

Received: May 2023 Accepted: June 2023
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58262/ks.v11i2.232>

Professional Storytelling and Children literature in Oman

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Abstract

The history of Oman has played a significant role in shaping the Omani culture and identity. Omani literature is a rich including various forms of poetry and folktales to modern fiction and drama. The current research focus on the professional storytelling and children literature in Oman. The researchers use the historical and analysis distractive research methods to investigate the history of recording children's literature in the Arab world, the Omani children's storytelling writers, the role of technology in transforming children's literature into visual materials. This research concluded that the Arab culture and Omani culture in particular represents high-quality literature including children's stories, which aids the reader to understand the values, culture, heritage, and traditions of Oman. Also, the digital platforms and technology have transformed the children's literature in the Arab world in different devises such as mobile applications, e-books, and online platforms have made children's stories more accessible. As a result, the contemporary technology transferred the children's literature, stories, and folk melodies into visual drawings, which has resulted in the creation of new chances for participation, creativity, and education. Therefore, Interactive e-books, Animated Adaptations, Virtual reality (VR) and Educational Apps were appearing as alternative contemporary approaches for professional storytelling in the 21st century. On the other hand, the contributions of Omani storytellers were emerged of modern children's stories with the Omani culture and identity in the original matter. However, the issue of transferring the Omani storytelling into visual curative drawing is still remain. Therefore, the researchers recommend further investigation in this issue in the future studies.

Key words: transforming, literature, Omani stories, children literature, Arts.

Introduction

In her documentation, Arab Children's Literature an Update, Tami C. Al-Hazzá (2006) tried to give a true picture about Arabic literature in children's literature by introducing basic logic information about Arabs and their culture. Arabs speak Arabic or have ancestors whose native tongue was Arabic. Arabs possess Semitic roots and trace their origins to the Arabia Peninsula and she confirms that "Most people believe that all Arabs are Muslim. However, the Arab world includes sizable populations of Arab Christians, Egyptian Copts, Maronites, Druze, and

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Melokites. Only 20 percent of the world's Muslim population is Arab—the majority of Muslims come from Indonesia” (p.11). Therefore, Arabs are representing 17 countries, from Morocco to Oman located on the eastern edge of the Arabia Peninsula. Al-Hazzá (2006) raised an issue misunderstanding Arabs and their culture by media stereotypes. She stats that “In today's world there is a great deal of misunderstanding and misinformation about Arabs and their culture. Stereotypes of Arabs as villains or terrorists are often propagated by the media and by Hollywood movies. These stereotypes and sensational news headlines are partly to blame for promulgating misunderstandings about Arab culture” (p.11).

On the other side, the Arab culture repenting high-quality Arab literature including children's stories, which help to understand the values, cultural heritage, and traditions of the Arab culture. For example, Al-Hazzá (2006) refers to the book titled “The Arab World and Arab Americans”, which includes selection of well-written children's literature. As she explains that this book “respects Arab heritage, creates positive images of Arabs in readers' minds, and features story lines that credibly represent Arabs” (p. 12). The children's picture books such as “The Day of Ahmed's Secret”, “The Storytellers”, “Sami and the Time of the Troubles”, and “Sitti's Secrets” were mentioned as examples for the picture books. Also, she refers to the novels written to the children such as “Samir and Yonatan”, “A Stone in My Hand”, “Habibi”, and “Season of the Sandstorms” in order to describe the author's styles writing to help the readers to visualize the sensory details of life in this long-vanished world as she believed.

Therefore, the significance of children's literature in education stems from the fact that it is an effective method for fostering language, literacy, and critical thinking skills. Educators have used books and stories to engage students and impart valuable lessons for centuries.

Children's literature is an essential teaching and learning tool, contributing to the development of language and literacy skills, fostering social and emotional growth, and fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. There is no doubt that through literature, children are exposed to new ideas, concepts, and perspectives, which aids in their development of a broader worldview.

Ambu-saidi (2018) confirms the important of children's stories by quoting (Kohl, 1995: 23) when saying that “Children's stories are the tools used by adults to educate and shape children based on society standards; in other words, it is a children formation tool. Children's literature is not only a mere piece of work that is meant to please children but also a perspective in which children can change their view towards life”.

Nikolajeva and Scott (2013) state that, “Children's literature is a vital component of education, providing young learners with the tools they need to develop literacy skills, cultural awareness, and critical thinking skills” (p. 2). From science and math to history and social studies, literature can be used to make learning more interesting and fun.

The field of children's literature has undergone radical change as a result of the introduction of new technologies in recent years. Authors and illustrators can now use cutting-edge programs and equipment to create interactive visual adaptations of classic tales and folk songs. These novel narrative techniques not only interest and amuse young readers but also present them with opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding.

