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### Children: How Their Literature Affects Them

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CHILDREN: HOW THEIR LITERATURE AFFECTS THEM

By Judy Hughes

## CHILDREN: HOW THEIR LITERATURE AFFECTS THEM

As we moved toward the twentieth century there began to develop a movement for a literature distinctly for children. It was from 1850-1900 that children's literature came into its own. This movement was promoted by those that believed that children deserve a literature as significant as that of adults.

There are six good reasons why children need literature:

1. Literature is entertainment.
2. Literature refreshes the spirit -- for the moment, one learns to escape from the immediate cares and is able to come back to them recreated and refreshed.
3. Literature can help to explore life and living.
4. Literature is a guidance resource.
5. Literature may stimulate creative activities.
6. Literature is beautiful language.

"So reading has become almost synonymous with civilization."<sup>1</sup>  
One of the most important criteria for judging a nation is by how many of its people can read.

There are three great parallels, if followed consistently, that will provide the kind of literature program that children need today. The first one is that the child needs a

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Carlson, Books and the Teen-Age Reader, (New York: Bantam Books), 1971, p. 2.

balance of the new and the old. Modern authors for children know what the inside of a child's mind is like, and they write with a tempo, style, and spirit that is modern. But a child also needs to know that there were great stories before his time.

The second great parallel is the balance between realistic and fanciful literature. The child loves the kind of stories that acquaint him with his own world. He wants and needs stories about others that live like him and different from him in his own country and in others. But along with realistic experiences, the child also needs and wants the kind of literature that can take him out of his own world and into the world of the impossible, the fanciful, and the improbable.

Children also need a balance of prose and poetry. In many schools today there seems to be little time for poetry. Children are given their heritage of poetry where they can read it and see it beautifully on a page or joyously hear it.

"Poetry like music, is meant to be heard."<sup>2</sup> Reading poetry is like reading music from a book. If you have heard it before, it is vibrant with melody. But for many the printed music of a new song is inchoherent, because of an inability to read music. Those who read poetry for pleasure are usually those

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<sup>2</sup>Nancy Larrick, A Teacher's Guide to Children's Books, (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1960), p. 108.

who have had it read to them. To find pleasure in poetry, it must be both informal and personal.

We live in an age of prose, not of poetry. The bulk of published literature for the past two-hundred years has been prose. "Yet we know that poetry is a natural form of expression for human beings. Delight in the rhythmic arrangements of words is as old as man's communication itself. In the long history of mankind, poetry has been the most common form of literary expression."<sup>3</sup>

Most people read poetry at times. It may only be a glance as they go through a magazine and their eyes fall on a poem and they skim it before turning the page. Frequently the impact of a poem is out of proportion to the amount of time spent reading it.

Certain cultures and periods of history have been more richly endowed with the gift of poetry than others.

While it is important that young readers have access to a body of standard poetry, perhaps when they suddenly decide to find out what that poetry stuff is all about, they may prefer to start with light verse.

Children may not like poetry because of poorly selected verse about children, but not for them. Children love short poems portraying action rather than abstract ideas, poems with marked rhyme and rhythm and a musical lilt to the words.

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<sup>3</sup>Carlson, op. cit., p. 136.

There may have been too much analysis of the poems. Where meanings are subtle, abstract, or overly mature the poetry is not suitable for children. Compulsory memorization of poetry tends to create a dislike for it.

What makes a good book for children? In order to truly judge a book's worth, the following questions may be able to serve as a guide:

Who is the author? What else has he written? What are his qualifications for writing the book?

What is the purpose of the book? Inspirational? Informational? Practical? How well does the book fill its purpose?

What is the subject? Is it within a child's comprehension? Is it true to life? How does it compare with other books on the same subject? Do children like it?

Do the characters appear to be real? Do events arise naturally?

Who published the book? Is the format suitable in cover, binding, size, type, spacing, and margins?

Are the illustrations suitable? Do they supplement the text? If the book is other than fiction or poetry, does it have an index or bibliography?

