

The Creative Launcher

Journal URL: <https://www.thecreativelauncher.com/index.php/tcl>

ISSN: 2455-6580

Issue: Vol. 9 & Issue 3 (June, 2024)


Publisher: Perception Publishing

Published on: 30th June, 2024

Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access: Yes

Journal DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.53032/issn.2455-6580>

©The Creative Launcher (2024). This Open Access article is published under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International License <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>, which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. For citation use the DOI. Please contact editor on: thecreativelauncher@gmail.com

Licensing:  <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>



Article History: Abstract Received on: 26th April 2024 | Full Article Received on: 15th May 2024 | Revision received on: 18th May 2024 | Plagiarism Checked on 28th May 2024 | Peer Review Completed on: 16th June 2024 | Article Accepted on 17th June 2024 | First Published on: 30th June 2024

Research Article



Exploring Pastoral Themes in *The Wind in the Willows*: A Celebration of Animal Life in Educational and Riparian Contexts


Dr. Ravindra Neupane

Lecturer

Department of English

Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, TU, Nepal

Email: rdkneupane@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9180-9255>

 <https://doi.org/10.53032/tcl.2024.9.3.06>

Pages: 41-50

Abstract

The present research focuses on the distinctive ways that the animal characters in Kenneth Grahame's children's book *The Wind in the Willows* perceive, navigate, and communicate in a fantasy setting. The interpretation of *The Wind in the Willows* is around the analysis of pastoral celebration, a topic that is rarely covered in children's literature. Mole, Rat, Badger, and Toad, the film's four primary animal characters, go on a series of absurd escapades that typically involve playing around in boats but always come to a close with them returning to their comfortable homes. The stories in the book create an idyllic universe devoid of sex, labor, fierceness, and demise, where relationships, decency, capability, bravery, and compassion are

encouraged. The results of this investigation indicate that Arcadia is among the secret grounds that characterize the Golden Age of Children's Literature and is located along a river in the book. In conclusion, it is hoped that this research will support books for young readers like *The Wind in the Willows*, which emphasizes letting go of eccentricity and originality to fit in with the group.

Keywords: Arcadia, Animal, Children's Literature, Ecocriticism, Nature, Fancy, Imagination, Nostalgia, Pastoral

Introduction

Experienced readers contextualize the novel in various ways. According to Peter Green, Profiler for Kenneth Grahame, the novel served as writer Grahame's psychological getaway from his terrible marriage and his unrewarding but well-paid employment at the Bank of England (23). The structure and concept of the mock epic Odyssean are highlighted by Lois Kuznets (51). According to Peter Hunt, the book is "by fits and starts, all of these"—an anarchist comedy, burlesque, nostalgia, Bildungsroman, animal paradise, sexist conservative treatise, and sociological study of class struggle (97). In a broader context than gardens, Wilkie asserts that the children's literature canon was influenced long before Grahame's book by the "nurturing, pastoral features of Romanticism, emphasizing Bildungsroman characteristics of growth and change" (3). "Nostalgia for a fast-retreating idyll" (Bavidge 5) first arose as a major motif in children's books with a pastoral theme.

The novel rewards such readings in spades. If we go back to the text's beginnings, which have been curiously overlooked by most critics and which call for the kind of analysis that Marilyn Butler urges, "The writings of the past ask for an educated reading, as far as possible from their own discourse or code or cultural system" (43). It is also important to keep in mind that the tale features a particular author and addressee. Grahame started telling his son Alastair bedtime stories in 1904, which later developed into narrative letters when they split up in 1907 and eventually published in print in 1908. It's the story of how Ratty, Badger, and Mole try to help Mr. Toad when he gets obsessed with cars and starts getting into trouble. Additionally, it includes disjointed short stories about them that are detailed. The book is based on bedtime tales Grahame told his son Alastair. This article contends that Grahame's goal was to pass on information to Alastair from father to son, from the old boy in public school today to the new boy of the future, in a way that would appeal to the four-year-old audience of the oral storytelling as well as the seven-year-old on vacation with his governess.