On the other hand, numerous of Arabic studies indicate that the vast majority of what is presented to an Arab child is in fact imported from other societies and languages. This content is then translated in order to make up for certain flaws in the quality of the material that is

made available to an Arab child. therefore, the aims of the current research will attempt to fill some gape of this issue and utilizing from the technologies in transforming the Omani songs and folk stories into visual drawings.

The research objectives questions

This research aims to achieve the following objectives

- (1) Documenting the development of children's literature in the Arab world
- (2) highlighting the contributions of Omani storytellers for children.
- (3) Researching how technology is used to turn children's books into visual materials

The research questions are:

1. What is the background of Arab children's literary documentation?
2. What are the Omani authors' major contributions to children's literature?
3. How can technology contribute to the visualization of children's literature?

The Research Methodology

The historical approach and descriptive analytical research methods were used in this research. All research questions, including the reality of documenting Arab children's literature, tracking the most significant initiatives related to writing stories for Omani children, and examining the role of technology in turning children's literature into visual materials, will be addressed through descriptive written and using the historical approach to understanding the development of the children's literary to rich visualization stage of current children's literary.

The history of recording children's literature in the Arab world

Despite the late appearance of interest in children's literature in the Arab world—which did not occur until the late nineteenth century with translation movements—Miqdadi (2014) notes on Al-Hadidi (1982) that the influence began with "the cultural influence coming from the West, influenced, especially by French literature, and this appeared in Egypt at the time of Muhammad Ali through translation; as a result of mixing with the West, and he was the first to present a modern children's book—in the form of Before Ahmed Shawqi (1868–1922) arrived, the blaze eventually faded out. He published *Divan Al-Shawqiyyat Al-Saghiriya* in 1898 AD as the first step in his campaign to persuade Arab poets to target some of their works for children and teenagers (129).

As a result, there have been considerable advancements in the recording and preservation of children's literature throughout history in the Arab world. Oral literature and storytelling have a long history and have been passed down through the centuries. These tales frequently include cultural values, fantasy, and adventure components in addition to moral precepts (Amyun, 2016). However, it wasn't until the publishing of works expressly geared for young readers in the early 20th century that children's literature started to become recognized as a separate genre.

In this section, we'll try to give a broad overview of the development of children's book recordings in the Arab world while highlighting significant events, significant people, and the effects of these recordings on the local literary scene. Al-Hadidi (1982) mentions that interest in children's literature began late in the world in general and the Arab world in particular, despite the fact that the first record of children's literature in human history dates back to three thousand years BC, written on papyrus and illustrated and engraved on the walls of temples

and palaces. And graves, such as the stories of Snake Island, King Khufu, the conquest of Jaffa, and other illustrated stories for children. (28). Among the scenes drawn in those comics are the scenes of a cat walking on its hind legs, carrying a stick on its shoulders, and driving geese in front of it; a rabbit guarding and caring for goats; and mice sharing housing with cats in one town. Lions and deer sit side by side, enjoying watching the ball play, the donkey playing the harp instrument, and the lion and the tiger leads a flock of ducks.

In the current era, interest in the child has begun to occupy an important position as a result of the awareness of individuals and societies of the extent to which this literature contributes to the upbringing of young people, as it is the cornerstone of building man and his future. This interest began to increase, as indicated by Miqdadi (2014), after the end of the second third of the twentieth century, when this field was able to extract some recognition from scientific and literary bodies, so children's literature was introduced to some Arab universities and scientific institutes, and children's libraries were established throughout the Arab world. The writers presented their creations as stories, plays, poems, and songs, and the authors presented many studies on children's literature and its development in the Arab world. The trend of writers and poets began to write for children in Arabic literature, such as Kamel Kilani, Zakaria Tamer, and Suleiman Al-Essa.

The advent of recording technologies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a significant turning point in the preservation of children's literature. Arab pioneers recognized the value of recording and began capturing oral stories, poems, and songs for children. One notable figure is Ameen Rihani, a Lebanese-American writer who recorded and published a collection of Arabic children's songs in the early 20th century, preserving these melodies for future generations (Al-Khalifa, 2015; Al-Zadjali, 2020).

Also, the emergence of radio broadcasting in the Arab world during the mid-20th century brought about a revolution in the dissemination of children's literature. Radio programs dedicated to children became immensely popular, featuring storytelling, dramatizations, and educational content. These programs not only entertained but also educated young listeners, introducing them to a wide range of literary genres and characters (Balbaky, 2012; Kahil, 2008).

With the rise of television in the latter half of the 20th century, the accessibility and reach of recorded children's literature expanded further. Television programs such as "*Iftah Ya Simsim*" in the Arab Gulf region and "*Alam Simsim*" in the Arab world introduced children to educational content, storytelling, and animated adaptations of beloved literary works. These visual mediums captured the imagination of young viewers and brought popular characters to life, fostering a love for reading and storytelling (Smith, 2019; Hassan, 2016).

