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Protecting Innocence and Navigating Reality

A Critical Analysis of Adult Influence on Three Classic Children's Books

Master's thesis in Language Studies with Teacher Education, years 8 - 13

Supervisor: Rhonna Robbins-Sponaas

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To those who had faith in me when I could not,

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1 Exploring the Context of Children's Literature: An Introduction

The notion that good behavior in childhood is associated with good behavior in adulthood is a widely held belief. Good behavior can be traced back to the evolution of homo sapiens. We moved away from the hunter-gatherer lifestyle and into a more collective lifestyle where everyone must contribute, or at least a majority must contribute. If most people only received goods from the collective without lending a helping hand, the entire system would collapse. One way to teach children to behave by the values and expectations of society is through children's literature. In *Reading Children's Literature: A Critical Introduction* (2019), Carrie Hintz and Eric L. Tribunella define *didactic* as "a text or passage that explicitly teaches a lesson, whether moral, political, religious, social, or practical" (552). Didacticism remains a central characteristic of children's literature, with many literary works teaching lessons related to desire, knowledge, and the notion of home as a safe haven. The prevalence of didacticism in the genre, combined with storytelling, allows society to convey its norms and values to a young and impressionable audience, shaping their perspectives and guiding them on their path to becoming responsible and informed citizens.

Children's literature has expanded and evolved with time, with didacticism and innovation as two pillars of the genre. Hintz points out that the genre is innovative by "experimenting with forms and themes, by playing with conventions and expectations, and by taking chances in using words and images in literary and artistic ways" (37). There are examples of the innovative range of the genre in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Before Carroll, people viewed didactic children's books as a form of entertainment. However, with Carroll's creative use of language, he elevated the genre beyond its didactic commitment and transformed it into something that enhanced the entertainment value. The balance between didacticism and innovation has allowed children's literature to maintain its relevance and importance in shaping young minds. While it continues to teach important lessons, it also offers imaginative and engaging experiences for readers. Children's literature remains a dynamic and evolving genre, constantly pushing the boundaries of what is possible, and continuing to captivate young readers across generations.

Children acquire and mimic behaviors through observation and attentive listening. In children's literature, the young reader witnesses the protagonist's actions and their consequences, whether they are positive or negative. Actions that society has disapproved of and deemed undesirable will be referred to as negative behavior, such as causing others harm, stealing, and being untruthful, to name a few. On the other side of the spectrum, positive behavior is behavior that society wants to reinforce, such as kindness, politeness, and more historical behaviors, such as being modest. These behaviors are based on *societal norms*, which are unwritten rules and expectations that dictate how individuals should behave in a particular society or culture. The collective lifestyle of our society today is built upon the idea of shared norms and values, and negative behaviors are seen as violations of these norms and values.

Children acquire knowledge about the actions of others and the outcomes that arise from those actions (Rymanowicz). However, Rymanowicz points out that observing a particular conduct does not always imply that a child will replicate it. There is an agreement among researchers that children's literature is beneficial for learning in general. Several researchers agree that children's literature can be used as a guidance tool for positive behavior (Lacina & Stetson), second language learning (Bland & Lütge), or developing other essential skills such as social and cultural skills (Harris), among other things. Children's literature has the potential to influence children's behavior, but it is crucial to recognize that children progressively develop the mental capacity to make autonomous decisions on whether or not to imitate the observed behaviors. Therefore, children's literature can serve as an effective tool for learning, but it cannot be considered a single definitive solution to foster desired behavior.

Children's literature has been and is continuously affected by how we view children. One can argue that adults created children's literature based on their perceptions of what children need, want, and should be exposed to. Consequently, adults primarily control children's literature. As society's attitudes towards children change, so do the themes and messages conveyed in children's literature. The changes include what information is deemed appropriate for children to learn and what topics should be shielded from them, reflecting the societal values of the time (Hunt, *Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*). The idea that adults should be the ones to select, sensor, and serve information is prevalent in children's literature. Therefore, society's impact on children's literature can be observed through the changing views of childhood throughout history.

Hintz and Tribunella offer a comprehensive historical overview of how childhood was perceived from the 13th to the 20th century, tracing how attitudes towards children and their societal status have undergone notable transformations in the Western world. During the period spanning from the 13th to the 17th century, society generally regarded children as miniature versions of adults (54). Children were treated as adults and expected to act like adults. During the 17th century, children were widely regarded as pure and innocent beings, often idealized and romanticized (43). To illustrate this perception, consider the popular paintings of the time that depicted children as angelic figures, with cherubic faces and ethereal qualities. These portrayals exemplified the prevailing notion of the "romantic child," as a symbol of purity and untainted goodness. In contrast, Puritan theology painted the picture of "the sinful child". The sinful child included a widespread belief that all children are born with inherent corruption due to Adam and Eve's original sin. According to this belief, children are highly vulnerable to temptation and easily influenced by wickedness (46). Puritan paintings and illustrations of children often depicted them engaged in activities that demonstrated their moral virtue, such as praying, reading the Bible, or helping with chores around the house. These depictions could be seen as representative of the Puritan belief that all humans are born sinful and must strive towards moral purity through good deeds and constant self-reflection.

The perception of children as economically valuable sources was common in the 17th century and persisted to the late 19th century. During this time period, children were frequently utilized for physical labor and perceived as an essential contributor to the family's

income. Mandatory education laws were implemented in the UK with the Elementary Education Act in 1870. This law established a national system of elementary education, making school attendance compulsory for all children between the ages of five and thirteen (Simon 2010). Despite the Act, many children still did not attend school regularly due to poverty or long distances to schools. The significance of this observation lies in the fact that socioeconomic circumstances played a pivotal role in determining children's access to education. As a result, many children from poor and working-class families continued to work and live on the streets of England even after the Act was passed.

In 1916, the Privy Council of England received a request from the Virginia Company to send able-bodied workers. The City of London declared that street children would be sent to work in the Americas, and if they resisted, they would be imprisoned and punished (Hintz 48). Subsequently, legislative measures were implemented throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries to prohibit children's exploitation as laborers in factories and fields. Although the Elementary Education Act of 1870 mandated that all children should receive an education, it took some time for this to become a reality for every child. These legislative measures began a change by removing children from the workforce (Hintz 49-50).

Over time, children stopped being viewed as a source of economic stability, and became sacred, precious, and fragile beings instead. Parents became worried about their children's safety and would use them as a source of emotional reward (Hintz 51). An example of this is when adults link a child's accomplishment and success to bolster their own self-esteem. The post-industrial period is seen as one of the most drastic changes in views on childhood and children as they went from being viewed as expendable labor and a source of income to becoming sentimental objects that cost parents money (Hintz 48). There have been multiple shifts in how society perceive children and childhood, leading to the recognition that children possess distinct qualities that set them apart from adults and that childhood is a distinct stage of human development characterized by growth and maturation into adulthood.

Given our understanding of childhood as a distinct phase of human development, it is essential to examine how children's literature as a genre addresses its didactic role in educating and shaping children's perceptions. The history of literature for children strongly emphasizes didactic elements (Nodelman). Parents used instructional texts to teach their children etiquette and morals by reading to them. With the industrial revolution, education shifted towards preparing young people for factory work, emphasizing practical skills such as reading and writing (Grenby). This shift in education led to increased literacy rates among children and a surge in the production of children's literature (Carpenter; Darton).

Before the industrial revolution, several fictional works for children included fantastical and entertaining elements, such as *The Fables of Aesop*, published in 1484, and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift. Because of the industrial revolution, the market expanded exponentially with high demand and low costs of producing books, leading to the inclusion of more pleasurable elements in children's literature alongside the didactic ones (Darton). The rise of literature in this period was aimed at an ever-widening audience, reducing the importance of readers with enough education and leisure to take a professional or semi-professional interest in classical and modern literature (Watts 48).

Today's children's literature strikes a balance between didactic elements and engaging storylines (Hunt, *Introduction to Children's Lit.*), reflecting changes in readers' expectations and the evolution of the market. The language is more straightforward than adult literature, with illustrations complementing the text. Moreover, children's literature often features young protagonists and relevant plots (Nikolajeva, *Children's Literature: New Aesthetic*). These changes reflect a shift in literature for children, making it more accessible and enjoyable for young readers. Consequently, despite being less valued by the educated elite, more accessible and uncomplicated forms of literature gained popularity among a wider audience during the post-industrial period (Watts 48).

Children's literature is complex, and to understand its ability to engage child and adult readers, three key concepts should be examined: *doubleness*, *double code systems*, and *dual address*. Nodelman defines *doubleness* as using literary techniques such as wordplay and allusions to create a text that engages both child and adult readers in separate ways (179-187). The use of *doubleness* can be through simple language and rhyming schemes that appeal to children while incorporating complex puns and cultural references likely to be understood only by adults.

Similarly, Nikolajeva's concept of *double code systems* focuses on using semiotic systems composed of cultural codes such as language, symbolism, and imagery, in creating a text that can be interpreted in multiple ways by different readers ("Cultural Code" 39). Semiotic systems are used to communicate meaning within a particular culture or society. These codes are dynamic and constantly change over time.

Double code systems and semiotic systems are related concepts but are not the same. A double code system relies on the interaction and interplay between two semiotic systems. To fully grasp the meaning of a message conveyed through a double code system, one must be able to analyze and interpret the signs and symbols used in both semiotic systems.

For example, in a children's book that uses both written text and illustrations to tell a story, understanding the meaning of the images is as important as understanding the meaning of the words. A reader who is not familiar with the visual language used in the illustrations may miss important aspects of the story or interpret it differently than intended. Therefore, a thorough understanding of semiotic systems is necessary to analyze and interpret the multiple layers of meaning conveyed through a double code system.

