

2024

**YULIA  
MALININA**

**RUDY IS LOOKING FOR A FRIEND: A PICTURE BOOK  
PROJECT ABOUT INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**



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Projeto apresentado ao IADE - Faculdade de Design,  
Tecnologia e Comunicação da Universidade Europeia,  
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do grau de Mestre em Design e Cultura Visual realizado  
sob a orientação científica do Doutor Eduardo Côrte-Real,  
Professor Catedrático, da Universidade Europeia



## **acknowledgements**

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my parents for letting me explore the opportunity of connecting to my inner child and being able to create freely without worrying about the things adult people should be worrying about. I hope I can make my family proud.

I would also like to acknowledge the greatest support of my friends who helped me go through this bumpy journey of getting the Master's degree.



**palavras-chave**

infância, literatura infantil, livro ilustrado, ilustração, relacionamentos.

**resumo**

O mercado de literatura infantil está em ascensão desde meados do século passado. Apesar de milhões de livros terem sido publicados, ainda existem muitos tópicos para explorar e muitas maneiras de interpretá-los.

O objetivo deste projeto é ajudar os jovens leitores a aprender sobre as interações humanas.

Este objetivo será alcançado através do desenvolvimento de um livro ilustrado infantil, focado na construção de amizades, utilizando cães como personagens antropomórficos principais. A investigação para o projecto utilizará a literatura existente para analisar o conceito de infância, a sua história e como esta influencia o surgimento da literatura dirigida especificamente às crianças.

Este projeto tem potencial para posterior desenvolvimento e apre: às crianças, a fim de conhecer as suas reações e opiniões.



**Keywords**

childhood, children's literature, picture book, illustration, relationships.

**abstract**

Children's literature market has been on the rise since the middle of last century. Despite millions of books having been published, there are still many topics to explore and many ways to interpret them.

This project's purpose is to help young readers learn about human interactions.

This goal will be achieved by developing a children's picture book, focused on building friendships, using dogs as anthropomorphic main characters. The research for the project will use existing literature to analyze the concept of childhood, its' history and how it influences the emergence of the literature targeted specifically at children.

This project has the potential for further development and presentation to children in order to find out their reactions and opinions.



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## **Contextualization**

The importance of kids and children's literature has received increased focus in today's quickly changing environment. Over the last few decades, children's literature has emerged as a subject of great interest from an academic point of view. The primary purpose of teaching picture books in early childhood education is to develop responsiveness, internal intelligence and talent, sensitivity, and imagination in children. In addition, using picture books as learning materials is most suitable for children who find it hard to concentrate or listen for a long period. The effectiveness of teaching through stories has long been recognized, and many complex advantages were not understood for a long time. These complex advantages lie in the way stories invite a variety of experiences and meanings, the way they are constructed to involve children in this imaginative and emotional exploration of self and others, the way stories speak to so many areas of the human experience, and the way stories can release inner images that are experienced as real and true. This project had the objective of enhancing contemporary state-of-the-art children's books and enabling easy navigation among children and their parents on the topic of interpersonal relationships.

Feeling well and having a good life entails interaction between people. It is because humans are social beings that it is in our genes to keep bonds with others. These relationships can last for quite some time, such as those with friends or family members, or be rather short-lived. There are also those which have deeper emotional links. This includes different types of partners e.g., married partners versus unmarried ones (boyfriend/girlfriend), parents and children, as well as professionals who work together over long periods of time. All these types of bonds between individuals play an important role in the development of a healthy society. A long time ago, humans figured out that there were lots of advantages to living alongside others. In order to increase their chances of staying safe and healthy as well as having their needs met more easily, they started forming groups—and eventually societies—with one another.

There are various mental benefits to having positive social interactions. Human beings are very receptive by nature; to get along well with others and feel satisfied at the same time, it's important that we have people around us who care about us (and whom we care about in return). Modern society mainly confines this kind of intimacy within immediate families alone. A close human relationship increases our ability to handle stressors better and console each other in times

of adversity. The presence of someone who will listen to problems or concerns non-judgmentally can make all the difference in the world. Many people learn how to interact with parents and friends effectively in early childhood. Failure to acquire these skills at a young age may lead to one having difficulties while interacting socially later in life. Friendships change us even when we're adults; so do partnerships and relationships at work. Getting better at communicating effectively and respectfully and understanding what other people might be thinking or feeling will help us build a healthier life. Therefore, we arrive to the following research questions:

What is childhood and when the notion of it was formed?

What role do picture books play in the development of children?

How can children be taught to communicate with others and make friends by means of a picture book?

### **Objectives of the Project**

The main goals of the project include understanding the concept of childhood and how it changed and evolved throughout history, as well as analyzing the cultural events that shaped literature for children. Exploring this genre, examining its historical roots, key contributors and the trajectory of its evolution. Also, investigating the recent trends in children's literature and forming the idea about where it is headed. Moreover, the project was aiming to study the importance of illustrated books in children's development, including how children process information at different stages of their growth. Besides, the author wanted to dive into the creative process of creating a picture book from scratch, focusing on the conceptualization, development, and production stages and documenting the process.

### **Methodology**

In order to create a picture book aimed at children, it was needed to collect and analyze all the necessary information pertaining to the concept of childhood, children's psychology and

children's picture book market. It was followed by the author commencing working on their project.

The first phase was to review literature, looking into the existing academic writings and other publications like books for children to see what has been said about children's literature until this point in time. As part of this, understand how authors and illustrators make decisions about what they include in their books for children throughout history.

It was also important to look at how childhood has been seen in different times, and also think about when children's books first started becoming common. Analyze current patterns and developing motifs in children's literature in order to enhance the creative process. Study theories of cognitive development and information processing in children within the field of developmental psychology. Pay attention to the way in which youngsters comprehend and interact with literature at various levels of cognitive growth. Understand the features and roles of picture books in children's literacy and cognitive growth.

Following the gathering and analysis of required data, the author commenced a creative process to produce thoughts and notions for narratives, all while being aware of how profoundly supportive dogs can be as emotional animals. This included creating mood boards and collecting aesthetic references to direct the visual progression of the picture book. Producing illustrations and character concepts inspired by both real-world observations and imaginative thinking and then completing the illustrations and finalizing the layout design for the picture book.

## **Structure**

In the first chapter, childhood and children's books evolution has been looked at by the author. The current trends that are popular now which also determine what is published for kids will be considered here.

Kids should be surrounded with books from their very birth. They learn about things in the world as they grow up. Furthermore, they become thinkers and problem solvers through reading picture books or illustrated texts. Pictures in books are useful for helping children

understand what they are reading (and for getting them interested in new stories). In this chapter, the author explains more about why picture books are good for young kids - their imagination makes pictures out of stories.

The third chapter will show the readers everything about how a picture book comes into being. It is not easy to come up with something that appears simple yet tells a story effectively; there is a lot that we need to consider while doing it. First of all, the author looks at dogs as emotional support animals and justifies their choice of making them main characters of the story. Then there is an explanation on how the book was produced: starting from thinking over possible variants of plots; creating mood boards; drawing characters' sketches and finishing work.

This thesis examines children's literature through various perspectives including psychology, art and literature which is a comprehensive approach. It aims at highlighting every aspect of children's literature so that we can better assess its influence on young readership and recognize our own change toward it.

## **Background**

According to Richard Howells and Joaquim Negreiros (2012, p. 1), in advanced societies people are surrounded by visual information. Consequently, there is a need for visual literacy in order not to get lost in the abundance of it, visual information can be read just as clearly as the written one. Nowadays, pictures serve as proof of the events as words alone are not enough and written and visual information are usually combined to convey a more powerful message.

In his work, *The Uses of Images* Ernst Gombrich (1999) asserts that visual images possess the greatest capacity for stimulation. The function of a picture is to enhance understanding by providing information and complementing the meaning of a word. However, pictures serve a purpose beyond providing aesthetic gratification; they can convey information, evoke emotions, and tell stories. The allure of picture books is in the seamless integration of words and drawings, which collaborate to narrate stories and establish a profound connection with young readers. Illustrated books have a profound impact on expanding consciousness by enhancing comprehension and deepening sensations. Consciousness is the state of being awake and aware,

encompassing an individual's perception of external objects and their interior condition. The brain performs crucial psychological activities by integrating, controlling, and directing the body and mental system. Thomas Mann posited that artists endure by grappling with internal tensions in their artistic creations and stated that the objective of art is to unveil the entirety of our being, encompassing our most clandestine musings, our disposition, our virtues and vices, and our fallacies. Art helps children see what they have been looking at all along. Helping children to not only look but also see is one-way art can affect change. When people begin to see what they have been looking at their eyes are opened to new ways of thinking and feeling. Art can give children a new way of thinking about themselves and the world. Art can help children imagine what it might be like to be someone else which, in turn, might help them overcome existing challenges. (Kurzke, H., & Willson, L., 2002)

Images have a limited capacity for conveying empirical information like words do in texts though they often do so. In many instances images express feelings, and evoke associations or memories; some of which can go unnoticed by viewers. For example, seeing an image of an infant can evoke feelings of empathy or vulnerability, unconsciously bring back memories of fear or anxiety or create ideas about purity with a need for protectionism. Regardless these infants also come with messages carrying another layer of assumption that Jesus too may represent. However, none of these is expressed explicitly through what goes across to the audience. Charles Peirce (1958), developed a theory that examined visual art as one form of communication. He classified signs into three categories: iconic, indexical and symbolic.

Books with strong visual imagery are more meaningful and attractive to children, who live in an increasingly visual culture where their experiences are highly mediated by pictures. Visual culture pertains to a society where people create meaning through images and not words, thus making these images the dominant material. Paul Duncum (2002, p. 15) argues that we now depend more heavily on visuals than ever before in human history. Children's cognitive and emotional perceptions of the environment are significantly affected by the visual aspect of life. Visual images are no longer restricted to certain forms of art expression inside schoolrooms or museums, and they do not belong just within picture books either; instead, they have become a daily communication tool reflecting different epistemologies. According to Duncum (2002), visual culture in the present society gives more ways of self-expression for people and an

inclination to play interpretation. However, it is also self-referential, shallow preferring immediate, transitory and intense experiences.

Taking a positive attitude that integrates their perspectives and emotions will help parents understand children's nature as well as their own being. The sensory experiences of children and how they relate with the environment show their understanding of life. The fact is that children have a different approach to reality than adults, and they are very sensitive to events (Matthews, Gareth and Amy Mullin, 2023). This difference in perceiving or receiving things happens due to the unique senses, imaginations, cognition and intuition that come along with growth at an early age. Children desire to express their true selves through their auditory and cognitive processes. Children's books should be designed to help readers make independent decisions by reflecting on the realities and challenges of childhood. It is important to recognize that being a child does not automatically equate to happiness. Children, as they grow, often have a multitude of concerns and difficulties that they are unable to verbalize but keep hidden in their subconscious mind. These concerns and problems may be much more numerous than those experienced by adults. Books authored from such a perspective should encompass all aspects of childhood and the experience of being a child.

Books written for children have been influenced by changes in how childhood is perceived over the last two centuries. The remarkable fact noted by John Rowe Townsend (1996) is that no literature could exist for children until they ceased being thought of as miniature versions of grown-ups. Printed books are presently considered to be as obsolete as vinyl records and eight tracks are, which are currently regarded as ancient technology in the era of digital revolution. The future is said to belong to e-books and digital devices. These arguments can easily be refuted by data from the book industry. E-books have experienced a surge in popularity as a significant source of reading materials, but they have reached a stable position, accounting for 25 per cent of the market (Kellogg, 2015). Literature for children is a crucial educational resource that aids in the development of vital skills in young people. It provides youngsters with fresh insights into many aspects of life, improves their vocabulary, gives emotional support, and enhances their skills of interaction. Children's literature that is traditional also includes texts about such incidents that may occur, like books teaching ethical behaviour, educating learners on different aspects of education or other real-life situations. However, recent research reveals

substantial alterations made in children's literary works since the twenty-first century. The change has been driven by shifts in social values and beliefs over time plus technological advancements and globalization.

## CHAPTER 1 CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

### 1.1 The concept of childhood through the years

According to Joseph Zornado, (2001, p.15) children's literature has a complex and uncertain connection with the experience of childhood and should not be relied upon as accurate representations of what childhood was or is. The reason for this is not solely due to the wide range of experiences during infancy, but rather because every writer (or syndicate, or publisher) fabricates or shapes the specific version of childhood that they subsequently explore. Children's literature is more inclined to depict attitudes about childhood than any specific or culturally accepted concept of childhood. The portrayal of childhood in children's books often serves as an idealized or cautionary representation of how adults believe it should be, or desire it to be. It may also reflect adults' nostalgic memories or desires for their own childhood experiences. The complexity arises from the power dynamics inherent in children's books. Since adults are the authors and decision-makers, while children are the readers, it may be argued that it is both impossible and undesirable to have a children's book that does not attempt to influence its audience in some manner.

According to Laurence Brockliss (2016, p. 1), the notion of childhood is a very recent development; in the majority of medieval societies, childhood was non-existent. By the time children reached the age of seven, they were regarded as miniature adults and were expected to fulfil responsibilities like working, getting married, and facing legal repercussions. Charles Darwin introduced concepts of childhood development in his research on the origins of ethology, which is the scientific study of the evolutionary foundation of behaviour. He also wrote "A Biographical Sketch of an Infant" in 1877, which further explored this topic.

Philippe Ariès, a social historian, (1960, p. 125) initially brought out the notion that childhood is shaped by society and history, rather than being inherently biological or fundamentally natural. He contended that societal perspectives towards children had undergone transformation throughout the course of history, leading to the emergence of a novel notion: childhood. He asserted that during the Middle Ages, children and adults interacted without restrictions. However, adults were relatively less attentive to the development and well-being of

children compared to modern European society. Children were perceived primarily as little adults, humans in the process of becoming adults, rather than as unique individuals belonging to a specific social or age group.

Ariès (1960) was intrigued by medieval art because it depicted childhood without any noticeable differences from adulthood. According to him, children were depicted in art as miniature versions of adults, if they were depicted at all. They were not portrayed as being seen as "other" or belonging to a separate social group from adults. However, until the late Middle Ages, there was a noticeable distinction made between children and adults in paintings. In Western art, they gained significance as a topic for representation both on their own and in family portraiture.

Starting from the fifteenth century, there was a growing distinction in the portrayal of children (Figure 1). This can be attributed to the impact of Renaissance art's humanistic values, as well as broader societal changes such as the emergence of capitalism, the ascent of the bourgeoisie, and evolving notions of families and family dynamics. Historians concur that significant transformations took place during the sixteenth century that had an impact on the concepts and likely conduct related to families, family life, and youth. During this period, capitalism was emerging and the feudal system, particularly in England, was undergoing significant changes. Historians specializing in the modernization school contend that there was a significant transformation in childcare and views towards children in Early Modern Europe, particularly in the sixteenth century, coinciding with the emergence of Puritanism. Using the term 'children' can be deceiving and misleading, as it was actually boys who were initially identified as a separate and unique social group. The historical development of the concept of childhood was exclusive to certain social classes, while also concealing distinctions based on gender and social class. During this period, there was a significant shift in the perception of childhood, as women and children were more viewed as being closely connected to nature. This shift was part of a larger trend where 'nature' was increasingly considered as a good and somewhat enigmatic force. During this period, artworks began to depict children with dogs more frequently. In the past, girls were frequently depicted wearing less restrictive clothing. These portrayals generally included them in gardens or other natural settings as backgrounds. (Diana Gittins, 2009, p.43).

