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**RESPONSE TO LITERATURE:
EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL STUDIES**

THE NOTION OF CHILDHOOD AND THE CHILD AS IMPLIED READER (TEST CASE: "LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD")

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This article argues that there is a strong link between the notion of childhood in culture and the presuppositions about the child as implied reader. The term "implied reader" is used here in a slightly different manner than Iser's (1974). Following Hrushovski (1979) and Vodička (1942/1976) reference here is not made to a specific realization of the text by an individual reader but to the construct of the reading process, which is the intersubjective result of the realization of the text as assumed by the writer, consciously or unconsciously. Hence the question of the implied reader is involved with both prevalent norms and models of the literary system as well as with norms of reading and realization of the text which are subject to historical changes and fashions.

It is also assumed here that the question of the implied reader is more crucial for the understanding of the text in the case of children's literature than in literature for adults because society demands that the writer for children be more aware of the reader—the child—than the writer for adults. This is the case because, unlike writers of adult literature, children's writers have constraints imposed upon them which emerge not only from the literary system but equally from the education system, and are to a large extent the result of society's understanding of what the child *can* read and of what the child *should* read.

With these assumptions as a point of departure, two questions are raised in regard to the child as implied reader:

- (1) How does the notion of childhood determine the assumptions about the child as implied reader?
- (2) In what ways are those assumptions responsible for the character of the texts for the child, and how do the historical changes in the assumptions about the child as implied reader result in different texts?

THE NOTION OF CHILDHOOD

Twentieth century cultural and conceptual consciousness is almost obsessed by the mental, physical, and sexual problems of childhood. Our society views childhood as the most important period of life and tends to account for most of our adult behavior on the basis of childhood experience. However, this view of childhood is far removed from the one society held only two centuries ago: our concept of childhood simply did not exist then.

Ariès (1962) claims, as does recent research (Weber-Kellerman, 1979; Plessen & von Zahn, 1979), that society held a different view of childhood from the Middle Ages until the 17th century, when this view began to change. Until the 17th century children were not considered as any different from adults, and hence it was assumed that they had no special needs (meaning that there was neither an established education system nor any books for children).

In Medieval society and in the centuries that followed, the theological approach, as well as conditions of life, left no room for childhood. The conceptual framework of society ignored the characteristics distinguishing a child from an adult, the

the child was considered an integral part of adult society, sharing its dress, its rooms, its games, and its work. There was a unity of the world of the adult and the child which around the 16th century began to undergo a process of polarization, resulting in a new concept of childhood.

This new concept of childhood emerged in society as a result of certain processes including changes in the current ideas of the time. Surprising as it may seem, this preceded the well-known changes in social conditions, usually linked with the emergence of the notion of childhood, such as the industrial revolution, the emergence of the bourgeois class, and the drop in the child mortality rate. These things did undoubtedly also play a role in the development of the notion of childhood; however, the change in the ideological sphere meant that a distinct view of the child was in existence about one hundred years prior to such material changes.

As Ariès claims, the emergence of the notion of "the child" can be traced back to late 16th century religious paintings which used the child for religious purposes. The child was thus introduced as sweet, innocent, and angelic. Later as this iconography acquired a decorative function instead of a religious one, paintings of children took on non-religious themes and no doubt were at least partly responsible for the new awareness society came to have of children's special qualities of sweetness and innocence. These qualities led to the child's gradually becoming a source of amusement and relaxation for adults.

This new view of the child was first held within the family circle. In quite a short time people would no longer hesitate to admit the pleasure they obtained from their children and would refuse to stop molly-coddling them. In a way children were, like pets, a constant source of amusement for adults.

However, not long after this idea of childhood came to be accepted by society, a new view which contradicted it began to develop, especially among moralists and pedagogues within the Church who believed that children were both innocent and close to God. This was a good reason to isolate the child from the corrupting company of adults. Thus evolved a second notion of childhood which, in its concern for the spiritual well-being of the child, held that children should be educated and disciplined. With this new attitude there arose for the first time both psychological interest in the child and the need for an organized education system. Children were regarded from then on as delicate creatures who had to be safeguarded as well as reformed and molded. The way to reform children was through education and through books, the

main pedagogic vehicle. Hence, this social perception of childhood created for the first time both the need and the demand for children's books. This second notion of the child—the educative—became the framework for canonized children's literature. Children's books were written from then on with a certain idea of the child in mind, and when this notion changed, the texts for children changed as well.