This information was meant to prepare the child for his future education. Concerning the situation Alastair is about to find himself in, the tale of the newbie Mole, who gains friends, picks up skills, and broadens his environment, is particularly pertinent. Though its rhetorical devices and fictitious content perfectly capture the fears and circumstances of both its author and its addressee, *The Wind in the Willows* is a successful general guide for the behavior of that fascinating young animal, the English schoolboy. As such, the needs of a one-boy audience are catered to in this gently instructive and cautionary tale written by a system initiate.

Research Method

This study employs the interpretive philosophy, which forms the basis of the qualitative research methodology. Information is presented as narrative prose or a textual summary of the phenomena under investigation using a qualitative method. The qualitative research approach is used to analyze the text of *The Wind in the Willows*. Literature employs a variety of literary strategies to explore animals' exposure along riverbanks, including personification, similes, metaphors, animation language, symbolism, and images.

According to Hancock, in Makwanya and Dick (11) qualitative content inspection is a technique for categorizing oral or social data to catalog, summarize, and tabulate. As a result, the sort of technical analysis that is most applicable to this research is qualitative analysis. This is explained by the information provided in the words, phrases, and sentences described in the section above.

Documented analysis is an additional information source that might be highly beneficial for qualitative academics, according to Hoepful in Makwanya and Dick (14). A portion of the document analysis involved looking at and assessing resources on schoolboys with the pastoral celebration of animal life. These children's novels are the source of data for this investigation.

Discussion and Analysis

It's interesting to note that *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), the only work of young adult literature we are certain Grahame read, came about as a result of the same impulse: When Thomas Hughes was considering what should he tell his son, Maurice, age eight, about starting school, he came up with the idea for the book. Alastair, on the other hand, would find his idealized self - criticized, harassed, and given a scornful sissy moniker, such as "Molly" or "Fluff," in late Victorian realistic schoolboy fiction. Alastair is quirky, overemotional, physically challenged, immature, and dependent on his mother. In literature, such outcasts endured the torture of being wrapped in blankets or placed over a fire; in Lewis Carroll's day at Rugby, books would have been defaced with the sarcastic comment, "C. L. Dodgson is a muff." The subtle similarities between *The Wind in the Willows* and well-known school tales imply that, far from frightening Alastair, the author based his work on realistic books and magazines that were at his disposal, Grahame picked a more subversive and palatable method of imparting schoolboy survival advice.

C. S. Lewis, Alastair Grahame's close peer, would have enthusiastically approved the decision to deliver material through animal imagination rather than a classroom story if he had read *The Wind in the Willows* as a youngster as opposed to discovering it in his thirties. Lewis expresses his distaste for the Childhood readings of realistic schoolboy fiction he had read in "On Three Ways of Writing for Children." Lewis is furious because realism's false promises lead to disappointment: "I never thought the real world would resemble fairy tales. I think I was expecting the school to be like the school stories. The school stories tricked me, not the imagination (1078). Such tales made him yearn to be a popular, successful schoolboy and brought him back to his world, leaving him "undivinely discontented" (1078). A boy bearing Alastair Grahame's exceptional obligations would be at much higher risk of experiencing this discontentment, which may be the natural fate of the ordinary.

Alastair Grahame was born, prematurely, on 12 May 1900; and to his parents' intense distress, proved to have congenital cataract of the right eye, which was completely blind, along with a pronounced squint in the left—which was also “over-sighted,” according to Green's excellent biography of Kenneth Grahame. (227).

Alastair, a sensitive child born to unhappy parents, “become the beneficiary of both his parents' frustrated feelings” (227). He was spoiled, and that is an understatement. Alastair's “precocious, cheeky style which disgusted Grahame's friends,” according to Carpenter, is mentioned (152). Green, lamenting Elspeth Grahame's failure to acknowledge her son's physical deformities and mental instability, claims that the boy's entire existence became a fight to live up to the unattainable ideal she set him, and in the end, the strain was too great (228). Insinuations about Alastair that his wife held were not shared by Kenneth Grahame. Grahame had firsthand knowledge of the difficulties his overindulged and overpraised kid would encounter because he had attended a public school. He must have been in excruciating pain as in 1907, he wrote the story letters to Alastair, who was seven years old. since, according to upper-middle-class custom, he was going to step out of the loving, nurturing wrap of his mother and nanny and into the brutal, masculine world of English public school.