By the nineteenth century, the garden had come to symbolize childhood. Childhood, particularly girlhood, became increasingly linked with nature over time. This association led to a growing sentimentalization of childhood, reaching its peak in iconic sentimental depictions like the 'Bubbles' advertisements from the early twentieth century. These advertisements portrayed nature, purity, innocence, and transience in a sentimental manner, using these themes to promote a wide range of products. Subsequently, the concept of universal infancy, which disregards historical context and diversity, becomes deeply rooted in Western society.



Figure 1: Holbein the Younger H., (1538) *Edward VI as a child*, National Gallery of art, Washington DC.

Roy Lowe (2009, p.27) states that during the early modern period, the plight of impoverished children was already difficult. However, the advent of industrialization greatly exacerbated their circumstances. The advent of industrialization, characterized by the emergence of factories and a swift surge in population and urbanization, created an irresistible opportunity for unethical employers. In urban centers, such as London, clerics and parish authorities recognized a novel chance to address the issue of child pauperism. Similarly, the factory owners recognized the potential of acquiring a fresh and exceptionally cost-effective workforce from the urban areas. As a result, a large number of young children who had lost their parents were transported over great distances from their homes and subjected to harsh confinement resembling jail circumstances, where they were made to work long hours in industrial settings.

According to Brian Milne (2010, p. 143) Robert Peel and William Wilberforce, along with other reformers, were concerned about the working conditions of children in factories. As a

result, they worked towards creating legislation to regulate these activities. By the end of the century, numerous Acts of Parliament were enacted, resulting in a multitude of measures that made it progressively more challenging for unethical employers to exploit youngsters, as had been the situation a century earlier. This marked the initial significant involvement of the state, in its contemporary manifestation, with children. Through regulating the terms of their employment and aiming to establish basic requirements, the state, possibly without realizing it, positioned itself as the ultimate judge of the welfare of children. In addition, the reform movement of the 19th century was concerned with establishing available and eventually universal systems of common school education. Hence, popular education was really not just motivated by maintaining order but also by philanthropic reasons.

The presence of regular schedules, adherence to the ringing of bells, and the embrace of a system of incentives and penalties (all features of the industrial system) were undoubtedly deliberate aspects of the educational experience provided to children in elementary schools during the nineteenth century. The importance of universal schooling for our understanding of childhood cannot be underestimated. Initially, the institution of schools facilitated the perception of infancy as a sequential progression of developmental stages: nursery, baby, junior, and secondary. The processes of transition delineated and ascertained the occurring events. Moreover, this type of teaching led to the standardization of children, a process that would not have occurred otherwise. Furthermore, education facilitated an intensification and systematization of the process of assigning gender roles to children. From a young age, boys and girls were segregated in classrooms, attending separate schools and following different educational paths. (Milne, 2010).

The present-day mass press emerged after the publication of the Daily Mail in 1896 and widespread education that made literacy widespread. This increased the number of readers, hence book publishing industry started growing at the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, children's books began being produced (Lowe, 2009).

According to Harvey Chisick (1982), in the eighteenth century, philosophes held the belief that establishing a system of universal elementary education, wherein children from the impoverished majority, regardless of gender, would be taught literacy, numeracy, and moral values, could effectively transform them into productive and law-abiding members of society. The newly established mandatory education systems in Europe and North America during the

19th century were not primarily focused on promoting the well-being of children. Their primary objective was to cultivate educated, productive, and law-abiding individuals who would possess a deep affection for their homeland and be willing to sacrifice their lives for its welfare. Confined to their desks for extended periods, they were confined in a cramped classroom, instructed by repetition and frequently subjected to physical punishment for lack of knowledge, disobedience, and untidiness. The state's interest in new ideas about child rearing and child development emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. Teaching became a profession that required theoretical and classroom training, and the inspectorate responsible for monitoring classroom performance embraced learning centered around kids.

The conceptual demarcations established to distinguish childhood from maturity have consistently held great importance in various cultures, serving social, political, religious, and legal objectives throughout history. The status of a kid is determined by the granting of protection and recognition of their inherent limitations in terms of personal responsibility, all within the framework of their parental or communal affiliation. A child is normally someone who is below the age of maturity. However, what exactly constitutes childhood has been a matter of interpretation as well as subjectivity across eras which have resulted in different ways in which societies determine when life's boundaries are put in place. UNICEF defines childhood as the period of life that encompasses a person's birth up until they reach the age of fifteen. According to Article 1 of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as an individual who is below the age of eighteen. According to D. Kelly Weisberg (1978, p. 46), the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child is a significant international document. It was on the 20th of November 1959 that the United Nations Resolution on Child Rights was adopted and this was a turning point in the global recognition and protection of these rights. It is a foundation document that presents ten principles aiming at guaranteeing children's welfare, safeguarding them and facilitating their development. This declaration came about after World War II, which made people realize that human rights especially those of innocent groups like children needed to be protected. However, as far as we have come since then these principles still stand true. Unfortunately, many children across the world today face problems such as poverty, violence, abuse, and lack of access to education and health services. Every right stated in this declaration should be enjoyed by every child with no exception. The principle stresses the element of discrimination based on race, religion social origin or any other status. Children are entitled to

special protection to help them grow physically, mentally and socially into healthy adults. A name and nationality are necessary for every child when born. Among other things included under social security is adequate nutrition for good health; housing suited to children's needs; free time activities meant for relaxation, play and leisure; medical care including procedures required under law; etc. Disabled boys and girls must get specialized care for them to fully develop themselves through proper education among others. Therefore, they need love from their parents as well as capacity-building programs such as mentorship programs where they will easily learn more about what they want to become in future while growing up under parental guidance full of affection. The right direction is towards offering compulsory education freely according to the legal requirement, which should be directed towards general culture acquisition enabling them to form their own attitudes foster their moral behaviour and sense responsibility both personally as well as socially towards other individuals.

In fact, it is now evident that over the last two centuries, childhood has been transformed in an irreversible manner and society's power to govern and control childhood has grown. As a result, childhood itself was characterized by certain stereotypical patterns.

## 1.2 Children's literature formation

The concept of childhood plays a significant role in shaping the subject matter of children's literature. Due to the ever-evolving nature of youth, which is influenced by several elements, some experts say that children's literature should be created in a manner that aligns with children's requirements and aids in their growth.

According to Bette Goldstone (1986), during the Middle Ages, a seven-year-old child was seen as being able to do everything adults did and there was no such thing as what we today call childhood. There were no books written for children then. The notion of childhood came with the first-ever children's picture book called *Orbis Pictus* which was published in 1659.

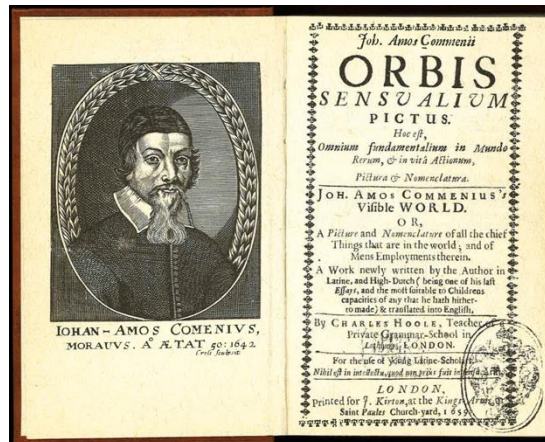


Figure 2: Comenius I. (1685), *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, [title page]

Cornelia Meigs (1969) stated that children's literature has been in existence long before stories made specifically for children were invented and before the first books emerged. The middle ages, however, did not recognize early childhood as a separate development stage due to their prevalent theological beliefs and harsh living conditions. This is the reason why there was no distinction between adults and children. At this time there was nothing like children's entertainment; therefore they had to deal with what was meant for grownups. During the Middle Ages, what is now referred to as children's literature encompassed the literature that was consumed by the entire culture. Most of it was made up of fables, folk tales and legends passed down from one generation to another by word-of-mouth.

Youngsters were attentively listening to these narratives at the hearth of their humble abode, and as they matured, they passed down the identical anecdotes to their offspring. Although not initially intended for children, these stories were readily embraced by them due to their abundant wonders and enigmatic nature, which have always captivated children. The oral tradition remained significant even after the monks began recording the first literature. Due to the limited access to manuscripts and books, oral literature served as the sole form of literature available to underprivileged kids.

The advent of the printing press facilitated more accessibility to books, resulting in a general increase in children's literacy. So, there were no books written for young people at that time until the 16th century. Society believed that young people had to read only instructive literature that would teach them something useful and develop their brains. (Judy Hughes, 1975, p.10)

The books created for children during this period were solely educational, such as rhymes for acquiring knowledge of numbers or days of the week, grammar books, books on etiquette, or religious texts.

Consequently, children persisted in embracing texts that appealed to them, such as *Aesop's Fables* (1484). John Amos Comenius, who became famous for publishing *Orbis Pictus* in 1658 (figure 2), was one of the first writers who sought to present a more humane face of literature for kids than the ongoing didactic texts. In line with Rita Ghesquiere (2014), there were religious publications that were meant solely for children during this period. These books described various forms like catechism and stories about the deaths of innocent young ones. Salvation played a big role in Puritanism where all kids were viewed as wrongdoers whose souls are either damned or saved. Accordingly, teaching was always in terms of warnings and threats with reminders to them about the pain and suffering that hell would bring them if they didn't change their behaviour. During these years there was an atmosphere which conditioned almost everything available for them to read. The books mainly included etiquette manuals, textbooks on different subjects such as instructions and *the Bible's* scriptures other than terrifying narratives from Puritan sources that adults also read. Accordingly, childhood was beginning to be seen as a separate stage in life; this view became widely accepted while recognizing that children could be understood as family members and members of society too.

Therefore, the 18th century was a significant turning point for children's literature. It introduced a wholly distinct perspective towards children and their schooling. During that era, children were acknowledged to possess distinct attributes, thus requiring specific attention and support. As a result, a new kind of fiction for children emerged, known as secular books. The primary objective was to provide amusement and entertainment for youngsters, rather than focusing on their education. John Newberry's *Little Pretty Pocketbook*, (figure 3) published in 1744, is often regarded as the inaugural children's book of its sort. Simultaneously, the initial compilations of folklore narratives emerged.

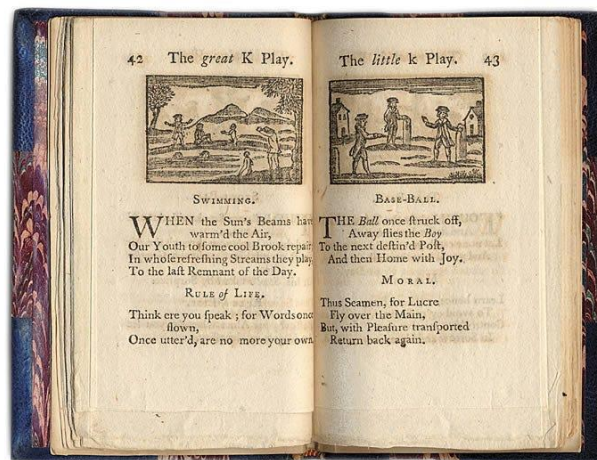


Figure 3: Newberry, J. (1744), *Little Pretty Pocket book*. First American edition. Worcester, Massachusetts: Isaiah Thomas, 1787. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress

Undoubtedly, Charles Perrault's *Tales of Mother Goose* (figure 4), which was translated into English by Robert Samber and published by John Newberry in 1729, stands as the most renowned one. Several of the original eight stories continue to be popular among youngsters, including *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*. Even though fairy tales enjoyed great popularity, many critics complained about a lack of moral values, supernatural beings and religious contexts which they believed did harm to stories told through them. Educators in the 18th century dismissed fairy tales as inappropriate reading materials for kids however youngsters continued reading these books the same way they had always done it through listening. (Hughes, 1975, p. 21)

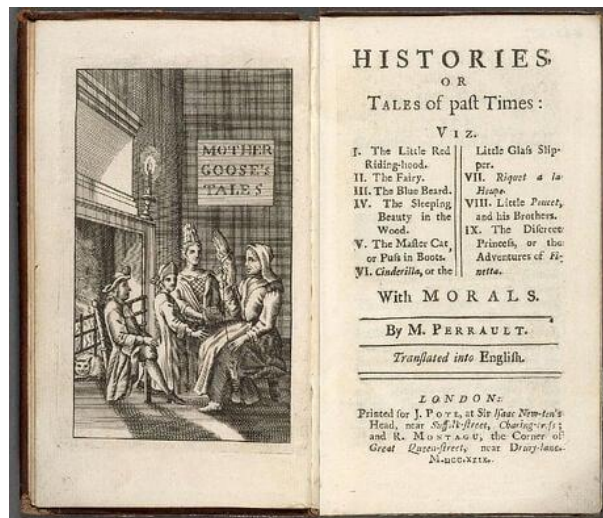


Figure 4: Perrault C. (1697), *Tales of Mother Goose*

According to Emer O’Sullivan (2010), in the eighteenth century, the genre of adventure stories was developed, inspired by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. The renowned adventure was initially intended for adults, but its tremendous success among children led to its integration into the realm of children's literature, where it became an indispensable component. Adventure stories, fairy tales, historical novels, and girl's fiction were the prevailing genres of children's literature from the nineteenth century until the 1950s.

With the advent of the Romantic Movement in the nineteenth century, there was a significant surge in the fascination with folk and fairy stories. It ultimately established an environment in which stories that were inherently implausible were no longer considered damaging for children. This acceptance extended beyond just fairy tales and encompassed fantasies as well. Children's literature ceased to be regarded as lesser and exclusively the realm of female writers, as esteemed authors began to also write for children. The contributory factors included mandatory education, an increase in the minimum age for employment, and a decrease in child mortality. (Brockliss, 2016, p.3).