In recent years, digital platforms and advancements in technology have transformed the landscape of recording children's literature in the Arab world. Mobile applications, e-books, and online platforms have made children's stories more accessible and interactive. Authors, illustrators, and publishers are embracing digital tools to create engaging content and reach a wider audience. Digital recordings allow for the incorporation of multimedia elements such as sound effects, animations, and interactive features, enhancing the overall reading experience for children (Abu Abdallah, 2021; Makki, 2018).

Alongside the technological advancements, efforts have been made to preserve and adapt traditional stories and folktales for contemporary audiences. Organizations and institutions are dedicated to documenting and archiving traditional children's literature, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage. Additionally, authors and illustrators are reimagining classic stories, infusing them with modern themes and perspectives to resonate with today's children

while maintaining a connection to their cultural roots (Al Yahyai, 2018; Rihani, 1921).

Finally, the recording of children's literature in the Arab world has evolved significantly throughout history. From oral tradition to radio, television, and digital platforms, the accessibility and reach of children's stories have expanded, captivating young audiences and promoting a love for reading and storytelling.

The Omani children's storytelling writers

In Oman, the tradition of storytelling has been passed down through the years and is highly revered. Storytelling in Oman has roots in an era when oral traditions predominated as the primary means of disseminating myths, tales, and other types of cultural expression. Al-Ismaily (2014) notes in his study the importance of traditional Omani folktales in preserving a culture that is in danger of disappearing. Historical, Helal (2023) states "The earliest form of Omani literature was oral storytelling, which dates back to pre-Islamic times. Storytelling was an essential part of Omani culture, and tales were passed down from generation to generation. These stories were often based on real events or historical figures and were used to entertain, educate, and preserve the country's cultural heritage. With the arrival of Islam in the 7th century, storytelling evolved to include religious tales and moral lessons".

In this regard, AL-Lawati (2019) mentions that in Oman the children's literature received a lot of attention in the last ten years in all aspects including academic, artistic and literary, where children's literature increased in cultural activities related directly to the children. In contrast, as she confirms that "the studies and reviews which documents this type of increase are still very few and that is because it's rare to find specialized books in the Omani library which about the Omani experience in children's literature whether in the history or documentation factor or in the critical studies" (p.12).

Discussing the Role of Storytelling and Oral Tradition in Omani Culture, Helal (2023) confirms that "In Omani culture, storytelling has been a significant part of their oral tradition for centuries. The role of professional storytellers, also known as Hakawati, has been crucial in preserving and passing on Omani folklore. These storytellers were highly respected members of society, and their performances were often held in public spaces like marketplaces, mosques, and homes". Therefore, the professional storytellers ad Hell (2023) mentioned were skilled in numerous storytelling techniques practices, containing singing, reciting poetry, and narrating stories as well as Omani folklore.

Regarding the educational values in the Omani folktale, Ambusaidi et al., (2015) confirm that the Omani folk tales include very important educational values that when they are told to youth can embedded to them good values. Omani folk tales did these things for long time. The Omani folk tales in Nizwa is not far from what the Omani folk tales in general from the consolidation of the educational values, because it is part of Omani folk tales. In their study, they address the role of the Omani folk tales in the consolidation of the educational values through analysis set of folks from Nizwa scientifically.

In their project, Ambusaidi et al., (2023) provide intensive study about school education and heritage with focus on Intangible heritage such as folk tales, proverbs, and old Omani stories. This study provides an introduction to intangible cultural heritage, local and global experiences in caring for intangible heritage, explain the relationship between school education and national heritage, the practical concepts and educational values included in Omani folk tales with reference to practical applications on how to include national heritage

in school curriculum.

Bedouin communities, due to their nomadic lifestyle and oral transmission of tales, played a crucial role in the preservation of storytelling. Folklore, mythology, legend, and historical accounts were all included in this category of tales. Al-Siyabi (2017) emphasized the significance of narration in Oman for connecting generations and perpetuating Omani values and knowledge.

According to AL-Lawati (2011) people in Oman exchanged stories and children's literature orally and stored them in their memories. She believes that the children's literature started in Oman in 1989 as a piece of work that is written directly for children.

In 1989, the National Committee adopted publishing two stories by two Omani writers Tahera Al-Lawati and Fatima AL-Lawati under the title Collection of Children Omani Stories. In 1991, the first Omani children play Love and Corporation Day by Fatima Al-Lawati was performed as theatre art. As further steps development, the National Committee was ambitious to establish a children's magazine in June 1992 as first attempt without any output with no reasons for not adopting this a great step. The Omani Cultural Club also pay part of developing the children's literature in Oman, by conducting workshops for writing children's stories by some writers but the level not up ambitious and there were a few publications directed to the children in Oman such as story of Zahra Fears Night by Fatima AL-Lawa (AL-Lawati, 2011, Ambusaidi, 2018).