Likewise, Wall introduces the term *dual address*, which refers to literary works for children that move between addressing child and adult readers (Wall in Hintz 32). In contrast to the common perception that children's literature is simplistic and straightforward, several literary scholars have demonstrated the intricate and multi-faceted nature of this genre. All these concepts emphasize the complexity and richness of children's literature, which can engage readers of all ages through multiple perspectives and codes. These concepts demonstrate that children's literature can be understood by different age groups on multiple levels and can emerge from unexpected sources.

Children's books that amuse adults can be seen as examples of the duality that Nodelman, Nikolajeva, and Wall describe. Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is full

of wordplay and social commentary that readers of all ages can appreciate. Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* (1943) has simple language and fairy-tale-like quality, making it accessible to young readers. At the same time, the book's deeper themes, such as love, the meaning of life, and the loss of innocence, can be appreciated on a more intellectual level. *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) was a literary work intended for an adult audience, but it gained readership among young readers as well. In brief, the duality in literature, particularly in children's literature, enhances its multi-layered complexity by allowing for multiple interpretations and understandings of the text.

The concept of *binary oppositions* in children's literature is one example of how children's literature has evolved and been utilized to convey important messages to young readers. Binary oppositions in children's literature are based on the idea that many children's books present a world divided into opposing concepts or values (Nodelman). For example, the opposition between "home" and "away" is a common theme in children's literature. Many stories involve a character leaving their familiar home environment and embarking on a journey or adventure in an unfamiliar place. This opposition creates a sense of tension between the safety and comfort of home and the excitement and uncertainty of the unknown.

Similarly, the opposition between "safety" and "danger" is another common theme in children's literature. Many stories involve a character facing and overcoming dangerous or challenging situations through courage and resourcefulness. This opposition teaches children the importance of facing their fears and taking risks to grow and develop. Nodelman also discusses the opposition between "adult" and "child," often used in children's literature to represent the conflict between authority and independence. Many stories involve a young protagonist who must rebel against the rules and expectations of adults to assert their own identity and autonomy.

Nevertheless, Nodelman argues that binary oppositions which involve dividing the world into two opposing categories or concepts, such as "good" versus "evil" or "us" versus "them", may present issues by oversimplifying complex matters and overlook the nuances and variations of reality (230). Instead, they provide a simplified, preconceived notion of how the world operates, which can lead to rigid thinking, stereotyping, and exclusion of individuals or groups who do not fit neatly into these binary categories.

Making information understandable and relatable to children is essential. However, it is also important to challenge them with new ideas and concepts. By presenting binary opposition, children can develop a basic framework for understanding and categorizing the world they live in. Combining the use of binary oppositions with age-appropriate language and context for complex concepts, while also encouraging children to ask questions, scaffolds children's learning. Contrasting concepts can also be a storytelling device to create tension and conflict within a narrative. The struggle between opposing forces can provide a sense of drama and excitement that can capture a child's attention and hold their interest.

Nodelman states that "adult perceptions of what children like or need shape the literature that adults provide for children in ways that provide it with distinct markers that allow it to be identified as a genre" (188). Other scholars have also voiced critical opinions

about authorship and voice in children's literature (Ní Bhroin & Kennon; Joosen). The voice of the author in children's literature is a clear indicator of the person responsible for determining what young readers should be exposed to, what they might find engaging, and how that content should be presented. Whether communicated explicitly or implicitly, the author's voice stands out as a significant marker in children's literature.

Authorial bias, unconsciously or consciously including one's biases and perspectives in writing, can be problematic in any text or genre. In the case of children's books, which are often written by adults, authorial bias may have a significant impact on how young readers perceive the world. Children who have not yet fully developed critical thinking or analytical skills may be influenced by the perspectives and experiences of the author. Consequently, authorial bias can impact how children perceive the world and their place in it.

Such biases can manifest in various ways, including the choice of themes, characters, and language used in children's books. Books may perpetuate gender stereotypes or present limited representations of diverse communities, cultures, and experiences due to the presence of adult bias. For instance, Dr. Seuss, a beloved children's author, has been criticized for perpetuating racist and harmful stereotypes in some of his works, such as in *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* (1937) and *If I Ran the Zoo* (1950) (Chen). These books, written in the 1930s and 1950s respectively, depict people of color using caricatures and reinforce tropes we recognize as harmful today.

The impact of authorial biases in children's literature is closely related to the issue of censorship, as the presence of certain themes or messages in books may be seen as inappropriate or harmful by some individuals or groups. *Censorship* can be defined as "a change in the access status of material based on the content of the work and made by a governing authority or its representatives" (The Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association (ALA), 106). This definition of censorship mainly centers on the withdrawal of access to specific texts, which can create more interest in these works as they become seen as "forbidden fruit."

However, the ALA's definition of censorship does not consider the process of censoring some texts by selecting other texts to highlight and advertise. This definition limitation is addressed by Kenneth Kidd, who challenges the established critical viewpoint on censorship and selection. Kidd argues that censorship can be viewed as selection and not only as a means of restricting access to certain ideas (Kidd in Hintz 480).

Hintz agrees with Kidd that selection is arguably a form of censorship (480). While the ALA's definition of censorship may be more narrow, censorship can also refer to any attempt to limit or suppress information or ideas, whether it is done by a government, organization, or individual. In children's literature, censorship can occur through the decisions made by parents, teachers, librarians, publishers, and others who control what books children have access to.

Selection is a powerful method for adults to steer children towards reading material that aligns with the preferences of adults rather than children's interests. Adults may have various reasons for censoring or restricting children's access to certain types of literature,

such as religious or political beliefs, social norms, or a desire to protect children from potentially harmful content. On the other hand, children have unique interests and preferences in what they want to read, which may not always align with adults' priorities. When exploring the issue of censorship in children's literature, it is important to consider the different motivations of adults who select children's books versus what children seek in books. The potential for censorship arises when these two perspectives clash. If adults prioritize their motivations over what children seek in books, this may lead to a lack of diversity and representation in children's literature—as a result, suppressing valuable and challenging ideas that can broaden a child's perspective. The issue of censorship and selection in children's literature highlights the pervasive role that adults play in shaping what children read and the potential for this interference to have a harmful impact on young readers.

Another perspective is that leaving children to select their literature may not necessarily expose them to diverse or challenging perspectives. They may also choose texts that are too advanced for them or even harmful. The selection of literature by adults allows for customization of themes and messages to match a child's age and experience level, which can enhance their understanding of complex issues. While it is important to consider children's interests and perspectives when selecting literature, adults can also play a valuable role in guiding children towards books that challenge and expand their worldview.

The paradox of wanting to educate children while also wanting to protect them is a fundamental tension in children's literature. On the one hand, children's books are meant to educate children and prepare them for the challenges of the world they will eventually face as they grow up. This education often involves the exposure to complex themes and issues that may be difficult for children to understand, but which are necessary for them to navigate the world as adults.

On the other hand, children's literature is also meant to protect children's innocence. Many adults believe that children should be sheltered from the harsh realities of the world, at least until they are old enough to understand them. This belief has led to the creation of children's books that present idealized and sanitized versions of the world, in which children are shielded from the darker aspects of human nature.

The paradox arises because these two goals can sometimes be at odds with each other. While adults want to educate children, they may also be concerned about exposing them to topics or themes that are considered inappropriate for their age. For example, adults may want to educate children about death, but worry that discussing the topic could upset or frighten them. This can lead to a tug-of-war between the desire to educate and the desire to protect children's innocence.

The theme of safety further adds to the paradox, as adults create the notion of "home" as a sanctuary. Adults encourage knowledge among children and simultaneously safeguard them from information that adults deem dangerous. The assumption is that children require adult guidance to stay safe and that if they venture into the dangerous world, they can always return to the safety of their homes. However, this notion is problematic as many homes are not safe, perpetuating an ideal while also weaponizing

innocence by presenting home as the only safe haven. This theme is significant as it serves as an example of how the representation of adults in children's literature can be detrimental.

The theme of innocence plays a significant role in shaping children's perspectives and relationships with the world as adults strive to provide education and protection through the literature they consume. According to Nodelman, innocence can be understood in two distinct ways. The first refers to a lack of knowledge or experience, where the child is shielded from the negative perceptions and ills of the world, and their minds remain uncorrupted. This notion of innocence has been used in children's literature to create an idealized world where the child is protected from the world's harsh realities. The second way of understanding innocence is as wisdom. In contrast to the traditional definition of wisdom as insights and decision-making based on knowledge and experience, innocence as wisdom is a romanticized notion that perceives the world through a lens of purity and lack of bias. In this sense, innocence is not merely a lack of negative knowledge but a positive and idealized way of seeing the world.

Transitioning from examining the nature and issues affiliated with children's literature, the focus of this thesis aims to explore the evolution of the children's literature genre, examine the didactic approach to educating and protecting children through literature, and the impact of authorial biases on the messages conveyed in selected works. Chapter two focuses on *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) by John Bunyan, examining its significance and influence on the children's literature genre and how it reflects the didactic approach of the time. Chapter three explores *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) by Lewis Carroll, analyzing its impact on the genre and how it challenged traditional didacticism through its whimsical and nonsensical narrative. Chapter four delves into *The Little Prince* (1943) by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, examining its relevance in the genre's evolution and how it reflects a shift towards a more philosophical approach to teaching children through literature. Chapter five will combine the previous chapters' findings and discuss how *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and *The Little Prince* connect to the genre's focus on educating and protecting children. The final chapter will also explore the authorial biases identified within these three children's books and how they have influenced the messages and themes presented in the works.