Does it have a lasting value due to content, style, or format?

New developments in printing made possible the publication of more beautiful books. As fine, well-illustrated

books gain recognition, more and more talented writers and artist devoted their energies to the production of quality books for children. Unfortunately, these same techniques also increased the number of cheap and mediocre books.

Good books, whether they are for children or adults, cannot be dissected, with words picked out here and there and held up to the light. I think children, as a rule -- at least those who read a great deal -- are intelligent about books and don't expect to find only approved speech in them. They take a book as a whole; and if the book is so good that it comes to life for them, they think little of the words that bring it to life.

Good literature is not necessarily that which includes only language approved for classroom use. Very little great literature would fall into this category. We cannot protect children from life. Well-written books help to get children ready for life, even though their adults might not approve of every word that appears in every book they read.<sup>4</sup>

Children interpret literature through their own experiences. Forced response does not help the child discover his own ideas. Modes of presentation should harmonize with forms of appreciation which children express or use most naturally. No amount of talking about literature can convey its message to children as much as a sincere and oral presentation, free from useless comment or explanation.

Reading should be enjoyable, but it should be more than simple pleasure. Reading expands life; the reader comes to know life in other parts of the world and in other periods of history. He is able to learn something of the range of

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<sup>4</sup>Ruth Hill Viguers, Margin for Surprise, (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1964), p. 13.

existence, from childhood to adulthood and to old age, from poverty to wealth, from joys to sorrows, from normalcy to insanity, between male and female. He develops a world view that gives him a perspective beyond the life he is actually able to live.

In Margin for Surprise Alastair Reid says:

"Children are interested in anything except, possibly the things they are expected to be interested in; and we might as well lay our world open to them and let them make off with whatever improbable treasure they discover for themselves..."<sup>5</sup>

The imaginative flights and sustained fantasy that are a part of children's play is a receptive background that children can bring to their reading.

The child lives in the book; but just as much the book lives in the child. I mean that, admittedly, the process of reading is reciprocal; the book is no more than a formula, to be furnished out with images out of the reader's mind. At any age, the reader must come across: the child reader is the most eager and quick to do so; he not only lends to the story, he brings into the story the whole of his sensuous experiences which from being limited is the more intense.<sup>6</sup>

The relation of reading to the way children play is noticeable when they are creating their own fiction. Their "explorations" are always of the familiar.

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<sup>5</sup>Ruth Hill Viguers, Margin for Surprise, (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1964), p. 157.

<sup>6</sup>Elizabeth Bowen, "Fiction and the Paradox of Play", Wilson Library Journal, Vol. 44, (Dec. 1969), p. 397.



Children seem to have three questions; Who am I? -- a question of background. Who am I? -- "I want to discover the hidden me." Who am I? -- "I want to read stories about children like me." Childhood should be reflected -- realistically, humanely, universally.

Children are inexperienced and like a job-seeker who has never had a job, they are likely to be denied experience till they have had the experience to handle it. Thus at graduation the young are put out in a world from which they have long been protected from and expected to cope with it. Children are people, who vary as much as adults in what they are able to comprehend and what they wish.

Paul Hazard believes a good book is one that offers to children an intuitive and direct way of knowledge, a simple beauty capable of being perceived quickly, arousing a vibration in their souls which will endure all of their lives. Children prefer books which provide them with pictures they like; pictures chosen from the riches of the world; enchanting pictures that bring release and joy; books that awaken sensibility, that enable them to share human emotions and that gives them respect for universal life. Good books are those which respect the valor and eminent dignity of play, books of knowledge.

"Literature is immeasurably above and beyond the printed word, of a significance far transcending the merely infor-

mational, varied as is human destiny, nonexistent without the twin qualities of beauty of idea and beauty of expression,"<sup>7</sup> was stated by Elizabeth Nesbitt in "Children and Great Books."

No longer does the author of "juvenile" books write down to children from his plane of adulthood. Instead he attempts to rise to the simplicity and objectivity of the child's plane, to enter their mind, to think, feel, and speak as children.

