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## THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND ITS VALUE FOR YOUNG GENERATION

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### Abstract

The article specifically focused on theoretical background of children's literature, its importance in the development and formation of children's personality in modern society, and analyzes the history of the emergence of children's literature.

**Keywords:** children's literature, genres, children's books, characteristics, literary features, folklore, oral tradition, psychological aspects, british literature

### Introduction

Children's literature plays significant role in the formation of young generation. It has great influence on children from both educational and behavioral sides. Reading literary books supports students to learn about past and cultural heritage, increase communicative skills, broad horizon of thinking and teaches problem solving skills. Children's literature is one of the most important type of literature in Europe that includes stories, books, magazines, and poems that are created for children. Its formation and development, subject to general typological patterns, is in many respects similar to the formation of such children's literature as Russian and French, but at the same time it is also endowed with certain specific national features. The term consists images of baby books, predictable plots and basic illustrations or particular reading levels, the purified stories, stripped of real life in order to pass the scrutiny of state textbook selection committees and school boards.

### Methods.

Modern children's literature is classified in two different directions: genre or the intended age of the reader, from picture books for the kids to young adult fiction. Children's literature has been shaped by religious sources, like Puritan traditions, or by more philosophical and scientific standpoints with the influences of Charles Darwin and John Locke. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are famous and known as the "Golden Age of Children's Literature" because many classic children's books were published in this period. There is no single or widely



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used definition of children's literature. Early children's literature consisted of spoken stories, songs, and poems, used to educate, instruct, and entertain children.<sup>1</sup> It was only in the eighteenth century, with the development of the concept of childhood, that a separate genre of children's literature began to emerge, with its own divisions, expectations, and canon.<sup>2</sup> The earliest of these books were educational books, books on conduct, and simple ABCs—often decorated with animals, plants, and anthropomorphic letters.<sup>3</sup>

### Results and Discussion

Children's literature does not exist without its great history and sources, the roots of which lead the reader to folklore, to the mighty literature of the 18th-19th centuries. Known as the combination of old and new, realistic and fantastic gives English children's literature its unique originality. The younger generation needs to read and study fairy tales not only to develop their horizons and moral education, but also to study the history of their people through fairy tales that are passed down from generation to generation. Folk and literary fairy tales structurally form a single genre, forming a genre tradition.

Children's books are critical to child development, especially at preschool ages. Children have had limited engagement in social contexts at this age. Reading books will help them to prepare for future social interactions and real-life situations because reading helps language, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Children's books increase language development by introducing new vocabulary and helping children to learn about using language in context.<sup>[178]</sup> Children are also exposed to various words and sentence structures when reading. Moreover, children's books enhance children's cognitive development in memory, attention, and imagination. Reading allows them to relate to their experience and understanding to make meaning of the sensory message, which is how the brain understands the world around them.<sup>4</sup> Children's books also benefit children's social and emotional

<sup>1</sup> "To Instruct and Delight A History of Children's Literature". Random History. Archived from the original on July 15, 2012. Retrieved July 16, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Nikolajeva, María, ed. (1995). *Aspects and Issues in the History of Children's Literature*. Greenwood. ISBN 978-0-313-29614-7.

<sup>3</sup> Lyons, Martyn. 2011. *Books: a living history*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum.

<sup>4</sup> McDonald Connor, Carol (2016). *The cognitive development of reading and reading comprehension*. New York, NY. ISBN 9781317439530.



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development. Reading books help "personal development and self-understanding by presenting situations and characters with which our own can be compared".<sup>5</sup> Children's books often present topics that children can relate to, such as love, empathy, family affection, and friendship. Reading those books helps children to understand emotion and helps them transfer their learning to social contexts.

Children's literature is important for child development, supported by various theories. The socialization perspective suggests that children adopt the behaviors and language of their culture, making home literacy activities crucial for language acquisition and development. The interactionist theory of language acquisition emphasizes the role of the learner's innate ability and language environment, with folk literature serving as a valuable tool in improving phonological, syntactical, and semantic outputs. Additionally, children's literature contributes to the general development of the child, including spiritual, cognitive, linguistic, and emotional maturation, as well as aesthetic cultivation and expressive ability. It also plays a significant role in the formation of the child's character and helps them cope with difficult situations, such as the challenges posed by the pandemic. Overall, children's literature provides information, values, and culture, while encouraging critical and reflective thinking, making it essential for cognitive, social, affective, and linguistic aspects of child education.

Developmental theories on children's growth through childhood and adolescence to adulthood based on children's literature.

Erikson's developmental model describes a series of five levels characterised by psychosocial crises, which individuals must successfully resolve for them to mature to the next level. Of prime importance in resolving these conflicts are adults who care for the child and the interactions in which they are involved.

Characteristics:

- Children are increasingly able to care for themselves and their possessions.
- They develop the ability to realize that others may be in opposition to their behavior.
- Guilt may result in resolution of the conflict.
- Play can be categorized in two general forms:
  - solitary and dreaming and interaction with others in the form of enacting life.

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<sup>5</sup> Marriott, Stuart (1991). Picture books in the primary classroom. London: Chapman. ISBN 1853961442.



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- This enables them to think about their future as well as their present roles. Enjoy literature where characters experience conflict with others and their actions and motivations are communicated.

Kohlberg's theory is divided into three levels with two stages per level. Each stage is slightly more complex and more effective than the prior. As children, adolescents, and adults, assume more responsibility they may progress through the six levels. People understand their present stage, all below, and the one immediately above. They may revert to lower stages during stressful times. If a teacher or person in authority uses a control strategy at a level below the student's current level, the student will feel humiliated and may regress to that level. Essentially all good literature deals with values and can play a role in value formation. To do so requires situations that put the characters into conflict with the values of society and slightly above the current level of the reader/viewer to provide readers opportunities to compare and contrast their values against values of the characters that they admire. Maslow was concerned with how people develop their identity and humanness. He believed people develop their identity as they have their needs met and those needs formed a hierarchy, from the lowest, basic physical needs to highest, self-actualization. For example, a hungry child will not develop much intellectual curiosity. Lower level physical needs (hunger amount them) must be reasonably well satisfied before any individual will attend to higher levels intellectual curiosity. Hierarchy of Needs Levels from lower to higher:

1. Physical needs,
2. Safety needs,
3. Belonging & love,
4. Esteem and feeling of being recognized, and
5. Striving for self-actualization or to reach one's best physical, social, and emotional ability. (need to know), aesthetic needs (need for beauty), social (need to be among others), and emotional (need for success and mental well being).

Knowing Maslow's Hierarchy of needs helps to understand literature; as good authors tell stories that are plausible and realistic because their characters are based on real life people who develop as Maslow observed. Therefore, knowing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs will help understand character traits, character development, how plots unfold, different themes included in stories and other characteristics, which will help you to better appreciate quality literature.



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