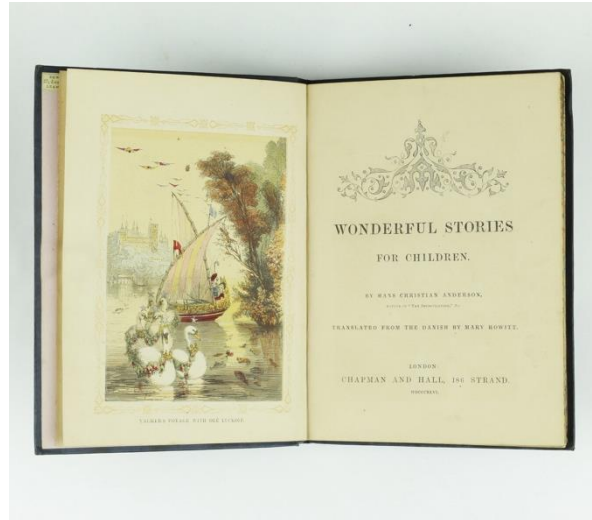


Figure 5: Andersen H, (1846), *Fairy tales*

A lot of contemporary versions of fairy tales came out. The book by the Grimm brothers was printed in 1823; Hans Christian Andersen's *Fairy Tales* (figure 5) were published in 1846. In the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a larger production of books which were tailored to young people's needs and interests. Many novels of adventure, historical novels, and detective stories were written as stories for boys with boys' interests in mind. There can be no doubt that Charles Dickens was one of the best novelists who ever lived. His work *Oliver Twist* (figure 6), which was published in 1838, is one of the finest stories about a young protagonist.

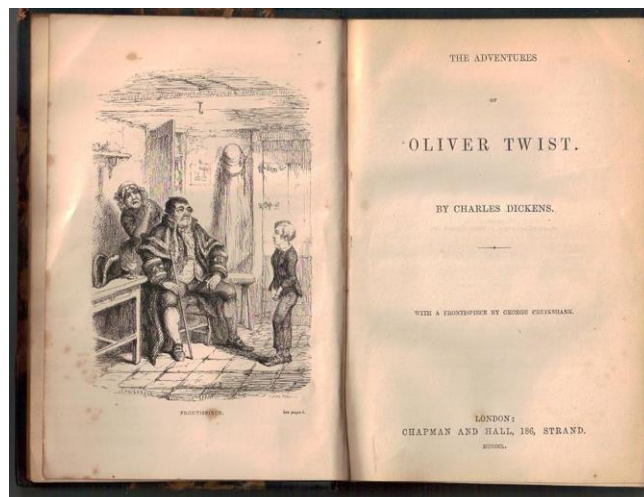


Figure 6: Dickens, C. (1838), *Oliver Twist*

Peter Hunt (1994, p. 241) suggests that the publication of *Alice Adventures in Wonderland* (Figure 7) by Lewis Carroll in 1865 was a turning point in children's literature. Here is shown one of the earliest and most successful of the modern fantasies and it is set upon a commendably sympathetic rather than directive narrative. This text is solely intended to provide youngsters with entertainment. It does not contain any instructions and is rich in unrestricted imagination and fantasy. Furthermore, it is not constrained by traditional notions of good and evil. During the latter half of the 19th century, numerous remarkable dreams were published. Charles Kingsley authored the renowned novel *Water-Babies* in 1863, while Lyman Frank Baum released the well-known book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900.

The twentieth century witnessed a flourishing of children's literature that was tightly intertwined with a fresh perspective on childhood. According to Meigs (1969), society's interest in all children was increasing, with a particular emphasis on the child's emotional needs. The significance of books in the lives of children was generally acknowledged, and literature was regarded as a crucial instrument for enhancing children's development. The books ceased to be created with the intention of instructing children in social and moral principles. Children were no longer perceived as immature individuals who needed to progress rapidly, but rather as autonomous beings with distinct mental, bodily, and social requirements.

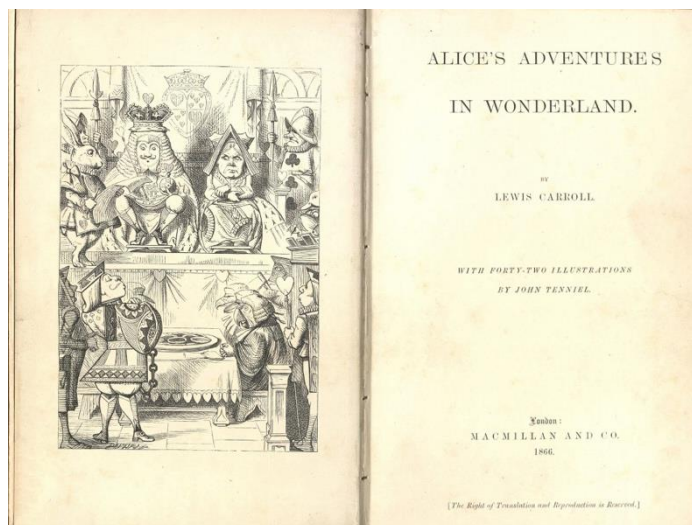


Figure 7: Carroll, L. (1865), *Alice Adventures in Wonderland*

In the 1920s, there were more books available for young people than ever before. There were also more different kinds of writing styles, topics, and methods being used. In Hunt's (1994) opinion, this is when children's books started to look better. They had better quality. For the first time, children's literature was becoming sophisticated and legitimate. During the 1970s, children's literature exploded. The genre got better and better, and people began to choose different subjects. Topics that had never been written about in children's books before were now very common. The reason why children's literature is so important today is because most people agree that childhood is a very important time in life that can greatly affect the future, either in a positive way or a negative way.

In a word, as Yulia Sattorova (2021, p.518) argues, that it is an inescapable fact that our modern age does not favour the habit of reading and talking about literary works. Conversations about reading on the other hand tend to be a leisurely activity usually accompanied by reading. However, this has been underappreciated by what is commonly regarded as visual and auditory stimuli that prevail in contemporary culture. It's commonly assumed by literary enthusiasts that reduced reading rates among children and their parents can be attributed to TV. Instead of engaging in book discussions, today they spend time watching enchanting electric screens of TVs and computers with lively scenes which are full of bright colours and have appealing music or sounds playing during motion-picture shows. This had obvious implications for social interaction as well as for reading itself. A closer look revealed that the thriving family set-up had degenerated into lower cohesion resulting in the alienation of children from family identity. (Rachael Levy et al., 2018).

However, the child's lack of practical experience made it impossible for him or her to imagine and think when reading information and fiction materials. Book publishers and authors are creating an increasing number of materials for children. However, due to the impact of television and video screens, many of these books are written using language that is significantly below the appropriate age level. Additionally, they are illustrated with bright and exaggerated colours, similar to the style used by Theodor Geisel, Dr Suess, and Maurice Sendak, in order to compete with the visually stimulating displays on electronic screens.

### 1.3 Recent trends in children's literature

Children's literature has significantly changed over the years, with a focus on writing stories, poems and illustrations for the younger generation. Current waves mirror transformations in societal norms, technological advances and fresh insights into child psychology and educational practices. This section aims to examine these trends with emphasis on major paradigm shifts and how they affect young readers. Children's literature provides new insights into many life issues, enlarges children's vocabularies, gives emotional support to them as well as improves their communication skills. According to Alyson Simpson and Teresa Cremin (2022), children's literature is very important in developing literacy among children and enhances young learners' cognitive development during their early schooling years and beyond. It generates substantial educational experiences that can reverse trends of poor performance in reading attainment for young students. It enhances children's creativity in a natural, engaging, and authentic way, while enhancing their cognitive and verbal abilities.

Children's writings have undergone significant shifts from 20th to 21st century. These modifications are a reflection of bigger worldwide changes, the advancement in technology and on-going educational philosophies. This part delves into historical background and driving forces for these changes, exploring how children's writings evolved over the past century.

Additionally, education reforms in early 20th century influenced children's literature. The promulgation of laws that made universal primary education compulsory resulted to increased number of school-going children with basic reading skills. Often the educators recommended certain texts that supported moral education, literacy acquisition and inculcation of patriotism among citizens. Many primers and graded readers written for class use appeared during this time period. (Milne, 2010, p.90)

The middle part of the last century presented some remarkable changes in children's literature as influenced by emerging psychoanalysis field. Psychoanalysts like Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud underlined childhood experiences as key determinants of adult behavior. This view was later called a psychodynamic approach in psychology (Saul Mcleod, 2024). As a result, such understanding had a profound effect on appreciating the inner world of a child and touching emotional aspects in stories. Late 20th Century brought awareness about cultural diversity

required in kid's books. As such it was during this period when authors began introducing these stories which represented marginalized communities. Finally, late 20th century saw Young Adult (YA) fiction come out as an independent genre which is still growing today. In the 1960s, the Young Adult Library Services Association coined the term young adult for age twelve to eighteen. YA books were created around more mature themes attracting older children and teenagers alike. (Carol Starr, 2006).

Children's literature has become more diverse as a result of globalization, which has enhanced cultural exchange. This means kids from different backgrounds can learn about other cultures through children's books, making them more accepting.

In the recent past, authors of children's books have been interested in discussing what they think are issues that affect today's society. For example, the stories contain issues such as environmental concerns and gender parity that young people consider being important to their generation.

The most significant development in young adults' reading material now is its focus on representation and inclusion. Thus, there are many contemporary works showcasing individuals with different ethnicities, abilities, family structures and genders. Approaching this issue from this angle starts from the realization that media needs to be inclusive, and representative of all stakeholders involved. It is important for kids to see themselves reflected in the stories they read so that they feel like they belong or are worthy.

Digital technology has had huge impacts on children's publications. E-books, interactive apps, and audiobooks are now common. These formats allow a child to experience a story in an active way.

The number of eco-themed works written for children has shot up due to increased awareness about climate change and related issues. They aim at informing young readers on environmental conservation strategies.

There is an emerging trend whereby classical stories are being made relevant in today's context by various writers through reimagining them. Classic tales authored during much earlier times have been redone by writers to be relevant to present times due to ideological changes

among other factors that influence modern societies; some such retelling concentrate upon feminist perspectives while others try capturing racial diversity and still others engage with our current societal problems.

According to Kathy G. Short (2023), the diversity of global cultures depicted in children's literature is expanding, marking a significant departure from two decades ago when the bulk of global books accessible in the U.S. were from English-speaking cultures and nations, such as Canada, the U.K., and Australia. A notable recent change is the increasing number of novels authored by individuals who write about their own familial heritage or experiences as immigrants. An enjoyable trend involves the creation of picture books that centre around apparel and foods associated with family narratives and customs. Many complex books that are about mental health like anxiety, depression and stress have become very common in order to provide young readers with ways of understanding and managing their feelings (figure 8). There are many children's books that portray the influence of their grandparents on them, acting as trustees of cultural memory. One thing that we notice quite often in literature is the use of folklore and mythological traditions in fantasy novels aimed at middle-grade and young-adult readers. Books about refugees and immigrants are still being published, but some of them are increasingly highlighting lesser-known historical and modern experiences (figure 9). Wordless visual narratives persist in enticing readers of all ages to immerse themselves in their story realms, as these narratives solely rely on visual pictures to convey the story (figure 10).

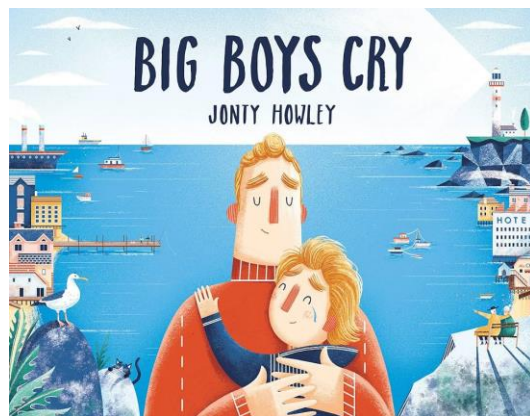
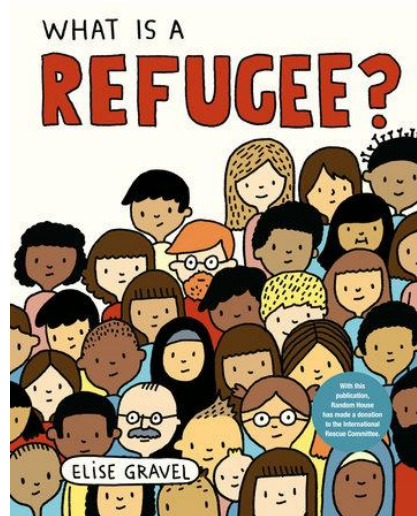


Figure 8: Howley, J, 2019, *Big boys cry*, [front cover]

The human experience can be enhanced via the exploration of literature, which affords multiple perspectives for reflection, interpretation, and enjoyment. It helps children to understand their world better, establish good attitudes towards themselves, improve self-perception and self-

value or esteem, make them accept others who think differently from them or have different viewpoints from theirs and have a natural curiosity about life and knowledge; it also strengthens interpersonal relationships among learners (Bucknell University Library 2010), sharpens sensory awareness as well as emotional consciousness while at the same time language. These roles in literature can also be related to children's books. Children's texts should instil empathy for people, life and nature; provoke diverse views; build confidence based on an inner feeling of self-worth; and prompt imaginative thinking as well as critical reasoning. To put it simply, it must aid children to make their own worlds more important in order to promote their growth. Therefore, children's novels must stress exclusively literary standards in a bid to give significance to their



own universe.

Figure 9: Gravel E., 2019, *What is a refugee*, [front cover]

Changes within children's literature over time also mirror sociological developments, technological advancements, educational trends etc., that have taken place in the world at large between 20th and 21st centuries. For instance, literature meant for juniors used to be moralistic but since then, it had become diverse, complicated, and technologically incorporated as the current stories indicate this. In fact, in its dynamism, the sector has evolved to the point of being able to connect children with their surroundings thereby providing them with highly engaging experiences that are also significant to their development. This field will continue to adapt and change, responding to what future generations want.



Figure 10: Antinori A., 2024, *Solo una noche*

The landscape of children's literature is dynamic and ever-changing. The latest trends show a move towards more inclusive, complex, and technological driven stories as a reflection of the diverse world that young readers live in. As these trends develop further, they are likely to enrich children's literature by offering a variety of experiences for young minds.

## **CHAPTER 2 IMPORTANCE OF BOOKS IN CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 How children process information at different stages**

The understanding of childhood has seen ongoing and historical development; children can no longer be considered as miniature versions of adults. Most modern perspectives about the nature of childhood are rooted in Aristotelian principles. These theories emphasize on the developmental aspect of childhood and how significant adults are in helping the children grow. Thus, one moves into adulthood through sequential physical, cognitive and moral developments that exhibit distinct stages. Depictions of children in art, literature or media closely reflect shifting ideas about childhood and have begun incorporating children's perspectives.

Educators, psychologists and all those concerned with child development need to understand how children process information at different stages of development. Without a doubt, Jean Piaget's ideas on the cognitive development of children is one of the most important and influential in this particular area due to its application in understanding how children think as they grow. This chapter critically explores the stages of information processing among children emphasizing more on Piaget's theories and their relevance to education today.

