

Criteria for Children's Literature: Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child* as a Study Case

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Abstract

Children's Literature comes to be one of the most famous kinds of literature in the recent period. It gives a chance to be in touch with the children's needs directly and affecting them properly by manipulating some constructive moral lessons which are the main pedagogical goals of this type. For example, the idea that the goodness will be rewarded and the bad deed will be punished runs deep in this kind of stories. Unquestionably, this type of literature has definite rules and criteria that are shaped to meet the goals behind writing such type of stories. In fact, there are three criteria that have been proposed by Nathenson and Escamilla in 2003 and there are also some additional criteria developed by Rebecca C. Obi, Ayanniyi Alhassan, and U. S. Osuji in 2010. This study is attempting to tackle these criteria by analyzing the structural framework and digging the pedagogical goals in Julia Donaldson's dramas: *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child* which are good examples of this kind of literature. The study starts firstly by giving an outlook to the definitions of this term (Children's Literature) then, explaining the criteria and finally examining the linguistic features and the structural framework of Donaldson's dramas to land on the most powerful points of usefulness to this kind of literature and how these dramas match the criteria.

Key Words: Children's Literature, Criteria, Julia Donaldson, *The Gruffalo*, *The Gruffalo's Child*.

1. Introduction

Children's literature is a term that refers to that kind of literature which is totally directed to children. It refers to any story whether it is short stories, poetry, rhymes, folk tales, or drama that is completely made for children (Obi et al, 2010, 4). Generally, the word 'children' was specified and has been defined by the 'United Nations Organization' as any person under the age of 18 years (Obi et al, 2010, 13). Since the children's literature is a unique division of literature in which the target readers/listeners are children, therefore it stands on the next shore to the adult's literature in terms of criteria. Barbara Stoodt states that children's literature is "thought, experience, and imagination shaped into oral or written language that may include visual images" (Stoodt, 1996, 4). One of most fundamental missions of this kind of literature is to educate. Children's literature appeals to the mind of the child and for that reason it can communicate and delivered the targeted values easily to the child who is about to discover the world throughout the stories. Besides, children's literature may add more experience to the children in using the kind of language that is appropriate for their age (Stoodt, 1996, 4).

The children's literature can either be read or acted or may simply listened to. In fact, "they are books written from the heart and from some memory ... and contact with childhood" (Davis, 1973, 17). Children's literature or children's books are made for special needs that should be fulfilled at the end. The examples for these needs are like "children's mental health, security, to love and be loved, to achieve, the need to know, and the need for aesthetic satisfaction" (Davis, 1973, 17). Although there are numerous types of children's literature, but there is also real life situations to talk about. A story about a real life situation may be more useful and touching. Nevertheless, a fairy story may come close to the child's mind (Obi et al, 2010, 7). As for the short story, it is a good type for children's literature. A story may include a description of past events or a description of imaginary events. In fact, short stories are more manageable and this is the great useful advantage.

In fact, when the child reads the story, it means that he/she is listening to another child and this is different when the stories are acted. It is important to bear in mind that children's literature addresses children in elementary or primary schools about the age of 6-14 years. Thus, the variety of what stories are about is huge and the subject matters are limitless. Simply, the main idea behind this kind of stories is to attract the children's attention to "what

people do, why they do it and what results from the doing and not what people think about what they do for thought processes are generally a bore to the young" (Davis, 1973, 7).

Children also like the well-known stories about animals, parents, or grandparents. Children actually like themselves and the stories about themselves. Children up to the age of nine years like the stories of familiar situations. Certainly, at some point, children love the made up story that is apparently about themselves and their own fresh activities. From this enjoyment and happiness in the familiar, children shift into the type of story that opens in their known world a huge scope of choices and it is better than the typical one. Children may also like stories about other real children whose actions are rather unusual, or break the rules, or are not capable to cope with them, who get into problem, confront the authorities, and victory over people who are older (Obi et al, 2010, 7).