Books written for children assumed that child readers differed from adult readers both in their capacity for understanding as well as in their needs, and that the texts produced for them should respond to their needs and capacities. In order to test these assumptions and to see how they were responsible for different implied readers, this author reviewed various versions of "Little Red Riding Hood." She chose this specific story first because it is a children's "classic," but even more so because its various versions manifest the diverse ways the child was perceived as implied reader in different periods, in both the child's capacity for comprehending and society's belief as to what the child should be exposed to. These ideas have changed drastically during the last three centuries and are manifested in the transformation of the "coddling" version of Perrault, to the "reasoning" version of Grimm, to the modern "protective" versions of the 20th century.

THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAIRY TALES IN THE 17TH CENTURY

While the notion of the child was in the process of being created, certain elements were transferred from the adult's world into the child's. Before fairy tales became the monopoly of children they were read and recounted over the centuries by adults and by children who shared their company. Thus, children were acquainted with fairy tales, but fairy tales were not considered as intended for children.

However, after the middle of the 17th century, an interesting and complex process ensued concerning the attitude towards fairy tales. Highbrow people considered the stories too simple for themselves, although they continued to regard them as suitable for children and people of the lower classes (see Ariès, 1962, pp. 95-98). On the other hand, a new interest in fairy tales made them a fashionable genre, and this was the motivation for creation of fairy tales based on the model of the traditional "naïve" texts. However, despite the fact that fairy tales were in fashion, it was assumed that they were written for the lower classes and children; adults of the upper classes could therefore enjoy them by pretending they were addressing children, which

was possible in the 17th century view of children as a source of amusement. Hence the reading of fairy tales by the highbrow was based on the silent agreement about two implied readers, the child and the highbrow adult, leaving much room for the writer to play between the two. This duality of readers and the sophisticated use of them can be discerned especially in the case of Perrault's "Little Red Riding Hood" with the obscure identity of the writer and the ambiguity of the text.

THE CASE OF PERRAULT

The attitude towards the culture of the child served as background as well as motivation and legitimation for Perrault's *Contes* (1697/1967), a collection of fairy tales, some of which, like "Little Red Riding Hood," were previously unknown as written texts (Soriano, 1978). Perrault's collection was followed by a prolific flow of fairy tales which flooded French literature in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Perrault's fairy tales aroused controversy almost from the very beginning, not only because they officially addressed children and at the same time were very sophisticated and ironical, but mainly because they were not signed by Perrault, the honorable member of the French Academy, but rather by his son Pierre Dormancour (who was 17 at the time of publication). The nature of the text and its questionable attribution raise at least two questions: First, why did the attribution of the text remain obscure? Secondly, to whom did the text really address itself?

The Obscure Attribution of the Text

The issue of the text attribution has been controversial for the last three centuries, with scholars apparently disagreeing over the identity of the author. Despite the fact that the texts were signed by the son of Perrault, they were already attributed to Perrault in his lifetime, and have been ever since. In volumes 1 and 37 of *Cabinet de Fées*, Perrault is already mentioned as the writer of *Contes*. Perrault himself never denied it, nor his being a writer in general, but at the same time he did his best to confuse the identity of the author of *Contes*. Perrault moreover, deliberately ignored the attempt to attribute the text to his niece Mlle. Lhéritier.

What can be the reasons for such manipulation of the writer's identity? It seems that the answer lies first in Perrault's high social status which meant that he, a member of the French Academy, could not afford to be officially recognized as the author of this sort of text. Secondly, and even more importantly, Perrault's game was only a part of a more

common game underlying the acceptability of fairy tales as a highbrow source of amusement. Highbrows enjoyed the duality of the writer in the same way they enjoyed the duality of the reader, having a silent agreement about both. However, in order to strengthen this duality the text had to provide unmistakable "evidence" in its ambiguous nature, and even more clearly through its satirical and ironical tone so as to leave no doubt about who was the "real" implied reader of the text in this game between the two implied readers.