In this overwhelmingly male-dominated environment, Grahame had found success in a place where there were five or six boys in a room, all of the professors were men, and women were only sometimes encountered in the figure of a matriarch who tended to the younger boys and occasionally supplied goodies to the homesick and disheartened in the kitchen. He learned to hide or subtly convey his thoughts after his early experiences with the capricious and unusual methods of the Oxford schoolmasters at St. Edward's School. This allowed him to win prizes for Divinity and Latin prose in 1874, as well as the Sixth Form Class Prize in 1875. He gained the respect of his peers by making the second eleven in cricket, winning the First Fifteen colors in rugby, and acting as the head of the school. He spoke in the Debating Society and published essays for the school newspaper. Grahame reminisced about the suffering of his admission to the public school, notwithstanding his triumphs. He paints a vivid picture of “a young school-boy, newly kicked out of his nest into the draughty, uncomfortable outer world, his unfledged skin still desiring the feathers whereinto he was wont to snuggle” in an article titled “The Fairy Wicket,” which was available in *The National Observer* in 1892. (Prince 30-31). Green cites Grahame's assertion that “One must now live in the enemy's camp, wear his colors, and utter his public shibboleths because attending school is an experience that cannot be avoided. More sinister is the potential for someone to start believing in them” (32).

Depending on the writer's mindset, the majority of written accounts of school days, whether autobiographical or fictitious, fit into one of several categories. The innovator, who seeks improvement and change, the rebel, who vehemently opposes the institution, and the conformist, who supports the ends as well as the methods of his specific school's system, are the three types of schoolboys whose opinions are most likely to be documented (358). The most similar attitude to what Lambert calls a “ritualist”—a boy who follows school rules without necessarily agreeing with them—is that of Grahame. Possibly not finding any of the traditional direct methods of instruction suitable for Alastair, Grahame—a ritualist and a father who seems to have understood his son's particular situation—encoded the knowledge needed for a

schoolboy to survive in the anthropomorphic animal tale that became *The Wind in the Willows*. One reason Grahame may not have directly offered counsel on school life was his divided reluctance to either join the “enemy camp”—the world of capricious, dogmatic adults—or publicly denounce the system that was fostered in that camp, a system in which he had performed exceptionally well. Another factor would have been his polite reluctance to brag about his achievements in these kinds of school-related endeavors, knowing full well that Alastair would never be a good athlete involving hand-eye harmonization and determination.

Whatever his motivations, Grahame’s technique required doing what is implied above in expressions like “kicked out of the nest” and “unfledged skin,” which were previously referenced. He transformed the school into the Riverbank, the students into animals in general, and Alastair into a mole who, as *When Wind in the Willows* opens, the main character is engaged in obviously household activities and exclaims, “Hang spring-cleaning,” before crawling out of his cave and into the sunlight meadow. Given the story’s primary audience, the partially blind Alastair, the decision to have a mole as the new boy was carefully considered. But any new boy at school could be a mole to a lesser degree, having to escape the dark, womblike confines of home and nursery in search of illumination. The new boy evicted from his nest is first unable to recognize the springtime pleasures of his new habitat, much similar to the mole. He needs to become familiar with the customs of the Riverbank (or of the classroom), get along with the other animals (or guys), select a species to look out for him, teach him, and befriend him, as well as gain the respect of his fellow soldiers via athletic prowess. By depicting the learning environment as a river and its surroundings, Grahame uses a relatable and well-liked metaphor.