2. Literature Review

Children's literature occupies a large area of attention in the present time. Therefore, many studies and researches are devoted to tackle the main strategies of this kind of literature. Some of these studies are dedicated to investigate the effects of this kind of literature on the children's mentality and behavior. Other studies are concerned mainly with the sense of humour and enjoyment that this kind of literature provides for the children. For instance, Amanda Craig (2004) sheds the light on the Gruffalo stories from the perspective of the trickster and the development of the social skills for the children. Betsie van der Westhuizen (2007) discusses the ways of 'locus of control' in the stories of the Gruffalo and explains how the locus of control mingled with humor delivered to the children. Matthew Creasy (2015) discusses the main components of the Children's literature from the perspective of different topics found in the stories of The Gruffalo which he compares to Harry Potter stories by J. K. Rowling. However, none of these studies discusses the criteria of children's literature. This study is devoted to shed light on the criteria of the children's literature and apply them on the stories of the Gruffalo.

3. Criteria for Children's Literature

Since most of the literature is in a written form, the language that is used in literature comes to be important and unique. The organic material of literature is language whether it was written or spoken. Even if it was the same language, still the use can be different. Language in literature has its own selections, patterns, distinctive systems to send the

messages (Obi et al, 2010, 3). No one can ignore the role of language in constructing the body of literature because literature is made out of language. It is the cart that the story writers use to deliver their own views to the readers or to the listeners. In fact, two points must be emphasized here; first the writer's experience, in that the readers learn something new and add more knowledge about the world. Second, it is when this experience helps the readers to find out something new about themselves in terms of humanity. Study or read about other people's experiences definitely enlarge the scope of perception and knowledge about the world. Therefore, the writers need the language as a raw material to design their points of view about the human experiences and launch them into the world. It means that the language is the main tool to deliver the messages. "This is the reason that literature is defined as language" (Williams & Owens, 1997, 23).

Since the children are the target of the children's literature, the books with pictures may be more appealing. These books are depending mainly on the fusion of linguistic texts with the visual images. In fact, the illustrations that accompany the text can facilitate the process of the understanding as well as insert more ideas. Pictures and illustrations show to the reader what is meant by the linguistic text, so that the reader may comprehend the subject matter or actions directly. The qualities of the pictures or the illustrations that accompany the text should be matching the content and do not disturb the message conveying (Nodelman, 2005, 131). The use of illustrations is important to the general understanding of the story to create an everlasting experience.

In fact, there are certain criteria to look for in the stories that are meant to be children's literature. Nathenson and Escamilla propose three criteria that are necessary to be found in the stories for the children. These criteria are "(a) strong, believable story lines, well crafted, not contrived or condescending; (b) believable, well-written language; and (c) quality illustrations that matched and supported the story" (Nathenson and Escamilla, 2003, 108). In fact, there are also some additional criteria that shape the structure of children's literature. These additional criteria like whether the heroes are children or teenagers which is important to be familiar to the child's mentality and whether the ideas or themes are simple or complex with special attention, of course, to the relationships and language in the story. The plainness of themes and language is the most dominating structure that shapes and defines the story as children's literature. Stories can be named as children's literature "if the ideas, relationship

and language are simple. However, literature is not children's literature if the ideas, relationship and language are found too complex whether oral or written" (Obi et al, 2010, 4).

The writer of such type of literature must be aware of the child's mind, psychology and the ways of understanding of the child. He/she also needs to recognize the differences in the children's psychological states, needs of understanding that arouse his interests to know more about this world. The writer of children's literature must not allow himself to enforce a particular way of reaction to this or that event. The way of reacting to the story may differ from one child to another. The nature of the child's world is different from the adult's one and it is not easy to predict his interests, responses and reaction (Obi et al, 2010, 25-26).

One of the most important goals of the children's literature is to please children by creating a lovely environment and motivate his imagination as well as develop his senses to grow with good perceptiveness to the world. The themes can be rotated about the neighborhood life or may go further to tackle universal ideas like pride and self identity. Once the writer thinks about a theme for his story, he needs to put in his consideration the audience and recount the theme to children's culture and age in this case the child will get benefit from reading the story. Moreover, children's literature is the best tool to transfer and reinforce the traditional values (Obi et al, 2010, 26).

4. Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child* as a Study Case

One of the pioneering writers in this field is Julia Donaldson. She was born in 1948 and raised in London. In the period of 2011-2013, she became 'The Children's Laureate'. *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child* which were written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated with pictures by Axel Scheffler stand as landmarks for the children's literature in the present days. *The Gruffalo* was published in 1999 and won many grand awards like the 'Smarties Gold Award'. In 2004, *The Gruffalo's Child* was published. The character of a mouse facing the difficulties in a forest is the main story line in both of these two dramatical stories. They were translated into many languages all over the world and more than million copies have been sold. Moreover, they have been acted on stages of many countries like USA, Ireland, Poland, Canada. Most recently, *The Gruffalo* was made a film with a musical adaptation (Westhuizen, 2007, 56-7).

In the domain of the children's literature, there are many stories in which the mouse is the chief character and it may represent many concepts or ideas that found in the human

world. One of the most important features in the stories of mice is the element of humour which comes to be an essential part of *The Gruffalo*. With the sense of humour, the child is moved by the character of the mouse and tries to identify with its success in difficult situations. Van Coillie argues that with such type of stories, the child aged four to five may enjoy the sense of humour with the surprises and the repetitions of the phrases, while the child who aged six to eight may find the enjoyment in the phonetic features of the language in terms of rhyme and definitely the sense of humour will take a considerable part of his/her thinking (Cited in Westhuizen, 2007, 58).

The story opens with the painting by Axel Scheffler on two pages wide to a woodland area in which the colors of brown and green are the main drawing frame. Then the linguistic text begins with a song that brings the sense of adventure to the child as he/she reads or hears it. The child's curiosity is risen by the careful choosing of words that indicates the start of an adventure.

"A mouse took a stroll through the deep dark wood.

A fox saw the mouse And the mouse looked good." (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 2)

The character of the mouse is portrayed through the words as being careless and joyful at the beginning. As the mouse enters the woods, it faces three predators: the fox, the owl and the snake respectively. These predators invited the mouse to a meal or a tea to devour it, but the mouse refused these offers and outwitted them all. The Mouse's technique is to outwit them one by one and tells each one different fearful attributes about the gruffalo, an imagined creature. The mouse was controlling the situation very cleverly. No single word in the text refers to the matter that the mouse was afraid from these predators. The mouse may has fearful feelings, but cleverly it hides them from these predators and this is an advantage to outwit them all (Westhuizen, 2007, 59). In fact, this behavior is a moral lesson in the sense that you can always hide your feelings from your enemies and do not let them know that you are afraid. Moreover, the bullying among the children in schools is widely spread and Donaldson may attempt to treat this issue in this way.

The mouse used his imagination to create an imaginary beast to scare the predators in his way. It tells everyone different features about this imaginary beast. But, unexpectedly the mouse faced a real beast that matches all the features that it mentioned to the other animals. However, the mouse was very quick in recovering from the astonishment. The mouse

cleverly uses this meeting with the Gruffalo to bring benefit by reversing the events to the beginning again. The mouse asked the Gruffalo to walk with him back in the same way in the wood to show the gruffalo that it (the mouse) is the most fearful creature in this wood. The Gruffalo agreed because he did not believe the mouse. The character of the Gruffalo is a part of the fantasy and it was connected with the mouse's fears. In fact, the fear from the unknown is normally found in the child's imagination. The child may create some images of dreadful things in his/her mind like monsters or beast. Thus, it is easy to see the child identify himself with the mouse swiftly (Westhuizen, 2007, 59). As far as the relationship between the monsters and the child's fears, J.E. Cirlot explains this relation as

The symbolic of the cosmic forces at a stage one step removed from chaos. ... On the psychological plane, they allude to the base powers which constitute the deepest strata of psychological geology, seething as in a volcano until they erupt in the shape of some monstrous apparition or activity. ... They are the antithesis – or the adversary – of the 'hero' and of weapons. For weapons are the positive powers granted to man ... In the case of Mouse, its weapons are its wits, its strong sense of survival and its assertive counteraction. (quoted in Westhuizen, 2007, 65)

It is clear that the life of the mouse has been endangered four times in this play. Each danger represents in fact one of the child's feelings of being unsafe. The first danger that the mouse faces is the fox which may represent the malicious intention of some people and this is clear when the fox spoke to the mouse:

"Where are you going to, little brown mouse?"

Come and have lunch in my underground house." (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 2)

Some linguistic features, like the repetition, may add the flavor of enjoyment to the child as he/her reads or hears the story. All of the words in this story are simple and taken from the child's world. Besides, the well-built rhyme and rhythm give the story the capability of being memorized and close to the child's mentality. The mouse is also clever in his replies which were mixed with irony and exaggeration:

"It's terribly kind of you, Fox, but no –

I'm going to have lunch with a gruffalo.'