THE AMBIGUITY OF THE TEXT AS A FUNCTION OF DUAL IMPLIED READERS

Since "Little Red Riding Hood" was not known in print until Perrault first published it in 1697, scholars still disagree as to whether Perrault could have based the text on oral tradition because the tragic ending was unheard of in the oral tradition. However, even the folklorist school which believes the text is originally an oral folktale seems to agree that Perrault elaborated the text and changed some of its formulaic structure in order to create something more sophisticated.

While breaking formulaic structures, Perrault was very careful to keep the illusion of the model of the oral tale, especially from the stylistic point of view. He not only used elements that demonstrated the "antiquity" of the text, but also introduced words which were recognized at the time as child vocabulary, unacceptable in written French. These elements, such as "la bobinette" and "la chevillette" were recognized as purely children's language and probably functioned to signify the child's world and to emphasize the official implied reader of the text.

The emphasis on the official implied reader was not unequivocal. The satirical and ironical levels of the text enabled Perrault to write about a "gentleman of the town" who does not hesitate to take advantage of poor, naive country girls. In such a way he emphasizes the tragic ending that leads to the moral, which comes as a postscript to the tale and concludes with "qui ne sait que ces Loups doucereux, / De tous les Loups sont les plus dangereux" (p. 115). [Who doesn't know that the sweetest wolves are the most dangerous of all.]

The theme of gentlemen who take advantage of little country girls is heightened by the story's erotic elements in the representation of the child: her beauty, the red color as her symbol, and of course the bed scene wherein "Le petit chaperon rouge se déshabille, et va se mettre dans le lit, où elle fut bien étonnée de voir comment sa Mère-grand était

faite en son déshabillé" (pp. 114-115). [Little Red Riding Hood got undressed and got into bed where she was quite astonished to see how her "grandmother" looked in her nightdress.] These strong erotic elements contribute to understanding the text as a story about a girl seduced by a gentleman rather than as a story about a little girl devoured by a wolf.

The ambiguous nature of the text through its use of formula, style, and structure can be explained on the grounds of official and unofficial readers of the text. This ambiguity enabled Perrault to use the notion of children as consumers of fairy tales and address the text officially to them while using the notion of the child as a source of amusement to make it possible for highbrow people to enjoy the text. To gain the highbrow reader, Perrault needed the level of irony and satire, an indication that the text was actually addressed to them, while the formulaic structures signaled the child reader.

To sum up, the notion of the child in Perrault's time served as a background for *Contes* and as an indispensable mask for the text to be accepted by highbrow adults. However, once the child was perceived differently by society and was no longer considered a source of amusement, the assumptions about the child as an implied reader changed as did the way the child was presented in those texts. This is true about all the texts produced for children since the 18th century. It is also true for the versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" which underwent various changes partly due to the change in their implied reader culminating in Grimm's "Rotkäppchen" ["Little Red Cap"], which is followed by many modern adaptations.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PERRAULT'S AND GRIMM'S VERSIONS

Research into folk tales has granted considerable space to the dispute over the connection between *Contes* and the similar texts gathered by the Brothers Grimm in their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812/1922). Scholars disagree over the questions both of the origin and "originality" of Grimm's texts and account for similarities between Perrault and Grimm on different grounds. Some present the historical-geographical explanation, while others prefer the one based on cultural relationships (Bolte & Polivka, 1963), or that of cultural transformation (Velten, 1930). Other scholars deny any direct connection between Perrault and Grimm, but claim a mediated relation through Tieck, to whom Brothers Grimm referred in their notes on "Rotkäppchen." Without entering into

this endless dispute, it is this author's contention here that the relation between the two versions can be illuminated from the perspective of the different prevalent notions of childhood and the different ways the child was perceived in each period.

In the years that passed between Perrault and Grimm, the "coddling" attitude had become a very different "reasoning" attitude. This change in the concept of childhood attributed great importance to the education of the child. The needs and demands of the newly developed education system largely determined the character of the texts in regard to the implied reader in two aspects at least: the child's capacity to realize the text, and, even more important, the text's obligations toward the child and desire on the part of adults that children should gain something for their spiritual welfare from the text.