2 From Allegory to Reality: An Analysis of *The Pilgrim's Progress*

John Bunyan was born in 1628 and experienced a spiritual crisis after having served as a soldier during the English Civil War. He then joined an independent church in his hometown of Bedford, England and began preaching shortly after. Alongside preaching, Bunyan also began a literary career that he continued even after being imprisoned for his refusal to stop preaching. He wrote much of *The Pilgrim's Progress* while imprisoned in Bedfordshire and published it in 1678. Since then, the book has never gone out of print and is the second most-read book after the Bible. *The Pilgrim's Progress* was mainly published for an adult readership but became "established as a classic book for children" in the 18th and 19th centuries (Hahn, "Introduction" xiii).

The story follows the protagonist, Christian, on his pilgrimage from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City in search of salvation. After reading a book, Christian shares a significant burden with his family, "I am for certain informed that this our city will be burned with fire from Heaven" (10). Unable to ease himself of the burden of foresight and without his family's support, Christian leaves the City of Destruction and his family behind. In Christian's mind, the only way to escape evil and certain ruin was to travel to the Celestial City, where "an endless Kingdom to be inhabited, and everlasting life to be given us" (15).

Christian faces numerous obstacles during his journey and encounters individuals who try to lure him into making sinful choices. Amidst these challenges, he meets a fellow traveler named Faithful, who has also departed from the City of Destruction and joins Christian on his pilgrimage. Through their commitment to being good Christians, Christian and Faithful are able to resist temptation and avoid falling into sins such as pride, envy, and pursuit of worldly pleasures. Even when faced with dangerous terrain and mystical beings, Christian and Faithful prevail and continue their journey. During their visit to the City of Vanity, Faithful is executed for allegedly mocking the local religion, and in his death, he rises to Heaven as a martyr. Leaving the City of Vanity, Christian is accompanied by a local, Hopeful, who converts from the local religion to Christianity. After a long and strenuous journey the pilgrimage comes to an end as Christian and Hopeful arrive at the Celestial City, where they are greeted with open arms by its inhabitants and by God.

As a Christian allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress* follows a fictional narrative on the surface, while there is a hidden message below the surface of the story. The hidden message is about the cost of salvation and the pilgrimage through life for the Christian audience. The book reflects the social and religious upheavals of 17th-century England, providing a glimpse into the religious tensions that existed at the time. Bunyan uses allegory to convey complex religious and moral ideas in an accessible and engaging way, seeking to educate his readers on the importance of living a virtuous life and avoiding temptation. The book attempts to teach desirable values such as piety, humility, and perseverance. Its enduring popularity suggests that these values continue to resonate with readers today, making it a classic book for children and a staple in the English literary canon. *The Pilgrim's Progress* serves as a reminder of the lasting power of literature to capture the cultural climate of its time and provide insights into the human experience.

The longevity of *The Pilgrim's Progress* can be attributed to its effective use of allegory. The story uses physical places and characters to convey symbolic meanings, specifically through their names. The characters' names and the names of places in the story often say something concrete about their nature or function in the allegory. For example, the protagonist is named Christian, which reflects his identity as a Christian pilgrim. The Valley of the Shadow of Death is a treacherous valley that Christian must pass through on his journey to the Celestial City. The valley's name reflects its function as a symbol of the spiritual trials and challenges that Christians must face to reach salvation. Similarly, Vanity is a city where worldly pleasures and materialism are celebrated. The city's name reflects its function as a symbol of secular society's sinful and superficial nature. Bunyan's use of allegory creates a narrative rich in symbolic meaning and invites readers to engage with complex ideas and abstract concepts. The symbolic names and places make these ideas accessible and engaging for readers. The allegorical elements in the story allow readers to explore universal themes of human experience, such as temptation, sin, and redemption, in a way that is relatable and thought-provoking for its contemporary audience.

Despite the many benefits of using allegorical names and settings in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, there are potential downsides that may not be well-received by modern society and audiences. One of the main concerns is the heavy didacticism of the narrative, where the story primarily serves as a vehicle for conveying a particular set of moral or religious teachings. The considerable emphasis on didactic instruction in the text can make the story feel forced or preachy, potentially limiting reader engagement. Additionally, the use of allegory requires a certain level of familiarity with the religious or moral teachings that are conveyed, which may alienate modern readers who do not share the author's worldview or values.

The evolution of readers' expectations for fiction is vital when analyzing the enduring popularity of books like *The Pilgrim's Progress*. What was once deemed acceptable and desirable in literature during the late 17th century may not be considered appropriate today. The allegorical approach used by Bunyan to convey moral and religious lessons may have been more acceptable to readers of that time, given the general bias against fiction as a corrupting influence. In the past, literature was often expected to have a didactic purpose, and allegory was an effective way to teach without potentially offending readers who might hold other beliefs. As literary preferences have changed over time, so have readers' expectations. The cultural context in which a work of literature is produced plays an important role in shaping its reception.

Watt notes that during the early 18th century, reading was a luxury afforded to only a few, as economic difficulties made education and leisure time scarce. Additionally, overcrowded housing in London left little privacy for reading. Women, who did not typically work outside of the home, may have had more time to read, but it is unclear to what extent. Furthermore, reading at night was difficult due to the scarcity of light (48).

Despite the challenges of reading during the late 17th and 18th centuries, *The Pilgrim's Progress* sold an impressive 160 editions by 1792, as reported by Ian Watt (50). This is somewhat surprising given that readers in the 18th century were increasingly drawn to secular literature. However, as Watt notes, many readers, particularly those from less

educated backgrounds, began with religious reading before moving on to other literary interests (50). One could argue that *The Pilgrim's Progress'* Christian themes, allegories, and storytelling resemble those found in the Bible. Nonetheless, the book also features morals the community deemed significant, making it a perfect fit to captivate readers' attention during its time.

The Pilgrim's Progress is a well-known work of literature that reflects the Puritan influence of the author's time. The underlying theology differentiates between modern Lutheran and Catholic Christianity. Bunyan emphasizes the Puritan view on salvation through the character of Ignorance. Ignorance is a young man whom Christian meets after crossing the Delectable Mountains. In the story, Christian completes the journey to the Celestial City with a scroll that he found by the Wicket-gate. Ignorance led a life similar to Christian's but chose to bypass the Wicket-gate because he thought the journey was too far from his homeland. Ignorance's decision not to enter through the Wicket-gate represents his rejection of the true Christian faith and his attempt to enter Heaven through his own means. This is why Christian calls him a "thief" and a "robber" (120). By trying to bypass the gate, Ignorance is essentially stealing or robbing himself of the salvation that can only be granted through faith in Christ. In other words, the Wicket-gate represents the narrow path of salvation that one must follow to enter Heaven, and by trying to find an alternative route, Ignorance is rejecting the path that God has set out for him. Ignorance then reaches the Celestial City's gates without a scroll and is denied entrance. Despite acting out of the best intentions, Ignorance is picked up at the gates to Heaven and taken to Hell.

A crucial point for Bunyan was the ultimate doom of Ignorance despite his best efforts. Salvation cannot be earned by merely living a virtuous life or behaving in a morally upright way. Within the strict views of Puritan Christianity, attempting to be good in a world tainted by original sin is insufficient. The text illustrates that even the God-fearing, who devote their lives to serving God, are not necessarily guaranteed a place in Heaven. Despite their best efforts, Bunyan conveys that not all deserve Heaven.

In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the theme of innocence is explored through various characters, and the consequences of acting ignorant are illustrated. Innocence generally refers to someone who is free from guilt or wrongdoing, or someone who lacks knowledge or understanding about a particular subject or situation. Similar to the idea of innocence, ignorance is the state of lacking knowledge or awareness about something specific. Nonetheless, it can also refer to a willful disregard for information or knowledge, or a refusal to acknowledge or recognize facts or truths. The character of Ignorance believes that trying one's best is enough to enter the Celestial City, but ultimately meets his doom despite his best efforts. This suggests that, for Bunyan, the idea of not knowing implies that someone willfully refuses to acknowledge the religious and moral beliefs held by Puritans. Therefore, everyone who is seemingly innocent is therefore ignorant, and Bunyan uses this notion to highlight the importance of seeking knowledge and following the Puritan way. Christian's wisdom and understanding of the future set him apart from his family, who choose to stay behind and ignore his warnings. By disregarding information, Christian's family ultimately chose to follow a path that can lead to their downfall, like it does for the character of Ignorance. For Bunyan, innocence is ignorance and is seen as doom.

Throughout the book, Christian demonstrates his evolving faith through his actions and behaviors. One of the first acts of good Puritan behavior is during the first part of the story when Christian exhibits a humble and repentant attitude, in which he acknowledges his past mistakes and seeks forgiveness for his sins. This behavior can be seen in his initial resistance to undertake the journey to the Celestial City when he meets Evangelist. Christian openly admits to feeling unworthy and inadequate for such a journey, burdened by the weight of his sins and uncertain of his acceptance into the Celestial City. By humbly acknowledging his shortcomings and imperfections, Christian demonstrates a model behavior of humility, which can serve as an example for others to follow. Through the contrast with other characters who exhibit undesired behaviors and face consequences for them, *The Pilgrim's Progress* becomes a powerful teaching tool for guiding individuals towards virtuous conduct.

In addition to his humility and repentance, Christian exhibits courage in facing the challenges and dangers encountered on his pilgrimage. An example of his bravery can be seen when he is held captive at the giant's home in the second part of the book. When Christian sees an opportunity to escape, he seizes it, risking his life to flee the giant's home and continue his journey toward the Celestial City. The story shows that Christian also displays compassion by helping others he meets on his journey who are struggling with their own burdens. He offers them encouragement and support, sharing his experiences and offering guidance to help them find their way. Throughout the story, various distractions and obstacles tempt Christian, threatening to derail his journey. Nonetheless, he remains committed to his goal and continues toward salvation. These various behaviors serve as an example for young readers, highlighting the importance of perseverance, humility, courage, faith, and compassion in one's life.