He has terrible tusks, and terrible claws,

And terrible teeth in his terrible jaws," (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 2-3)

And straightforwardly the fox escaped because it was outwitted by the mouse which repeats his sentence after fleeing each of these predators:

"Silly old Fox [Owl/Snake]! Doesn't he know,

There's no such thing as a gruffalo?" (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 3)

The second danger is when the mouse met an owl which invited the mouse to a cup of tea. The owl may stand also to some of the child's fears or type of people who are hate to see you happy. The owl says:

"Come and have tea in my treetop house.

It's frightfully nice of you, Owl, but no.

I'm going to have tea with ... a gruffalo," (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 3)

It will be well noticed if the light of investigation directed to the use of the word "no" that is rhymed with the next line that ends with the name of the beast "the gruffalo". The refusal is associated with the name of the beast. It is a source of power to refuse the bullying by denoting to a more powerful creature. In the child's world, a child may face a bully boy, but can outwit him by mentioning another source of power, of support and certainly of justice.

The third danger is the snake. Definitely a snake in literature is a symbol of malice and treachery like that of *Hamlet*. The mouse is the best meal for the snake which pretends to be friendly. The child needs to know that not everyone who speaks friendly can be honest.

"Come for a feast in my log-pile house.

It's wonderfully good of you, Snake, but no.

I'm having a feast with a.....a gruffalo," (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 4)

In the middle of the story and when the mouse got out peacefully from all of these dangers, it faces the unexpected moment. The mouse is in front of a real gruffalo. All the features that the mouse has mentioning to the last three predators are found in this creature. As if the writer was trying to convey a moral message that the child should not lie because his lies will be bigger and bigger to the extent it cannot be controllable anymore. Though the mouse was always saying that

"There's no such thing as a gruffal OH!"

But who is this creature with terrible claws

And terrible teeth in his terrible jaws?

'Oh help! Oh no!

It's a gruffalo!" (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 5)

In fact, this is the turning point in which the events are reversed, but with different aims and intentions. The story is put in reverse and this technique may help the child to remember the characters that have been mentioned before. Nevertheless, the mouse was capable of outwit even the Gruffalo and made an advantage from its presence to assure to the previous predators that the mouse is really a friend of the Gruffalo. These predators do not know what was the relationship between him and the gruffalo and on the other hand the gruffalo also does not know what the mouse has told them before. The mouse is using each one's fear against the other. Although a lot of tension is taken place, but the mouse was calm with self confident and that's why it outwitted even the Gruffalo which represents the fourth danger.

"'My favourite food!' the Gruffalo said.

'You'll taste good on a slice of bread!'

'Good?' said the mouse. 'Don't call me good!

I'm the scariest creature in this wood.

Just walk behind me and soon you'll see,

Everyone is afraid of me.'

‘All right,’ said the Gruffalo, bursting with laughter.

‘You go ahead and I’ll follow after.’” (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 6)

The sense of time comes to be crucial to the events in that the mouse succeeded in escaping the spot of danger as quickly as possible except that meeting with the Gruffalo. Thus, the story has speedy pacing which adds the sense of tension. Though the events start in a chronological order, the climax point lies in the meeting with the real Gruffalo. After that, the events are reversed. The repetition of the events in this way makes the experience of reading more enjoyable and the child may (consciously or not) know what is coming. The child may create an image in his/her mind that the mouse is the most cleverest character in this story and it controls everything around him since its plan works flawlessly (Westhuizen, 2007, 69-70).

The story of *The Gruffalo* is portrayed from outside in the sense that no one of these characters knew how the mouse was thinking. The mouse may be afraid, but there was no sign of its fear and that's why it was in control of itself and the other predators even the Gruffalo. In fact, controlling is very important in this story in which the mouse, due to its tricks and wit, was capable of controlling everyone around it. This was the result behind the clever use of language. The language was the only tool that the mouse has. According to Lacan, as explained and illustrated by Chris Barker and Dariusz Galasiński, "language formation is motivated by the pleasure that comes through feelings of control." Lacan regards the language as "the symbolization of desire and the never ending search of control" (quoted in Westhuizen, 2007, 62). One of the pedagogical goals that has been implanted in this story is the assertiveness that can be achieved only through controlling over the situation. The child may learn how to use the inner qualities to get control on his/her fears. Then he/she may develop the sense of self confident and being able to solve the hard situations that he/she may face in this life as well as overcomes the fears from the past. At the end, the mouse outwit everyone who tried to eat it. The mouse now can stroll freely or can simply sit anywhere in the wood to enjoy eating a nut:

"All was quiet in the deep dark wood.