To the young child pictures are more important than the printed words. By the time he reaches the third grade he considers the pictures as contributory to the print. However, he never outgrows a taste for well illustrated books.

In a collection of books for children there should be: scope, coverage, variety, readability, and attractiveness. In the content of a nonfiction book one should look for awareness of present-day techniques, accuracy of research, and presentation of a style suitable for the content and the persuasiveness of the writing. In fiction one should select books with vitality and that are true to the fundamental concepts of life.

It was not until the late eighteen-hundreds that public libraries began to realize the importance of separate rooms for children. It was early in the nineteen-hundreds that

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<sup>7</sup>Doris Gates, "Children and Great Books", Readings About Children's Literature, edited by Evelyn R. Robinson. New York: David Mc Kay Co., inc., 1966, p. 81.

Carnegie Library School of Pittsburg gave the first course of training for children's librarians. Other libraries followed the example. At first only a small group graduated. They had well-defined standards for judging books and were trained storytellers. They lived and worked with children and were able to understand the problems of young boys and girls.

Public library service for young people has rapidly grown in recent years. The idea of special services for teen-age readers is only about thirty years old.

Teens often consider themselves too old for children's books, but are unable to feel at home with adult books.

Trained librarians for young people guide their readers in choosing books which will satisfy their present interest and stimulate new ones. One of the librarian's most important functions is the provision of educational and vocational guidance for the readers. They cooperate closely with schools and other local organizations.

One also finds in the early nineteen-hundreds, that some publishers began to issue beautifully illustrated editions of children's classics. In 1919 the establishment of a new department to be devoted entirely to the production of children's books was announced. A former children's librarian was the editor. This was a long step forward for children's literature.

In 1924 Ann C. Moore began the first regular reviews of children's literature. The reviews appeared weekly in the literary supplement of the New York Herald Tribune. Today most leading newspapers and magazines carry reviews of juvenile books.

In 1922 an impetus was given to the writing of children's books in the United States by the establishment of the John Newbery Medal, awarded annually to the most distinguished book for children by an American author. The donor of the Newbery and the Caldecott Medals, Frederic G. Melcher, was editor of Publisher's Weekly; he died in 1963.

In thirteen-hundred years, the field of children's books has expanded until it now includes every general field of human knowledge and endeavor. Children's books are changing, along with the changing world.

The wisest of authors are those who do not limit themselves to one locale, but who write the books of the spirit.

Almost every child has some kind of driving interest; it may only last a short time. However, if this interest can be tied to reading there is an assured friendship. From this point better literature can be worked up to.

Children meet new people and new situations as they read. They share in historic decisions and see the effects of justice and injustice. The books of today do not have as their main objective the preaching of a sermon, but to tell a good

story. Young children are quick to sense moral issues and are often ready to pass judgement on wrong doers.

Children too have problems and though they seem minor to adults, they are not to their possessors. Sometimes a problem seems less difficult if the child finds others have had similar problems and survived. "There is an urgency to understanding each other, ourselves, our past, and our interrelationships."<sup>8</sup>

Children's books are a spring board for creative activities. Fairy tales, legends, and tall tales suggest more storytelling by the children themselves. With imagination children translate the author's words into flesh and blood reality.

Qualities common to all folk literature: concern with action rather than reflection; admiration for physical heroism; concern with great and moving influences, the mysterious and powerful. Folk literature is especially suitable for the lower grades.

Some literary fairy tales are Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll, The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix, Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows, Wanda Gag's Millions of Cats, Many Moons by James Thurber, and Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish traditional stories from the use of materials by an author to create a new world.

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<sup>8</sup>"Literature for Children," World Book Encyclopedia, (1968), p. 326.

Close at the heels of Alice in Wonderland came Little Women followed by Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, great books in children's literature or for that matter in all literature.

Children find great satisfaction in stories about girls and boys in everyday situations if the books are sincere and do not talk down to their readers.