The Different Tones and Endings

As has been noted by many scholars, the most obvious differences between Perrault's and Grimm's version lie in the tones of the texts (ironical versus naive) and in the endings (tragic versus happy). The difference in tone would appear to be the result of the different intentions of each writer. While Perrault addressed the highbrow with satire, and masked the satire by the use of the child as the official implied reader of the text, the Brothers Grimm tried to depict the tone of a naive narrator, indispensable for the "authenticity" effect of the text. This was achieved mainly by adapting the narration to the child's point of view and presenting it in embedded speech. This device was justified by the Brothers Grimm in the forward to *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, which illustrated the new image of children by emphasizing their pureness and genuine capacity to see the world in a special way—a new image of the child common to the Brothers Grimm and to their 19th century contemporaries.

However, what has primarily attracted the attention of scholars is the very different endings of the two versions. In Perrault's version the story ends when the child is devoured by the wolf. Grimm's version, on the other hand, offers two alternative endings. In both, the child is not hurt after all, although she is punished in the first—grandmother and the child are devoured, but then rescued when the wolf is killed. In the second the wolf drowns without hurting anyone at all.

Regardless of whether the ending was organic to the text (Velten), there is still the question of why the happy ending was needed at all, i.e., what were the reasons and functions of such an addition?

Unlike Perrault, who officially addressed his tale to children, the Brothers Grimm did not do so at first. It was in the spirit of 19th century Romanticism—the return to sources and nature—that this text was collected and hence addressed an adult audience. The Brothers Grimm could not and did not need to use Perrault's play between the "official" and "unofficial" implied reader, for, like their 19th century contemporaries, they believed that children should be separated from adults, for they had their own specific needs. They also thought that these needs could not be supplied by the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, at least not by the first edition; consequently, it had to be revised in order to become suitable for children.

The second edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was, therefore, adjusted and changed, especially from the linguistic point of view. As is indicated by the forward, two new implied ideas appeared which seem to serve as motivation for the changes that the text underwent during the century between Perrault and Grimm. The first was society's new perception of the child's distinct needs and the second was the ideas that those needs should be supplied under strict adult supervision. The way childhood was perceived by society had changed at least in two senses: there was a new understanding of the nature of the child, as well as a new demand which made adults responsible for the education of the child.

In Grimm's version of "Rotkäppchen" this new concept of childhood finds its expressions in the following three aspects: (a) relations in the family circle, (b) innocence of the child, and (c) a need for instruction of the child. These aspects will be discussed in relation to the different tone and the different ending as well as in relation to other minor differences in the texts. Revision of the ending was undoubtedly the result of the need to adjust the text to the model of the fairy tale. Unlike Perrault, who broke the model deliberately in order to create a satire, the Brothers Grimm needed the happy ending—indispensable for fairy tales. However, this was not its only motivation. Prevailing ideas about education were also a vital motivating force. These ideas demanded that the child learn a lesson from every event, experience or story, and punishment was an integral part of that learning process. The changed ending altered the meaning and the moral of the text. Unlike the child in Perrault's version, the child of Grimm's version is given a chance to learn the lesson, and apparently does so. Unlike the moral of Perrault which addresses gentlemen, Grimm's emphasis is not on the wolf, the "gentleman," but rather on the child and the moral lesson she must learn. These differences in emphasis are

probably also the reason for the total deletion of the erotic scene in the Grimm version.

It is quite possible that the happy ending was, as Bolte and Polívka (1963) suggest, taken from "Der Wolf und die sieben jungen Geisslein" [The wolf and the seven young kids]; the "wolf" element was already part of the fairy tale inventory and hence an almost ready-made solution. But, even if this claim is justified, it is still possible to account for the selection of this particular ending on the basis of both the model of the fairy tale and the educational views current at the time, especially since the lesson the child learns in "Little Red Riding Hood" does not exist at all in "Der Wolf und die sieben jungen Geisslein." It also should be noted that the Brothers Grimm were happy with the ending from the educational point of view, and even considered it proof that the text was indeed suitable for children. The differences in the morals of the texts are the direct result of the different ideas about education. In Perrault's time there was no education system at all, nor any ideas about the need for systematic education of the child, whereas in Grimm's time education not only existed, but was considered indispensable for the child's spiritual welfare. Adults within and outside of the family circle were considered responsible for the education of the child. This is best manifested in the Grimm version by the instructions given to the child by her mother. In Grimm this paragraph—entirely missing from Perrault's version—expresses the new ideas about education which had penetrated society in the years between. Grimm's mother instructs the child to behave herself at the grandmother's by saying, "and when you go into her room, don't forget to say 'good morning', and don't peep in every corner before you do it"; and instructs the child about the route she should take, telling her, "do not run off the path."