The mouse found a nut and the nut was good." (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 8)

These phrases can refer to the atmosphere in the wood at that given moment in which everything is good and cool. The nut may stand as a prize for the winner who is relaxing and enjoying the moment of victory. In fact, the Mouse is symbolizing "the human self-image" in which the gender of the mouse was unknown and therefore the child can spiritually connected with it and no matter whether the child was male or female (Westhuizen, 2007, 63).

The sequel to this story is *The Gruffalo's Child* in which Julia Donaldson with the illustrations by Axel Scheffler portrayed another wonderful story. *The Gruffalo's Child* was published after five years from *The Gruffalo*, in 2004. In fact, the question of gender was answered for the first time in this story in which the mouse is identified as male and the Gruffalo's child as female:

"The Gruffalo's Child

unclenched her fist.

'The Big Bad Mouse –

so he does exist!" (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 5)

Again, the story is being told from a different character to give the imagination the needed license to travel into the land of reverie. In this story, the Gruffalo's daughter plays the main role with the mouse in a different way that gives the sense of adventure. The Gruffalo's daughter represents the child's curiosity and the spirit to discover the world around her. When she knew that her father has some fear from what is described as "terribly big" and "terribly bad" mouse, she slipped in the night to look for that Big Bad Mouse. The child can recognize easily these simple words "terribly big" and "terribly bad". This story can be copied with both boys and girls aged three to nine. It may answered the question of why the parents always prevent their children from going out alone. The world around them is not a safe place and the parents' prevention is definitely for reasonable reasons (Donna, 2015, 1).

"The Gruffalo said that ...

No Gruffalo should ever set foot

in the deep, dark wood.

The Gruffalo's child asked that ...

Why not? Why not? Oh!

Because, if you do,

the Big Bad Mouse will be after you" (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 2)

Children's curiosity is directed in the opposite way to the parents' interests and concern. Here, the Gruffalo's child is questioning her father's fear and sneaks off in the night alone to find the big bad mouse, she turned out to be afraid herself. Although this can be regarded as bravery, but still the discussion of this behavior comes under the banner of dangerous act and this is the main pedagogical goal that this story was lunched for.

"One snowy night

when the Gruffalo snored...

...the Gruffalo's child was feeling bored.

The Gruffalo's child was feeling brave

so she tiptoed out of the Gruffalo cave" (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 3)

In the forest, the little Gruffalo started her journey. The forest can be a symbol for the unknown zone that attracts the child's attention. The child is eager to discover and search for the this unknown zone. Besides, the unknown zone can be the unconscious world of the child.

"The snow fell fast

and the wind blew wild.

Into the wood went

the Gruffalo's child." (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 3)

After encountering the same predators in the forest, the little Gruffalo was convinced that there is nothing named Big Bad Mouse. Therefore, there is no need to fear from the wood.

"It's all a trick.

Said the Gruffalo's child

as she sat on a stump

where the snow lay piled.

I don't believe

in the Big Bad Mouse" (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 5)

Again in the middle of the play, the little Gruffalo meets the mouse, but the mouse is small and not like what her dad has described. Thus, the little Gruffalo was not afraid at first and decided to eat the mouse. At that juncture, the mouse asked the little Gruffalo to give it time to call the big mouse. The trick this time was to leap on a branch of a nearby tree and uses the light of the moon to reflect a big shadow. The little Gruffalo thought that the shadow is the big bad mouse. Thus, the mouse succeeded again to overcome the predator which tried to devour it.

"The Mouse hopped into the hazel tree.

He beckoned, then said... Just wait and see.

Out came the moon. It was bright and round.

A terrible shadow fell onto the ground." (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 5-6).