Each child needs a chance to grow as a unique personality. He must begin at his own level with stories and books suitable for him. If he enjoys what he is reading, he is likely to grow and flourish in it.

Books expand the child's world and encourage him to reach out for new experiences and ideas. They help him formulate his own ideas and learn how to express them.

Literature of many kinds broaden the child's horizons. Children need the opportunity to explore all kinds of books. There are many places a child cannot go or that cannot be brought to him and many objects he can never see first hand. Through books he can go places he has never been and see things he has never seen. There should be plenty of time for reading. It should not stop with the school bell to go home. The child's joy in reading should be encouraged and cultivated.

Alfred North Whitehead said in Margin for Surprise:

"Literature only exist to express and develop that imaginative world which is our life, the kingdom which is within us. It follows that the literary side of a technical

education should consist in an effort to make the pupils enjoy literature. It does not matter what they know, but the enjoyment is vital."<sup>9</sup>

Part of the American dream is to make life richer for our children. Among this is that they have an understanding of music, art, literature, and drama.

Granted, to survive a book must have enduring qualities. A classic is enriched by timeless symbols; it transcends the immediate age and can be understood by generation after generation. Classics also have a magnificence of structure that cannot be dissected, yet they produce a deep satisfaction. A reader can return to a classic and enjoy its meaning and language each time. It represents man's finest use of language. However, it is the most subtle, most mature, and most difficult expression of human beings. It is little wonder that classics come late in literary growth.

The individual growing up today is faced with a life of running to catch up. What one learns in high school and college as facts, only take him a few years into adult life. We need to be "learning" people not "learned" people. One of the best sources for learning is books. About two-thirds of the adolescent books reviewed are nonfiction.

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<sup>9</sup>Viguers, op. cit., p. 14.

Young people want to read about people they can identify with. They prefer their characters to be of their sex and about the same age. The bulk of literature in the United States is for the white-upper-middle class. This leaves a great number of youth cut off from reading something similar to their own lives. Books with ethnic groups help those of the culture used and also give an avenue to seeing and understanding a world outside their own to those of other cultures.

The first principle in all good design is "fitness of purpose." Children's books should have clear type of ample size and with comparatively short lines. A white space or leading should be between the lines and wide margins are essential. The paper, the binding, and the stitching need to be sturdy. In a successfully illustrated book, the text and the pictures have the same atmosphere, the same feeling, and the same dramatic quality.

Younger children prefer bright colors in books while older children gradually grow into a preference for softer tints and tones. Pictures that tell a story, and contain humor and action are preferred. They like larger books and larger type.

There are three streams that feed the river of children's books. One is the stream of books especially for children. This stream is sometimes shallow and always wide. The second stream is books written for adults, but which possess the qualities that children want most in books. The third source



came to us from storytellers of the past and began as oral literature.

In the twenty years following World War II there was a steady increase of exchange of children's literature between countries.

Many adults spend their children's early years by underestimating them and then suddenly they push them out of childhood. Most adults realize that their younger children go through stages of reading. However, they often fail to realize the teen-ager is still growing in his literary taste. They assume he is ready to move into great literature. Recognizing that adolescents are still passing through stages is important. This is a crucial period when many potential readers stop reading. Human beings physically grow up in a slow and ordered pattern. Equally, they develop taste in literature in a slow and patterned way.

The pre-school child is rapidly developing language. He has a great interest in words and enjoys rhymes, nonsense, and repetition. Mother Goose and Wanda Gag's Millions of Cats are favorites for this age group. The pre-school child needs continuous activity, and has a short attention span. The books read to him should be completed in one sitting. He enjoys books which he can participate in. Two participation books are Pat the Bunny by Kunhart and Who's There? Open the Door!

