

Children's Literature: Replica of Compassion and love for humanity

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**Article Received: 5/03/2022, Article Accepted: 15/04/2022, Published online: 17/04/2022,
DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2022.7207**

Abstract

Many people have the opinion that the definition of children's literature means those books which are determined by various authorities such as teachers, reviewers, scholars, parents, publishers, librarians, retailers, and the various book-award committees as "appropriate" for children. Parents normally have the view that their children should be kept away from the kinds of book which the adults read. It is a natural thinking as they wish to protect their children from the unhappier aspects of life. They often recommend books of fairy tales, nursery rhymes, voyages of discovery and even the lives of great personalities. In the Indian context, there are stories of Panchatantra, Betal Pachchisi, Vikram-Betal, Alladin, Ali Baba and forty thieves and many other such stories. Some parents and adults try to indulge children in the art of reading books so that they are able to shape their personality well and become self-dependent, while some like the children to increase their knowledge and awareness.

Keywords: Children's Literature, Simple and straightforward, optimistic

INTRODUCTION:

It is believed that the genre known as Children's literature started in the 17th century and before that no attention was given to the children as readers, as books were written mainly for adults. And there was less work because the printed works were too expensive for the middle class or

The lower class. But to cater the needs of the people and to make everyone read literature and to increase the markets of books, there were lots of experiments being carried out in the world of writing and then came this genre which is known as children literature. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as "a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". It is obvious that the term "Children's literature" means literature written by the children. But there are different opinions regarding children's literature as defined by many people. Some people views that books are written by children, some people says that books are written for children, some have the opinion that books are chosen for children, and other says that books are chosen by children. So, it is difficult to say that, who is right or wrong? But we can say that there

are many views and definitions regarding children's literature.

But another opinion says that children's literature is usually understood to comprise books intentionally written for children to read. As Nancy Anderson, Associate Professor in the College of Education at the University of South Florida in Tampa defines children's literature as: all books written for children, "excluding works such as comic books, joke books, cartoon books, and nonfiction works that are not intended to be read from front to back, such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias', and other reference material. So, according to Nancy Anderson, we can say that works like J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series can be termed as Children literature. But we see that some of this work is also very popular among adults. Although J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series was originally written keeping in mind for the amusement and entertainment of the children but it is entertaining adults also. It was marketed only for children, but it was so popular among children and adults that The New York Times created a separate bestseller list for it.

There are Classic British novels like Tom's Midnight Garden (Philippa Pearce, 1958 and Jessamy (Barbara Sleigh, 1967). In the Classic British novels, the responsibility is enhanced by isolating the child not just spatially, but in time, through the use of time slip. Another writer, Arthur Ransome used the device of children acting for themselves extensively in his Swallows and Amazons series (1930-48) and included

poignant discussion of it (the "duffer" question in Swallows and Amazons and Swallow dele).

Children are more or less inclined towards books such as comics, which is not considered as literature in the traditional sense. They prefer those literary classics and recognized great works by modern writers. And they also often enjoy stories which speak on multiple levels. Alice Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carol is the story which is written for both adults and children. Someone who had enjoyed reading it as a child can come back to the text as an adult and see the darker themes that were lost on them as younger readers. Even the classic like Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was originally intended for an adult audience, but now it has become so popular among schoolchildren that it is even prescribed in the syllabus around the globe and is considered as a remarkable work for children. There are some others examples also of many classic books that were originally intended for adults are now commonly thought of as works for children.

As children's literature is defined as opposite to adult literature in terms of age, so we can categorise it according to age-group and further into sub-division due to the divergent interests of children age 0-18. But the criteria for these divisions are vague, and books near a borderline may be classified either way. It is so because at different age, the interests, knowledge and understanding level of a child is different. So, keeping all these in mind, books are

being written for them. As the child is younger, so the language simpler with large print and illustrations and as for elder children the language becomes a little complex, with normal print and fewer or no illustrations.

Children's books are mostly made beautiful, lavish and attractive with illustrations and other materials so that children are fascinated and attracted towards it this thing is rarely used in adult literature. Japan, Korea and France are exception in this case as there is popularity of illustrated novel genre. It is generally believed that the artwork plays a greater role in books intended for the youngest readers i.e. children. And as such children's picture books can be a cognitively accessible source of high quality art for young children. Besides, it is also a fact that even after children attain sufficient levels of literacy to enjoy the story without illustrations, they continue to appreciate the occasional drawings found in chapter books.