#### **Sensory Memory**

Sensory memory is the first stage in information processing where stimuli are received through the senses. In general, sensory memory lasts for a very short time usually a few seconds or less. The ability to filter out and focus on relevant sensory stimulus develops slowly in children. Young kids tend to be overwhelmed by sensory stimuli such that they fail to identify what is important from background noise. As they grow up, their sensory memory becomes more selective and efficient. (Crowder & Surprenant, 2000)

## Working Memory

According to Nelson Cowan (2015), working memory, also known as short-term memory, involves actively manipulating information. Its capacity is limited while its duration is short normally keeping data between 15-30 seconds unless it is constantly rehearsed. When it comes to young learners, working memory has low capacity thus impacting negatively on their ability to hold onto and manipulate material. Take a case in which the restriction is evident, for instance, when there is need to follow step by step instructions or solve problems that require retention of many things at once. As children grow their working memory also expands hence allowing them to engage in more complex cognitive tasks.

## Long-Term Memory

According to Dima Amso (2017), long-term memory acts as a reservoir where information can be stored for long periods of time. This comprises both implicit memories (skills and procedures) as well as explicit memories (facts and events). However, among children encoding process into LTM happens less effectively than adults do it. Repeating things over again; making meaningful associations plus emotional involvement enhance remembering in kids. With age, children get better strategies on encoding plus recalling thus improving long term performance.

## Executive Functions

Executive functions are higher level cognitive processes that include planning, decision-making, problem-solving and self-regulation. These functions are essential in effective information processing and they keep on growing even when children become adults. Young children often have difficulties with tasks that call for undisturbed attention, inhibitory control, and mental flexibility. However, as they grow up, their executive functions increase precision thereby allowing them to manage more complex cognitive tasks.

## Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development (Piaget, 1936)

Jean Piaget is a Swiss psychologist who came up with a comprehensive theory of how children develop thinking over time. Piaget's theory consists of four stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational. Each stage represents a qualitatively different kind of thinking. Moreover, it shows that the children go through these stages in predictable order.

### Sensorimotor Stage (Birth to 2 Years)

The sensorimotor stage refers to development of sensory motor abilities. Infants in this stage learn about the world mainly using their senses together with what they do with their bodies. Some key changes in the way infants think include:

**Object Permanence:** The knowledge that objects still exist even if they cannot be seen anymore. This notion develops usually between 8-12 months old.

**Goal-Directed Behavior:** Intentional actions such as reaching for an object or attempting to use tools prevail in infants.

**Mental Representation:** Children reach that stage where they can make imaginary images of objects and events thus enabling them take part in deferred imitation and simple problem solving.

### Preoperational Stage (2 to 7 Years)

In pre-operational stage, children develop symbolic thinking which allows them to use words, pictures, and symbols to stand for things. However, several cognitive constraints still limit their thinking:

**Egocentrism:** Children at the preoperational stage have difficulty taking others' perspectives because they assume that others see, hear, and feel exactly as they do.

Centration: Children concentrate on one aspect of a situation while neglecting the rest. For example, conservation task in terms of number, volume, and mass shows that kids do not comprehend that quantity remains constant irrespective of appearance differences.

Animism: It involves attributing human characteristics to inanimate objects including believing that sun is alive because it moves across the sky.

#### Concrete Operational Stage (7 to 11 Years)

Logical thinking begins from concrete operational stage for children. They can manipulate tangible objects and understand concepts such as:

Conservation: Quantity remains same despite change in shape or appearance. Now children solve conservation tasks by recognizing that transformations do not alter the underlying properties.

Classification: Objects grouped based on shared characteristics. Children can understand hierarchical relationships among these groups; hence organize objects into categories as well as subcategories.

Seriation: The ability to order objects along a quantitative dimension, such as arranging sticks by length.

#### Formal Operational Stage (12 Years and Up)

An abstract or hypothetical thought appears at 12 years and onwards when the formal operational stage sets in. In this regard, adolescents during this period:

Abstract Reasoning: They can conceive things that are not directly related to physical objects or personal experiences. Besides, they can engage in hypothetical-deductive logic which involves considering a number of factors leading to probable outcomes.

Systematic Problem-Solving: Work on problems systematically by testing hypotheses, drawing logical conclusions.

Metacognition: Reflects over own thinking process and understands what thought itself is.

Educational practices have been profoundly influenced by the ideas of Piaget. Educators need to understand stages of cognitive developments to teach in accordance with their children's level of thinking. By way of example, teachers may rely on use of concrete objects and visual aids in teaching young children operating at preoperational stage while during concrete operational stagehands on activities and experiments will be useful for students' better comprehension.

In formal operational stage, abstract concepts and problem-solving tasks may be used by instructors as challenges towards young adults.

In spite of the fact that Piaget's theory has been very influential, it has also faced some criticism. The argument made by some researchers is that cognitive development is not stage-like as suggested by Piaget but rather continuous (Stacey Lutz 2009). However, some people hold that Piaget did not fully comprehend what infants and toddlers are capable of, since further research shows that children this age display more advanced cognitive abilities than the psychologist initially noticed (Anita Woolfolk, 2013). Contemporary views such as those of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory put emphasis on social interaction and cultural context to cognitively develop a fuller understanding of how children learn and grow. To make effective learning possible, there must be an understanding on how children process information and also cognitive developmental stages. Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development provides a basic framework for understanding these processes through its emphasis on developmental stages and cognitive advances (Diane Papalia et al 2008). Despite its shortcomings however, Piaget's theory remains an essential touchstone in child development, offering insights into the way children think and understand this world as they grow over time. This knowledge could be used to write books for kids at different ages, so that they match up both with readers' cognitive abilities and developmental stages respectively. Henceforth, this chapter explored how authors may apply Piaget's theory to create attractive and purposeful literature for young children.

## 2.2 Books for each stage of development

According to Perry Nodelman (1988), children's literature plays a crucial role in teaching colours, lines, and aesthetic expression of words to youngsters, allowing them to appreciate the beauty of their native language. According to Shelby A. Wolf (2004), one of the fundamental purposes of children's literature is to assist children in developing their ability to imagine, think critically, and appreciate aesthetics. This process should be tailored to their developmental stage, starting from infancy. Children's literature should consist of age-appropriate books in order to effectively fulfil its intended purposes. Put simply, a book's design, context, and educational qualities should align with the concept of a child's world. This suggests that the language used should suit their nature, interests, needs, maturity level, cognitive capacities, and point of view. It should be noted here that not all books written for a child's level are necessarily appropriate for all children as a whole due to the fact these books are literary works too hence must satisfy certain literary norms. It would be an artistic sensitivity of the artist to create such books that are suitable for children.

Dilidüzgün (2002) argues that there has to be a relationship between the child and his reading material, based on factors such as interest, need, language, perspective, and developmental stage. Put simply, visual and verbal texts that are not suitable for a child's linguistic, cognitive, personal, and emotional growth, and that do not align with their interests and needs, and fail to reflect their perspective, can create obstacles between the child and the book from a young age. In other words, these texts may kill children's desire to associate with a book. This is why it is necessary to adapt books to the child's level in order to make it more real both for them and their daily life experience. This will enable children to easily understand and assimilate the emotional, cognitive and behavioural aspects contained in any story. The connection between a youngster and a book is closely linked to the child's cognitive ability. novels intended for children should highlight the depiction of kid reality. The key distinguishing factor between children's novels and those for adults is their focus on children's feelings, thoughts, and sensations.

According to Erkan Çer (2016, p.78), child literature works are suitable for children when they stress the reality of children, reflecting their nature, perspective, linguistic and cognitive abilities, as well as meeting literary requirements and artistic sensitivity. Therefore, it is

necessary for the child to occupy the subject position in literature intended for youngsters. Children should be targeted by authors of children's books, especially in the age range of 0-6 years old. These writings ought to take into account their inherent curiosity, urge for discovery; truthfulness; energy; enthusiasm; dreaming capacity; inventiveness; and originality. At this age group, it is important to note that children tend not to follow instructions they receive from adults. Furthermore, suitable children's literature should effectively convey the experiences, thoughts, feelings, happiness, anxieties, and concerns of children from their own point of view. However, if the judgments, principles, rules, stereotyped notions, oppressive attitudes, thinking patterns, and fixed and definite facts of adults are reflected in works of children's literature, it may result in children being placed in a subordinate position. Hence, it is important that kid's books should not have anything to do with grown-ups. Positioning grown-ups in the central places may render the book inappropriate for young readers.

When writing books for children, the first concern should be about the ideas given below:

Books need to mirror a child's temperament, viewpoint, passions and needs in terms of language skills and thinking faculties. The book should have contextual, formal and didactic elements suitable to the concept of kid reality.

The literary criteria that should be considered by authors when producing such books.

In children's literature, one can see the sensibility of a creator.

Writing in children's books aimed at appealing to adults' points of view, cognitive ability, or analytic framework is not justified.

According to Ayla Mayrick (2016), publishers typically allocate age categories for readers of different forms, as outlined in the following list:

Board books are specifically created for infants up to 3 years old. They are usually constructed with sturdy cardboard pages that are able to endure the handling of young children.

Picture Books: These types of books are specifically designed for children aged between 3-8 years. They normally accompany the text with illustrations.

Colouring & Activity (C&As): These are meant for children aged 3-8 years old and usually have colouring pages with activities for kids to do.

Novelty Books: Such books suit children over 3 years though some may differ depending on subject matter. Interactive components such as pop-ups or lift-the-flaps can be incorporated.

Early Leveled Readers: These are created specifically for kids aged between 5-9 years serving as an intermediate stage falling between picture and chapter books. Usually, they involve fewer words on each page and simpler stories.

First Chapter Books: Designed particularly for young readers who fall within the age bracket of six to nine years or seven to ten years. They offer the first experience regarding lengthy works which come with complex plots. It often has more words per page and more convoluted plot-lines.

Middle-Grade Novels: They target adolescents aged from eight through twelve because they are typically characterized by intricate storylines involving deep themes.

Young Adult Novels: This is a category that entails preteens or alternatively teenagers above twelve but sometimes older than fourteen due to addressing mature topics as compared to their counterparts in other categories.

Board Books (0-3). According to Alysia Marshall-Seslar (2022), board books are a child's first opportunity to explore the world through reading. They provide an introduction to children on narration, literature and written language. Additionally, high-quality board books also act as an entry point into a number of subjects that are easily understandable by young readers. Topics like numbers, opposites, animals and modes of transport are all suitable for board books. They introduce children to narration, literary works and written language. Because they are made from strong cardboard, board books can be used for long periods of time. These books have small sizes and use materials that allow easy handling by little children who may not yet be very skilled with flipping pages. Board books have many advantages to them. The two roles of board books include introducing themes and promoting learning in the areas in which a child is interested. Young kids will learn pre-reading skills including letter recognition or sound discrimination when using these introductory texts. First of all, it helps its readers acquire their first linguistic

abilities as well as reading skills at large using this type of book format for this purpose too since such stories can develop strong emotional bonds between parents and their offspring which is fostered through love for reading itself. In terms of speaking, there are some topics discussed during conversations between parents and their children hence facilitating more communication therefore helping the kids become good speakers; lastly, it does influence how they produce words including their formation plus pronunciation.

Board books facilitate the development of cognitive skills in children, they acquaint young readers with fundamental ideas such as forms, colours, numbers, and other related topics. Identifying symbols is a cognitive ability that is crucial for developing reading skills. Toddlers have the cognitive ability to comprehend that the written text on a page corresponds to the spoken words they hear. The pictures often depict tangible objects from their surroundings. An illustration resembling a cartoon depicts a cat, a charming and fuzzy creature, sitting on the couch next to the person. Board books facilitate children's exploration of various textures, noises, and pictures. Board books frequently serve as a child's initial exposure to the appreciation of art through illustrations. Books that are specially made for this purpose aim to stimulate the senses and make children physically interact with various parts of the book through touch, trace, and manipulation. The durability of board books helps develop a child's concentration power. Children become more capable of remembering things when they have their favourite board books.

Concept Books (2-8). According to Tracie Fofia (2018), concept books, also known as early childhood picture books, are made specifically for children below the age of four. Generally, at this stage, children have not yet learned to read or write. The books are appropriate for young readers who may not yet have developed language or literacy skills. They are called concept books because they are centred around concepts. They rarely include narratives in the traditional sense. novels for younger children may not necessarily include major characters, story problems, dialogue, escalating action, or other typical characteristics seen in novels for older children. However, they may nonetheless incorporate these elements either explicitly or implicitly. A concept is a fundamental idea or principle that helps to organize and understand information or phenomena. The dictionary defines the term as an "abstract idea," which is not particularly informative.

A more user-friendly meaning within the genre might be essential concepts of human existence. The most wonderful thing that concept books do is to give your child the essential skills and knowledge they need for kindergarten and beyond. In relation to letters, numbers, shapes, colours and other topics, this kind of literature provides kids with the information in an interesting way. There are different types of them. The alphabet books are the best-known type of concept book. These also teach other important things alongside introducing toddlers to ABCs. Alphabet books help children recognize letters one by one and learn how each letter sounds phonetically. Furthermore, these books illustrate that some objects go along with specific letters only. For example, little ones know that the word “ball” starts from “B.” Alphabet books increase vocabulary but also ensure proper ordering of alphabet characters by kids. Counting volumes introduces kids to arithmetic concepts involving numbers and quantities. Counting volumes teaches youngsters how to identify numbers as well as understand that numbers go in order one after another till infinity. And there are counting volumes which also acquaint readers with principles like addition and subtraction. Also, besides teaching young children about alphabet letters, numbers etc., concept books can be based on shapes, colors, time-telling, and other themes. Nonetheless, great concept materials simultaneously entertain while they educate learners regardless of their subject matter.

Easy Reader (4-8). According to Sylvie Shaffer (2019), the texts of these books are intrinsically constrained by the necessity to be readily deciphered and comprehended by young individuals with frequently limited lexicon and absence of prior knowledge. Picture books can include complex words and unfamiliar situations that may be beyond a child's understanding. However, since adults can help children decode, define, and understand these elements, they can still be used effectively. On the other hand, easy reader texts, which are designed for children who are beginning to read independently, have limitations on the words, sentence length, and chapter length they can use.

Children’s lack of knowledge about the sounds of words when selecting words has been mentioned by writers. It is vital for authors to think about sight vocabularies as well as the pace at which new words will be introduced and reviewed including the use of consonant blends (bl, ch, gr) and vowel digraphs (oa, ee, oi). This is often seen in the use of repetition where words or

phrases are frequently repeated after they have been introduced because of the limited vocabulary of these texts.

Furthermore, there is still the need for captivating characters and stories to attract new readers who can enhance their reading skills. The vocabulary used in the words must be basic, but the narratives should not be excessively uncomplicated, as this may cause readers to lose their enthusiasm and engagement. This task is challenging and even more difficult to do with excellence. In simple reader books, this is squeezed into a few words or even a few sentences so as to summarize the entire extensive development of the world, numerous characters and several plot arcs that are typical in works meant for more mature readers. As such, most easy readers including those written for learners who are now becoming more confident and able to sustain attention in reading usually consist of a handful cast and simple plots that are generally divided among short chapters. The illustrations in Easy Readers function differently than those found elsewhere. At times literal visual symmetry offers cues to early readers as they try to recognize non-phonological words when decoding them.