Water is an unfamiliar element, as land-dwelling humans discover, but one to which they can become used with experience and training. *The Hill* by Horace Annesley Vachell, a 1905 novel set in modern-day Harrow, opens with the following instructive passage: “You’re going to head into a significant river. There are boulders and rapids in it, but if you can swim, you can take the first dive and still enjoy it” (1-2). A river is not only foreign and “not home,” but also lively. In his contrast of *The Wind in the Willows* and *Huckleberry Finn*, “Home and Away,” Christopher Clausen argues that, like school, it is a way of winning those who get away from their household or back yet again. The river is also a very welcoming location for Grahame’s immediate audience. During Alastair’s childhood, the Grahame household resided on the Thames at Cookham Dene, then again at Pangbourne. It’s interesting to note that boating, the main hobby in *The Wind in the Willows*, was Kenneth Grahame’s preferred pastime, and Alastair was a proficient boater and swimmer despite his vision impairment.

Mole freely acknowledges that he has never been in a yacht or enjoyed the carefree river life going to the riverside and meeting regulars, the Water Rat. Rat takes the novice under his wing and teaches him about the ways of the world, which are, in his words, “It is my world, and I don’t want anything else. It is my brother and sister, and company, and food and drink. It is not worth having what it lacks, and it is not worth learning what it doesn’t know” (8). Through outlines to other associates of his set, Rat eases Mole’s path. He cautions Mole to stay away from undesirables, especially the Wild Wood animals: “Weasels, stoats, foxes, and other animals. They’re all okay in a way—I’m close friends with them, we talk when we meet, and all that—but

occasionally, there's no denying it, they have breakdowns, and when that happens, you can't trust them" (9-10). However, Once the brainwashing process has begun, they are equally fitting representations of the outcasts, blighters, and bounders that a sharp-eyed schoolboy despises, those who are not "our sort." Some commentators interpret Grahame's bourgeois social anxieties as being projected onto the Wild Wooders. Such propaganda is a mainstay of genuine schoolboy literature, as shown, for example, in conflicts between traditional and modern students.

This process is started by *The Wind in the Willows* by giving Alastair and other aspiring new boys a series of practical lessons. In one such instance,

As Rat continued to scull so powerfully and effortlessly, Mole's envy of him grew, and his vanity started to murmur that he could do it just as well. He quickly leapt up and grabbed the sculls, causing Rat to be caught off guard and fall backward off his seat. "Stop it you silly ass!" cried the Rat, from the bottom of the boat. "You can't do it! You'll have us over!" The Mole flung his sculls back with a flourish and made a great dig at the water. He missed the surface altogether, his legs flew up above his head, and he found himself lying on top of the prostrate Rat. (15)

Rat "kindly looked in another direction" (17) as Mole had to "sweep away a tear or two with the back of his paw," but the longer-lasting effect is that Rat had taught Mole the legends of river life, which were "quite thrilling stories they were, too, to an earth-dwelling animal like Mole" (17).

After meeting the companion who becomes David to his Jonathan, Mole gets to know Badger, who resembles more of a stern but compassionate headmaster of the Arnoldian kind than any other authority figure among the Riverbank animals. In Grahame's book, Badger is characterized as "seeming to be such an important personage and, while rarely visible, to make his hidden influence felt by everyone about the place" (38). Exactly the protagonist of the tale, Badger represents a decent expert. His goal is to uplift, admonish, and, if needed, change people who are in his care. After knocking on Badger's door in fear and exhaustion, Mole and Rat had their first prolonged interaction with the badger. Badger's first angry and skeptical retort suddenly transforms into fatherly worry: "He gave them both a loving stroke on the head as he looked down on them. He replied fatherly, it is not a night suitable for tiny animals to be outside. "Ratty, I'm afraid you've engaged in some of your pranks once more" (58). Badger adopts the role of the adult in charge after providing for their physical needs (a fire, dry clothes, and supper) "Rat and Mole's description of the alleged "pranks" are recalled. He is seated at the head of the table in his chair.

