vital spot,
And kills him with a single shot.
Pig, peeping through the window, stood
And yelled, ‘Well done, Miss Riding Hood!’
Ah, Piglet, you must never trust
Young ladies from the upper crust.
For now, Miss Riding Hood, one notes,
Not only has *two* wolfskin coats,
But when she goes from place to place,
She has a PIGSKIN TRAVELLING CASE.

The Story of a Mother

A POOR mother sat watching by the cradle of her little baby. She was very anxious and sorrowful; she dreaded that it was going to be taken from her. Its little eyes were closed, and it was deathly pale; it breathed very faintly, with now and then a long trembling breath like a sigh. The mother grew sadder and sadder as she looked at it.

There was a knock at the door, and a poor old man came in; he was wrapped in a big horse-cloth, which he needed to keep him warm, it was so very cold. Outside everything was covered with ice and snow, and a biting wind whistled round the house.

As the old man was shaking with cold, and the baby had dropped asleep for a moment, the mother got up and put some beer in a little mug on the stove to warm for him. The old man sat rocking the cradle, and the woman sat down on a chair close to him and watched the sick child, who drew its breath more deeply still, and feebly waved its little hand about.

"You think I shall keep him, don't you?" said she. "The Lord won't take him from me?"

And the old man, who was Death himself, nodded in such a curious way that she did not know whether it meant yes or no. The mother bent her head, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. Her head was so heavy, she had not closed her eyes for three nights and days, and she fell asleep, but only for a moment, then she started up shivering with cold.

"What is it?" she said, looking about to every side. But the old man was gone, and her little child was gone; he had taken it with him. The old clock in the corner whirred and whirred, and the big lead weight ran right down to the ground with a bang, and then the clock stopped too.

But the poor mother rushed out of the house calling for her child.

Out there, all in the snow, sat a woman in long black clothes, and she said, "Death has been into your room. I saw him hurrying away with your child; he goes faster than the wind, and he never brings back what he takes away."

"Only tell me which way he went," said the mother. "Tell me the way, and I shall find him."

"I know the way," said the woman in the black clothes; "but before I tell it you, you must sing me all the songs you used to sing to your baby; I like them; I have often heard them before. I am Night. I saw your tears while you sang."

"I will sing them all—all," said the mother; "but don't stop me; let me go that I may find my little baby."

But Night stood still and silent, and the mother wrung her hands, sang and wept. There were many songs, but many, many more tears.

At last Night said, "Go to the right, into the dark pine wood. I saw Death take that road with your child."

In the heart of the wood she came to a cross-road, and she did not know which way to go. There was a blackthorn bush just at the crossing with neither leaf nor flower on it, for it was the hard winter time, and icicles hung from the branches.

"Have you not seen Death pass by with my little child?"

"Yes," said the blackthorn bush; "but I won't tell you which way he went unless you will warm me at your heart. I am dying of cold; I shall soon be nothing but ice."

And she pressed the blackthorn bush to her heart so tightly, to warm it, that the thorns ran into her flesh, and great drops of blood flowed; but fresh green leaves and flowers sprang out on the thorn bush that cold winter night, such was the warmth of a sad mother's heart, and the thorn bush told her the way to go.

Then she came to a great lake, on which there were neither ships nor boats. The lake was not frozen hard enough to bear her, nor was it open or shallow enough for her to wade through it; but over it somehow she must go if she would find her child. She lay down to drink up the water, but that was of course impossible; the poor mother thought, however, that a miracle might happen.

"Now, this will never do!" said the lake. "Let us see if we two can't make a bargain! I collect pearls, and your

eyes are the brightest I have seen; if you will cry them out for me, I will carry you over to the great hot-house where Death lives and looks after his plants and flowers, every one of which is a human life."

"Oh, what would I not give to reach my child!" said the weeping mother, and she wept more than ever, till her eyes dropped down to the bottom of the lake and became two precious pearls. Then the lake lifted her as if she had been in a swing, and she was borne in a moment from the shore where she stood to the other side. Here stood a curious house a mile wide; one could hardly tell whether it was a mountain covered with woods and hollows, or whether it was built up; but the poor mother could not see it, you know, for she had cried her eyes out.