Wordless Books (2-12). According to Hayes (2014), there are many conventional wordless picture books which combine text with images for the purpose of telling a story.

Wordless picture books differ from standard picture books in that they lack printed text on the page. However, it might be argued that the text exists within the reader's head. Wordless picture books are distinct since they depend exclusively on visual imagery to narrate the story. In their 1992 wordless picture book bibliography, Virginia H. Richey and Katharyn E. Puckett (Virginia H. et al, 1992) highlight that the pictures in these books serve as the primary means of conveying meaning. The illustrations might tell a tale, illustrate a subject, or offer information. The designer of wordless picture books has distinct constraints that set them apart from typical illustrators, resulting in the unique nature of these books. Wordless books are an ideal method to engage children of different ages and reading proficiencies in the act of storytelling. Irrespective of one's degree of literacy, the reader will instinctively employ words that are part of their everyday conversational lexicon. Both children and adults can derive advantages from wordless novels.

However, what is the most effective way for me to narrate the story? Provide a narrative. Do not just list the images as it is. Identify your specific observations. Give a detailed description of the events happening in the illustration. Make a conclusion. Your child will learn better vocabulary for spoken terms if you associate them with visual images. This can be really surprising for you to see how much talking you might have when reading wordless books with your small child. Ask questions! Be curious aloud! What are your thoughts on...? What would occur, if...?

Utilize language reminiscent of a novel. Seamlessly link the events as you narrate the story. Utilize cohesive devices such as "next," "then," "later," etc. By engaging in this activity, you will demonstrate to your child that stories consist of a series of events that encompass an introduction, development, and conclusion.

Non-fiction picture books (3-12). Nonfiction children's books fall within a particular niche within children's book publishing, notes Mary Kole (2015). Mostly, nonfiction kids' books refer to non-fiction picture books such as those covering biographies in picture book format or nonfiction picture books about certain animals as well as math, science and history topics among others.

Given that nonfiction books for children are primarily purchased by educational institutions such as schools and libraries, the most effective nonfiction picture books possess compelling curriculum connections that align with the specific academic requirements of different grade levels. Nonfiction books for children primarily target an age group that is older than the typical audience for picture books. Knowledgeable authors are aware that the field of children's book publishing is segmented based on category, age group, and reading proficiency. The target audience for the majority of nonfiction books for children is often five years of age or older. Nonfiction picture books can be utilized in higher elementary school grades, contingent upon the extent of the material and the additional nonfiction elements, such as the afterword and glossary. The number of words in a nonfiction picture book is determined by the quantity of information being conveyed. Nonfiction kid's picture books average words from one thousand to three thousand only but mostly 2000 words unless there are additional sections like back matter which may include an afterword, note by author glossary and bibliography.

Supplementary resources are frequently added to nonfiction books for children to enhance their appeal to the school and library market. The expectations about the number of pages in nonfiction picture books are more flexible compared to the expectations for standard fiction picture books, which typically have 32 pages. The length of nonfiction picture books varies. Nonfiction picture books with fewer pages will still consist of 32 pages. Additional projects, perhaps requiring greater word lengths, will consist of either 40 or 64 pages. The length of things such as the afterword, author note, teacher guide, glossary, bibliography, etc., also plays a role in determining the overall length. (Mary Kole, 2015).

### 2.3 What is a picture book

Picture books serve as instruments of learning, sources of knowledge, and systems of communication. Picture books, as a unique genre, offer children a model for narrative language and a visual experience. Picture books can be utilized by children to develop an appreciation for art, acquire language skills, and enhance their understanding of their surroundings. The intricate nature of this form of visual art distinctively found in visual elements that make up illustrations inside the picture books is represented in artistic creations embodying aesthetic principles enhancing vision and perception. Barat (2007) stated that human existence involves various sensory experiences visual perception being one of them – the most important. For several decades researchers specialized in cognitive and developmental psychology have acknowledged that there is some correlation between the development of cognition among children and their visual perception.

There are different formal definitions of the picture book. According to certain scholars, a picture book is defined as one where the images have the main role in presenting the tale. Examples of these scholars include Nodelman (1988) and Sutherland & Hearne (1977). On the other hand, other scholars give more importance to the interaction between illustrations and text in defining a picture book. Examples of these scholars are Marantz (1977) and Schwarcz & Schwarcz (1991). Furthermore, some scholars make a distinction between picture books and illustrated books. John Stewig (1995) provides a definition of picture books as narratives conveyed by a combination of pictures and words. Illustrated books, on the other hand, are characterized by graphics that serve as an expansion of the text and contribute to the understanding of the story. This means any concept of what constitutes a picture book implies acknowledgement that both types of signs contribute to narration herein; thus becoming crucially important to understand the relationship between visuals and texts themselves. When it comes to kids' literature studies, Barbara Keifer (2008) explains why their comprehension level is so complicated because across a sequence of pages turning over there exist two systems with all their interplay and simultaneous presence. Although both sign systems convey meaning, each possesses distinct advantages. Words are more effective in conveying chronological information that progresses readers through time, whereas visuals are superior at conveying spatial information and are particularly powerful in invoking emotions (Kiefer, 2008). The readers of picture books face peculiar cognitive challenges because these art objects combine two kinds of

semiotic communication. Each source is perceived differently by readers when reading pictures since they need to understand both the pictures and the words. According to Schwarcz (1982) and Sipe (1998), written language is processed in a step-by-step manner, whereas the processing of visual art is mostly simultaneous. The inherent essence of the picture book necessitates readers to assimilate and amalgamate two disparate forms of information.

The inherent intricacy of the picture book format is apparent in Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott's (2001) examination of the interplay between pictures and text. These researchers have found five distinct links between pictures and text: The different ways in which words and illustrations can relate to each other are as follows: (1) symmetry, where they convey analogous meaning; (2) complementary, where they provide different but complementary information; (3) enhancement, where they extend each other's meaning; (4) counterpoint, where they tell different stories; and (5) contradiction, where they seem to conflict with one another. Images in picture books and written content were researched by Schwarcz (1982). Coupling and counterpoint are two principal ways he classified such interactions. It means that in a congruent relationship, text works together with pictures that are closely related to it naturally. The pictures either mirror, enhance, or expand upon the text, or the text and pictures alternate in conveying the narrative. In a connection of deviation, an image diverges or contradicts the text in some manner, or even acts as a contrasting element to the text. Readers may need to interpret textual and graphical information in different ways when dealing with the two sorts of interactions.

An illustrated picture book is a type of text where the images are crucial for the story's progression. Visual representations have the ability to elucidate, expand upon, or even challenge the interpretations conveyed in written information. In order to develop a reaction or interpretation, a reader must carefully analyze both the text and the accompanying visuals, and then integrate the meanings of both. According to semiotic theory, everything in the picture book is a sign and each one can contribute to the meaning of the book differently. Then, we will go on to describe these sections in detail and describe how they sum up to the general importance of this work.

Visual perception has a crucial role in children's ability to read and comprehend information, namely in terms of recognizing symbols and drawing (Rudolf Arnheim, 1974). As infants develop physically, they continuously gain knowledge and enhance their capacity to analyze and arrange visual information by rectifying past perceptual mistakes and assigning

significance to objects. The relationship between children and reading picture books is a cognitive process through which children seek information to fulfill their desire to acquire knowledge about themselves and the world around them. Picture books as artistic creations can enhance a child's visual vision thereby affecting their ability to comprehend information and derive meaning. As visual perception grows physiologically, and mentally during childhood, a child also develops his/her visual sense-making generalizations from observations on which he/she comes up with meanings from experience or symbolism that has been acquired over time. Visual perception of meaning depends on such parameters as the maturation of experience, ideas, and career aspects among others for elementary children.

*Children's Picturebooks: The Art of Visual Storytelling*, written by illustrator Martin Salisbury and children's literature professor Morag Styles tells us how children's picture books are created and which they consider as a powerful tool of communication (Salisbury and Styles, 2012). For instance, from ancient times people have been using visual storytelling to convey information or ideas; however, this kind of narrative has only existed for exactly 130 years. It was around this time that artist and illustrator Randolph Caldecott (1846-1886) started using images as a means of storytelling rather than just as decorative elements for text (figure 11).



Figure 11: Caldecott R., 1878, *Gilpin's Ride*, illustration from *'The Diverting History of John Gilpin'* by William Cowper

The picture book had significant growth and development during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period, according to Salisbury (2012, p.16), was called a golden age of children's picture books. This was due to advancements in printing technology, evolving

perspectives on childhood, and the emergence of highly talented painters, which all propelled it into a period of great success and achievement. The increasing literacy rates and rising middle-class aspirations fueled the need for children's books throughout the industrialized globe in the 19th century, with London being the focal point. The introduction of more advanced printing technologies made colour illustrations more affordable. As such, the artistically sophisticated English picture books gained momentum and flourished. Beatrix Potter was a London-raised woman who had framed Caldecott originals on display at her parents' elegant Kensington residence and dedicated her life to making books for children. The first of these, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (figure 12) quickly became popular and translated into several languages spread all over Europe and went as far as North America. These books were critical additions to public library collections all over the continent. Hence, during the initial three decades of the twentieth century, iconic literary works like *Curious George* or *Babar* stories were born. However, as Europe became engulfed in conflict, the availability of resources decreased and the scarcity of paper during the post-war period created a need to reduce publication expenses. However, due to the austerity of the time, there was a strong need for colour as a means of escape, which influenced the neo-romantic movement.

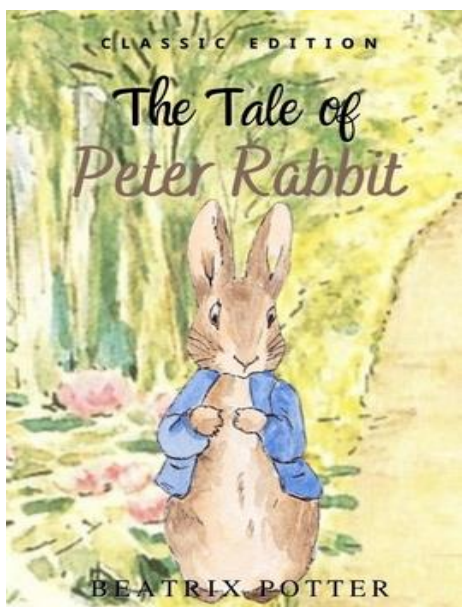


Figure 12: Potter B., 1902, *Peter Rabbit*



Figure 13: Rand P. (1957), *Sparkle and Spin*

A social change emerged in the 1950s where there was no longer a clear distinction between an artist and an author. This resulted in a group of famous graphic designers that started creating picture books to explore the visual thinking process. One interesting feature about this era is that it comprised children's picture books by Paul Rand, an acclaimed graphic designer who was both highly regarded and notoriously cantankerous. Together with his wife, Ann, they produced *Sparkle and Spin* (1957) (figure 13), *Little I* (1962), and *Listen! Listen!* (1970). These works are characterized by playful yet intellectual engagement with words, pictures, forms, sounds or ideas. Similarly Italian novelist Umberto Eco introduced semiotics to young readers within the same period: this academic discipline deals with signs and symbols.

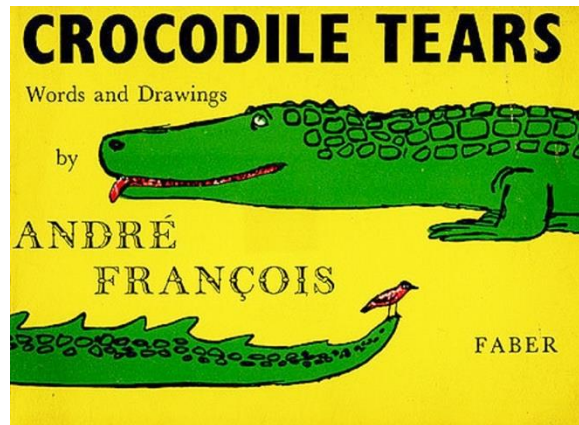


Figure 14: Francois, A, 1956, *Crocodile tears*

André François's book, *Crocodile Tears*, (figure 14) used an unconventional landscape structure to effectively convey and highlight the subject matter.

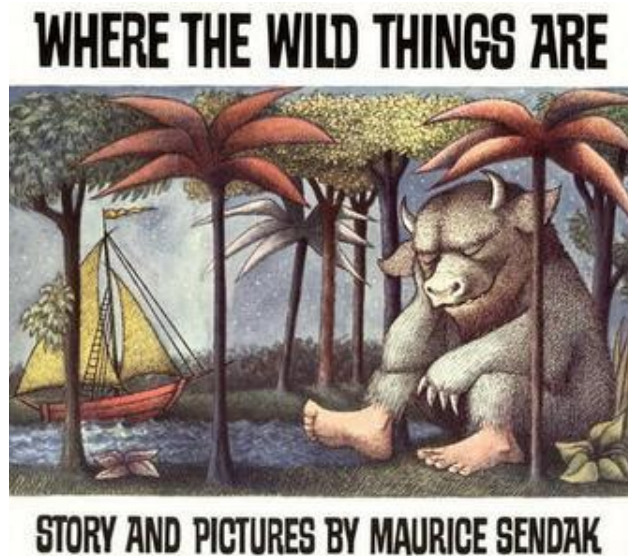


Figure 15: Sendak M, 1963, *Where the Wild Things are*

This was François's inaugural picture book as both the author and the illustrator. During the 1960s, a cohort of British artists, fresh out of art school, ushered in a new era of picture books characterized by vivid paint and colour. Many of these artists found ways to mix book illustration and painting as a means of earning a livelihood. During that time period, several highly significant picture books were created, including Maurice Sendak's much-adored masterpiece and Miroslav Šašek's enduring *This Is...* series. Miroslav Sasek's *This is...* series acquaints children with many countries and towns across the globe. What set them apart from other books of this kind was the artist's ability to observe and capture the specific and interesting details of various civilizations. The book *This is London* was released by MacMillan in 1959. Maurice Sendak is widely regarded as the most exceptional children's illustrator in history and was among the first to significantly influence educators, scholars, children, parents, and the artistic world. Although *Where The Wild Things Are* (figure 15), was not Sendak's initial picture book, it was the first to leave a significant impact on both children and adults. Curiously, the publication of this work sparked a great uproar, as some critics expressed concern that it would be excessively frightening for young readers. Typography has been seamlessly blended with illustration in Vladimir Radunchsky's art which perfectly complements Chris Raschka's lyrics in *Hip Hop Dog* (figure 16). However, what fascinates me most about this book is its examination of socially constructed

norms that continually evolve over time regarding appropriateness for children; it includes complex topics such as violence, sex death and mourning, and human rights abuses among others therefore transforming them into evocative story-telling devices accessible to people of all ages even though they were not originally intended for kids but for them. Even traditional narratives like the *Brothers Grimm fairy tales* and *Arabian Nights* which are treasured as great stories, were written primarily for children with dark and violent passages. Moreover, picture books have a long history of promoting radical political ideas. At present, picture books are of cultural significance to people of all ages. This type of art is extremely valuable and adaptable; it has gone beyond conventional paper-based media and has become fused with numerous other forms of art as well as objects. According to Salisbury and Styles (2012), the distinct abilities of children during their development also influence the appropriateness of visual texts in terms of style, creating certain contradictions and difficulties.