Christian also exhibits behavior that can be seen as problematic. After he calls Ignorance a thief and robber for thinking he can gain admittance into the City without a scroll, Ignorance defends himself and his beliefs. Ignorance justifies his actions by stating that he is adhering to the religious practices of his country and wishes others to do the same. Christian and Hopeful conclude that they are wasting their time talking to a "conceited fool" (120) and walk away from the situation. The problematic aspect of this situation is that it illustrates a lack of tolerance and understanding towards individuals who hold different beliefs. Instead of engaging in a respectful and open-minded discussion about their differences, Christian and Hopeful dismiss Ignorance. This behavior can lead to misunderstandings, conflict, and a lack of empathy towards others.

The incident between Christian, Hopeful, and Ignorance serves as a cautionary tale for modern society, which has become increasingly polarized with political division and digital echo chambers. The term "digital echo chamber" used in this context refers to the phenomenon where people rely heavily on social media and other online platforms that reinforce their existing beliefs and opinions, leading them to avoid engaging with alternative viewpoints. By promoting cultural and religious sensitivity, children's literature can encourage readers to approach differences with empathy and critical thinking, helping to bridge divides and promote a more inclusive society. As such, children's literature authors

have the power to shape the way children view the world and can influence their attitudes and behaviors.

Bunyan's focus on the idea that salvation is the ultimate purpose of life can be seen as promoting an exclusivist worldview that places one particular belief system above all others. This worldview can lead to the stigmatization of those with different beliefs, which can foster an atmosphere of fear and mistrust. Fear and mistrust of others can manifest as xenophobia, a fear or hatred of people from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Xenophobia is a persistent problem that is not confined to Bunyan's era but remains prevalent in modern society. Bunyan's work is a cautionary example of how literature can reinforce intolerance and exclusionary beliefs.

The Pilgrim's Progress portrays Christian's behavioral development, as depicted through the metaphor of "progress" in the title. This progression is the journey towards becoming deserving of entering the Celestial City. The point where Christian receives his scroll represents a turning point in his journey. Hahn notes that the scroll symbolizes assurance ("Introduction" xxiii). Christian's sins were forgiven by receiving that scroll, a tangible confirmation of his salvation, and it served as his ticket into the Celestial City. Christian's journey shows how his character and faith evolve through his experiences and the challenges he faces along the way.

The degree of didacticism can be seen in the way that Bunyan presents Christian's journey as a model of Puritan devotion and behavior, and in the way that he uses the story to teach readers about the nature of sin, salvation, and the afterlife. Nodelman argues that children's literature has a primary characteristic of convincing young readers to internalize adult concepts about their identities and actions, replacing their current understanding with an alternative viewpoint (78). In one way, *The Pilgrim's Progress* can be viewed as a moral guide. It promotes perseverance through Christian's ability to overcome any challenges and obstacles along the way. Christian is often shown to be humble and compassionate. These virtues are presented as essential to achieving salvation and reaching the Celestial City and are meant to guide readers toward a more virtuous and fulfilling life.

One could argue that *The Pilgrim's Progress* serves as a vehicle for religious indoctrination into Puritan theology, as it promotes a particular set of beliefs about sin, salvation, and the afterlife to encourage young readers to adopt these ideas as their own. Although the book has admirable qualities, the notion of it being a tool for religious indoctrination raises concerns. By promoting a singular viewpoint, the message of the story could stifle critical thinking, encourage intolerance towards those with different beliefs, and perpetuate harmful stereotypes and attitudes. Additionally, the book appears grounded in a patriarchal framework that exclusively recognizes men as spiritual leaders.

Therefore, it is crucial to view *The Pilgrim's Progress* within its historical context, as it reflects the societal and cultural values and beliefs of the 17th century. During that time, it was common for religious beliefs to be deeply ingrained and reinforced within society, and gender roles were strictly defined, with men holding positions of power as spiritual leaders. While its portrayal of religious indoctrination and patriarchal values may be concerning from a contemporary perspective, it was quite common during its time of publication.

The Pilgrim's Progress is a powerful example of how binary oppositions can be used in literature to create a sense of conflict and tension while conveying important moral and religious messages. The binary opposition of "home" and "away" which is traditionally depicted in children's literature as the protagonist leaves home and later returns is challenged in this story. The protagonist leaves his hometown to travel to The Celestial City; in doing so, Bunyan inverts the standard journey trope. The Celestial City is portrayed as the real and safe home, while the protagonist's hometown of the City of Destruction is depicted as an unsafe and doomed place. This subversion highlights the idea that the safe home is not necessarily the physical place one comes from but rather a spiritual destination that transcends physical boundaries. By portraying the Celestial City as a safe and secure place and everywhere else as dangerous, children are taught to be cautious and aware of their own path to salvation. It is, therefore, important to acknowledge that binary oppositions are not neutral but often employed to serve the adult agenda of educating and protecting children.

Another binary opposition Nodelman argues that is typical in children's literature is "safety" and "danger". This binary opposition can be compared to the opposition of salvation and damnation, a central theme in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Christian believes in a clear divide between those who will receive salvation and those who will be damned. Bunyan effectively uses this opposition to create a sense of tension and conflict in the narrative, with the protagonist striving toward salvation while avoiding damnation. Salvation as safety and damnation as danger create tension and conflict in the narrative while highlighting the importance of making the right choices and taking the right path toward a positive outcome.

The Pilgrim's Progress contains some explicit depictions of violence and death. For example, there are scenes where various enemies attack Christian on his journey, such as Apollyon, the giant Despair, and the lions. These scenes are described in detail and can be quite intense and graphic. When the giant Despair imprisons Christian and Hopeful in his dungeon, they are beaten and tortured, and left there "from Wednesday morning to Sunday night, without one bit of bread, or drop of drink, or any light" (110). The giant Despair tries to convince Christian and Hopeful, that they are beyond salvation and should end their lives either with "Knife, Halter or Poison" (110). When the giant returns and sees that his prisoners have not obeyed his counsel he falls into a rage and says, "it should be worse with them, than if they had never been born" (113). After suffering through mental and physical abuse, Christian and Hopeful manage to escape. The scene of violence and torture could be considered explicit for children's literature. While the violence is not described in graphic detail, it is still present and could disturb some young readers today.

Additionally, some scenes deal with death and judgment, such as the death of Faithful and the final judgment scene in which Christian and Hopeful are welcomed into the Celestial City while Ignorance is condemned to Hell. These scenes are also described in detail and can be emotionally impactful. Bunyan does not shy away from depicting violence and death, yet, he often uses metaphors and allegory to soften their impact and make them more accessible to younger readers. For example, the violence and death scenes often involve fantastical creatures or supernatural elements, such as the dragons and monsters that attack Christian. That said, *The Pilgrim's Progress* was written in a different period and

cultural context, and what may be considered appropriate for children's literature has changed based on how society views children.

The Pilgrim's Progress was initially intended for an adult audience. Despite this, it was a popular work of literature that was often read to children for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the book had a strong moral message that was relevant to children. It taught children about the importance of faith, perseverance, and doing what is right, even when it is difficult. Secondly, *The Pilgrim's Progress* was seen to introduce children to the Bible and Christian teachings. The book is full of biblical references and allusions and was intended to help readers understand and apply Christian doctrine to their lives. By reading the book to children, parents and educators could help them develop a better understanding of their faith. Finally, the book was considered a valuable work of literature that could help children develop their reading skills and understanding of the world. When children were viewed as miniature adults they were also exposed to more complex and challenging works of literature at an earlier age, and *The Pilgrim's Progress* was well-respected in this regard.

3 The Curious Case of Alice: An Analysis of Childhood and Growing Up in Wonderland

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, more commonly known under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll, was a British writer and mathematician best known for his classic children's book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). Born in Cheshire, England, in 1832, Carroll was the third of eleven children and a gifted scholar. He attended Oxford University, where he excelled in mathematics and developed a passion for logic and puzzles. In addition to his literary and academic pursuits, Carroll was a talented photographer and an ordained deacon in the Church of England. Despite his many accomplishments, Carroll was a complex figure who struggled with personal and social anxieties and faced criticism in his personal and professional life.

Carroll faced criticism in his personal life, particularly concerning his relationships with children. He was known to have close friendships with young girls, including Alice Liddell, the inspiration for the character of Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Some have suggested that Carroll's relationships with these girls may have been inappropriate or even romantic, but no definitive evidence supports this claim. However, Carroll's letters and diaries reveal that he was deeply conflicted about his relationships with children and struggled with feelings of guilt and anxiety as a result. In addition to these personal challenges, Carroll faced criticism for his unorthodox approach to mathematics and his unconventional writing style, which some saw as nonsensical and frivolous. Despite these criticisms, Carroll's work remains famous and influential to this day.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a classic novel about a seven-year-old Alice who falls down a rabbit hole into a magical world with peculiar, anthropomorphic creatures, including the Cheshire Cat, the Duchess, the Mock-Turtle, and the Queen of Hearts. One of the first creatures Alice meets is the White Rabbit, a nervous yet confident rabbit who is always in a hurry or late for something. The rabbit is a reappearing character as Alice moves through Wonderland. Alice embarks on adventures where logic and reality do not apply, and common-sense rules are turned upside down. She is too tall when she arrives in Wonderland and decides to eat and drink mysterious substances that make her shrink or grow larger at inexplicable times. Alice drinks from a bottle labeled "Drink Me" which shrinks her body and eats cakes marked "Eat Me," making her grow to a giant size. Even though Alice faces difficulty navigating Wonderland's unknown and peculiar norms, she adapts to Wonderland by adapting her size.

