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**MUCH OF MY WORK IS NOW APPEARING ON
MEDIUM:**

<https://medium.com/@jerrygriswold>

BOOKS AND READING. [The Patron Saint of Bibliophiles](#). Tony Cima didn't just collect books. He depended on them, even if they almost killed him (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). [Ronald Reagan's Childhood Reading](#). "I'm a sucker for hero worship" (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Reading Differently After September 11](#). Vulnerability in children's stories in light of 9/11 (from the Irish journal *Inis*). [Whatever Happened to Reading for Fun?](#) In a 2004 study "Reading at Risk," the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) noted an alarming downwards trend in book consumption. The news was even worse in 2007 (from *WordsAlive.org*, a San Diego reading advocacy group).



REVISITING CLASSICS. [Peter Rabbit Turns 100](#). Beatrix Potter's classic on its centennial (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). [The Real Peter Pan](#). Stephen Spielberg's film "Hook" and J.M. Barrie's story (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). [Pollyanna, Ex-Bubblehead](#). The heroine noted for emptyheaded optimism was really quite devious (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Taking the Measure of Harry Potter, on His Birthday](#). Eighteen years later, the unoriginality, popularity, and Britishness of J.K. Rowling's famous character. [Looking Back at Mickey Mouse \(on his 50th Birthday\)](#). When the mouse in white gloves was heroic and gratuitously cruel, paid a widow's mortgage and foiled bomb-throwing Reds (from the *New York Times Book Review*). ["The Flint Heart": Robust Fantasy, Subtle Politics](#). More than a



century ago, this British fantasy asked: "Who, among today's politicians, is a bully & a narcissist, ignorant & narrow-minded, power-hungry & hardhearted?" (from the *New York Times Book Review*). ["The Prince and the Pauper" Revisited](#). How Twain's novel specially speaks to our current circumstances (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). ["Beauty & the Beast" in Our Time](#). Why this fairy tale is the dominant story of our era (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). [Mary Poppins on Broadway](#). I attended the Broadway production of "Mary Poppins" with a kind of proprietary interest: to see if it was faithful to the book and to see if P.L. Travers would have been happy with the results (from *Parents' Choice*).



FILM & THEATER. [The Movie "Up": Literary Antecedents](#). Echoes of other stories in this beloved Disney/Pixar film (from the *Los Angeles Times*). ["Arrietty," "The Borrowers," and Smallness](#). Miyazaki's animated film, Norton's book, and the tiny in children's stories (from the *Los Angeles Times*). ["Saving Mr. Banks" But Throwing P.L. Travers Under the Bus](#). The Disney film about the author of the Mary Poppins books and my own memories of her. [Maurice Sendak's "The Nutcracker" & the Pacific Northwest Ballet](#) (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). [Tim Burton's "Alice in Wonderland."](#) In films like "Edward Scissorhands" and "The Nightmare Before Christmas," Burton has shown himself to be a master of the Quirky Gothic (from *Parents' Choice* and a radio discussion on KPBS). ["Return to Oz": Disney Film & Novelization](#). The fortunes of "novelizations" (books made from movies) rise or fall with the films they are tied to (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). ["Beastly" and "Red Riding Hood": Teen Dreams, Movies & Fairy Tales](#). Hollywood says: Boys prefer empowering metro realism, Girls high fantasy and better costumes (from *Parents' Choice*). [Spike Jonzes' Movie "Where the Wild Things Are."](#) A movie about childhood is not the same as a children's movie (from *Parents' Choice*). [Who is Disney's](#)

["Into the Woods" For?](#) "Into the Woods" reflects Hollywood's current muddle about age-differentiated audiences (from the blog "*Breezes from Wonderland*"). [Fairy Tales: Good to Think With.](#) It may seem surprising at first, but the world of Snow White and the Frog Prince and Rumpelstiltskin is often a heated zone where people push their agendas (from the *San Diego Union Tribune*). ["Inside Out" \(Disney/Pixar\).](#) "You lost me when Joy and Sadness took a shortcut through Abstract Thought to catch the Train of Thought." [Children's Films: A Subject in Search of an Author.](#) "A People's History of the Movies" would largely be a discussion of children's films.