"Where shall I find Death, who carried off my little child?" she said.

"He has not come back here yet," said the old crone, whose business it was to tend Death's big hot-house. "However did you get here, and who helped you?"

"Our Lord has helped me," said she. "He is merciful, and so will you be. Where shall I find my child?"

"I don't know," said the woman, "and you can't see. Many flowers and trees have withered in the night; Death will soon come and transplant them. You know that every human being has his or her tree of life, or flower, according as they are made; they look like other plants, but they have beating human hearts. A child's heart can beat too. Walk about here, perhaps you will recognise your child's; but what will you give me if I tell you what more you must do?"

"I have nothing to give," said the mother sadly, "but I will go to the end of the world for you."

"I've got nothing to do there," said the woman; "but you can give me your long black hair; I'm sure you know yourself that it is beautiful, and I fancy it. I'll give you my white hair in place of it, that will always be something."

"Don't you ask more than that," said she; "I will give it you gladly," and she gave her her beautiful black hair and received the old woman's white hair in exchange.

Then they went into Death's big hot-house, where the flowers and trees grew curiously mixed up together. Here were delicate hyacinths under bell glasses, and there were great strong peonies; here were water plants, some quite

fresh, others sickly with water snakes wound round them, and little black cray fish pinching their stems. Here were beautiful palm trees, oaks and plane trees; there grew parsley and sweet scented thyme; every tree and every flower had its name. Each one was a human life, living still, one in China, one in Greenland, scattered round about the world. There were big trees in small pots, growing in a stunted way, ready to burst their pots; and there were also, in other places, little tiresome flowers in rich earth surrounded with moss, and covered and tended. But the sad mother bent over all the tiniest plants and listened for the human heart beating in them. Among a million she knew her child's at once.

"This is it!" she cried, stretching out her hands over a little blue crocus which hung feebly down to one side.

"Don't touch the flower," said the old woman, "but place yourself here, so that when Death comes (for I expect him every minute) you may prevent him from pulling it up; threaten him that you will do the same to the other flowers, then he will be frightened. He has to answer to our Lord for them, not one may be pulled up without His leave."

All at once an icy wind whistled through the place, and the blind mother felt that Death had come.

"How didst thou find thy way hither?" asked he. "How couldst thou get here before me?"

"I am a mother," she said.

Then Death stretched out his long hand towards the delicate little flower, but she clasped her hands tightly round his, in terror lest he should touch one of the leaves. Death breathed upon her hands; she felt that his breath was colder than the coldest wind, and her hands fell numbly away from his.

"You have no power against me, you see," said Death.

"But our Lord has!" said she.

"I only do His will," said Death. "I am His gardener! I take all His flowers and trees and plant them in the Garden of Paradise, in the Unknown Land; but how they grow, and what they do there, I dare not tell thee!"

"Give me back my child!" said the mother, with tears and prayers; suddenly she clutched with both hands two beautiful flowers growing close by, and called out to Death, "I will pull up all your flowers, for I am in despair!"

"Touch them not!" said Death. "Thou sayst that

thou art unhappy, yet wouldst thou make some other mother equally unhappy——!"

"Some other mother!" said the poor woman, letting go the flowers at once.

"Here hast thou thine eyes back again," said Death; "I fished them up out of the lake, they shone so brightly; I did not know that they were thine. Take them back again, they are brighter than ever. Look down into the deep well close by, I will name the names of those flowers thou wast about to pluck, and thou shalt see their whole lives, and all that future thou wast about to destroy."

And she looked down into the well; it was happiness to see how one of them became a blessing to the world, and to see how much joy and pleasure was unfolded around him. Then she saw the life of the other, and that life was all sorrow and need, sin and misery.

"Both lives are according to the will of God!" said Death.

"Which of them is the flower of misery and which of blessedness?"