Despite finding herself in danger, Alice also creates dangerous situations and threatens the natives. Eventually, she finds her way to the garden of the Queen of Hearts, where she understands that all the characters she encounters throughout her journey are merely figments of her imagination. In the process, she learns valuable lessons about the importance of believing in oneself and the power of dreams. Alice wakes up and finds that her adventure was only a dream.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland has been translated into at least 174 languages, according to the UNESCO Index Translationum, which tracks book translations worldwide.

This makes it one of the most translated books in history. Haughton notes that Carroll's books redefined the conventions of children's literature by focusing on entertainment rather than moral lessons. Additionally, he observed that these books were not only innovative for their time, but also had a significant influence on literature and culture that followed. According to Haughton, they are considered one of the most innovative and experimental works of literary fiction in the 19th century (xii).

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland has famously been portrayed as the first children's book to break with didactic traditions. Despite this, that break from tradition did not leave the story of *Alice* completely without any didactic traces. Nodelman outlines qualities that some children's literature texts share, whereas one of these qualities was that all six texts he had explored were didactic. Nodelman noted that these were all stories in which what happened to the characters was meant to "represent a path for future behavior in readers" (81).

Alice demonstrates that children can discipline themselves when she cries, reprimanding herself and saying, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, a great girl like you, to go on crying this way! Stop this moment, I tell you!" (17) In this example Alice disciplines herself in a mature, adult-like manner when she starts to cry. As mentioned previously, the concept of the protection paradox refers to the phenomenon in which adults, while intending to impart knowledge to children, simultaneously shield them from information deemed harmful. The excerpt demonstrates a desirable behavior in which a child regulates her emotions without adult intervention. By acting like adults, children can prove that they are able to protect themselves.

A second instance where Alice displays model behavior is when she encounters the Cheshire Cat while playing croquet in the Red Queen's garden. Alice would not speak to the cat before its ears and eyes had appeared. The cat spoke as soon as it had enough mouth to ask, "How are you getting on?" (74) After the eyes appeared, Alice waited for a moment and then nodded " 'It's no use speaking to it,' she thought, 'till its ears have come, or at least one of them'" (74). This model behavior tells us that Alice knows how to communicate properly and that there is no point in speaking when someone is not listening. The example of Alice's introspection and reasoning would suggest that she possesses a level of maturity beyond her years. Using didactic techniques in children's literature can be a powerful tool for educators and parents alike. It can foster critical thinking and encourage children to reflect on their own behavior and values.

While *Alice* contains examples of didacticism and model behavior for young readers, the *Alice* books also broke away from the tradition of children's literature at the time, which was to write didactic literature intended for children (Hintz 105). Whenever Carroll included didactic instructions, he subverted them with nonsense, directly mocking education and didacticism. Despite the story's (and the author's) stance against instructions and morals, the story of *Alice* is still considered within the genre of children's literature. It stands as an example that children's literature is more than a chance to teach children morals and ethics; it can also be recreational. An excellent example of how Carroll critiques adults' desire to find a moral in everything is when the Duchess whispers in Alice's ear, "You're thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk. I ca' n't tell you just now

what the moral of that is, but I shall remember it in a bit", to which Alice responds "Perhaps it hasn't one" (78). This passage highlights one of the ways in which Carroll critiques adults' tendency to impose moral lessons on children's literature. By having Alice suggest that a situation might not have a moral, Carroll challenges the notion that every story must have a didactic purpose. The Duchess serves as a caricature of the adult who insists on finding a moral in everything, revealing the absurdity of such an approach to literature.

Carroll presents a story where the only one who seems sane and grounded is the only child in a world of adults, underscoring the idea that a child's mind is clearer and less corrupt than an adult's. Despite being physically uncomfortable with the Duchess resting her chin on her shoulder, Alice remains polite and shows no signs of rudeness. Alice questions the Duchess's logic and her need to find a moral in everything, staying critical instead of conforming to societal norms and agreeing with everything (Carroll 78-9). By showing that Alice is more rational and level-headed than the adult characters in Wonderland, Carroll suggests that societal norms can be nonsensical and that children's perspectives should not be dismissed or overlooked. This idea ties in with the theme of innocence as wisdom, which Carroll presents throughout the book, where the child's mind is seen as less corrupt and better equipped to question societal norms.

Although Alice is often portrayed as the level-headed one in a sea of nonsensical adults, her occasional disruptive behavior also challenges the idea of innocence as wisdom. This behavior is exemplified in various instances throughout the story. In the chapter "Who Stole the Tarts?", Alice exhibits peculiar and erratic behavior. Alice attempts to take control of the trial proceedings by interrupting and contradicting the court and openly criticizing the evidence presented. While admirable in its defense of the falsely accused Knave of Hearts, this behavior is impolite and inappropriate in a courtroom setting. Alice also calls a juror stupid and takes the pencil out of the juror's hand, leaving him unable to write throughout the trial (96). Her outspoken and confrontational manner is viewed as disruptive and disrespectful, particularly in a formal court setting. Nonetheless, Alice's defiance of the absurd and illogical proceedings is a positive display of individualism and resistance against oppressive systems. Alice's tendency to challenge authority and question the rules could be seen as both admirable and naïve, but it leads to her being declared guilty and sentenced to beheading.

Young readers can perceive Alice's assertive behavior as a positive model, even though her actions nearly result in fatal consequences. The fact that she ultimately wakes up from the dream before any real danger occurs mitigates the severity of her behavior. This instance demonstrates the importance of context in assessing whether a behavior is desirable. One could view Carroll's portrayal of the intricacy of societal expectations and children's behavior as a critique of society. Carroll's portrayal of Alice's assertive behavior serves as a commentary on societal expectations and their limitations on children. By depicting Alice's positive and potentially dangerous behavior, Carroll highlights the complex relationship between children and the adult world. The portrayal of Alice as assertive challenges the traditional notion of childhood innocence and suggests that children are capable of more than society often gives them credit for. Overall, *Alice* supports the idea

that children's literature can be a powerful tool for critiquing societal norms and expectations, and for empowering young readers to question and challenge them.

Carroll's portrayal of Alice's assertive behavior challenges societal norms and raises questions about the role of adult guidance and authority in children's lives. Protecting children from danger through guidance while recognizing their ability to make their own choices presents an intriguing and potentially contradictory idea. Children's literature can sometimes depict a message that goes against what society wants to teach young readers. At one point, the Duchess asks Alice if she is "thinking again?" and Alice responds sharply, asserting her right to think. Regardless, the Duchess compares Alice's right to think to a pig's right to fly (80), ultimately implying a disregard for Alice's intellectual autonomy. This exchange raises questions about the role of adult guidance and authority in children's lives and the idea of empowering children to think and act for themselves. By portraying Alice as an independent and assertive character who challenges societal norms, Carroll offers a nuanced critique of adult authority and its relationship to children's intellectual development.

Carroll's attitudes towards the education system can also be seen throughout the book. Some of the most memorable and humorous moments in the story are a result of Carroll's playful mockery of conventional wisdom and rules. Carroll satirizes the traditional education system by portraying its limitations in practical situations. Alice's lack of understanding of basic geography concepts, such as latitude and longitude, highlights the shortcomings of theoretical knowledge without practical application. As Alice falls down the rabbit hole, she has time to reflect:

"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 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?" (11)

Alice has no idea of "latitude" and "longitude" other than that they have to do with the Earth and are smart-sounding words. Furthermore, the conversation between the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon highlights the absurdity of the education system in Wonderland, with courses such as "reeling and writhing" (85) and "Ambition, distraction, uglification, and derision" (85) presented as equivalents to reading, writing, and mathematics. In contrast to more reputable hard sciences, the portrayal of mathematics as nonsensical reflects the social science versus hard science debate. People often see social sciences and hard sciences such as math and physics as two different kinds of knowledge and consider hard sciences to be more respectable. The portrayal of science and mathematics as nonsensical further highlights this divide. Carroll suggests that theoretical knowledge without practical application is insufficient, and the education system should prioritize practicality over theoretical knowledge.

Carroll's criticism of the education system reflects his larger critique of adult society, where logic and reason are often sacrificed in favor of meaningless social norms. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* provides a striking comparison between the nonsense of adult society and the clarity of a child's mind. While the adult characters in *Alice* lack a critical sense of mind and logical explanations, Alice possesses these qualities. As she navigates through absurd and nonsensical situations, Alice demonstrates a remarkable tolerance and critical thinking abilities.

The depiction of death in children's literature has been a long-standing controversy among scholars and practitioners, as it raises questions about its appropriateness and the role of adult authority in shaping children's literary experiences. This controversy is exemplified in the significant and recurring motif of death and execution throughout the book. Despite this potentially unsettling theme, Alice is often confronted with death and the threat of execution, whether through the presence of the Queen of Hearts or the strange and surreal scenarios she finds herself in. Plotz observes that Carroll possesses an exceptional talent for bracketing death and generating a feeling of detachment or distance between the reader and the potentially unsettling or grim topic at hand (3). Carroll does this by presenting the threat of death and execution in a surreal and fantastical context. For example, when the Queen of Hearts orders the execution of the Knave of Hearts, the trial proceedings are presented as nonsensical and illogical. The trial becomes chaotic and ridiculous, with nonsensical evidence and arbitrary rulings.

Another way Carroll brackets death is by using the device of the dream or hallucination to further distance the reader from the story's events. By framing the story as a dream or a hallucination, Carroll can create a sense of unreality around the story's events, which can lessen their impact on the reader. This approach opened the door to a surge of creativity in both children's and adult literature and made Carroll widely recognized as having taught writers how to use this technique. Moreover, this raises broader questions about the role of adult authority in shaping children's literary experiences and the extent to which adults assume they know what is best for children.