The concepts and behavior of pre-school children are ego-centered. They like stories with which they can clearly identify. Two examples are Brown's Good Night Moon and Krauss's The Growing Story. Children at this age are curious about their world. They want stories about everyday experiences, such as, Flack's Angus and the Ducks and Papa Small by Lenski. The pre-schooler enjoys imaginative play and likes stories which personify the inanimate, such as, Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

The pre-school child seeks warmth and security in relationship with adults. He needs books that show individual attention and have happy endings, such as, Peter Rabbit by Potter and Ask Mr. Bear by Flack. Along with his need for warmth and security with adults the pre-schooler also begins to seek some independence from adults. His books should help him adjust to new and frightening experiences. An example of the adjustment to new experiences is Brown's The Runaway Bunny.

As a child reaches early elementary, his attention span increases and he may enjoy a continued story if each chapter is a complete incident. He is seeking adult approval and needs much praise. The child continues to seek independence from adults and needs opportunities for book selection on his own. However, he still needs the warmth and security in adult relationships. Books may provide good family relationships.

The child in the early elementary grades is eager and curious, and needs a wide variety of books to choose from. Fairness and rules are important at this level. He needs equal opportunities to read and share books. The child's humor is developing and there should be an encouragement of appreciation of humor in literature. His permanent teeth appear; books may be one of the greatest aids in helping a child accept physical changes.

At the early elementary level the child is expected to learn to read. He needs the opportunities to use and read other books beside the basic reader. He may even like to read books about reading.

At the middle elementary level the attention span is still getting longer. Children enjoy hearing continued stories. They are attaining independence in reading skills. Children may discover reading as an enjoyable activity or hobby at this age. There is a wide variation in ability and interest at this level. The difference in interest of boys and girls is evident. Books need to meet the varied interest. Self-selection of books is even more important. In middle elementary grades acceptance by peer groups is increasingly important to children.

Children need opportunities to recommend and discuss books at this level. Their selection of books is influenced by leaders in their peer groups. The interest in collections

for those in middle elementary is high. Due to improved coordination, proficiency in games is possible. This leads to more interest in sports.

At the middle elementary level interest becomes less ego-centered. There is a greater interest in biographies, life in the past, and people of other lands. The child seeks specific information to answer questions. He is more capable of cooperating and working in groups. At this age he enjoys slapstick humor in everyday situations. He begins to appreciate imaginary adventure. Provisions for oral readings of their favorite incidents should be made.

In the late elementary grades the rate of physical development widely varies. Girls are usually about two years ahead of boys in physical growth. The child needs guides to understand the growth process and help him with personal problems. Understanding and accepting his or her sex role is a developmental task of the period. Books may provide impetus for discussion and identification with others meeting this task.

There is a sustained and intense interest in specific activities at the upper elementary level. The child spends more time reading at this age than any other. He tends to select books related to one topic. His increased understanding of reality makes possible the projection into a fantasy world; here is where imaginative literature needs introducing.

There is increased emphasis upon peer groups and a sense of belonging. The child expresses his prejudices at this age. At the upper elementary level there should be an emphasis upon the unique contributions of all. There is an awareness of self and interest in self and others at this level. The child searches for his values at this time. He is interested in world problems and needs help in relating reading to current events.

According to studies chronological age is more important than mental age in determining what a child enjoys reading. By the time the child reaches his teens there is a great difference between what boys and girls want to read. Teens generally chose or reject a book for its subject matter.

Between the ages of eleven and fourteen, the child usually finds the greatest satisfaction in one or more of the following types of literature: animal stories; adventure stories (especially boys); mystery stories; tales of the supernatural; sports stories; growing up around the world (especially girls); home and family life (a favorite with girls); broad, bold, slapstick humor; setting in the past (more popular with girls).

Biographies often serve as a transition from fiction to nonfiction. Early adolescents prefer fiction to other materials. Biography shares the verve and movement of fiction and has as its center the actions and experiences of an exciting personality usually in chronological order. Biography

may also help to widen interest. It illuminates moments in history. Many teens prefer a contemporary person for the subject of biography. They prefer the "interpretive" biography where the author finds the central threads of the individual's life and makes an interesting personality. They usually tend to be short, about three-hundred pages. Also, a group of adult books which the young chose are those in which the character's experiences are unusual or deeply personal -- the reader becomes emotionally involved.