Storytelling was prevalent at *Majlis*, a place of community assembly where people came to hear accounts, therefore, in order to engage their audience, storytellers, often referred to as "raconteurs" or "*hakawatis*," employed expressive gestures, voice modulation, and evocative storytelling skills. These gifted storytellers had the ability to take their audiences to exotic locales and engross them in the tales' storylines.

In Omani mythology, themes like courage, love, loyalty, and the paranormal are all covered. Folklore typically imparts moral lessons, but historical accounts shed light on a country's past. Geographical features like mountains, oases, and forts are weaved into local stories and myths to give the storytelling tradition credibility and weight (Al-Harrasi, 2000).

In recent years, the development of children's literature in Oman has received considerable attention. Along with numerous cultural institutions and publishing houses, the Omani government has made concerted efforts to promote and support the creation of Omani children's literature. For instance, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture has launched initiatives to encourage Omani authors and illustrators to create quality children's literature that reflects Omani culture and values.

In addition, organizations such as the Omani Society for Writers and Literati (OSWL) have played a significant role in promoting and supporting Omani children's literature (Al-Awadi, 2018). The OSWL organizes literary events, workshops, and competitions to cultivate creativity among Omani authors and illustrators, thereby nurturing a vibrant and dynamic landscape for children's literature in Oman.

Academic studies on Arabic and Omani children's literature have acquired momentum in recent years in terms of research and scholarship. Amyuni (2016) examines the impact of children's literature on literacy development and cultural identity formation among young consumers.

For instance, "Children's Literature in the Arab World: A Historical Overview" by Amyuni (2016) provides a thorough examination of the emergence and evolution of children's literature in the Arab world. This study examines the role of children's literature in shaping cultural identity and nurturing a passion for reading in Arab children.

In the late twentieth century, there was a recent emergence of modern children's stories in Oman. This section concentrates on the works and contributions of Omani storytellers to the field of children's literature. It entails researching and profiling notable Omani authors who have written stories for children, as well as their writing techniques, themes, and impact on young readers. By highlighting the accomplishments of these authors, the goal is to recognize and celebrate their efforts to enrich the literary landscape for Omani children and nurture a sense of cultural identity.

In the most recent study by (Al-Yahyai, et al., 2023), presenting a study as a part of a funded project by Sultan Qaboos University in Oman aims to record the Omani stories and folk song. Al-Yahyai, et al., (2023) stats that the initial focus of this study will be on reporting the first stage of the project, showing the situation of Omani stories, and presenting the result of visual images within stories. Therefore, in order to reach the storytelling-based on visual interactive images, we first have to understand the situation of the Omani children's storytelling writers.

Examples of Omnia writers such as Fatima Al-Lawati, Umamah Al-Lawati, Azhar Ahmed Al-Harthy, Abdullah Al-Eisri, and Basma Al-Khatiri, emerged in this literary field. Basma Al-Khatiri is considered the most prominent writer of children's stories and educational materials for children in the Sultanate of Oman. In the section that follows, we will discuss these authors and their contributions to this field.

Basma Al-Khatiri

Basma Al-Khatiri is an eminent Omani woman author who has made substantial contributions to Omani literature. Al-Khatiri has emerged as a major figure in contemporary Omani literature, especially in the realm of fiction writing. Al-Khatiri's literary works frequently reflect the social and cultural realities of Oman, delving into topics such as identity, tradition, and the evolving role of women in Omani society. Her writing style is recognized for its evocative descriptions, expressive imagery, and perceptive character portrayals.

Al-Khatiri has written extensively on cultural and social issues in Oman in addition to her fiction. Her nonfiction works address topics such as the empowerment of women, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the significance of literature in fostering dialogue and understanding.

Basma Al-Khatiri's literary accomplishments have garnered both domestic and international recognition. Her works have been lauded for their cultural significance and contribution to Oman's literary scene.

Examples of her works: a series of stories entitled: "Ahmed's Journey in a Week", a series of stories "The Wonders of the Senses", the series "Labeeb, Libya and the Happy Family", "A Series of My Right", the story "Save God, He Protects You", and a series of Jurisprudence and Children's Etiquette. The series "God in My Heart" in 2013 AD, the story "I am a Calculator" in 2013 AD, the story "Jud the Active", the story "I am the Apple", the story "Mama Sings to Me" in 2014 AD, the story "The Puzzle of Shapes" in 2014 AD, and the story "To a Farm My Grandfather" in 2015 AD, and the story "The Owner of Lost Money" in 2017 AD, and other educational and methodological books and

interesting educational and educational stories.