As the animals narrated their story, he "nodded gravely at various moments, and he never said anything and didn't appear surprised or horrified by anything. "I told you so," or "Just what I always said," or remarked that they "ought to have done so-and-so," or "ought not to have done that," "(The final two points, which Badger omitted from his speech, clearly allude to the General Confession in the Anglican prayerbook). Instead of using overbearing didacticism, Badger lets the two animals reflect on their actions and faults and come to their conclusions. This reminds the kind advice given to Stephen Greenfield by Mr. Rastle in Reed's *The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* (1871). Toad of Toad Hall, the intriguing bad boy of the River, won't, however,

take kindly to Badger's more laid-back strategy, which depends on Rat and Mole's essentially kind nature. When Badger learns about Toad's most outrageous behavior, he says, "We'll deal with Toad severely, I suppose. We won't tolerate any bullshit of any kind, and we'll turn him into a responsible Toad" (62). The two young hedgehogs respond to Rat and Mole's inquiry about Badger the following morning by saying, "The master's gone into his study, Sir... and on no account wants to be disturbed." They could be interpreted from their submissive conduct as being indicatives of a common people (64). Badger is the ideal headmaster for the Riverbank "school" since he can be distant or nurturing, stern or empathetic depending on the situation, tolerantly alert, determined but not judicious, and conscientious but not cavillous.

The attempt to rehabilitate Toad—differently mentioned as "taking in hand," "rescue," "conversion," and "mission of mercy"—represents probably Badger's greatest educational challenge. Toad must alter because of his status to improve himself and Riverbank civilization. Toad is a wealthy, conceited, endearing, and spur-of-the-moment character who is arguably the most memorable in the book. He never postpones enjoyment, chases to hilariously disastrous ends, and boasts about his house, fortune, fun, and lovely. "This highlights asymmetrical architecture while bringing human and animal perspectives into alignment" (Neupane 53). He is not a discreet and responsible member of the middle class. Along with Mole and Rat, Toad represents a stereotype of the typical schoolboy. As a flamboyant narcissist, Toad is probably going to make problems at school. He reminds me a lot of "Demon" Scaife from *The Hill* and Flashman from *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Carpenter does make a lighthearted observation of the animals' academic past when he says that one could picture Toad enjoying a brief stay at Eton or Harrow earlier being ejected.

This highlights asymmetrical architecture while bringing the human and animal perspectives into alignment.

This highlights asymmetrical architecture while bringing the human and animal perspectives into alignment.

Toad stands out from the other students at the school because he resolves to defy authority and enter the Wide World of society—and ladies. Of all the animals, Claudia Nelson notes that Toad "has the most kinship with the human (adult and—worse—female) world" (167). He interacts with washerwomen, nurses, and the children of jailers. , and the feared bargewoman because of his undeniably sexual enthusiasm for automobiles. As *The Wind in the Willows* shows, taking a character like Toad's reckless course is dangerous. His unrestrained individuality is bad for him individually, but Rat and Badger think it's even worse since it makes the team seem bad. Toad "has been corrupted by contemporary technology; he has made a public fool of himself; he is egotistical, reckless, and a spendthrift; he has embarrassed his pals" (Green 245). It is interesting how these crimes blend the personal and the collective. Toad's indulgence harms the riverbed's social system in addition to him personally. His death makes it possible for the repugnant weasels and stoats to congregate in Toad Hall and mock the noble creatures that perform on Toad's stage. In the cautionary tale of Toad, Grahame lays forth the cornerstone of public school spirit—loyalty to the group—for a child raised to think too highly of himself. Upon observing Toad's perils, Mole and Alastair learn the importance of cooperation: "Never, never let the side down." Alternatively, a few miles from the Grahames' residence down

the Thames or the riverfront replica of Toad Hall, Mapledurham House, is where the Eton Boating Song, “Yes we’ll still swing together / And pledge by the best of schools,” is performed.

The young hero, Michael Fane, receives nearly helpful advice on school life from an older, wiser child named Rodber: “Look here, Rodber said, “I don’t mind giving you a couple of ideas about school since you’ll be a new kid.” Look here, don’t reveal your Christian identity to anyone, and be humble.” (87). Shortly after, the narrator of *Sinister Street* mockingly describes the useful schoolboy virtue of anonymity: “Michael took pride in the fact that, for the most part, his appearance and attire matched the style of the younger boys at Randall’s. It would be awful to attract attention. In fact, Michael believed that attracting attention was the worst possible sin that anybody could commit” (92).

