

Introduction subject in their pieces of literature



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Introduction

Many cultures have over time experienced real and dramatic changes in almost every sphere. As time elapses, people evolve. Consequently, there is a paradigm shift in the way people do things and handle various situations that come their way on daily basis. Child literature has been part of people's lives. It has however undergone tremendous changes over time from one generation to the next.

These changes are represented as stages in the lifetime of these generations. The timelines also depict a sense of peoples' perceptions and outlook on life, defining the norms and cultures that governed institutions at given times (Mulherin, 1982). Many factors have been considered to determine the depth of literature that the child is exposed to with much of this being centered on age and what the adults perceive the child to be.

Age

Child literature has been classified according to the stages of growth of the child. From infancy through to adolescence (this almost happens at the

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stages of twelve and thirteen), the child is given different classes of literature that is expected to bring up certain traits in them. The bridge between infant literature and adult literature is the young adult's literature.

This differs from the previous in both maturity level and the content that is represented. The literary skills that are employed are also different. Much of what appears in adult literature also features in literature designed for the children. McGuffey, for instance, alludes that fiction in its many forms such as " contemporary realism, fantasy and historical fiction, poetry, folk tales, legends, myths, and epics all occur in children literature" (McGuffey, 2001).

Non-fictional literature spans from subjects that range from literature to humanities. These subjects vary from social issues, biological studies to general sciences and ultimately deals in the earth as the prime topic. Books that are designed to be children's literature use many methods to pass across the message they are meant to convey, as such pictures that display both visual and audio texts are used to complete the cycle.

The evolution of Children literature

Children literature as it is known today, has borrowed a lot from the then adult literature. The fairy tales and other fictitious characters were all a part of adult history. Books that were to be used as educative materials went further than providing entertainment to the children, and as such were used to teach, impart moral lessons and improve on a child's ability to socialize with others effectively.

Other books were cautionary to the youth as they warned them on the consequences of operating within the set standards and rules that

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determined the norms of their people (Kubler-Ross, 1999). Children literature came into being at around the seventeenth century. Before then, children were overlooked and accorded little respect; they were considered a little less of humans and not much was done for them in relation to the literature they got.

Cliftons (2006) noted that children in the olden days had it rough with their literature laced with an abnormally barbaric and forceful streak often used to scare the children to get them behave as the parents wished. They were majorly used to caution children and as such the subject in their pieces of literature was either killed or severely punished for a wrong deed. By the end of the seventeenth century, following the publication of John Newberry's "A little pretty pocket book" for children, it dawned on the people that children literature should be a tool for entertainment rather than for education or castigation. This marked the beginning of the official publishing of children literature and as such, set the trend for the other writers and the generations of writers that came afterwards.

The roles of children literature in society

Children literature, as earlier stated can be used as an avenue to impart several life lessons to the students and thus be an educative tool. It can also be used to pass history from one generation to the next thus expanding the knowledge base of a given child (Hunt, 1995). Child literature in its own capacity could be used to mould character as a cautionary tool to the children that have indiscipline cases in the society.

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