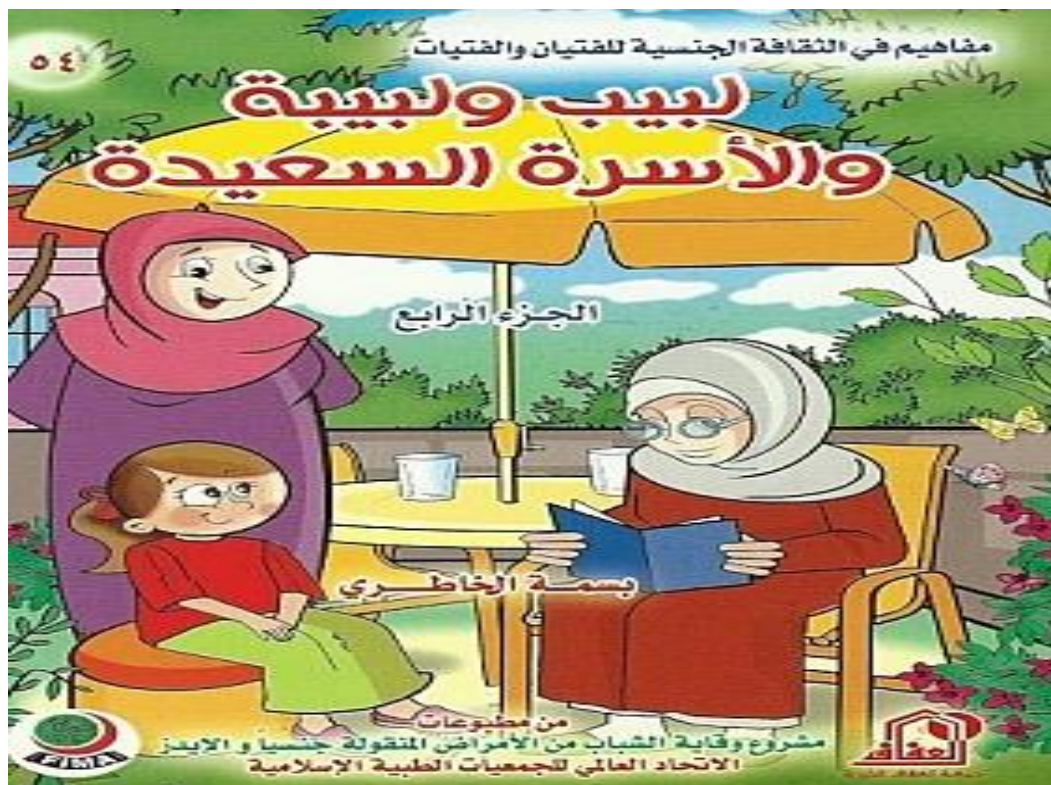


Figure 1: Children story titled “Labeeb, Libya and the Happy Family” by Basma Al-Khatiri

Umamah Mustafa Al-Lawati

Umamah Al-Lawati, a renowned writer and storyteller, has created a diverse collection of captivating stories that reflect the rich cultural heritage of her country. Her stories are imbued with the essence of Omani traditions, values, and folklore, providing readers with a deeper understanding of Omani culture.

One notable aspect of Umamah's stories is her skillful blend of fantasy and reality. She seamlessly weaves together elements of mythology, legends, and everyday life, creating narratives that transport readers to enchanting worlds while still maintaining a connection to Omani traditions. Through her stories, she introduces readers to mystical creatures, heroic characters, and mythical landscapes that are deeply rooted in Omani folklore.

Umamah's stories often revolve around themes of bravery, wisdom, and the importance of community. Her protagonists are often ordinary individuals who find themselves faced with extraordinary challenges, teaching readers valuable life lessons about perseverance, empathy, and the power of unity. Her stories also celebrate the beauty of Omani landscapes, highlighting the country's natural wonders and historical landmarks.

In addition to preserving traditional storytelling techniques, Umamah incorporates modern storytelling approaches to engage contemporary readers. Her stories are accessible to readers of all ages, with a style that captures the imagination and leaves a lasting impact. Through her vivid descriptions and engaging narratives, she manages to captivate both young and adult

audiences, fostering a love for storytelling and Omani culture.

Al-Lawati's stories have gained recognition both within Oman and beyond. Her books have been praised for their ability to transport readers into the world of Omani folklore, and her contributions to children's literature have earned her accolades for promoting cultural heritage and instilling pride in young readers.

Through her stories, Umamah Al-Lawati continues to be a significant voice in Omani literature, contributing to the preservation and promotion of Omani storytelling traditions. Her stories serve as a bridge between the past and the present, connecting readers with the vibrant cultural tapestry of Oman and inspiring a renewed appreciation for the power of storytelling.



Figure 2: Children story titled “The Mango Boy” by Umamah Al-Lawati.

Aisha Abdullah Al Harthei

Aisha Al Harthei is a prominent Omani woman writer known for her contributions to Omani literature. Her works reflect the rich cultural heritage and traditions of Oman while also exploring contemporary themes and issues. Al Harthei has written numerous novels, short stories, and poems that delve into various aspects of Omani society, including the lives of women, the challenges of modernization, and the preservation of cultural identity. Her writings often highlight the struggles, aspirations, and resilience of Omani women, offering a nuanced perspective on their roles and experiences.