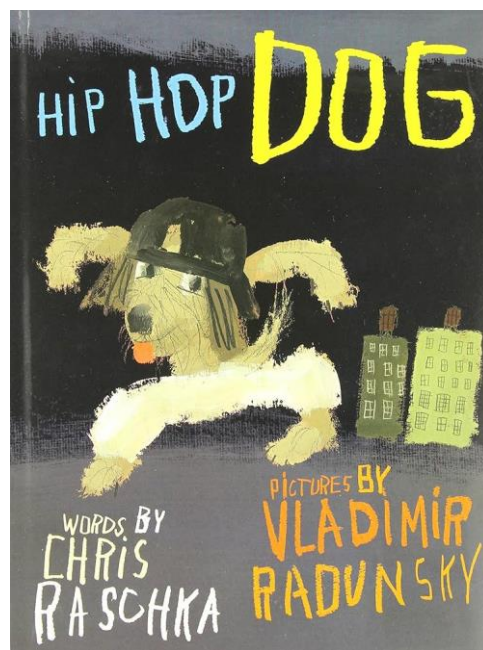


Figure 16: Radunsky V. (2010), *Hip Hop Dog*. [book cover]

A crucial aspect of early childhood education and development is children's picture books. These books have both visual and written components that make them unique in terms of cognitive, emotional, and social support to the little ones; this chapter discusses various aspects of the picture book as a medium stressing on its role in literacy acquisition, nurturing imagination and emotional intelligence as well as promoting intercultural understanding.

Vocabulary development in young children greatly depends on picture books. Using pictures and words together helps children understand new words within their original context by looking at their use with other words. (Ercan Çer, 2016, p.93)

Language structure is learnt from picture books. Sentence construction, grammar, and narrative flow are some of the concepts children pick up after repeated readings. Reading comprehension is fostered through the interaction between text and illustrations. In addition to knowing how to read pictures to get meaning out of them or predict story endings through them by using visual cues during reading process, kids also learn some basic visual literacy skills which include an understanding of color, shape, perspective among others that aids in visual communication.

Relationships between people are often depicted in stories that enable understanding about social interactions among them; cooperation between individuals as well as empathy. Children can learn useful social skills from watching characters interacting with one another or sorting conflicts out amicably.

According to Nikolajeva (2013), children's picture books are important for cognitive, emotional, and social development. By telling stories visually through images combined with written language, these books improve reading skills while stimulating creative imagination in children thereby developing emotional intelligence and cultural competence among many other things such as love for reading which lasts a lifetime for all ages including adults who share storybooks with their kids; it also helps strengthen parent-child bonds through shared reading experiences. Picture books have remained relevant because they provide educational opportunities besides being favorite sources for early child teachings.

## 2.4 How Picture Books Play a Role in a Child's Development

In childhood education, developing critical thinking abilities is important because young minds need to be prepared for an increasingly elaborate world. Within this specific context, picture books play a major, but often unrecognized role in assisting develop essential cognitive abilities in children necessary for their mental growth. These are forms that boost a child's literacy and language knowledge from an early age all through their growing years. Additionally, it offers amusement since it has coloring images that attract readers' interests making reading enjoyable for both children and adults.

These two considerations alone confer a substantial significance on picture books in a child's life. According to Lisa Ciecierskil, et al (2018, p.124), in the professional sector of picture books, there has been a recent increase in the number of fascinating new genres. These branches comprise different types of literature such as post-modern picture books. Such kind of literature highlights design features like strategic text placement, diverse font sizes, and three-dimensional pictures among others. Furthermore, it veers away from typical plot structures which incite readers into engaging with intricate content on intellectual grounds. Hybrid picture books combine verse and prose, incorporate various forms of information, blend different styles, and serve multiple purposes. These genres provide readers with novel methods of constructing significance. They can also act as an invitation to educators and readers to explore fresh viewpoints and new possibilities for using these categories of picture books, as well as various other sorts of picture books, for instructional purposes.

Critical thinking is commonly acknowledged as a fundamental aspect of mental growth, involving the capacity to scrutinize information, form logical conclusions, and proficiently resolve difficulties. As children go from the initial phases of education to more advanced academic endeavours, the development of critical thinking abilities becomes of utmost importance. These skills not only improve academic outcomes but also form the basis for lifelong informed decision-making and innovative problem-solving capabilities. On another level though is the fact that these sorts of stories make use of pictures intertwined with sentences so as to appeal specifically to children's audiences. According to Julian Rodd (2012), the visual narratives not only captivate the imaginations of young individuals, but they also offer a multimodal experience that actively involves both the language and visual regions of the brain.

This distinctive amalgamation produces an ideal setting for cultivating critical thinking abilities in a comprehensive manner. However, picture books can help kids think critically about what they see around them too; there exists a wide range of such publications addressing crucial social-emotional themes including empathy diversity or solving problems amongst others. Therefore, adults could discuss these issues with kids who would then appreciate various thoughts originating from other communities thereby making them become more logical thinkers even long after being born yet thus cannot fully engage in such reasoning on their own apart from instruction by teachers or parents in this case. Picture books frequently feature narratives that depict characters encountering various problems, conflicts, or riddles. By interacting with these narratives, children are stimulated to engage in critical thinking, contemplating various options and assessing the potential outcomes of alternative decisions. By engaging in this narrative inquiry, children enhance their problem-solving abilities and acquire a more profound comprehension of cause-and-effect connections, which in turn cultivates a more advanced approach to decision-making. Parents too can engage their children in picture books and enhance their ability to make predictions about future events in the story. This is important as it helps develop children's abilities to reason out logically and infer as well. As a result of this particular skill being practiced, the students are learning how to think critically and use evidence to justify their predictions. Adults may foster increased critical thinking abilities in children by posing questions such as "What factors influenced the character's decision?" or "What emotions might the character be experiencing in this situation?" This prompts children to analyze and assess the tale, so enhancing their ability to think critically.

Also, picture books might facilitate children in establishing links between the narrative and their personal encounters. When children can establish connections between the events in a book and their own experiences, they are actively participating in critical thinking. Adults can foster children's reflection and critical thinking by posing questions such as "Can you recall a moment when you empathized with the character in the narrative?" or "How would you have responded in that circumstance?" This prompts children to contemplate their own experiences and analyze their connection to the story.

Picture books can serve as a valuable instrument for educating children about diverse thoughts and perspectives. Adults may enhance children's critical thinking skills by exposing

them to diverse stories from many cultures and backgrounds, helping them to analyze and assess alternative viewpoints and concepts.

Parents too can engage their children in picture books and enhance their ability to make predictions about future events in the story. This is important as it helps develop children's abilities to reason out logically and infer as well. As a result of this particular skill being practised, the students are learning how to think critically and use evidence to justify their predictions.

The interrelationship between picture books and the development of analytical thinking in small children is undeniable. The world of visual storytelling for younger readers creates curiosity, problem-solving skills, and analytic thinking. It is important as childhood education evolves that we accept and embrace picture books as a tool for developing critical thinking in future generations. This can be done by inserting those texts which are deliberate into the teaching process. By purposefully fusing instruction with picture books, the next generation will have acquired the necessary skills to navigate through changes in their environment.

Children's picture books are significant not only for their literary merit but also for their crucial role in the formative reading process of young readers. Illustrations are linked to the early phases of reading and serve the purpose of aiding youngsters to comprehend that written text carries significance even before they are able to read it themselves (Harms, 1998). If the author has effectively fulfilled their role, the primary purpose of images in a child's picture book is to elucidate the text (Heins, 1987). Illustrations are crucial for the development of emergent readers as they aid in the process of decoding text, enhancing recall and comprehension skills, and facilitating vocabulary acquisition and development.

It is difficult to think of illustrations and artworks without considering them along with words when looking at some of the best illustrative texts ever written. In fact, they are inseparable at times (Butler, 1987). Children who get exposed to only these elements may lack a complete reading experience. According to Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson (2003), using images within texts in picture books enhances comprehension abilities among struggling readers. In a separate investigation conducted by Beck and McKeown (2001), it was cautioned that children may develop a strong reliance on illustrations during read-aloud scenarios. Consequently, their

attention becomes fixated on the visuals, causing them to lose focus on the linguistic aspects of the stories being read to them.

## CHAPTER 3 CREATIVE PROCESS: ILLUSTRATING CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK

### 3.1 Why dogs

Even if you are not a dog owner, you have probably seen a dog in your life. Four legs, hairy (or not), tongue out, perked ears, nose moving trying to sniff something you cannot smell, tail wagging from left to right. What is so special about this creature, you ask? The thing is, until a dog chooses to enter your life, you will not know their secret. And it is rather simple – unconditional love.

Although the question of whether animals are capable of complex emotions like humans has been the subject of much discussion, the fact remains that dogs can form extremely strong bonds with their owners, which more than makes up for the challenges that come with dog ownership. Yes, having a dog is not all fun and games, it is almost like raising an eternal child that never leaves the nest. And when people start buying or adopting dogs, because they think it will be easy and fun, it becomes a problem. As you can already understand, this master's thesis project will be all about dogs. My three years of caring for a dachshund named Rudolph—yes, like Santa's reindeer—inspired this effort, and I decided to mark his presence in my life by creating a picture book that will also involve the dogs of my friends and acquaintances.

Throughout most of human history dogs have served as protectors, helpers, and companions in addition to sources of inspiration and awe. They have been immortalized in various art forms including paintings, sculptures, prints photography even large-scale balloon-like structures. Despite the passage of centuries, dogs continue to serve as our friends and embody the ideals of protection, loyalty, and unwavering affection. It is evident why they have played a significant and prominent role in our visual history for such a prolonged period.

The historical significance of dogs in earlier civilizations continues to captivate us. In recent years, there has been a growing fascination with the process of dog domestication and the development of contemporary canine breeds.

The scientific community continues to debate the controversial subject of the origin and evolution of the domestic dog, specifically on fundamental features such as the specific

location and timeframe of its genesis, as well as the number of cases in which dogs were domesticated.

As per Adam Freedman and Robert Wayne (p. 282, 2016) domestic dog is the earliest carnivore species that has undergone significant domestication. Due to their cognitive superiority as well as their behavioural traits, domestic dogs were selected for different roles such as hunting herding or simply companionship. Elaine A Ostrander et al. (2017, p. 706) state that domestication occurred during two phases: initial domestication from feral grey wolves into proto-dogs which were then further refined into the progenitors of modern breeds.

Following the original domestication of dogs, which occurred approximately 15,000 to 30,000 years ago, individuals selectively chose dogs with exceptional hunting, guarding, and herding abilities to serve as their companions, based on their specific requirements. Dogs were utilized both in warfare and as affectionate companions, serving purposes such as providing fur and meat, as well as being loyal and reliable companions. At the moment, there exist around 350 different dog breeds each having unique characteristics and behaviors.

Elaine Ostrander and Heidi Parker, two geneticists from the National Human Genome Research Institute in Bethesda, Maryland along with their colleagues spent twenty years collecting DNA samples from dogs. They accomplished this by attending dog shows, contacting dog enthusiasts, and seeking assistance from various sources worldwide. In certain instances, they also utilized pre-existing data. Their focus was not on investigating the process and timeline of dog domestication, but rather on understanding the development of all dog breeds. Their current sample comprises 1346 canines, with 161 distinct breeds, which accounts for little less than fifty per cent of the total dog population. According to the study by Heidi Parker et al (2017), through the analysis of 150,000 genetic markers on each dog's genome, a family tree was constructed. The categorization of many breeds based on their shared occupational roles implies that ancient breeders probably selectively developed dogs for specialized functions, prioritizing the care and breeding of those who excelled in guarding or herding tasks. Subsequently, throughout the course of the last two centuries, individuals have further separated those bigger collectives into distinct breeds.

Dogs have been integral to human history from prehistoric times. According to Joshua Mark (2018), the ancient temple of Gobekli-Tepe in Turkey, which dates back to at least 12,000 years BCE, has yielded archaeological evidence of domesticated dogs in the Middle East. This is the earliest evidence of any domestication that was found at the Natufian Grave dug up at Ein Mallaha in Israel about 12,000 BCE. There was an old man buried with his dog in this grave. Dogs held great importance in many ancient cultures and were generally seen as very important just like they are now. They were cherished family members as well as loyal companions, hunters and protectors among other roles.

Egyptians and Greeks had such respect for dogs that they named two of the most prominent stars - Sirius and Canis Major – after them. In the Christian post-Classical period, dogs became symbols of virtue through visual representation. St Dominic would often be depicted being accompanied by a dog which later on became symbolic of faithfulness and loyalty to the Dominican order. In Renaissance and Baroque paintings, dogs were frequently depicted at religious or spiritual rites. The Arnolfini Wedding Portrait painted by Jan Van Eyck is famous for including a small canine figure in its foreground; this represents both fidelity within marriage and pure love.

If you have maintained a pet dog before, it would not require the thinking abilities of a veterinarian for one to understand that dogs are social beings. According to Stanley Coren (2001), dogs as belonging to the *Canis familiaris* species, have been strongly geared towards living in groups or herds. They require significant attention and exhibit behaviours that indicate their ability to form social bonds and kinship with other animals, including humans. Remarkably, thousands of years of evolution and hundreds of years of domestication have resulted in the development of social-cognitive capacities in domestic dogs which are very similar to those found in young children. Michael Tomasello and Juliane Kaminski (2009) assert that canines can be communicated with using both verbal and non-verbal means. Dogs can understand and react to different forms of human communication such as voice modulations, body gestures, hands movements and other behaviors. Dogs exhibit numerous communication mechanisms that mirror their surroundings, especially those of their owners. These kinds of communication can take the form of eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, communication via tastes, smells (hence the phrase “the nose knows”), pheromones and vocalization such as growling, purring and

barking among others. Humans give messages to others about their intentions or feelings through body language and other forms of communication. However they can still communicate without words like humans do. Dogs are able to connect with each other and human beings by using non-verbal language even though it is inaudible.

The research done by Attila Andics et al (2014) showed that dogs demonstrate affection towards their owners and other animals in various ways such as wagging tails, licking and nibbling. Dogs' brains become active when responding to voices just like those of humans according to a study that used MRI technology. This means that dogs have an ability to distinguish different emotional sounds hence making them compassionate companions for people. Without doubt this emotion is inherent in people too. As social beings, humans also exhibit affection, friendliness, happiness, fear, melancholy, empathy, playfulness, aggression, and various more clearly categorized emotions.

Similarly to people, dogs can also experience negative emotions that might influence their behaviour. Although humans and dogs have developed a generally stable connection rooted in trust within the context of the family, owners may encounter challenges when attempting to restore trust with their pets once it has been lost.