The idea that children should be instructed by adults as far as their behavior was concerned, a notion unknown in Perrault's time, was commonly practiced in Grimm's time, and served as a basis for the relationships between mother and child in Grimm's version. Moreover, the school, an institution which hardly existed in Perrault's time, had become both established and hated, as indicated in Grimm's version when the wolf, upon meeting the child, determines that she looks as sad as if she were going to school: "You walk along as if you were going to school."

Differences in Minor Aspects

In addition to differences often discussed by scholars, there are other minor changes in the

Grimm version resulting from the different ways the child was perceived. This is true not only about the attitude toward school, but also about inter-family relations, which are hardly hinted at in Perrault's version, but are strongly emphasized by the Grimms: the grandmother's love for the child, the mother's commitment to the grandmother, and the child's love for the grandmother. While the grandmother's love is hardly mentioned in Perrault's version, Grimm's grandmother loves the child dearly, and sews the hood as a symbol of her love. Thus, while the hood serves in Perrault's version to hint at the sexuality of the child, in Grimm's version it serves as a sign for the grandmother's profound affection for the child.

This change in the presentation of family relations is undoubtedly the direct result of the change in the ideas on the family and the place of the child in it. Hence the different moral of each text: While the naive country girl of Perrault is lost forever, the little girl of Grimm is saved by adults who are responsible for her. As long as she is protected by them, she is safe, and that is exactly the moral she learns: "As long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so."

MODERN ADAPTATIONS OF GRIMM

The newly established child education system created a demand for appropriate books that could be used as a vehicle for learning. This new "instructive" concept of education became the "raison d'être" of texts for children. The fact that the educational establishment attached great importance to the texts for children made its supervision of the texts inevitable, and ideas about the child and childhood guided both writing for children and the assumptions about its implied reader. This linkage between the two has not changed basically from the 18th century to the present. What has changed since Grimm's time have been the specific ideas about childhood and education. But pedagogic guiding has dominated the production of official children's books and was for instance responsible for the prohibition of fairy tales at the turn of the 19th century. At that time Grimm's "Rotkäppchen" as well as other fairy tales were considered unsuitable and were totally excluded from canonized literature for children. The educational establishment mistrusted works of imagination and favored the so-called "realistic" works, whose constant figures were death and sickness (For an exhaustive description of the texts, see Avery 1975, especially chapters 2, 3 & 4).

By the middle of the 19th century, imagination

was considered not only suitable, but even indispensable for children and their development. As a result, fairy tales were rehabilitated and again introduced into the canonized children's system. Yet, as the ideas about the child and his/her education changed, Grimm's "Rotkäppchen" was no longer considered appropriate and had to be revised to accord with the new views. Because of the pluralism in approaches to understanding childhood, there was an appropriately large range of versions and editions of the text. Some editions were changed only slightly or not at all, either because of the status of the text as a "classic" or because of the great importance attached to the "complete" version by certain psychologists who regard the text itself as indispensable for the child's development (see Bettelheim, 1976).

A considerable number of editions of "Little Red Riding Hood" do change the text a great deal. The bases for their textual revisions are their assumptions about childhood, especially about the child's capacity to understand and the themes to which he should be exposed. With these two issues in mind, the various adaptations are concerned mainly with the characterization, the introduction of unsuitable events, and the assumed social norms of the texts. In those aspects, most adaptations hardly differ from one another. The only difference lies in the solutions they offer for problematic issues and in the extent of deviation they permit from the original.

In order to discuss the handling of these aspects, three versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" serve as a good sample of the norms determining the procedures of textual revision which accord with the principles described above. The versions to be discussed here are the following: (a) Modern Promotions, n.d.; (b) Puppet Book, 1970; and (c) A Pop-up Book, n.d. All three versions agree about the need to revise the aspects of the tone, characterization, unsuitable events and social norms, in accordance with their understanding of the child as implied reader.