Al Harthei's literary contributions have earned her recognition both within Oman and internationally. Her works have been celebrated for their authentic portrayal of Omani culture, their strong female characters, and their ability to resonate with readers across different

backgrounds.

As an Omani woman writer, Aisha Al Harthei represents a growing cohort of female voices in Omani literature. Her works contribute to the broader narrative of Omani identity and serve as a testament to the richness and diversity of Omani literary traditions. By exploring themes of cultural heritage, gender, and societal change, Al Harthei's writings provide valuable insights into the complexities of Omani society and the experiences of Omani women.

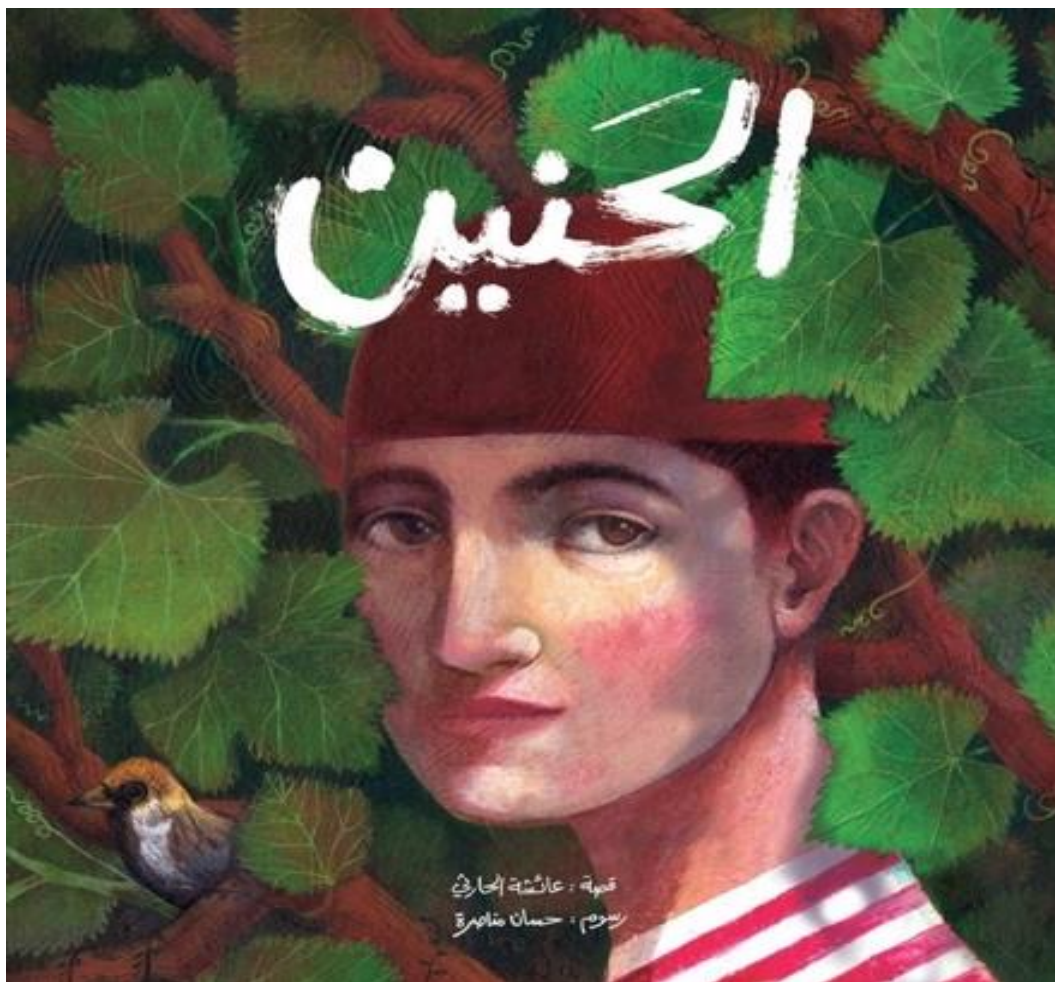


Figure 3: Children story titled “Nostalgia” by Aisha Al Harthei .

This section concludes that Arabic and Omani children's literature have an extensive and varied history spanning many centuries. It incorporates a wide variety of genres, including stories, poetry, and educational literature aimed at juvenile readers. In addition, children's literature plays a vital role in nurturing literacy, cultural awareness, and imagination among children, as well as preserving and celebrating the Arabic and Omani cultural heritage.

The role of technology in transforming children's literature into visual materials

Technology has enabled the development of interactive and dynamic graphic elements that may enhance and enrich written material in children's literature. It has been proven that this kind of storytelling is particularly good at holding kids' attention and promoting reading. The

introduction of technology into children's writing allowed for this. It has been proven that this method of delivering stories is quite successful in grabbing kids' attention and encouraging reading in them. According to children's book author and illustrator, Pilkey (2002) mentioned that "Incorporating technology in children's literature is a way to bring new life to classic stories and create something truly magical for young readers." Technology may be used in children's books to give classic stories a new lease on life and create something genuinely magical for young readers. (Pikey, 2002).