The most oldest and popular material, which is the part of children's literature is folklore. It includes nursery rhymes, folktales, myths, epics, legends, fables, songs, and ballads that have been passed down by storytellers for hundreds, even thousands, of years to enlighten and entertain generations of listeners, young and old. Although, it is difficult to trace the history of any literature and specifically if it is for children to precise starting point still we can list children literature mainly for readers and listeners up to about age 12 according to the century.

Everybody around the globe has grown up listening to these stories from parents, teachers and other adults. In the 18th century in John Newbery published A Little Pretty Pocket-Book in England in 1744 John Newbery published A Little Pretty Pocket-Book in England. The interesting thing about it is that he sold it with a ball for boys or a pincushion for girls. But this became a landmark for the beginning of pleasure reading marketed specifically to children. Earlier the literature marketed for children had been intended to instruct the young, though there was a rich oral tradition of storytelling for children and adults.

In the 19th century, a remarkable thing happened in Germany, the brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm wrote down and preserved tales told by oral tradition in Germany, such as Snow White, Rapunzel, and Hansel and Gretel (1812), which are still very popular. One of the most popular writers of this century was Maria Elizabeth Budden. This century saw the rise of Russian writers like Alexander Pushkin, who was a poet and published his fairy tales in verse which were based on Russian folklore: The Tale of the Priest and of H Workman Balda (1830), The Tale of Tsar Saltan (1831). These are still a source of inspiration and motivation for other writers of children's literature and continue to be published into millions of copies and in many languages. Some of his popular tales are "The emperor's new clothes" and "ugly duckling" which have been included in the syllabus of many schools.

Lewis Carroll, the famous writer of England published his masterpiece tale, Alice's Adventure in Wonderland in 1865. It is a tale of adventure of a little girl, Alice in an imaginary land, which is very interesting for the readers and so because of this, it is very popular not only among children but among adults. This can also be termed as a fine example of the genre of literary nonsense, and this is its characteristics.

But it was Rudyard Kipling, who is credited to publish The Jungle Books in 1894, which has become so popular that it has been adapted into many animation series and films around the globe. The Jungle Book, is a collection of stories about a boy and his adventures, who lives in the jungle with animals. In the last years of the 19th century, the series of Hollow Tree books was written by Albert Bigelow Paine in 1898. He wrote the first of his three Hollow Tree books, The Hollow Tree and Deep Woods Book, which was followed by the Hollow Tree Snowed-in Book in 1901 and Hollow Tree Days and Nights in 1915. In 1899 Helen Bannerman published her work, Little Black Sambo. It is a story of a boy abused by four tigers who, at the end of the story, suffer the consequences of their abuse-melting into butter and being eaten on pancakes.

L. Frank Baum published The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in 1900, which is considered as the last work of the century in terms of children's literature. Since then, it has been constantly in print. It is considered as one of the best-known stories in

American culture and has been translated into 40 languages. The success of the series inspired Baum to write thirteen sequels. And even other authors continued theme series for decades.

The 20th Century saw the rise of many new writers and their works, starting with Beatrix Potter. He was followed by Peter Rabbit in 1920. Peter Rabbit is a story of a young rabbit that is very mischievous and disobedient. He is told not to go into his garden of McGregor, but she ventures to do so. The book is unique in its sense as it has generated considerable merchandise over the decades and somewhat now also since its release with toys, dishes, foods, clothing, videos, and other products made available.

There have lot of work is going on in the field of children's literature, not only in England but also in other European countries like France as in 1931; Jean de Brunhoff published Histoire de Babar, which is the French edition of the first of seven Babar the elephant stories, which has already been popular in English. The title of the English version, which was The Story of Babar was earlier published in Britain and also in the United States in 1933.

It was C. S. Lewis who published the first of instalment of his Chronicles of Narnia series in the UK in 1950. The Chronicles of Narnia is considered as masterpiece as it has been sold over 120 million copies in 41 languages. Not only this, its popularity can be seen by the fact

that it has been adapted several times, for other means of entertainment i.e. radio, television, stage, and cinema. The reason behind its popularity is that in addition to numerous traditional Christian themes, the series borrow characters and ideas from Greek and Roman mythology, as well as from traditional British and Irish fairy tales.

Children's literature is also a source of techniques used by the teachers and adults all around the world to guide, motivate and inspire children. It has been used by good teachers to augment classroom instruction providing a meaning-centred application for one of education's richest resources-children's literature. So, teachers should introduce fiction to young readers, by using a children's literature, which is an effective means to introduce the parts of a story to students (characters, setting, plot, introduction, theme, and conclusion). This can result in the easy learning for the students as they will take much interest in it. Moreover, the task of the teacher will also be easy to give them knowledge and make them aware of everything.

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