TRAVEL. [Travel Plans Via Kids' Books: Western Europe.](#) Christina Hardyment says read "Heidi" in the Alps, "Babar" in France, "Pinocchio" in an Italian gondola, and "Sleeping Beauty" in a German castle (from *Parents' Choice*). [Paris in Children's Books.](#) For a whiff of the Foreign, authors often visit the City of Light. You can too (from *Parents' Choice*). [Travel in England Via Kids' Books.](#) Next time I fly into Heathrow, I will present my passport and my library card. [Whale Watching.](#) When we could, say, be squirrel-watching or cow-watching, why are we especially drawn to—of all God's creatures—the whale? (from *Parents' Choice*). [Kids' Authors & Their Homes: Literary Tour of U.S.](#) Favorite authors and locales associated with their stories (from *Parents' Choice*). [New Zealand YA Novels.](#) "I could find out more about New Zealand by reading fiction rather than Fodor's facts" (from *Parents' Choice*). [Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art.](#) In bucolic Western Massachusetts stands an incredible museum dedicated to this kind of kids' book (from *Parents' Choice*).



PEOPLE. [James Marshall, We Love You.](#) Like his books, I learned, Jim Marshall was "a charming companion" and a little edgy (from *Parents' Choice*). [Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings.](#) Author of "The Yearling," hard-drinking sportswoman and writer, friends with Ernest

Hemingway (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Sid Fleischman: A Remembrance](#). He felt his success was due to the fact that he still sometimes thought like a child (from *Parents' Choice*). [Juan Felipe Herrera: An Interview](#). Well known poet and author of several dozen books (including bilingual picture books and adolescent novels written in verse), Herrera became in 2015 the first Latino appointed U.S. Poet Laureate. Here is my interview with him (from *Parents' Choice*). [L. Frank Baum: Oz & California](#). How the author of the Oz books came to live in California (from the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*). [Mark Twain: His Centennial Year](#). Learning by impersonation (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). [Marcia Brown: The Tokyo Interview](#). "We need the stranger to understand ourselves" (from *The Study of Current English*). [Hans Christian Andersen \(& Sex\)](#). The original Ugly Duckling (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). [Michael Sowa](#). A German artist and illustrator worth discovering (from *Parents' Choice*). [Berta & Elmer Hader](#). These mid-century bohemians built a home and studio alongside the Hudson River, made weekly trips into New York to pick up or drop off work, and did close to fifty children's books (from *The Lion and the Unicorn*). [William Steig: Shrek & Co.](#) His clever and hilarious ways of playing with other children's stories (from *Parents' Choice*). [Leo Politi](#). In the 1940's, he was the first to do multicultural picture books that featured Mexican-American characters and themes (from *Parents' Choice*). [David Weisner](#). An artist/teacher, a student of the picture-book genre and an historian of its avant garde (from *Parents' Choice*). [Jules Verne](#). Fiction about inventions and inventors (from *Parents' Choice*). [Nicoletta Ceccoli: Childhood's Beautiful Nightmares](#). A leading figure in Europe, Ceccoli creates dark and eerie children's books. Or has she created a new thing: picture books for adolescents and post-adolescents? My profile and interview of this daring young Italian artist. [Robert J. Lang: Origami with Kids](#). Youngsters interested in bugs, computers, math and Rubik's cubes should be introduced to origami (from *Parents' Choice*). [P.L. Travers: A Remembrance](#). The author of

“Mary Poppins” was the wisest woman I ever met (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*).



HOLIDAY CALENDAR. {*Martin Luther King Day*} [African-American Children's Books: Busing & Flying](#). Toni Morrison collects photos from the days of school integration; Virginia Hamilton collects African-American folklore (from *Parents' Choice*). {*Valentine's Day*} [Valentines, Candy, Sweethearts](#). Passing out valentines in school, and giving sweets to your sweetheart. {*St. Patrick's Day*} [Ireland & Irish Children's Stories](#). A long tradition of myths and legends has had an influence on Irish writers for children (from *Parents' Choice*). {*April Fools*} [The Fool & the Child](#). “The almost universal attitude children adopt with grown-ups,” the famous psychologist Otto Rank observed, “is playing the fool” (from *Parents' Choice*). {*Mothers Day*} [Literary Moms in Children's Books](#). In Storyland every day is, more or less, Mother's Day. {*Father's Day*} [Our Culture's Dotty Dads](#). Fathers really get little respect in our society. Reflecting this fact are the dads who appear in Storyland. {*July 4*} [The American Revolution Revised: Children's Books in the Era of the Tea Party](#). [Summer Reading](#). School is out. Reading for fun. [Back to School: The Invention of the School Story](#). The rise of mandatory schooling and the School Story, from *Little Women* to *Harry Potter* (from *Parents Choice* and the *San Diego Union Tribune*). [Halloween: Our Monsters Aren't What They Used to Be](#). Why children's stories and films are no longer scary (from the *Los Angeles Times*). [Two Touching Christmas Stories](#). I wear my heart on my sleeve (from *Parents' Choice*). {*Xmas*} [In Praise of the Grinch](#). The Grinch is not the enemy of Christmas; he is the enemy of the inauthentic and insincere” (from *Parents' Choice*).



