

Abstract: The historical era between 1850 and 1950 is known to be a turbulent period reflected not only in adult literature but also in the texts written for children. This unusually rich period in terms of political, social and ideological development certainly influenced most parts of the world. However, it was particularly important for England mainly for the transition of the Victorian era and Edwardian period to the modern history initiated by the WW I. Throughout this period many new ideologies arose and scientific discoveries were more numerous than ever. In 1859, for instance, Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* was published and initiated the still on-going war period between Christianity and science. At the same time, the concept of childhood started to be understood in a different way and books written for children became a common commodity converting the end of 18th century in the Golden Age of children's literature. However, according to Peter Hunt's publication *Understanding Children's Literature*, 'all texts are inevitably infused by ideologies'. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is firstly, to study the way in which ideologies are incorporated in the texts for children (overt or covert) and secondly, the extent to which the texts for children become a vehicle of ideology. Starting with *Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley, the influence of *On the Origin of Species* on the novel will be investigated as well as the way the author combines his Roman Catholic beliefs with the new discovery in the world of biology. Although John Ruskin's fairy tale *The King of the Golden River* is short, it bears some of the artistic characteristics of the visual art which the author studied thoroughly and for this reason, attention will be paid also to the aesthetic preferences of the time. The third text, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Secret Garden* will be primarily analysed as a text inspired by American religious movement Christian Science with some space dedicated also to British Imperialism and class distinction, the latter strongly present in the text. The last narrative, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis will be studied as a text based primarily on New Testament however issues such as gender role will be also considered. The core argument of the thesis is to show that texts written for children can work as a mirror of the society, of its ideological development and scientific progress. Therefore, texts produced for young readers have to be studied not only as texts bearing entertaining or/and educative function but as ideologically loaded manuals with powerful, manipulative function. Consequently, the analysis of the four texts will show that adults are not able to produce a text for children without incorporating in it some kind of ideology. A secondary concern of the thesis is the comparative prevalence of the contemporary books for children (for instance P. Pullman's books). The thesis will examine whether the presence of ideology in the texts is presently any different from children's literature written in the target period. Finally, as intertextuality plays an important role in three of the four primary sources in this thesis, special attention is paid to the relationship between the originally published texts and their derivatives. In case of *Water Babies*, Kingsley's fictional text will be compared with *On the Origin of Species*. The influence of the publication *Christian Science* by Mary Baker Eddy will be studied with regard to *Secret Garden* and the parallels between Bible and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* will be also examined in detail.