According to Al Musaw et al., (2017) Nowadays technology became an affective and worthy tool for learning and acquisition of knowledge, and they identified the impact of using technology in kindergarteners as a motivation to read and enhancing children's understanding of the text in the e-books or e-stories as to Al Musaw et al., (2017) mentioned that "The e-book is defined as electronic version of printed book [...] or written work in digital format which can be readable by using readers, personal computer or mobile phone" (p.45). Therefore, the tension between e-books and paper books comes from the variability of the advantages and disadvantages of both categories. The e-books including e-stories are characterized by accessibility, portability, and less space for storage. In addition to adding some assistance tools such as videos, sounds, and links and the ease of updating, editing and adding new information; where that what paper books are missing (Al Musaw et al., 2017).

Ribeiro (2015, p.40) argues the issue of the Digital Storytelling (DS) in the 21st century as an integrated approach to language learning. She sees DS as "a learning strategy that implies the integration of multimedia in an educational setting, allows using the latest Web 2.0 technologies accessible to our students for learning purposes" where most the literature review exposes that DS and the inherent building process involves, inspires students and developing higher-order thinking skills in education. Therefore, Ribeiro (2015) confirms that: "Storytelling coupled with media and digital literacy skills, coined as digital storytelling, addresses most, if not all, of the twenty-first century student outcomes identified by the Partnership for 21st Century 2. Storytelling in education develops learning and innovation skills, such as creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration, and addresses essential life and career skills as well" (p.42).

Also, Leong et al, (2019) confirm the expected role of using the digital storytelling is "to enhance vocabulary learning by exposing language learners to the lexical items while listening to and reading digital stories" (p.4). Chung (2002) mentioned that listening skills can be enhanced through visual representations using the digital storytelling. Therefore, integration of audio elements as voiceover narration and background audio within digital storytelling, the learners, the children in our case, can understand better and learn and listen even more better within moving animation and colourful graphics in the storytelling especially in the early childhood.

In addition, technology has enabled children to interact with characters and settings in ways that were previously impossible. Interactive e-books, for instance, enable children to touch, swipe, and tap their way through a story, making reading more immersive and engaging. According to Laura May, a professor of children's literature, "the integration of technology into storytelling has transformed the way we read and engage with literature, providing new avenues for exploration and learning" (Maye et al., 2017).

Therefore, the introduction of contemporary technology into the process of transforming children's literature, stories, and folk melodies into visual drawings has resulted in the creation

of new chances for participation, creativity, and education. According to Jeffers (2021), a well-known author and artist for children's books, "technology has given us the ability to bring stories to life in ways we could only have dreamed of before, creating an exciting and interactive reading experience for children".

Truly, stories can be created using new technology enables users such as children, students and teachers together to attempt toward well knowledge, media and technology abilities, specifically in terms of visual literacy, media literacy and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) literacy (Ribeiro, 2015).

Also, the incorporation of technology has enabled authors and illustrators to create characters and cultures that are more diverse and inclusive in children's literature. The ability to incorporate multimedia elements such as audio, video, and animation enables a more complete depiction of cultural experiences and perspectives. According to (Lin et al., 2020), an author and illustrator of children's books, "technology has allowed us to create books that are more diverse and inclusive, reflecting the experiences of children from all walks of life".

While the advent of modern technologies and changing lifestyles has posed challenges to traditional storytelling, there has been a concerted effort to revitalize the art form in Oman. Organizations, such as the Omani Society for Writers and Literati, have organized storytelling festivals and competitions to encourage young talents and foster an appreciation for storytelling among the youth. (Al-Harrasi, 2000).

In order to market for Children's Literature in Oman, Ambu-saidi (2018) argues that "Knowing the importance of children's literature especially in the digital age where the use of technology is dominating all fields, children's literature should be tackled to maintain a generation that values books and reading" (p.135).

This section aims to investigate the transformative impact of technology on children's literature by focusing specifically on the creation of visual materials. It involves examining how technological advancements, such as interactive e-books, animated adaptations, virtual reality experiences, and educational apps, have reshaped the traditional modes of presenting stories to young audiences. Through this exploration, the section seeks to provide insights into the ways in which technology has enhanced engagement, interactivity, and learning within the realm of children's literature.

• **Interactive e-books**

Interactive e-books have emerged as a dynamic platform that bridges the gap between traditional literature and modern technology. These e-books go beyond static text and illustrations, incorporating interactive elements such as animations, sound effects, and touch-based interactions. The integration of multimedia components enhances children's engagement and immersion in the story. For instance, the "Alice for the iPad" app by Atomic Antelope brings Lewis Carroll's classic tale to life with animated illustrations and interactive puzzles that encourage exploration and critical thinking (Atomic Antelope, n.d.).