HISTORY & POLITICS. [George Washington & the Cherry Tree](#). The legend meant to encourage truth-telling was itself a fabrication (from the *Los Angeles Times*). [M.T. Anderson's "Octavian Nothing."](#) It may be hard to conceive of making this claim about a young adult book, but I believe "Octavian Nothing" will someday be recognized as a novel of the first rank (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Laurie Halse Anderson's "Forge."](#) Featuring an African-American soldier fighting during the American Revolution, Anderson's historical novel focuses on the winter hardships suffered during the encampment at Valley Forge (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Patriotic Biographies](#). It is uncanny how Lynne Cheney, wife of the Vice President, celebrates a ragtag bunch of insurgents (American revolutionaries) fighting an occupying army (the British) in a book published at the exact moment a ragtag bunch of Iraqi "insurgents" (as the press consistently calls them) besiege the American occupying forces sent to Iraq by George Bush and Dick Cheney (from *Parents' Choice*). [Barack Obama's Children's Book](#). Offers thirteen short tributes to an ethnically diverse group of Americans who shaped our nation (e.g., Albert Einstein, Jackie Robinson, Sitting Bull, Helen Keller). There is little reason to complain about *the book*. There is also little reason to praise it (from *Parents' Choice*).



KINDS. [E-book Backlash](#). Children's Stories Savage the iPad. With children's literature, a choice between the book and digital media? [Nursery Rhymes](#). For no other reason than they are delightful (from *Parents' Choice*). [Illustrating Mother Goose](#). "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep," "Jack and Jill," "Little Boy Blue," and more (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [How Picturebooks Work](#). Which comes first: the pictures or the text? (from *Parents' Choice*). [Pop-Up Books](#). Moveable feats (from *Parents' Choice*). [Board Books \(for Babies\)](#). If it were a vehicle, the board book would be a tank or an armored personnel carrier (from *Parents' Choice*). [Fables: Aesop](#). Why Aesop's

Fables should be the one literary work sent to outer space to represent us (from *Parents' Choice*). [Counting Books](#). When numbering no longer requires fingers and toes (from *Parents' Choice*). [Nonsense](#). Why nonsense is so important (from *Parents' Choice*). [Graphic Biographies](#). Amelia Earhart, Elvis Presley, Muhammad Ali, and Pablo Neruda (from *Parents' Choice*). [Graphic Novels \(& Shaun Tan\)](#). A clash between the super normal and fantasy (from *Parents' Choice*). [Best Contemporary YA Novels](#). When I was in junior high and high school, all we had for young adult novels (it seemed to me) was "Catcher in the Rye" and "To Kill a Mockingbird"; here, in my opinion, are the four best young adult novels published in recent years (from *Parents' Choice*). [The Pop YA Novel](#). When teens sported spiked and colored hair, when pixie princesses dressed in 1950s prom dresses and cowboy boots, when Cyndi Lauper was singing "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" (from *Parents' Choice*). [Series Books: Reading Backwards](#). Can we read works "backwards," looking for prequels and progenitors, and come to new understandings of literary works? (from *TALL: Teaching and Learning About Literature*). [Middle-Grade Reading: Solipsism & Adventure](#). *Gingersnap* by Patricia Reilly Giff and *Navigating Early* by Clare Vanderpool: their assumptions about what appeals these days to middle-grade readers (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Philip Pullman's Cosmic Fantasies: An Appreciation of "His Dark Materials."](#) Pullman's trilogy has been my all-time favorite reading during the last decade (from *Parents' Choice*). [Two Latino/a Books About the Immigrant Experience](#). The story of immigration is often a memoir about childhood (from *Parents' Choice*). [Brian Selznick's "Wonderstruck."](#) "Local Author Does Good" (from the *San Diego Union Tribune*). [Young Adult Novel by Roddy Doyle](#). A review of *Wilderness* (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Fantasylands](#). Where fantasy comes from and why the young find it so appealing (from *Parents' Choice*). [Map Reading](#). I'm a sucker for books with maps (from *Parents' Choice*). [Children's Poetry & Natalie Merchant](#). A fascinating anthology of children's poetry accompanied by biographical