According to Genevieve Timpone (2024), humans' top companions for at least 14,000 years have been dogs. Ancient art from Pompeii and China indicates that the origins of using dogs to help the disabled are not clear but they guided blind people as these pieces depict. A Frenchman named Valentin Haüy established the First Institute for Blind Children in 1785 and introduced the idea of utilizing canines to assist people who had problems with their sight. Though it took time after World War I before modern Guide Dog movement was created. The War Dogs were reassigned from their military duties to help many soldiers who had lost their sight because of war and exposure to mustard gas. This led to the establishment of official Guide Dog training programs since they proved effective at returning soldiers' independence. The range of tasks which dogs could do also broadened as knowledge about dog's abilities improved. Dr. Bonita "Bonnie" Bergin introduced the idea and term 'Service Dog' in 1975. Dr. Bergin discovered that canines may be trained not just to help people with sight problems, but also to assist with mobility and psychological issues. Guide Dogs were the only Service Dogs recognized by law in America until 1990. However, with the enactment of the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities were permitted to be accompanied by their Service Dog in public places. From Guide Dogs to Psychiatric Service Dogs, Mobility Dogs, and Medical Alert Dogs – these amazing dogs perform an incredible range of services. Although the actual beginnings of dog assistance remain unknown; one thing is for sure: the human-canine bond predates written history.

Having in mind all of the above, the reader can understand why dogs are such beloved characters in children's literature. The author of this project also decided to use these animals and give them human characteristics.

### 3.2 Coming up with the story idea

Taking into consideration all of the aforementioned factors, I concluded that featuring dogs as the primary protagonists in a children's picture book would be an excellent concept. Dogs, as social creatures, can display human characteristics in real life, making it easy for youngsters to connect with stories involving animals.

Upon conceiving the notion that the book would center around canines, I also desired for the narrative to possess a touch of amusement, with an instructive backdrop. Upon analysis, I concluded that the book should target a younger demographic, as children as young as three years old enter a developmental stage where they engage in contact with peers and acquire the concept of friendship. This book aims to provide insight into the concept of friendship and offer guidance on how to identify and establish meaningful connections with others. Rudy, my dachshund, is seeking companions at the park. Rudy's inability to establish meaningful connections with others hinders his ability to develop friends. This is evident in situations where he intrudes on their play, interrupts their lunch, or disrupts their sleep, leading to their dislike of him. Following Rudy's interactions with other canines, experiencing frustration and nearly abandoning his efforts, he becomes aware of a poodle detecting his scent from behind. To establish a friendship, dogs can just engage in a gentle act of sniffing each other, which serves as a means of getting acquainted. Meanwhile, while reading, a parent can provide an explanation of how dogs and people go about forming connections.

The rationale behind my creation of a story centered around friendship is quite straightforward. I believe that friendships hold significance throughout all stages of life and are essential for every individual. I believe it is crucial to instruct children from a young age on how to effectively engage with others and form friendships with individuals who share similar interests.

### 3.3 Mood Board and References

Before starting sketching and coming up with the storyboard, I started my research of children's book market. This chapter is dedicated to some of my favorite books about dogs.

*Gaston* - by Kelly DiPucchio, illustrated by Christian Robinson 2015



Figure 17: DiPucchio K, *Gaston*, illustrations

This is a charming picture book for kids with exquisite pictures. Though they are a bit of outcasts in the other home, two puppies who are switched at birth find that dynamic natural. That novel is about being unique and still fitting in. With children, the story might serve as a conversation starter about accepting who you are—a unique person with all of your eccentricities and imperfections. The dog faces in these very straightforward graphic-style images effectively capture their feelings. I grin a lot at the stylized forms of the dogs. I am in amazement and astonishment by Christian Robinson's pictures. Some find incredibly realistic technical illustrations amazing, but I find it amazing when an illustrator can infuse their work with a great deal of style while also capturing every emotion the tale demands. That's a genuine talent. Just stunning are the illustrations. Super cute pictures and a super cute narrative.

*The Perfect Dog* - Kevin O'Malley 2016



Figure 18: O'Malley K., *The Perfect Dog*, illustrations

An endearing tale about a young girl's quest to discover the ideal canine companion. Does she want short-haired or long-haired dog? Would she like a dog that is quick or one that is slow? A big one or small... She will learn that any dog will suit her needs.

On one hand, the illustration style here is realistic, we can understand what dog breed it is at a first glance, but on the other, it is still cartoonish, reminding of Disney characters.

The author of the project was really inspired by the technique.

*Coco where are you?* Cinta Arribas 2016



Figure 19: Aribas C., *Coco, where are you*, illustrations

The author is in search of their canine companion named Coco. They became separated in the park during our leisurely stroll. Coco is neither lengthy nor tedious, neither rosy nor mischievous, neither diminutive nor timid... Could the reader assist the, in locating the dog?

This book has a lovely illustration style. Shape, texture, and color are all exaggerated in every character. Visuals resemble a collage.

*That dog!* Nanette Newman 1980

An enchanting bittersweet story about a boy Ben that assumes that his dog Barney can do anything at all possible and impossible. Above everything else, Barney loves his owner Ben just as much as Ben loves Barney. Barney also enjoys singing, digging, and snatching lamb chops. There is no substitute for that dog. Ben tentatively comes to terms with the fact that he can accept another unique kind of dog following Barney's death.

Nanette Newman has combined her stunning artwork with evocative prose to create a beautiful and touching story of love and loss. It is so important for children to explore such dark themes as death of a loved one.

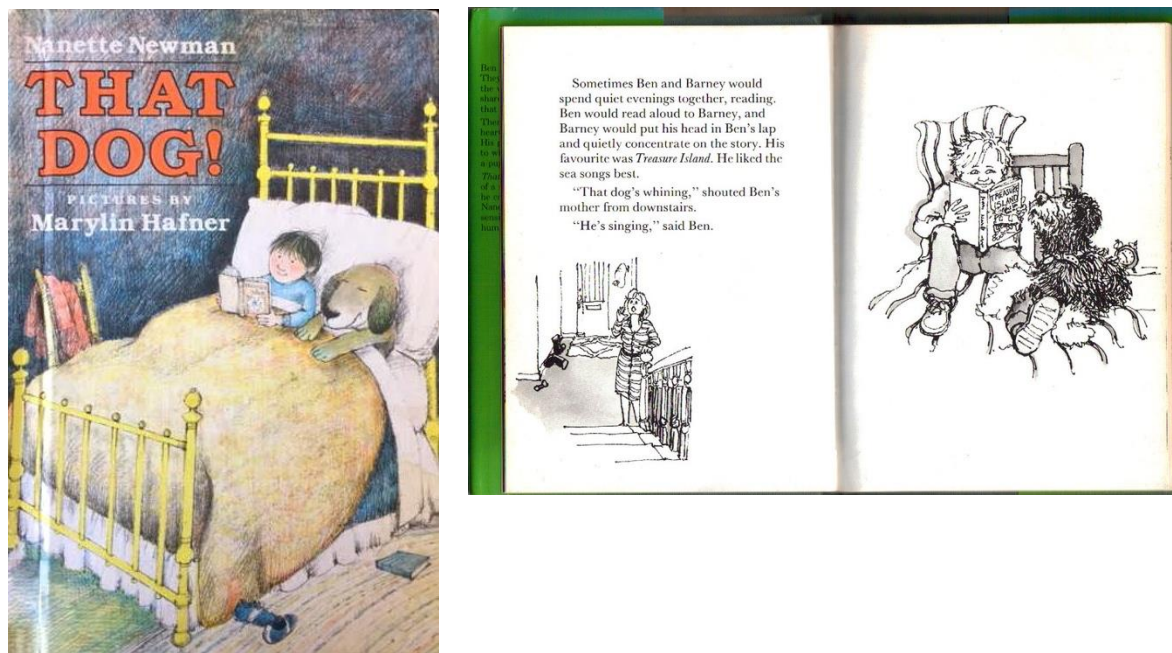


Figure 20: Hafner M., *That dog*, illustrations

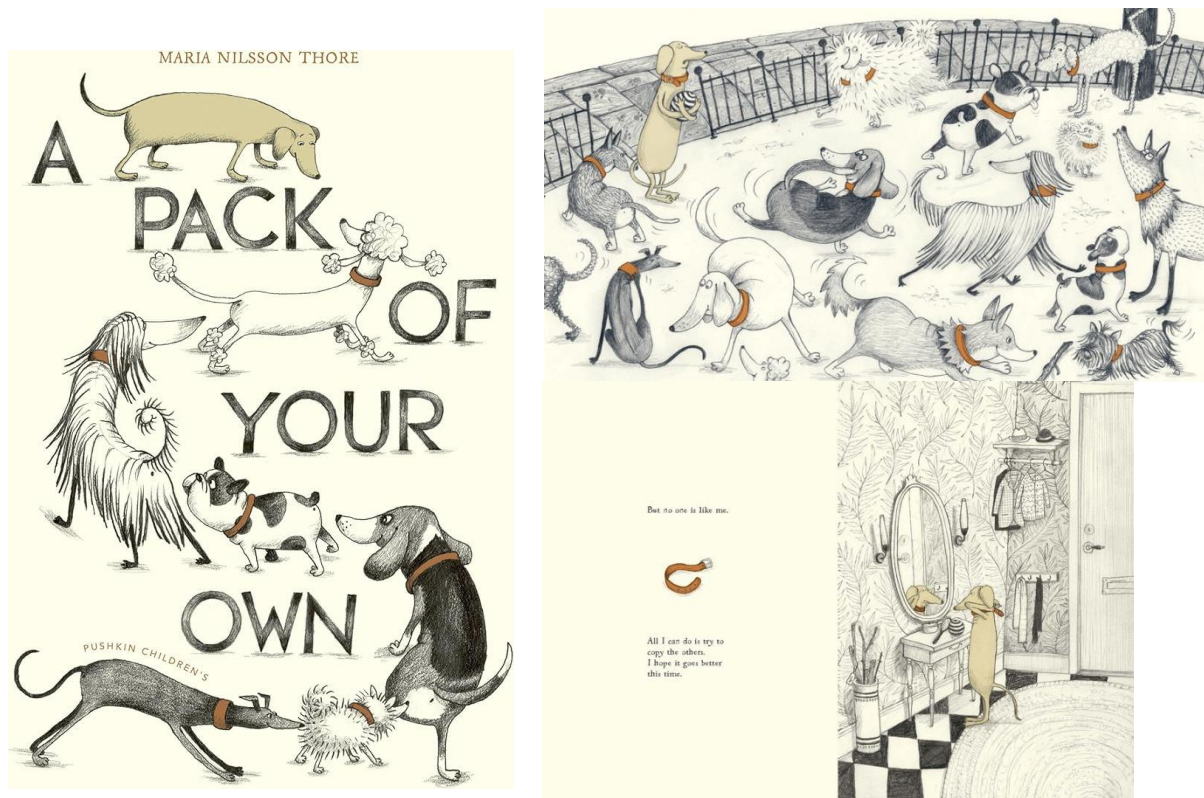


Figure 21: Nilsson M., *A pack of your own*, illustrations

A lonely dachshund yearns for companionship, although whenever the diminutive sausage dog visits the park, they struggle to assimilate. He is limited to seeing the other canines engaging in play and enjoying themselves. However, one day, a companion arrives... 'A Pack of Your Own' is an endearing, yet humorous tale that looks into the world of relationships within the canine society. Through beautifully drawn pictures, readers are prompted to reflect upon the nature of friendship by posing thought-provoking inquiries. To what extent should one modify their behavior to gain acceptance and recognition from others? Is it necessary for us to possess similarity in order to establish a friendship? Can two dogs living as companions be best friends when their nature is so opposite?

*How to be your dog's best friend* Elena Bulay 2023

An exquisitely depicted manual on the proper maintenance of your canine companion. In this book the reader meets Lena and Jo, her adopted canine partner! Lena's magnificent illustrations provide an honest account about how she built up a strong bond between herself and Jo, who became inseparable from her. It also acts as a comprehensive guidebook filled with useful information on looking after your own pet for life.

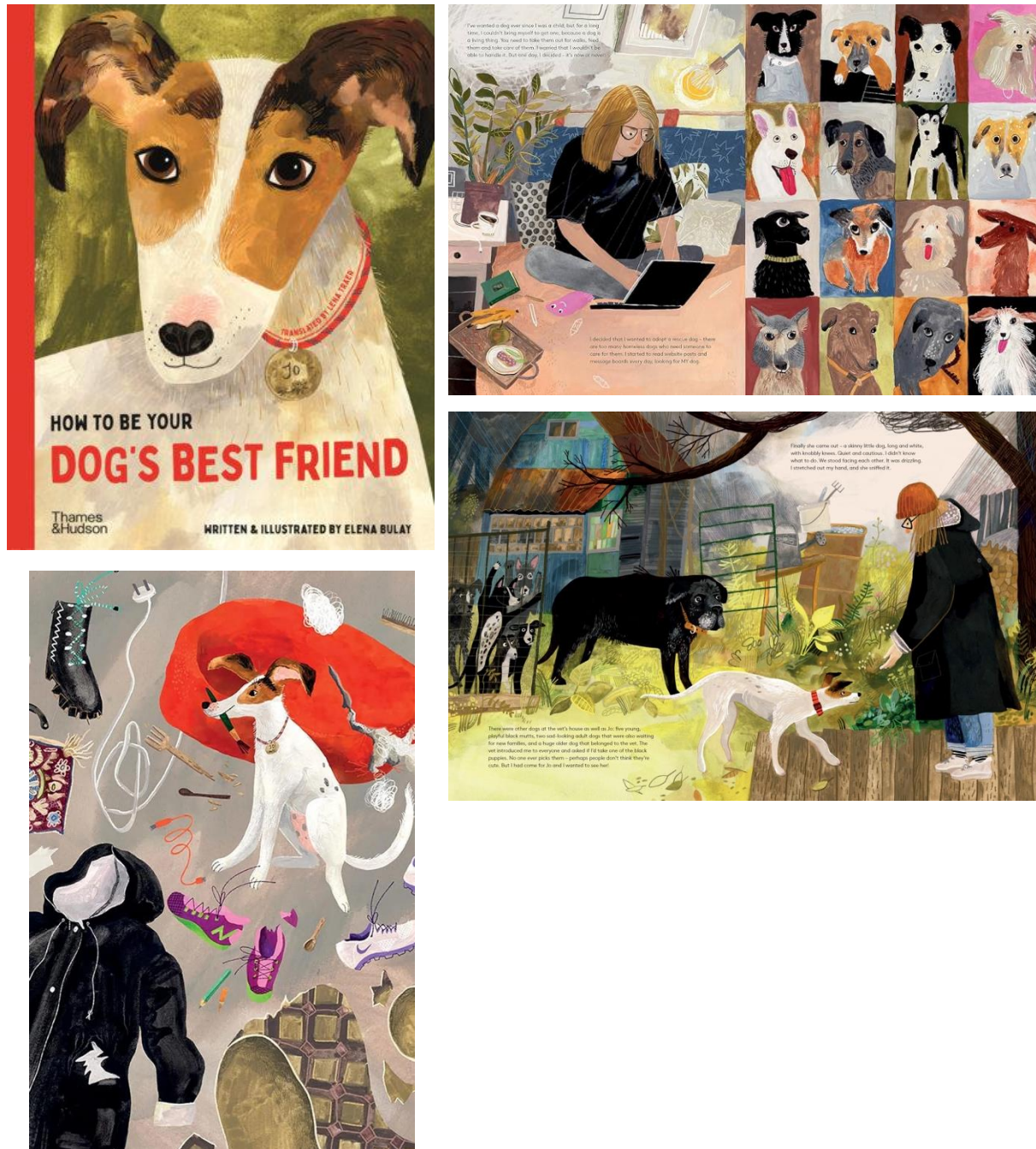


Figure 22: Bulay E., *How to be your dog's best friend*, illustrations



Figure 23: Heena B, *I am a dog*, illustrations

This is an emotionally evocative narrative written by the renowned Korean author of picture books, Baek Heena. The books frequently evoke Claymation films, including characters that are sculptures meticulously constructed and photographed in small-scale film sets. The narrative provides insight into the adoption of a puppy named Guseuli by the family of a five-year-old child named Dongdongi, as seen from the dog's point of view. Guseuli experiences profound longing for its mother and sibling puppies, and if it detects the sound of canines crying nearby, Guseuli feels compelled to react, since they could potentially be its own kin. Guseuli's current existence primarily revolves around patiently anticipating the return of its human cohabitants in the vacant dwelling. The user is curious about the reasons behind Dongdongi and Grandmother's frequent stumbling and anger during their joint walks. Guseuli fails to see the reason for being penalized for soiling the bed subsequent to consuming unhealthy food. However, Guseuli truly becomes an integral part of the family and both receives and gives unwavering love from Dongdongi.