Research indicates that interactive e-books can positively impact children's reading comprehension and vocabulary development. A study by Chiong et al. (2012) found that children who read interactive e-books with interactive features like hotspots and animations showed greater understanding of the story compared to those reading traditional print books. The study suggests that these features can scaffold young readers' comprehension and enhance their storytelling experience.

- **Animated Adaptations: Breathing Life into Characters**

Advances in animation technology have opened new avenues for translating children's literature into captivating visual experiences. Animated adaptations of beloved children's books, such as Disney's adaptations of fairy tales, have brought characters to life on the screen, introducing them to a wider audience and expanding their cultural impact. The dynamic nature of animation allows for creative reinterpretations of stories while retaining the essence of the original text.

For example, the animated adaptation of Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are" transformed the book's illustrations into a visually captivating and emotionally resonant experience. The animation added movement, expression, and a soundtrack that enriched the narrative and conveyed the protagonist's emotional journey.



Figure 4: Children story titled "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak

- **Virtual Reality (VR) Experiences: Immersive Storytelling**

Virtual reality (VR) has introduced a new dimension to children's literature by enabling immersive storytelling experiences. VR allows young readers to step into the worlds of their favorite stories, interacting with characters and environments in unprecedented ways. This technology has the potential to foster a deeper emotional connection with the narrative and characters, promoting empathy and a sense of presence.

One notable example is the VR adaptation of Neil Gaiman's "The Wolves in the Walls," which invites readers to explore the story's setting and interact with the characters in a 3D virtual environment. The immersive nature of VR offers a unique form of engagement that goes beyond traditional reading and enhances children's sense of agency within the story.

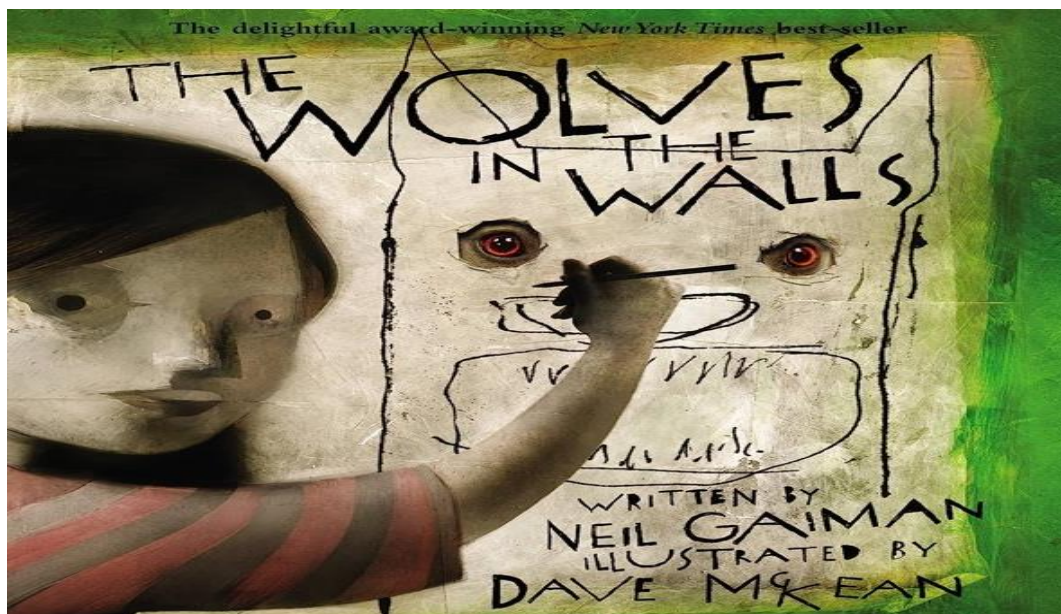


Figure 5: Children story titled “The Wolves in the Walls” by Neil Gaiman (Author), Dave McKean (Illustrator)-2005

- **Educational Apps: Learning through Play**

Technology has also facilitated the development of educational apps that merge entertainment and learning, transforming children's literature into interactive educational experiences. These apps often combine storytelling with activities that promote cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development. For instance, the "Endless Alphabet" app introduces children to vocabulary through playful animations and interactive letter puzzles (Originator Inc., n.d.).

Research suggests that well-designed educational apps can have positive effects on children's learning outcomes. A study by Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2015) found that interactive apps that engage children in meaningful activities and promote.

Conclusion

The role of technology in transforming children's literature into visual materials has ushered in a new era of engagement, interactivity, and learning. Interactive e-books enhance young readers' comprehension and engagement, while animated adaptations breathe life into beloved characters. Virtual reality offers immersive storytelling experiences that deepen emotional connections, and educational apps blend entertainment with learning to promote cognitive development. As technology continues to evolve, the transformation of children's literature into visual materials will undoubtedly shape the future of storytelling for generations to come.

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