At the ages of fifteen and sixteen or during the middle adolescence the child usually likes to read the nonfiction accounts of adventure, biography and autobiography, historical novels, the mystical romance (especially girls), and the story of adolescent life.

The late adolescent may read books on the search for personal values, books of social significance, strange and unusual human experience, and transition literature into adult life.

Generation after generation of adolescents who ultimately become adult readers have sought those books whose subject matter falls into the above categories.

Books with the best chance of weaning teen-agers twelve to fifteen away from subliterate is the adolescent or junior novel.

The adolescent novel is a book written by a serious writer for teen-agers. The author tries to evoke through his use of

words the feelings and emotions, triumphs and failures, tensions and releases that teens normally experience. Like good adult literature the adolescent novel presents for the readers inspection of the whole spectrum of life.

The adolescent novel developed slowly. Some of the earliest examples were literary accidents, written for adults, such as, Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain and Louisa May Alcott's Little Women, but were claimed by teen-agers.

Robert L. Stevenson's tales of the sea became a favorite with boys twelve to thirteen. Jack London's stories about man and nature were read over and over by teen-agers. These books though written for adults, pointed out the need for material of a respectable literature level for answering the needs of the teen-ager. The result was the "adolescent novel."

Seventeenth Summer, by Maureen Daly, published in the 1940's is often credited with being the first junior novel of distinction and quality. At the time this book was published it represented a unique and new approach to the junior novel. It took adolescent problems and reaction as seriously as the young people experiencing them do. It gave a truthful picture of adolescent life.

Today's young reader wants exactly what Seventeenth Summer offered to earlier generations: an honest view of the adolescent world from the adolescent view; a book that holds a mirror up to society today, so the reader can see his own world reflected in it.

Adolescent novels of enduring appeal have these qualities in common: adolescence is never satirized nor glorified; it is shown as the teen-ager himself sees it; generally the story is told from the personal point of view of one character; these books detail what it feels like to be ashamed of one's parents, to be afraid in a crowd, to be lonely and on the side lines, to be pushed to the limits of one's physical endurance in sports events and fail, to enter a contest and be only second best.

In the last thirty years both the number and merits of the teen-age novel have steadily increased. These books are classifiable under about nine themes.

The first of these themes is the sports stories. They show the actual excitement of physical contest. They may also show the distortion of values that can occur in the American community as a result of adulation of young high school players. Each incident arises out of the characters of those involved and the nature of the social values by which they live. They leave the reader to make his own decisions of right and wrong and to explore the fundamental problems of human relationships and goals. An example of a book falling into this category is Go, Team Go! by John Tunis.

The second theme of the adolescent novel is the animal story. These books often weave animal-human relationships in with many others. They may teach the teen-ager of the



reality of death; they may also have some growing-up decisions and problems.

Stories of olden times is another theme. These stories and books underscore the idea that human life is basically the same whenever and wherever it is lived. The young person has a vicarious experience of living in an age different from his own and discovers that problems of long ago are essentially the same today. Johnny Tremain by Ester Forbes is an excellent example.

The fourth heading the junior novel may fall under is science fiction. It implies the continuation of human strivings. These books show that basic feelings, problems, and relationships are the same, although external conditions may vary. An example of science fiction is Farmer in the Sky by Robert Heinlein.

Stories of foreign cultures make up another theme for the adolescent novel. These books attempt to show the pattern of life and the quality of life as it is in various parts of the world. Generally they deal with an adolescent or group of adolescents in some intense experience. An example is Michel-Aime Baudouy's More Than Courage.

Boys and cars make up the sixth theme. While most automobile stories have a certain amount of didacticism, they do succeed in capturing and presenting the mysterious, all-consuming attachment of a boy for his car. They help the reader

understand himself through the mirror image of another going through similar experiences, such as, Street Red by Henry Felsen.