While it’s true that some crimes are worse than eternal life, Grahame’s understanding as a young student—as depicted in *The Wind in the Willows*—aligns with the advice given in *Sinister Street*. As we’ve seen, Toad’s vanity is never rewarded. The only other juvenile hedgehogs with the infantile characteristic of Christian names are Billy and Otter’s small son Portly, who suggests that they are still living with their mother. Rat, Mole, and Toad are never addressed by anything other than their surnames or the adjective “old guy.” Rich with slang, some of which are juvenile taunts and insults, and somewhat excessive in its use of terms such as “jolly” and “stupid,” the novel’s conversation, in Kuznets’ words, is stylized to the point of poverty (113). To demonstrate how such adolescent reductionism cuts across all social strata and periods, one simply needs to point to Beavis and Butthead’s categorization of everything into “cool” and “sucks,” which is today’s equal of Mole and Rat’s “jolly” and “dumb.”

As all these norms would imply, *The Wind in the Willows*, like other works of young adult literature, emphasizes sacrificing uniqueness and originality in order to fit in with a group. As the book progresses, many of Mole’s core “maleness” is left behind. Even if, like a schoolboy on vacation, he is allowed to return for Christmas before departing, most likely permanently, he still gives up his underground burrow. He gives up his carefree ways and lives as a Riverbanker. By the end of the book, he is battling alongside Rat, Badger, and Toad in the fictitious epic battle to reclaim Toad Hall from the stoats and weasels. By chapter nine, he has gained enough confidence to persuade Rat not to become a Wayfarer. By chapter five, he had stopped crying. Like Stalky, Beetle, and M’Turk at the end of *Stalky & Co.* by Rudyard Kipling. The four animals are brought together at the novel’s climax as heroes of their era, solidifying Mole’s position as an “insider” (1899).

As numerous British novels and memoirs from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries attest, school days were, or at least were thought to be, the most significant influential period of a human’s life. “The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton,” the Duke of Wellington famously declared. Alastair Grahame’s contemporary at Eton, Cyril Connolly, engraved more critically of the school’s powerful effect on rivals:

In fact, were I to deduce any system from my feelings on leaving Eton, it might be called The Theory of Permanent Adolescence. It is the theory that the experiences undergone by boys at the great public schools, their glories, and disappointments, are so intense as to dominate their lives and to arrest their development. From these it results that the great part of the ruling class remains adolescent, school-minded. . . . Early laurels weigh

like lead, and of many of the boys whom I knew at Eton, I can say that their lives are over. (251-52)

A female activist respondent, Connolly, portrays *The Wind in the Willows* as the cultural weaning of masculine members of the ruling class. Connolly's Etonians and Grahame's Riverbanks, like Bertie Wooster and the other Drones in P. G. Wodehouse's writings, continue to be everlasting schoolboys and bachelors at heart, trained to dissociate from and then pervert, idealize, or the impact of moms, aunts, sisters, and (female) partners is mysterious -in-waiting. Literary descriptions of their status are generally more endearing than the results themselves.

Even while *The Wind in the Willows* may seem idyllic to many readers—whether young children, late teens, or adults—it actually had some terrible ironies for both its author and the audience that it was intended for just one person. After it became incredibly popular, Grahame never authored another book, though left the Bank of England to devote all of his time to literature. And if his primary goal in creating *The Wind in the Willows* was to advise Alastair on the behaviors, demeanor, and vocabulary that would enable him to thrive in one of the most prestigious public schools in England, his story fell short of its intended impact. Alastair's family decided to keep him at home with a governess until he was ten years old rather than sending him to go at the tradition of eight years old. They then reluctantly sent him to Dorset's Old Malthouse School for prep. Fortunately, it was a happy, accepting environment.