Furthermore, the question of what constitutes "appropriate" material for children is not always clear-cut and is often influenced by cultural and social norms. Some adults may believe that specific themes or topics, such as death, should be avoided in children's literature. In contrast, others may see these topics as valuable opportunities for children to engage with complex issues and develop their emotional intelligence. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is an important part of the discussion of the role of adult authority in shaping children's literary experiences. Carroll's willingness to discuss death indicates his belief in empowering children to think and act independently. Nevertheless, by bracketing death, he acknowledges the importance of protecting children and presenting the topic in a more palatable way.

In the book, one can see Carroll's different linguistic strategies used to create nonsensical situations, playfulness, and entertainment. Typically, writers would use hyperbole to exaggerate, although these exaggerations are typically not meant in a literal manner. The use of exaggeration can be found on page 17 when Alice cries so much that she fills the room and has to swim. Carroll exceeds hyperbole with an exaggeration that

goes beyond the plausible and into nonsense. If he had used hyperbole, Carroll could have said, "Alice cried enough to fill a whole room," and continued the story without the whole room actually being filled with a pool of tears. However, he continues the exaggeration into the unrealistic realm, exaggerating the definition of hyperbole into something unrecognizable. After swimming in the pool of tears, the mouse suggests telling a dry story to make everyone dry faster. The mouse continues to tell the long story of William the Conqueror. After a while, the mouse asks Alice how she is feeling, to which she responds, "'As wet as ever,' 'it doesn't seem to dry me at all'" (25). It turns out that the dry story did not make them dry faster. Carroll uses wordplay in order to show the reader that Wonderland lacks logic.

By using exaggeration and wordplay to create nonsensical and illogical situations, Carroll challenges traditional narrative conventions and invites readers to question their understanding of reality. This experimentation with language and structure is one example of how authors have influenced the evolution of the children's literature genre. Additionally, the idea of using literature as a tool for educating and protecting children is relevant, as Carroll's work and others like it often tackle complex themes and issues in a way that is accessible to young readers. Finally, the impact of authorial biases is also relevant, as the choices made by Carroll in crafting his story reflect his own perspectives and values, which may have influenced the messages conveyed in his work.

Carroll's authorial biases and values are evident in his portrayal of the binary opposition between "home" and "away". Adults created the concept of "home" as a haven and assumed that children need adult guidance to stay safe. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* present an exaggerated feminized and domestic world. For instance, Alice visits the homes of the White Rabbit and the Duchess, where she encounters activities associated with women, including cooking and childcare, and plays games with the Red Queen. These domestic activities contrast sharply with Wonderland's foreign and dangerous elements, and Alice is often in dangerous situations. The Duchess is portrayed as a reckless and violent mother, contrasting with the nurturing and safe idea of home. The Red Queen is a homicidal and irrational matriarch who dominates her husband, the quiet and insignificant king. In some ways, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* portrays a young girl trying to navigate through the dangers of growing up, not focusing on the stereotypical nurturing female model.

Carroll's approach to binary oppositions in children's literature can be seen as unconventional, as he subverts the typical portrayal of home and away and uses them as starting points. Instead of showing home as a safe place and away from home as dangerous, he describes Wonderland as a place that is like home but has many dangers. Carroll's work can be commended for its ability to showcase complexity and subvert traditional, oversimplified binaries. While Carroll challenges some traditional binaries, he ultimately adheres to the conventional narrative structure by having Alice return home and come to the realization that her adventures were merely a dream. Carroll's use of unconventional linguistic strategies and exploration of new ideas is noteworthy, and his adherence to conventional narrative structures reinforces the familiar framework of children's literature.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was a French writer and aviator known for his novel *The Little Prince*, published in 1943. Born in Lyon in 1900, Saint-Exupéry developed a passion for flying at an early age and served as a pilot in the French Air Force during World War I. While serving in the Second World War, Saint-Exupéry was exiled to North America after leaving the French Army. Despite being a decorated pilot and a national hero, he was deeply frustrated by the French surrender to Nazi Germany and sought to continue the fight in exile. During his time, he wrote several works, including *The Little Prince*, which became one of the most beloved books of the 20th century. Saint-Exupéry's exile and his personal experiences from war profoundly influenced his writing. He experienced occasional periods of depression throughout his life, which may have been compounded by physical injuries sustained during his aviation work and personal challenges, including financial and marital problems. In particular, this book is widely interpreted as an allegory for the author's own struggles and reflections on the human condition. Saint-Exupéry's legacy as a writer and aviator remains celebrated, inspiring readers and admirers worldwide.

The Little Prince tells the story of a pilot who crashes his plane in a desert and meets a young prince from another planet. The prince explains that he traveled from his home, asteroid B-612, leaving his most prized possession behind, a rose. The prince visited several planets before coming to Earth. On his journey in space, he encountered many exciting characters, including a king, a vain man, an alcoholic, a lamplighter, and a geographer. The geographer suggested the little prince travel to Earth in the Sahara Desert, so he did. As the little prince and the pilot spend time together, the prince shares his wisdom and experiences with the pilot. However, the prince longs to return home to his rose. On the day of the first anniversary since he landed in the desert, the prince plans to let a snake bite him in order to travel home. The pilot has repaired his plane and will also leave shortly after. That day, the pilot watches as the little prince falls to the ground from the snake's venomous bite. The following day, when his body is nowhere to be found, the pilot prays that the boy survived and flies back to society. Despite his youth, *The Little Prince* reflects on themes such as loneliness, friendship, love, and loss.

Like any other literary piece, *The Little Prince* was not created in isolation but rather shaped by various cultural, societal, and historical factors. Kimberley Reynolds contends that children's literature is influenced by cultural factors and is subject to change in response to societal concerns and developments in adult literature. Reynolds states that these cultural factors can affect children's literature themes, styles, and values (83).

Saint-Exupéry wrote the story after having served as a pilot in the First and Second World Wars. Instead of choosing to write a thrilling adventure, Saint-Exupéry centered on the little prince's philosophical journey and his insights into life and human nature. Daniel Hahn notes that there was a shift towards more introspective literature for children that focused on character development and personal growth. This shift was partly influenced by World War II's aftermath and the rising recognition of children's emotional needs. The war-related trauma many children encountered as refugees or participants in the conflict made them particularly vulnerable to emotional distress. As a result, there was a rising awareness

of the importance of literature in addressing children's emotional needs, which prompted a shift towards more reflective and contemplative literature. During this period, many popular books explored loss, fear, and the quest for self-discovery (*The Oxford Companion* 678).

The Little Prince is a deeply philosophical and didactic work, and many examples of didactic morals are woven throughout the book. The book's first example of a didactic moral lesson is when the little prince learns that appearances can be deceiving, and true beauty lies within. This is exemplified by the rose the little prince left behind on asteroid B-612, which he initially thought was a unique and special rose, but later realizes is solely one of many. The lesson teaches readers to look beyond appearances to find what is truly valuable and important.

The book also contains other important didactic lessons. For example, the danger of pride and the importance of humility are two lessons that go hand in hand. The little prince encounters many proud and self-absorbed characters, such as the king and the conceited man. These characters are portrayed as shallow and unfulfilled, and the little prince realizes that true happiness comes from humility and a willingness to connect with others. Additionally, the book teaches the importance of imagination and creativity. The little prince values imagination and creativity more than anything else, and he encourages the pilot to use his imagination to see the world in new and different ways. This lesson encourages the reader to embrace one's inner child and find joy and wonder in the world around them.

The power of love and connection is another significant theme in the book. The little prince learns that love and connection are the most essential things in life, and he encourages the pilot to cherish his relationships with others. The little prince learns this lesson through his interactions with the fox, who teaches him about the beauty of friendship and the importance of investing time and effort into building meaningful relationships. These didactic lessons are merely a few of the thought-provoking ideas and messages found through the story, and they continue to resonate with readers of all ages.

Moving from didactic lessons, it is worth noting that the story also reinforces several societal norms. One of the most prominent norms is the importance of imagination and creativity, especially in children. The little prince is portrayed as someone who sees the world uniquely and imaginatively, and this is presented as a positive trait. In contrast, the adults he encounters on his journey are portrayed as unimaginative and overly concerned with practical matters, which is presented as a negative trait.

The solitary existence of the adult characters in the book is presented as empty and unfulfilling, while the little prince's innocence serves as a contrast. The prominent theme of childhood innocence is woven throughout the book. The text perpetuates the notion that the loss of childhood naivete is a detrimental phenomenon and that adults are disconnected from their pure and innocent nature. The little prince is portrayed as a symbol of childhood innocence and purity. His innocence is demonstrated through his curiosity, wonder, and ability to see the world differently than the adults around him. The loss of childhood innocence is presented as a tragedy, as it leads to the adults becoming jaded, cynical, and materialistic.

The book also reinforces the idea that childhood innocence should be cherished and protected. The little prince's innocence should be admired and protected, as it is the key to his happiness and fulfillment. The adults in the book are portrayed as unhappy and unfulfilled precisely because they have lost touch with their childhood innocence. While Western culture often emphasizes the importance of maturing and discarding childlike behaviors, the book suggests there is value in retaining a sense of childhood innocence and wonder, even into adulthood.

In *The Little Prince*, the opposition between innocence and experience is central. The character of the little prince is portrayed as innocent and childlike, but he possesses a wisdom that is often lacking in the adult characters he encounters. The adult characters in the story are portrayed as experienced and knowledgeable, but they are often blinded by their own narrow-mindedness and preconceptions. The book challenges the idea that wisdom comes solely from experience and suggests that innocence can also be a source of wisdom.

The opposition between viewing innocence as wisdom and adults' experiences as wisdom can be seen during the final part of the story when the little prince misses home and believes that he can travel back home to his rose by being bitten by the snake. The little prince's behavior might seem irrational or desperate. The pilot's knowledge of venomous snakes makes him believe that this will lead to the prince's death. In the end, the prince's body disappears overnight, and the story ends without further exploration. The bittersweet conclusion of the story, where the narrator is left yearning for the little prince's return, raises questions about whether the prince's innocent plan successfully brought him home or whether the pilot's wise suspicions of a fatal outcome were accurate.