"That I may not tell thee," said Death; "but I may tell thee that one of the flowers was thy own child's; it was thy child's fate thou sawest, thine own child's future."

Then the mother shrieked in terror. "Which was my child? tell me that! Save the wretched one! Save my child from all the misery! Rather carry it away! bear it into God's kingdom! Forget my tears, forget my prayers, and all that I have said and done!"

"I do not understand thee!" said Death; "wilt thou have thy child back, or shall I take it whither thou knowest not!"

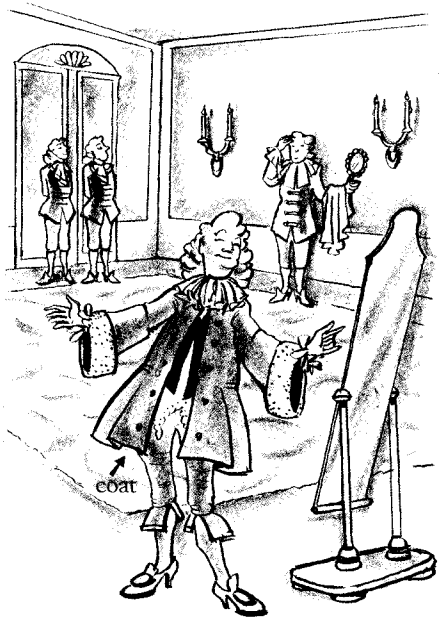
The mother wrung her hands, fell upon her knees, and prayed to Our Father, "Do not listen to me when I pray against Thy will, which is best; do not listen, do not listen!" And she bent her head in humble submission.

Then Death carried her child into the Unknown Land.

The *Emperor's* New Clothes

Many years ago there lived an emperor who spent all of his money on new clothes. He did not care about his *soldiers*, or about the theatre, or about anything else. All he wanted to do was to *show off* his new clothes.

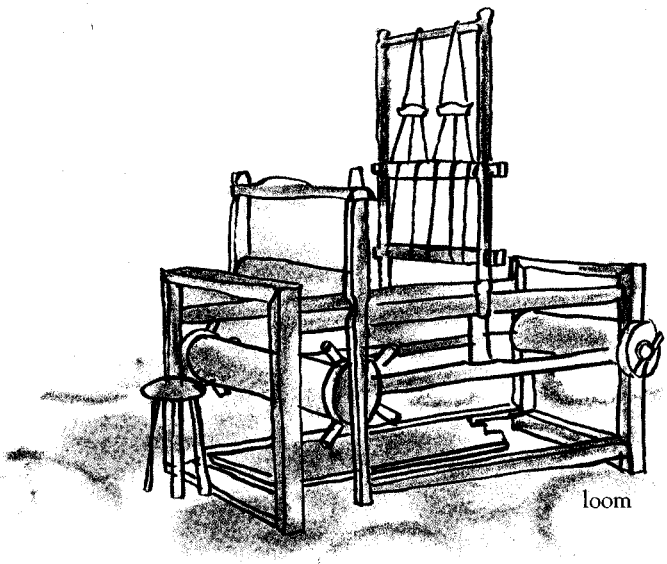
The emperor had a different *coat* for every hour of the day. When people came to see him, his ministers never said, »The emperor is in a meeting«, they always said, »The emperor is changing his clothes.«



emperor, a very powerful and important man (like a king)
soldier, someone who fights wars
show off, show people how wonderful or great you are

One day two men arrived in the city where the emperor lived. They told everyone they were *weavers* and that they could *weave* the finest *cloth* in the world. The colours and the patterns of the cloth were very beautiful, they said. But the cloth was also *invisible* to anyone who was not fit for his job or who was very *stupid*!