Adventure and mystery stories make up the next two themes. Because of old favorites, such as, Robinson Crusoe, The Swiss Family Robinson, and Treasure Island, many people instinctively think of the adventure story when adolescent reading is mentioned. These books were originally written for adults. Generally such stories were about a person who found himself in a strange and hostile environment which he had to escape from through his wits and physical prowess. Today's adventure story is likely to be more plausible with fewer stereotypes; yet the high level of excitement is still there.

The mystery story is closely related to the adventure story. The teen-age mystery novel focuses on strange and unexplained happenings.

The ninth and last theme of the junior novel is the problem story. A distinguished handful of junior novels center on the theme of teen-agers attempting to find direction for their lives in a world of confusing values. While adults sometimes feel that teen-agers should be spared contact with harsh realities, the truth is that most adolescents will face them anyway, through rumor and discussion in school, if not through personal experience. By showing sensitive and intelligent teen-agers coping with problems, by providing accurate

information, and by treating the problems without sensationalism, the novels help the readers toward more mature attitudes.

Most teens move into reading truly adult literature through the medium of the popular contemporary novel. It is difficult to predict the age the young reader will become dissatisfied with literature especially written for him.

There is a small, rather distinguished group of books that is transition literature between the junior novel and the truly adult novel. They tend to be more mature in tone and much more mature in the experiences they detail. However, in general they are read exclusively by teen-age readers. An example is Marguerite Bro's Sarah.

Beyond these are the popular adult novel mentioned above. The popular adult novel may hold the individual spellbound as he reads, however, once finished he finds nothing significant has been said. Nevertheless, the popular adult novel fills most of the leisure time of the reading public.

If books are to have meaning they must be related to the young persons personal and social needs. These are sometimes called "developmental needs." Following is a list of some of the basic tasks or developmental needs a book should be related to for the teen-age reader: (1) developing competency in physical skills and acceptance of the physical body; (2) understanding oneself and developing and adequate, satisfying

ideal of self; (3) understanding one's social environment and adjusting oneself to one's peers; (4) achieving academic competency; (5) understanding and making desirable adjustments determined by sex roles; (6) achieving an understanding of vocations and of occupational demands; (7) understanding of the basic promises of our society and recognizing one's responsibilities; and (8) changing of one's relationships with his parents.

Books may play an important role in helping adolescents reach maturity. They serve in several different ways which may appear to be opposites. Books may become a part of the teen-ager's rebellion against the adult world. Literature has always held up a mirror for the reader to see himself sharply and clearly. Literature, by its very nature, is selective and suggest integrations, connections, insights into experiences, and values which the individual might not otherwise find for himself.

Most teen-agers cannot resist the lure of shocking books. Sometimes they present values and ideas which the young person has not previously been exposed. But more often it is the physical aspects of sex and love which they have heard friends whisper about. The teen-ager needs to know about the whole world. He is growing up and it is natural for him to want answers about sex. The adolescent needs help to develop a balanced and healthy attitude toward sex and

our society today. There are good books on sex. Two are The Catcher in the Rye and The Scarlet Letter.

In the last half of the nineteenth century, magazines formed a significant part of literature for children. The first true magazine for English children, The Charm, was first published in 1852. It was not until the 1860's that children's magazines gained importance. Many of the best stories for children first appeared in these magazines.

The first children's magazine in America, The Juvenile Miscellany, was first published in 1827. It emphasized American history and biography. Other magazines resulted from the Sunday School movement of that time.

The emerging concept of the child's development emphasized continuous growth, uniqueness of the individual, and the interrelationships of physical, emotional, and social development. Needs for love, affection, and belonging were heavily stressed. The "world of childhood" was recognized as unique and significant. There was new impetus for the world of understanding. The shadows of religious austerity and didacticism were reduced in the light of understanding children. The religious books written were designed to help the child appreciate his religion and that of others.

The books and materials liked best by dull, average, and superior children are very similar.