The storytelling is captivating due to its imaginative and unpredictable elements, and use of symbolism and allegory to enhance its depth and complexity. There is an intimate connection to the story through the dialogue between the narrator and the little prince. The narrator's wonder and curiosity about the little prince's world compels one to keep reading. The fantastical elements, including the little prince's galactic travels, make the story unpredictable and engaging. Moreover, the story is rich in symbolism and allegory, encouraging readers to reflect on its themes and messages. For instance, the symbolism of the little prince's rose adds layers of meaning and emotional depth, making the story intellectually stimulating and emotionally impactful.

The rose in *The Little Prince* holds significant symbolic value, representing multiple themes throughout the story. Firstly, the rose symbolizes love and the complexities of human relationships. The little prince's love for his rose is deep and sincere, but it is also fraught with difficulties, as the rose is demanding and sometimes difficult to please. Through this relationship the reader can learn of the challenges of romantic relationships and the effort required to make them work. Secondly, the rose symbolizes beauty and fragility. The rose is delicate and vulnerable, and the little prince fiercely protects her. This represents the beauty and fragility of life and the importance of cherishing and protecting the things we love. Thirdly, the rose symbolizes uniqueness, being the only one of her kind on their planet. The little prince treasures her for this quality. The little prince found a field of red roses on earth that looked identical to his rose. Despite this, the little prince said,

"You are nothing like my rose" (71). Embracing individuality and celebrating what makes us different from others is a valuable lesson in story. Finally, the rose symbolizes the little prince's growth and development. His love for the rose and eventual separation from her represents his journey toward self-discovery and independence as he learns to find meaning and purpose beyond his attachment to her. Overall, the rose in *The Little Prince* is a multifaceted symbol representing love, beauty, fragility, individuality, and personal growth.

The application of allegory in *The Little Prince* to convey philosophical concepts is exemplary of the evolving themes and complexity present in children's literature. The baobabs are described as dangerous plants that grow quickly and have the potential to take over the planet if not uprooted in time. These plants are threatening the little prince's planet and symbolize negative thoughts and behaviors that can lead to destruction if not confronted and eradicated. The little prince's voyage from planet to planet embodies a spiritual and philosophical journey towards self-discovery and enlightenment. The narrator, a pilot, highlights the importance of imagination, creativity, and seeing the world through the lens of a child. Overall, the allegories present offer readers a multi-layered narrative that invites reflection on important philosophical and spiritual themes, which may be influenced by authorial bias.

In *The Little Prince*, nearly all adult characters are portrayed as narrow-minded and impossible, which starts to evolve a theme. In contrast, the little prince, who is portrayed as a child, seems open-minded and rational. While visiting different planets, the little prince concludes that several adults he encounters are very odd. Behaviors society might think of as normal, or at least well-known to most people, form part of our shared understanding. These behaviors are pointed out as odd by the little prince. Throughout the book, the little prince shows the child reader that it is possible to be critical of adults and that not all adults have the control they portray.

The ending of *The Little Prince* is enigmatic, as it could be interpreted as a cheerful finale by children, while adults may perceive it as a mournful death. The portrayal of the ending as a possible suicide may be deemed inappropriate for younger readers, as it can be interpreted as promoting self-harm as a solution to end emotional pain or yearning. However, as the ending is susceptible to both optimistic and pessimistic interpretations, it allows the reader to grow with the story as they age. One can view this example as risky regarding model behavior. If children think that leaving their bodies means they stop feeling lonely and become happy, they might not see the risks in this situation. Whether the story's objective was to promote self-destructive behavior in children as a viable solution for coping with challenging circumstances is questionable. Nevertheless, the narrative addresses various complex philosophical themes in an engaging and thought-provoking manner.

As Plotz asserts, "When children die in literature, they are assimilated to fixity, usually perishing in ways that make them clean, quiet, immobile, and permanent" (3). This statement suggests that literary representations of childhood death often portray deceased children as static and unchanging, emphasizing their innocence and purity. In the case of this book, the death of the little prince is not portrayed as a physical death but rather as a transcendence into another realm or plane of existence.

Depictions of death in children's literature can be important for developing the genre. Children's literature often deals with profound and complex issues that can be difficult for young readers to understand, and the representation of death can be one way to explore these issues in a meaningful way. By including themes of death and loss, children's literature can help young readers develop essential emotional and cognitive skills, such as empathy and critical thinking, and can provide a way to explore and process difficult emotions. In this sense, the statement suggests that representations of childhood death can be seen as part of the broader cultural and historical context that has enabled the emergence and development of children's literature as a distinct genre.

The Little Prince is a beloved classic, but it has been the subject of criticism, including by Harold Bloom who referred to the book as "too thin, too precious, and finally too simple" (20). Michael Johnson criticized the commercialization of the book, which has led to an abundance of adaptations, merchandise, and spin-offs that dilute the original story's sincerity and message. Johnson contends that the book's popularity has transformed it into a brand that prioritizes profit over its importance of human connection (Johnson). The complexity of themes in *The Little Prince* may present a conflict for both young readers' limited attention spans and adults' attempts to shield them from explicit depictions of upsetting topics. Thus, there is a need to balance conveying the complexity of themes without writing it "too thin and precious" to preserve its original message and intent.

The Little Prince represents a significant shift in the genre of children's literature, particularly concerning its themes and approach to educating and protecting children. The book addresses previously taboo themes with a retrospective perspective, reflecting the post-war society in which it was written. This new approach to children's literature is shaped by the author's own struggles with his emotions and experiences during and after the war. The author's bias is evident in his attempt to channel his emotions into the book, perhaps as a means of personal healing and imparting his insights to children, resulting in the book's didactic nature. Overall, *The Little Prince* marks a transformative moment in children's literature, bringing about new themes and ideas and challenging the traditional conventions of the genre.

5 Reflections on Three Timeless Tales: Concluding Thoughts on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and *The Little Prince*

The previous chapters have presented analyses of three classic works of children's literature: *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and *The Little Prince* (1943). These works were examined in light of the research questions, which aimed to explore the genre's evolution, the focus on educating and protecting children, and authorial biases. Through these analyses, it has become clear that each work represents a unique contribution to the genre, addressing essential themes and issues that have resonated with readers for centuries. This chapter will build upon the analyses, exploring in greater depth how these works address issues related to the research questions and considering their significance within the broader context of children's literature.

All three literary works use allegory to convey deeper meanings and messages beyond the story's surface. Nevertheless, how they use allegory and the effects they achieve differ. *The Pilgrim's Progress* uses allegorical places and characters to convey symbolic meanings, whereas *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* contrasts a child's critical mind with adult irrationality as an allegory of growing up. Finally, the little prince's journey represents a spiritual and philosophical journey toward self-discovery and enlightenment.

In all three works, binary oppositions are used as a literary technique to explore complex themes and ideas. This technique can also be seen as a tool for educating children about the world around them. By dividing the world into opposing categories or values, children's literature is able to present complex ideas in a way that is understandable and relatable for young readers. Additionally, binary oppositions can be used as a means of protecting children from potentially harmful or difficult subject matter by presenting it in a more palatable form.

For example, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the opposition between "home" and "away" and "safety" and "danger" is used to convey moral and religious messages, while also creating tension and conflict. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the contrast between the domestic world and foreign and dangerous elements is used to portray a young girl navigating the challenges of growing up. *The Little Prince* challenges the opposition between innocence as wisdom and adults' experiences as wisdom, creating a bittersweet story that encourages readers to think deeply about the complexities of life.

While binary oppositions can be a useful tool in children's literature to educate and protect, they also have the potential to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and limit children's understanding of the world. One reason for the continued use of binary oppositions in children's literature may be the assumption held by adults that children possess less developed cognitive abilities than adults, making it challenging for them to comprehend narratives that do not rely on a binary framework. The stark juxtaposition between "good" and "evil" is easily recognizable in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In contrast, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* contains a more nuanced and layered portrayal of binary oppositions, which incorporates satirical and critical elements while still adhering to the traditional conventions of the genre. Despite the increased complexity in the use of binary oppositions seen in

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, it seems that Saint-Exupéry reverted to more simplistic portrayals of binary oppositions in *The Little Prince*, resulting in criticism from scholars like Harold Bloom, who viewed the work as "too thin, too precious, and ultimately too simple" (20). These critiques suggest that while binary oppositions are a crucial feature of children's literature that can evolve to include greater complexity, their effectiveness ultimately depends on the author's skills and intentions and is not necessarily tied to historical or cultural factors.

The genre of children's literature has been influenced and continues to be impacted by society's perception of children. One can observe varying approaches by examining the treatment of the theme of death in three different children's books. There is a marked difference between the oldest work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and the more contemporary work, *The Little Prince*. The former employs explicit and graphic descriptions of violence, torture, death, and judgment, while the latter uses more indirect and metaphorical language.

The Pilgrim's Progress contains vivid descriptions of torture and mentions of death and Hell that align with the Puritan belief that children are inherently sinful. During the 17th century, religion played a significant role in children's education, and it was thought that exposing them to religious beliefs was necessary to prevent eternal damnation. However, it is unlikely that this approach was applied to other controversial subjects such as sexuality or mental health. The middle work, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the theme of death is consistently presented in a humorous manner. *Alice* addresses death through fantastical and dream-like contexts. These three works highlight the evolution of the literary representation of death in children's literature over time, as well as the diversity of approaches taken by different authors. The portrayal of death in each of these works may differ due to their publishing in different centuries. The way death is portrayed in children's literature has evolved over time, reflecting changes in society's attitudes toward death and dying, and what is deemed appropriate for children.