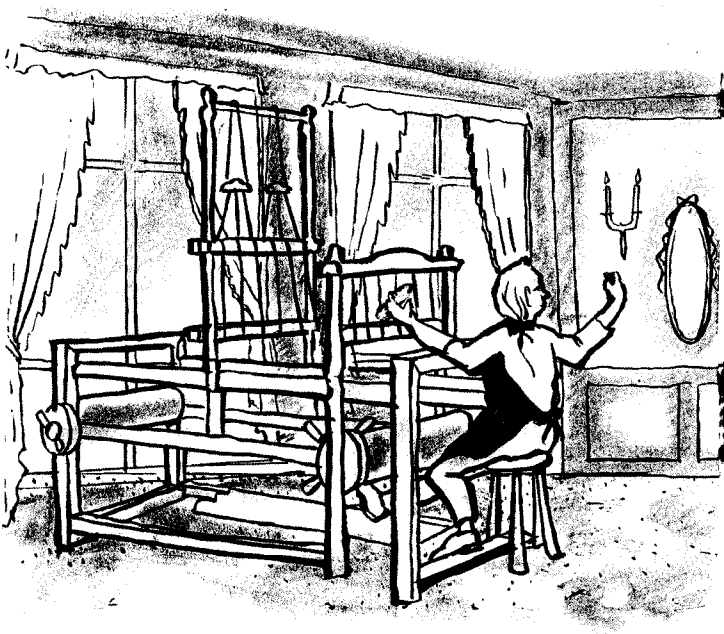
»Oh, that would be great!« thought the emperor when he heard about the two weavers. »If I wore clothes made of this cloth, I would be able to find out


loom

weaver, someone who makes cloth
weave, make cloth on a loom, see picture, page 20/21
cloth, the material that clothes are made of
invisible, impossible to see
stupid, not clever

if any of my ministers are not fit for their jobs. I would be able to tell who was stupid and who was clever. Yes, I've got to have these weavers make some new clothes for me!«

And so the emperor gave the two men money and asked them to start weaving the cloth for him right away. The weavers set up their *looms* and asked the emperor for gold and *silk* for the cloth. But they did not put any of it on their looms. Instead, they put it in their own *pockets* and *pretended* to start working on their empty looms.



silk, a very fine cloth (made by silk worms)
pocket, a part of your clothes that you can keep things in
pretend, act as if you are doing something without really doing it

»I wonder how far they have got with the cloth,« said the emperor after a few days. But he was afraid to go and visit the weavers himself. What if he was not able to see the cloth they were weaving? Everyone in the city had heard about the cloth and wanted to find out who was stupid and who was clever. How could he be sure that he was clever enough to see the cloth? The emperor decided it was better to send his oldest minister to visit the two weavers. »He is very good at his job, so he will surely be able to see the cloth they are weaving.«

So the old minister went to the two weavers, who were sitting at their empty looms pretending to work very hard.

»My goodness!« he thought when he saw the looms. »I can't see anything at all!«

The two weavers pointed to their looms. »Do you like the colours and the patterns of our cloth?«

The minister closed and opened his eyes several times, but still he could not see anything. »Am I really that stupid?« he asked himself. »Well, nobody must know about this!«

»Oh, how lovely!« he said to the weavers. »Those colours! And those patterns! I will tell the emperor right away that I like it very much!«

»Oh, we are so happy that you like it,« said the two weavers. »Could you ask the emperor for more silk and gold? As you can see for yourself, it is very *expensive* to make this very fine cloth.«

»Yes, yes, of course,« said the minister and *hurried* back to the emperor to tell him the wonderful news.

A few days later, the emperor sent another one of his ministers to find out how the work was going. The minister looked and looked at the looms, but he could not see anything either. »I am not stupid,« he thought to himself, »therefore I must not be fit for my job. Nobody must find out about this!« And so he said to the weavers, »The cloth is really wonderful!«

»Won't you come over and feel it?« one of the weavers asked. »It is really fine.«

»Oh, yes,« said the minister and pretended to feel

expensive, costing a lot of money, not cheap
hurry, do something very quickly

the cloth. »Yes, this really is very fine.«

Now everyone in the whole city was talking about the beautiful cloth that the weavers were making for the emperor. The emperor decided that it was time for him to see the cloth himself. So he asked his *servants* to come with him to visit the two weavers.