notes and two CDs on which each of the twenty-six poems is set to music (from the *Horn Book*). [Tall Tales: Paul\(a\) Bunyan](#). Like other larger-than-life American legends, Paul Bunyan was associated with the tall tale, that narrative offspring of the liars' convention (from the *New York Times Book Review*).



TOPICS. [Bears in Kids' Stories](#). In Kidsworld, every tenth animal seems to be a bear (from *Parents' Choice*). [Teddy Bears' Picnic](#). Alexandra Day goes out to the woods (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Zen & Kids](#). Zen may be an ideal philosophy for children (from *Parents' Choice*). [Cowboys & Cowgirls](#). Mamas, Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys and Cowgirls (from *Parents' Choice*). [Island Dreams](#). For the young, island dreaming seems particularly acute when they are grappling with issues of order and disorder, control and chaos (from *Parents' Choice*). [Gardening with Children](#). *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *The Secret Garden*, *A Child's Garden of Verses*—combine one or all with a packet of seeds (from *Parents' Choice*). [Pirates & Pretending](#). Ah, the theatrical gorgeousness of being a pirate! With an eye patch and swordplay (from *Parents' Choice*). [Small and Tall: Books About Height](#). Smallness is a problem for boys but tallness, not so much; the opposite is the case for girls, though Michelle Obama may be changing that (from the *New York Times Book Review*). ["I, Chihuahua": the Skippyjon Jones Books](#). Ten miles from California's border with Mexico, a new craze is spreading among the students at the Chula Vista Learning Community Charter School (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Living Toys](#). For the very young, the whole world is alive—from talking teddy bears to the North Wind (from *Parents' Choice*). [A World Without Soup](#). Kate DiCamillo's "The Tale of Desperaux" (from the *New York Times Book Review*). [Can Grown-Ups Be Trusted?](#) Children's Films and Plays Turn Dark. [Burdening Kids with Innocence](#). On pedophilia, Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein," and recent cases of child abduction and murder (from the *Los Angeles Times*).



CRITICS & PROFESSIONS. [Francelia Butler: Two Remembrances](#). The dauntless professor often credited with establishing the literary study of Children's Literature (from the *Hartford Courant* and the 2013 *Children's Literature Association Memorial Lecture*). [Jonathan Cott: Interviews](#). A review of Cott's *Pipers at the Gates of Dawn*: interviews with Seuss, Sendak, Steig, Lindgren, Achebe, Travers, and Opie (from the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*). [Can Little Mary Learn if Teacher's in the Dark?](#) The "Technique" gang aims to steer teacher preparation away from content (from the *Los Angeles Times*). [Remembering Bruno Bettelheim, 1903-1990](#). (in *TALL: Teaching and Learning Literature with Children and Young Adults*). [The Future of the Profession](#). Musing on the state of Children's Literature in Academia (from *Lion and Unicorn* and excerpted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* *Academe Today*). [Keeping "Kiddie Lit" in Its Place](#). Thoughts on the status of Children's Literature prompted by "Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children's Literature" by Beverly Lyon Clark (from the *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*). [Biography & Literary Critics](#). Two recent books suggest the perils and pleasures of biographies penned by critics (from the journal *Children's Literature*). [Picturebooks: The Art of Visual Storytelling](#). Examinations by scholars by Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles (from the *San Diego Union Tribune*). [Humphrey Carpenter's "Secret Gardens: A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature."](#) The Curmudgeon in the Garden (from *Children's Literature*). [Wizards of Oz](#). Michael Hearne collects critical essays on Baum's classic work, and Michael Hague interprets the text with his illustrations (from the journal *Children's Literature*). ["Retired Children's Lit Scholars Just Wanna Have Fun: Two Interviews with Jerry Griswold."](#) The first interview with SDSU graduate students (Jill Coste, Alya Hameed, Alixandria Lombardo, and Kelsey Wadman). The second with Julie Anne Stevens (St. Patrick's College Dublin).