During the post-industrialized 19th century, English society viewed children as vulnerable and sacred. Carroll's portrayal of Alice as adventurous, intelligent, and unapologetic subverts the conventional view of children. *The Little Prince* portrays the prince's childlike innocence and truthfulness, traits the narrator grows fond of. In the 20th century, society viewed children as sacred beings, and this perception is evident throughout the book. The book touches on themes relevant to post-war society, including death and grief. Additionally, unlike *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *The Little Prince* handles the topic of death implicitly, using literary techniques to shield young readers from explicit language.

Children's literature is characterized by its extensive use of allegory, enabling it to appeal to diverse audiences. The versatility of allegory allows for the portrayal of multiple perspectives, resulting in a literary work that possesses a dual address or a "doubleness" as Nodelman describes it, that can appeal to both children and adults.

Allegory plays a significant role in these three works. Throughout history, allegory has proven to be an important means to convey moral and philosophical lessons. Even

though the literary technique has remained the same, we can see a clear change in the end-goal of the use. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, allegory has been used to convey a religious lesson. While in *The Little Prince*, published 265 years later, allegory has shifted towards a more philosophical approach. Carroll's use of allegory in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* stands out as Carroll has proven himself as quite a social critic. He uses allegory to highlight Victorian society's flaws and absurdities, encouraging readers to think critically about the world around them. In contrast to the two other works, *Alice's* allegories teach lessons that go against society's norms, as they satirize the Victorian obsession with etiquette and the monarchy's authority, to name a few. Additionally, this demonstrates the versatility of allegory in children's literature. Despite its long-standing presence in literature, children's literature has allowed the literary technique to be used in multiple ways for multiple means.

The prevalence of didacticism remains central in children's literature, where many works aim to teach lessons related to morals, politics, religion, social values, and practicality. With the implementation of education, storytelling in children's literature evolved from instructional texts to more entertaining stories with a balance of didactic and pleasurable elements. *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Little Prince* illustrate didacticism in children's literature. On the other hand, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* stands out as an example of how children's literature can be recreational rather than merely a chance to teach morals and ethics. Carroll mocks education and didacticism by implanting nonsense whenever he includes didactic instructions.

Didacticism in children's literature is often viewed as a means for adults to protect and shelter children by providing them with essential information and skills for navigating the world while also safeguarding them from inappropriate content. Nonetheless, children's books with a high level of didacticism, such as *The Pilgrim's Progress*, may be viewed as highly protective. In this case, they may even border on religious indoctrination, controlling the way children think and act. In contrast, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *The Little Prince* promote children's autonomy and independence while incorporating didactic or anti-didactic elements. Despite their differences, all three selected children's books can be seen as attempting to protect children, primarily through model behavior.

Alice's assertive behavior challenges authority and questions the rules, but the outcome of her actions is near-fatal, highlighting the significance of context in assessing whether a behavior is desirable. In *The Little Prince*, some of the little prince's behavior, such as getting bitten by a venomous snake, can be considered irrational or desperate. Young readers learn from the actions and consequences of the protagonists. Despite modeling behavior deemed undesirable by societal norms, both Alice and the little prince receive consequences for their actions, leading to a didactic lesson for young readers.

As all three children's books contain some degree of didactic lessons, whether they aimed to be didactic or anti-didactic, it can be argued that children's literature is inextricably connected to educating and protecting children to the degree that children's literature and didactics cannot be separated.

The context surrounding the books sheds light on how adult perspectives and experiences shape and influence the genre. According to Nodelman, children's literature is a

genre that is defined by the adult perception of what children like or need (188). The author's voice is a distinct marker in children's literature, as it is the person deciding what information should be relayed to children, how it should be communicated, and what they might want to be told. By examining the adult authorial biases present in these books, we can gain a deeper understanding of how adult perspectives and experiences shape the genre and influence how children perceive the world around them.

Biases can be found in any literary work, as authors' experiences and perspectives shape their writing. It is a natural human tendency to be influenced by one's experiences, which can manifest in authorial biases in any literary work. While it may be challenging to delve into the broader context of the authors' lives and experiences to fully understand these biases, concluding that all three texts likely contain such biases and reflecting upon their potential impact is possible. It is worth noting that literary works can also be analyzed in the context of themselves without considering the author. Regardless, it is essential to recognize that biases exist in any work and to consider how they may shape the text and its reception.

John Bunyan was born 1628 served in the military before returning home and turning to Puritanism. He wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* after being imprisoned for unlawful preaching. Bunyan was motivated to spread the puritan way of living, and his personal religious motivation culminated in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. There is no denying that his intentions with the story includes a strong bias against any other who do not share the same religious belief. Additionally, the book's portrayal of women is limited and stereotypical, with female characters playing secondary roles and often being defined by their relationships to male characters. This bias may be seen as limiting the representation of women and perpetuating gender stereotypes.

Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, was born in 1832 in Cheshire, England, and was a gifted scholar who excelled in mathematics. He also faced criticism in his personal and professional life, including concerns about his relationships with young girls. Carroll's fondness for the young girl, Alice Liddell, inspired him to write the story of Alice in Wonderland. His background as a scholar can be noticed through the story's sophisticated and complex use of different literary techniques, and the social commentary found in its subtext. Moreover, the inspiration for the character of Alice has been subject to controversy and speculation. While no definitive evidence suggests inappropriate or romantic behavior, one can speculate that Carroll's portrayal of Alice in the book may reflect his own personal biases and desires. Additionally, the book's portrayal of characters from diverse cultural backgrounds, such as the Caterpillar with its hookah pipe and the Cheshire Cat with its grin, may be seen as reflecting biases and stereotypes about these cultures.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *The Little Prince*, was born in 1900 and became a decorated pilot in the French Air Force during World War I. He was exiled to North America during the Second World War, where he wrote several works, including *The Little Prince*, which is widely interpreted as an allegory for the author's struggles and reflections on the human condition. Saint-Exupéry experienced occasional periods of depression and faced personal challenges, including financial and marital problems. Saint-Exupéry's portrayal of the little prince as innocent and pure, and the adults he encounters as foolish

and shallow, may reflect a bias against adults and their ways of thinking and behaving. This bias may be seen as limiting the representation of adult characters and perpetuating stereotypes about their behavior and beliefs.

When examining children's literature, it is crucial to recognize the potential impact of authorial bias on readers' understanding of the work. Due to the limited critical skills of young readers, they may not be able to recognize and question implicit biases and values conveyed in the text, which can result in internalizing harmful attitudes and beliefs. Thus, it is important to scrutinize children's literature for perpetuating societal norms and stereotypes through authorial bias. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that esteemed literary works continue to be revered and celebrated despite criticism of their authors' possible biases. J. K. Rowling, the author of the widely beloved *Harry Potter* series, has come under fire for her stance on gender identity and her representation of diverse characters in the series. Despite this, the *Harry Potter* books are still considered significant works in children's literature and continue to inspire the imaginations of readers worldwide. The same can be said for Carroll and his *Alice* books, which are considered timeless classics despite occasional controversy.

In reviewing children's books with a critical perspective on authorial bias, one must consider one's personal biases. For instance, the idea that children's literature did not belong to children, given the apparent adult influence in all aspects of the genre. Furthermore, expectations about the literature's quality may be preconceived, based on the intended young audience, resulting in expectations of simplistic language and the incorporation of happy endings. Nevertheless, some children's books have heightened expectations tied to them due to their continued status as bestsellers over time.

Future studies could benefit from exploring historical contexts to further examine how the three children's books align with broader trends and movements in the genre. The present analysis has primarily focused on the author's influence on children's literature. Furthermore, other aspects, such as censorship and parental influence on book selection, could be explored more deeply. Examining the practice of bowdlerizing books, where texts are edited to remove offensive content, could provide insight into how children's literature has been altered to cater to different audiences.

The impact of authorial biases on character and theme in children's literature can be subject to more profound analysis. Such an analysis can be used pedagogically to develop critical thinking skills among students and foster reflection and discussion on biases in children's literature. Additionally, it would be beneficial for future research to explore the broader cultural and societal factors that contribute to the formation of these biases in children's literature and investigate their potential effects on young readers.

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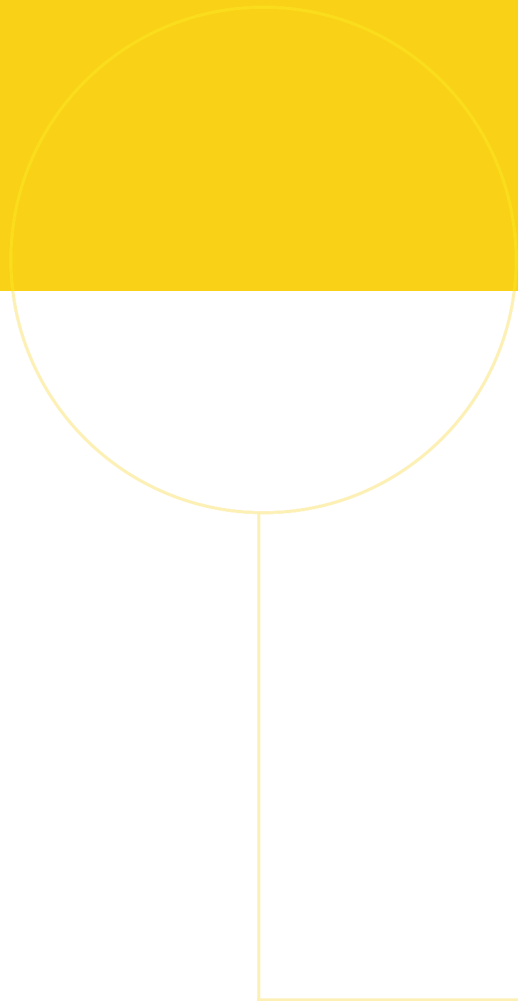
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