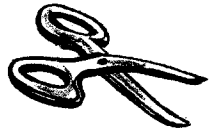
»Welcome, Your Majesty,« the weavers said. »We hope you like the colours and the patterns of the cloth we are making for you. As you can see, we are nearly finished.« They pointed to the empty looms.

»What is this!« thought the emperor as he looked at their looms. »I can't see anything at all! Am I stupid? Or am I not fit to be emperor? This is just terrible!« To the weavers he said, »Oh, it is **really** pretty! Those colours are **just** right for me.«

The emperor's servants looked down at the empty looms and could not believe their own eyes. Where was the cloth? »Oh, Your Majesty, you are right! It really is wonderful!« they said. »Your Majesty must have this lovely cloth made into clothes to show to your people.«

»Yes,« said the emperor. »I will show the clothes to my people.«

That night, the weavers worked very hard. They knew that people were *curious* and were looking in through their windows. So they pretended to take the cloth from the looms. Then they took a pair of *scissors*,



scissors

servant, someone who works in someone else's house
curious, wanting to know what is going on

held up their arms and cut through the air. They sat down and began *sewing* the cloth with an empty *needle*. Early the next morning, they jumped up and said, »Now the clothes are ready!«

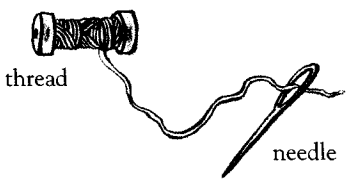
The emperor came together with his servants and his best soldiers. The two weavers held up their arms and began showing the emperor his new clothes. »See, Your Majesty, here are the *trousers*! And here is the coat! They are both so light that you will think you have nothing on. That is what is so beautiful about these clothes!«

»Oh yes, we see,« said the soldiers, who couldn't see anything at all.

»Now would Your Majesty like to take your clothes off, so you can try on these new clothes?«

The emperor took off his clothes, and the two weavers helped him put the new clothes on.

»Oh, yes,« said the emperor and turned round and round in front of the *mirror*. »These clothes fit me so well! And these colours look so good on me! Now I am



sew, use a needle and thread
trousers, what people wear on their legs
mirror, something you use to look at yourself

ready to show off my new clothes to my people!«

The emperor's servants did not dare to say anything. They pretended to pick up the ends of the emperor's coat and followed him out through the door. Then the emperor walked proudly through the streets of the city to show his new clothes to his people.

Everyone shouted, »Oh, the emperor's new clothes are so beautiful! They are the finest clothes we have

ever seen! Look how well they fit him!«

»But he isn't wearing anything!« a little boy sud-

denly shouted.

His father tried to make him be quiet, but people started looking at each other and saying, »Yes, that boy is right! The emperor isn't wearing anything!«

The emperor heard this, and he knew in his heart that the people were right. But he continued to walk slowly through the streets, showing off his fine new clothes.

https://www.google.com/search?q=the+emperor%27s+new+clothes&source=lnms&tbm=vid&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjun7Xsp479AhVPRaQEHYKCAFMQ_AUoAnoECAEQBA#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:185df3d2,vid:z9mQoJU-6I0

REFERENCES

The contents of this textbook have been reproduced from other original sources for educational purposes only. The topics covered in this course have been selected carefully so that they address the varying needs of ESL students. The selected literary readings included in this textbook are all in public domain. The major sources for this textbook are the following:

- ***Fairy Tales from Hans Christian Anderson*. Everyman's Library.**
- **Hunt, Peter, ed. *Understanding Children's Literature*. Routledge, 1999.**
- **O'Sullivan, Emer. *Historical Dictionary of Children's Literature*. The Scarecrow Press, 2010.**
- **Roald Dahl. *Revolting Rhymes***
- **Wolf. Shelby, ed. *Handbook of Research on Children's and Young Adult Literature*. Routledge, 2011.**

For further reading, students are recommended to check the following:

- **Haase, Donald. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press, 2008.**