The Tone

The implied reader can be discerned by the tone of the text. In all versions the tone is not only authoritative, but sort of superior and "talking-down." This becomes eminently clear when the narrator even explains those points he presumes the child is incapable of understanding by himself. For instance, the narrator of the Puppet edition explains the name of the little girl in the following manner: "That is exactly why she was called Little Red Riding Hood." The same narrator also ex-

plains the craftiness of the wolf, assuming a child cannot comprehend such sophisticated behavior: "The crafty old wolf really knew where grandmother lived. He also knew that the path across the meadow was the shortest way to reach grandmother's house." The narrator of the Pop-up edition is not sure a child can understand that the wolf had disguised himself as grandmother, thus he explains: "She was surprised to see her granny in bed (you see, she thought the wolf was her granny)."

Assumed Social Norms

Very often the texts give expression to common social norms and prevailing fashions. This can be discerned not only in major structures, but in minor details as well. For instance, alcohol is a negative value and therefore will be replaced by fruit, honey or milk, in accordance with the modern "natural food" fad. Thus mother sends a varied basket to suit the current fashion: "One day her mother packed a basket with cake and fruit" (Puppet); or, "One day her mother told her to take a basket of bread and honey to her grandmother who was sick" (Modern Promotions). After the hunter rescues the child, grandmother makes a little party, and what does she serve but milk: "They were all so happy that they decided to have a party then and there. Grandmother served glasses of milk to her visitors" (Puppet).

When it is the fashion to present the child with challenges he/she has to experience by himself/herself, the text is revised into a "challenge" story: the child is given a chance to experience a visit to her "granny" all by herself:

"Oh yes, that would be lovely," said the Red Riding Hood. I've never been to Granny's on my own before. It will be an exciting adventure! So Little Red Riding Hood waved goodbye to her mother and started to walk along the forest path to Granny's cottage. As she walked along and saw all the birds and forest creatures she was not a bit frightened for she loved the forest. (Pop-up, n.d.)

Unsuitable Events

Any information which is considered unsuitable for children is either omitted or revised in order to become acceptable. The text avoids both the violent scene where grandmother and child are devoured by the wolf, and also any possible unpleasant information. This is probably the reason for the grandmother's not being "sick" in the Modern Promotion edition, but rather euphemistically "not well." Similarly in the Puppet Book, the mother explains, "This is a gift for you to take to your grandmother. She is not well and will enjoy eating some cake and fruit." In the Pop-up edition nothing

at all is wrong with grandmother: "Why don't you go and visit Granny. I'm sure she would be pleased to see you."

The various devices writers use to avoid the violent scene at the end are clear evidence of the attempt to avoid information which is unsuitable—the most extreme solution is to deny all violence and even prevent the wolf himself from being hurt: "When the wolf saw the hunter's long rifle, he had a change of mind. Now it was his turn to be frightened. He had time for just one yelp before running out of the house as quickly as he could." In other cases the wolf does get punished and poetic justice is done. However, in most cases the violent scenes with grandmother and the child are simply avoided. Grandmother hides in the closet without getting hurt, and the child is rescued *before* and not after the wolf devours her:

Fortunately, at that moment, the forester arrived. He ran inside and was just in time to rescue the little girl. Red Riding Hood breathed a sigh of relief when she realized what a narrow escape she had had. (Pop-up, n.d.)

At that moment a hunter passed the house. He heard Little Riding Hood's frightened scream and burst open the door. (Puppet, 1970)

But grandmother saw the wolf too! She dashed into her clothes closet and locked the door behind her, doing it so quickly that the wolf hardly knew what was happening. (Puppet, 1970)

SUMMARY

This examination of Perrault's, Grimm's, and three out of hundreds of modern versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" indicates that the changes in the texts were neither random nor insignificant. Many reasons lay behind those changes (as, for instance, prevailing literary models), but one of the crucial factors in determining the character of the texts for the child was undoubtedly the different notions of childhood. Since the 18th century children's literature has been strongly linked with the educational establishment and has based its legitimation on it. This linkage has served as a source for constraints imposed upon children's literature in at least two areas: the way in which children are presented characterized and judged by the texts, and the way in which the child is assumed to be the implied reader of the text.

Thus, children's libraries in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries may contain the very same titles, but once the books are opened it becomes quite clear how very different the contents are. What really counts is the way childhood is perceived by society, and that determines to a large extent what actually lies between the covers. That writer

would vary text according to their understandings about and expectations of their audience indicates

that they understand the powerful influence of a text on the response of its readers.

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