Books must be chosen not only by literary standards, but also in light of whether it is liked by children or not.

"A man ought to read just as inclination leads; for what he reads as a task will do him little good."<sup>10</sup>

During the twentieth century there has been a significant growth in the development of the picture book. The vital role of pictures in children's literature has been recognized. Pictures must convey the same message as the written text; the story and the illustrations should be unified. The picture book as we know it today -- the book in which the pictures take up equal or exceeding space as that of the text -- was included in the marked expansion of children's books in the United States during the 1920's. The rapid rise in popularity of picture books brought an attendant evil -- the production of poorly contrived and poorly executed books. Most picture books are designed to be read to children. The child cannot be introduced to books too early.

The improvement in color printing about the middle of the nineteenth century made possible the reproduction of works by three artists whose illustrations set high standards for those who followed -- Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway, and Randolph Caldecott.

In 1865 the first of Walter Crane's "toy-books" appeared. During the next ten years Crane illustrated a number of such books, containing many of the old nursery tales. His The

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<sup>10</sup>Carlsen, op. cit., p. 21.

Baby's Opera published in 1877 immediately became popular. The Baby's Bouquet and The Baby's Own Aesop followed. For these books Crane's sister, Lucy, supplied the rhymes and the tales. Crane's drawings, while beautiful and charming, are decorative rather than dramatic. The amount of detail can be confusing to the young child.

Kate Greenaway's illustrations were some of the first to demonstrate that pictures of children could be made delightful to children. Her pictures show children doing quite ordinary things. She illustrated few books for others, but supplied her own text, mostly light verse.

Drawings by Randolph Caldecott possess a timelessness and freshness lacking in those by Crane and Greenaway. His picture books are still favorites today, as they were seventy-five years ago. It is fitting that the annual award for the best picture book in the United States should be called the Caldecott Medal.

Leslie Brooks is another of the great illustrators for children's literature. His drawings are alive, full of humor, and appealing to children and adults. His first book published in America, The Nursery Rhyme Book, was edited by Andrew Lang. Other works by Brooks are Johnny Crow's Garden and Johnny Crow's Party.

Reginald Birch was born in England, but lived in the United States. He did the illustrations to Clement C. Moore's The Night Before Christmas in 1937.

One of the first American illustrators for children's books to become famous was Howard Pyle. Among the books he wrote and illustrated are The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood, Men of Iron, The Wonder Clock, and a series about King Arthur. His pictures of pirates and man-to-man combats have been very popular with boys.

American artists have been particularly successful in illustrating books containing animal characters. Among the first to gain this distinction was A. B. Frost, whose delineations of Brer Rabbit and other Uncle Remus characters, have long been a significant part of those stories.

We are greatly indebted to the English artist, Arthur Rackham, for the excellent engraving, printing, and binding that is a rule in children's books today. For many years books with Rackham illustrations were favorite Christmas gifts in the United States and Great Britain. His imagery and inventiveness were best shown in his pictures of fairies, but the wealth of detail and soft colors he used are better for older children.

Several attempts have been made to illustrate children's books with photographs. Travel, nature, and other informational materials lend themselves to this treatment and are liked and accepted by children. However, on the whole, attempts to illustrate children's books, especially fiction, with photographs have been unsuccessful.



The greatest artists are none too good for children's books. Genuine spirit of animation, breathing to life, and the surging swing into action are the qualities that Maurice Sendak considers essential for children's illustrations. Sendak proclaims music as one source from which his own pictures take on life.

It had been thought that TV kept children from reading. In 1955, Davy Crockett showed what TV could mean to children's reading. After the Disney program on the "Hero of the Wild Frontier" children went out and got all the books they could find about Davy Crockett. There have been other similar examples.

The collectors of these ideas and facts <sup>have</sup> only been able to scratch the surface of children's literature. New ideas and thoughts are constantly being discovered and tried with children. People are constantly studying the needs and desires of children. Parents, teachers, and librarians strive, or should strive, constantly to meet these needs and desires.

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