In 1914, Alastair's mother made an impulsive decision to move him from his prep school to Rugby, one of the "great schools." —was not as fortunate. According to Alison Prince, Alastair was pushed into a life that, by his standards, was not far from hell because he was full of air and unable to participate in any sports other than swimming due to his bad vision. In a harsh school, Rugby was brutal in its treatment of any boy who put on airs, appeared out of the ordinary in any manner, or was anything but a "good sport" (285). He resigned within months because he was so bitterly unhappy. The Grahams succeeded in enrolling him at Eton in January 1915, where he could stay for a little over a year. Alastair received individual tutoring at home to complete his studies before enrolling in the College in Oxford. His other students at university remembered that he often looked down. Alastair was twenty years old when he was struck by a train and probably took his own life. It does not seem like he's ever fit in with the schoolboy culture whose mythology is portrayed in *The Wind in the Willows* so eloquently.

Conclusion

The distinctive ways that the animal characters in Kenneth Grahame's novel for young readers *The Wind in the Willows* perceive, navigate, and interact in a pastoral setting. In my interpretation of the novel, the analysis of pastoral celebration—rarely employed in children's literature—emerges as the main theme. Mole, Rat, Badger, and Toad, the four primary animal protagonists, go on several absurd adventures together, most of which comprise messing around in boats, but they all reappear in their cozy and comforting homes. It's a bucolic celebration of animal life along the riverside. In a fictional world without sex, labor, violence, or death, incidents from the book inspire friendship, decency, competence, bravery, and generosity. As a consequence of this inquiry, it was discovered that the book's riverside location is home to Arcadia, one of the secret gardens that epitomize the Golden Age of children's fiction. To integrate into a community, *The Wind in the Willows* promotes letting go of eccentricity and

originality, just as in previous works of children's literature., and it is intended that this study will strengthen that message.

Works Cited

- Bavidge, Jenny. "Stories in Space: The Geographies of Children's Literature." *Children's Geographies*, vol.4, no.3, 2006, pp. 319-330.
- Butler, Marilyn. "Against Tradition: The Case for a Particularized Historical Method." *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, edited by Jerome J. McGann, U of Wisconsin P, 1985, pp.25-47.
- Carpenter, Humphrey. *Secret Gardens: The Golden Age of Children's Literature*. Houghton Mifflin, 1985.
- Clausen, Christopher. "Home and Away." *The Moral Imagination: Essays on Literature and Ethics*, U of Iowa P, 1986, pp. 39- 50.
- Connolly, Cyril. *Enemies of Promise*. Macmillan, 1948.
- Grahame, Kenneth. *The Wind in the Willows*. Dell, 1969.
- Green, Peter. *Kenneth Grahame: A Biography*. World, 1959.
- Hunt, Peter. *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford UP, 1994.
- Kuznets, Lois R. *Kenneth Grahame*. Twayne, 1987.
- Lambert, Royston. *The Hothouse Society*. London, 1968.
- Lewis, C. S. "On Three Ways of Writing for Children." *The Riverside Anthology of Children's Literature*, edited by Judith Saltman, Houghton Mifflin, 1985, pp. 1075-81.
- Mackenzie, Compton. *Sinister Street*. Macdonald and Lane, 1913.
- Mangan, J. A. *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*. Cambridge UP, 1981.
- Makwanya, Peter and Mathias Taririro Dick. "An Analysis of Children's Poems in Environment and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: A Participatory Approach, Catching Them Young." (2014).
- Nelson, Claudia. *Boys Will Be Girls: The Feminine Ethic and British Children's Fiction, 1857-1917*. Rutgers UP, 1991.
- Neupane, Ravindra. "Humans and Animals' Relationship in Karen Joy Fowler's We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves". *Baneshwor Campus Journal of Academia*. Vol. 2, 2023, 47-57.
- Prince, Alison. *Kenneth Grahame: An Innocent in the Wild Wood*. Allison & Busby, 1996.
- Richards, Jeffrey. *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction*. Manchester UP, 1988.
- Vachell, Horace Annesley. *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship*. John Murray, 1905.
- Wilkie, Christine. "Digging Up The Secret Garden: Noble Innocents or Little Savages?" *Children's Literature in Education*, vol.28, no.2, 1997, pp. 73-83.