While conducting the research for the moodboard, it was clear that there are thousands of beautifully illustrated books where dogs play the main part. All of the artists are using the artistic mediums that they tamed throughout the years. Being a beginner illustrator, the author of this project decided to stick to what they already knew and what they were comfortable with. That is why the illustrations would be created digitally on an iPad in an application called Procreate.

Having already determined the target audience's age group – 0-5, it was decided to use a limited color palette and somewhat simple shapes. Although, oversimplifying was not the goal. The aim was to preserve the real appearance of the characters, adding a cartoonish twist to them.

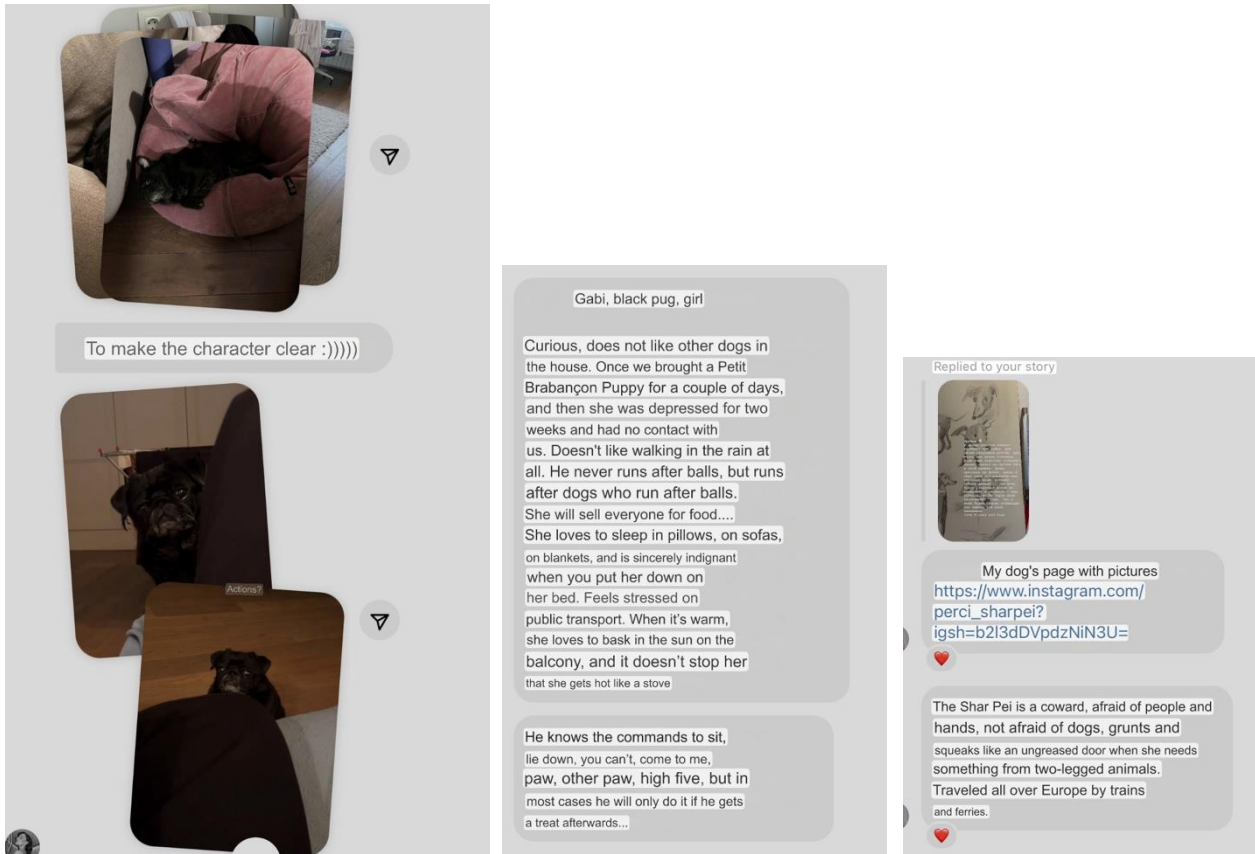
### 3.4. Developing the Project

After deciding on the main characters of the book and the style, the author posted on their social media encouraging their friends to send pictures of their dogs and tell a bit about their character, habits, and behavior. Having had received the necessary feedback, the author started sketching the characters. Everything that the dog's owners wrote about their furry friends was used as research of dog's behavior as a species to form the story.

At first, there were grand ideas for the book. The initial thought was to create a story about a dog that travelled from Russia to Portugal and now is settling there, trying to find new friends. But the author had to adjust their expectations due to the limited time frames. This is when the work started.



First step: asking people for help



### Second step: receiving the stories about dogs

The author received many stories and pictures of their friends' dogs. These are examples of some of the messages.

### Third step: sketching real life characters

After having gathered all the photos, it was time to start researching dogs' anatomy, facial expressions,

The sketches were made in a sketchbook with a graphite pencil. They were later used as reference for the characters throughout all the drawing process.



Forth step: forming the story plot

As the reader can notice, the story was always revolving about one topic: friendship. That is why it was decided to make the story a bit simpler and start working. As the author had the first hand experience with their own dog, they decided to base the story on the original experience. The backgrounds of the illustrations were inspired by Estrela Garden where the author goes to walk their dachshund. The interactions with other dogs are also somewhat real. The thing is the main character is actually a very anxious dog, who is afraid of many things, starting from plastic bags. Nevertheless, he is really open to communication and ready to make friends and play. It was decided from the beginning that the happy ending will be complete with the help of author's dog's best friend – a black poodle, as they know each other for a long time.

These canine interactions can be easily transferred into human realm. Friendship is an essential and inseparable part of human existence, crucial to our overall state of being and contentment. The requirement of it encompasses emotional, psychological, and even bodily elements, highlighting its significance in several facets of our life.

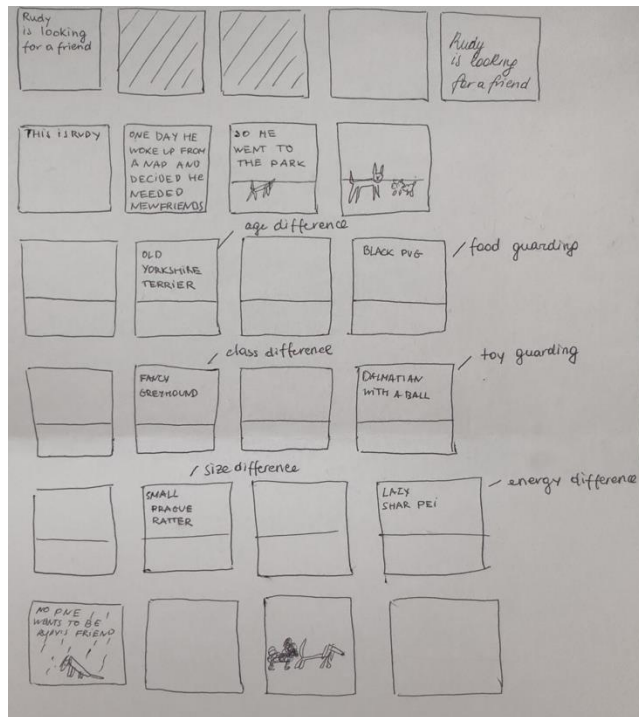
### Fifth step: storyboard

1 This is Rudy. He has a big nose  
 2 Rudy is meeting his friend in the park  
 3 His friend has a black curly fur  
 4 In order to find his friend, Rudy needs to sniff every dog in the park.

Dogs: prague ratter  
 shar pei  
 beagle  
 pug  
 dachshund  
 greyhound  
 dalmatian  
 samoyed  
 yorkshire terrier  
 cat?  
 Preston poodle

?  
 is this Rudy's friend?  
 and this?  
 what about this one?  
 is this his friend?

At first, the plot was revolving around sniffing. Main character Rudolph was supposed to sniff all the dogs in the park in order to find his friend - a black poodle. But after another consideration, some adjustments were made.



### Final storyboard

When thinking about the final story plot, the author came back to the messages of my friends about their dogs. For example, the black pug did not like other dogs and did not like to share her food, the Yorkshire terrier was very old and did not have energy to play with others, the shar-pei was so big, she simply did not perceive smaller dogs, the greyhound's owner bought her beautiful outfits and did not let her play with others. That is why the decision was made to base the story on real life and real dogs.

### Sixth step: choosing color palette

Because the book's target audience is children from 0 to 5, it was decided to use a limited color palette with calm pastel hues. The main colors would be – brown, black, white, grey – for the main characters, light blue, green, yellow for the background.

### Seventh step: drawing style

It was important for the author not to oversimplify the characters style. Even though this book is aimed at the youngest readers, it was essential to save the similarity to real life.



Some of the drawings before we decided to use less textures and details and before omitting dog's owners' faces from the picture in order to make them more relatable for young readers.

### Eighth step: technique

The technique used here is achieved by drawing by hand on an iPad in Procreate application. The author chose a limited number of brushes and tested them. The choice was fallen upon brushes that have a bit of texture, because there a lot of nature scenes in the book.

### Ninth step: layout

After the illustration process was finished, it was time to export all of the drawings from Procreate to InDesign and begin the layout process. For the text Verveine font was used because it looks fun and playful.

3.5 Final Version





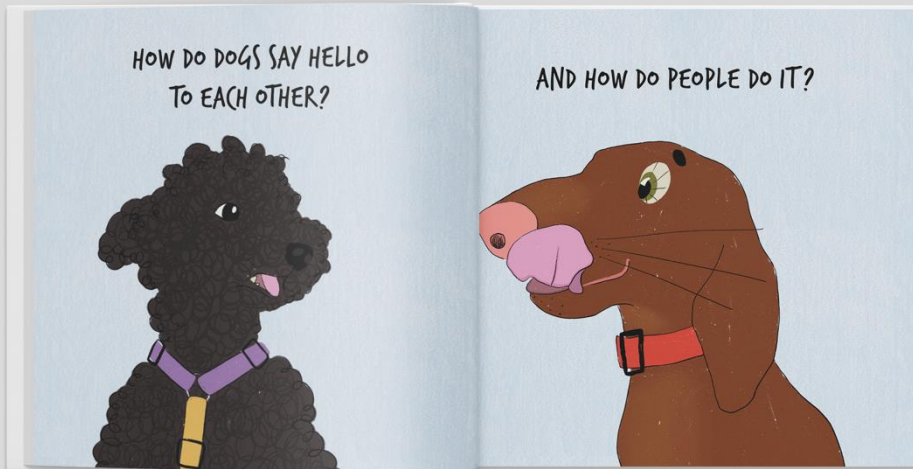












## Conclusion

This thesis has discovered the manifold aspects of childhood, its historical development and how picture books are highly significant for the cognitive, emotional, and social growth of children. This means that by answering the research questions and attaining the set objectives a lot of worthy insights have been received.

Firstly, childhood has not always been what it is today; it has changed considerably over time in response to cultural, social and economic factors. Initially seen from a point of view of practicality and economics, this view of childhood was gradually replaced by one that recognized the unique developmental needs and rights of children. This paradigm shift has been essential in shaping contemporary educational and psychological thinking about childhood.

Secondly, the author discovered that picture books play an indispensable role in children's growth. They are more than just things that kids read to pass time but are fundamental components for enhancing reading ability as well as nurturing creativity and empathy. Juxtaposing images with words can help kids understand complex concepts, enhance their language abilities or appreciate human interactions at different levels. In this way, illustrated texts allow children to get to know their own minds, while they also become aware of how they relate to others within society, which in its turn enables them to develop in all aspects.

Additionally, this study also considered ways through which picture books can be beneficial for teaching communication skills to young people, thereby enabling them foster friendships. These narratives encourage self-awareness in children so that they express themselves, consider others' opinions and viewpoints; then consequently learn to establish relationships alongside communities' functioning.

Also, the author explored the historical beginnings of children literature as well as some key events that molded it into a rich market it is now. Starting from early didactic stories, up to modern diverse inclusive narratives, the paper analyzed wider societal changes through which children's literature has gone through like any other genre. The main children book's authors were also mentioned in this project. More than just being entertainers, these giants of

children's literature have also been educators and mentors to many generations of young people, thus affirming their lasting impact.

Moreover, the recent analysis of children's storybooks reveals an inclination towards more inclusive themes that are complex and diverse, hence pointing out where this genre is moving to. This is a growing recognition for providing different experiences and backgrounds in literature to promote all-inclusive perspective among youth as indicated by the new wave in children's books.

Through recording the creative process for developing a picture book, this project gave the author pragmatic ideas on conceptualization, development, and production stages. That was when it was learnt that it takes so much effort to come up with stories that engage children emotionally as well as meeting their developmental needs.

In summary, this paper has demonstrated how childhood can change and picture books are essential in enhancing the child development and helping them evolve different skills. This project considered historical context influencing children's reading material and appreciated creation behind every picture book. As it advances itself into the future, there is no doubt that this type of literature will always be one of those things that educate children from within as they continue grow up.

The project turned out to be an interesting journey and upon further testing could grow into a book series about a dog name Rudy that takes upon him a complicated task of teaching small children different things about this world. The first book that was produced is about making friends, which is a good starting point.

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