After meeting the tricky mouse, the Gruffalo's child was deceived and return back to the cave quickly. In fact, the shadow of the mouse may represents the exaggeration of the child's fear. Some of these fears are seen bigger because the child's mind look at the shadow, not on the real content of the matter.

"To the Gruffalo cave

where the Gruffalo's child was a bit less brave.

The Gruffalo's child was a bit less bored.

And the Gruffalo snored ... and snored." (*The Gruffalo's Child*, 2004, 6).

The most important thing that is shared between these two dramas, *The Gruffalo* and *The Gruffalo's Child*, is the mastery of the situation in which the mouse outwits everyone and this time is the Gruffalo's child (Donna, 2015, 1).

On the linguistic level, Donaldson's mastery of language is shown in the use of the rhythm and rhyme. In each section and subsection, Donaldson uses replicated rhythms and rhyme. She breaks the rhythm in the middle of the story after she expresses the joy of the mouse in deceiving the predators (Creasy, 2015, 1). This is when the syllable "oh!" is used to express the mouse's shock in facing the real Gruffalo:

"Oh, help!

Oh, no!

It's a gruffalo!" (*The Gruffalo*, 1999, 5)

One of the main linguistic features in these stories is the use of the Direct Speech in which the texts are relying heavily on the dialogues among the characters. Phonological devices are also important to keep the child concentrated. For example, the rhyming of the couplets became a frequent linguistic trait: {house-mouse, said-fled, good-wood, lake-snake, claws-jaws}. Moreover, the alliteration is having its clear presence in the phrases of "terrible tusks, terrible teeth, and deep dark wood ... etc}. The alliteration gives more emphasis and power to the descriptions to be attached in the children's minds. Throughout these stories, Donaldson uses the present simple tense since it is easier for the children to comprehend. but, there are many occasions in which the past simple tense is used like "and away he sped" (Graham & Baxter, 2016).

The narration technique of this story is swaying between the first person and third person narration. Thus, the unbiased viewpoint is clear and the reader or the listener has a superior position in which he/she knows more about the mouse and it's way of thinking than the other predators. This is where the dramatic irony lies. It is promoted also by the use of the active voice since the focal point is the action of the mouse. Simple sentences are used widely to avoid complication and drive the children to a full understanding. However, there are certain occasions in which a compound sentence is used to describe the Gruffalo's appearance. (UK.Essays.com)

The story of the Gruffalo is not only textual, but there are also non-linguistic features that are represented by the illustrations throughout the book. The illustrations by the German artist Axel Scheffler help this story to be spread widely. He sent at the beginning few rough sketches about the forests of Hamburg. He draws on the "deep dark wood" and its residents

with a lively manner. Scheffler's drawings are loaded with heavy ink and intense colors which produced unique animal characters and for this reason the drawings combine both realism and cartoonish overview. Donaldson seems to be conceived with the image of Gruffalo as an "alien like creature", but Scheffler was depending largely on the descriptions that found in her writings. Scheffler reached a kind of mixture between cuddly and fearful in special harmony way that covers the whole story (Creasy, 2015, 1).

Without these illustrations, there will be no comprehensive understanding to the thoughts. If the play is being acted on the stage, the audience may depend on the characters' dressing to built a comprehensive perceptive of thoughts. Amanda Craig (2004) says that "the illustrations need to not just match the text but deepen it in unexpected ways". Therefore, the main idea behind the illustrations is to add some non-linguistic components to the story. For example, the Gruffalo is pictured with more features than the mouse mentioned for the predators. The mouse didn't mention the big ears or the horns or the huge body. Moreover, the illustrations show that the Gruffalo is standing in the middle of the road and closing it to the extent there is no space for the mouse to pass by (Westhuizen, 2007, 71). In her interview with *The Independent*, Julia Donaldson described the image of the Gruffalo:

I didn't really have a preconceived idea of what the Gruffalo would look like, ... It just came into being according to what rhymed with what. ... I think I originally envisaged him as being more weird and less furry. Before I had a publisher for the book I would tell the story in schools and ask the children to draw the Gruffalo. On the whole, theirs looked more like aliens and less like cuddly animals. (Independent Review)

Amanda Craig argues that the mouse is in the state of innocence when it met the Gruffalo in the sense that it was pictured with big round eyes and pale brown body. On the other hand, the Gruffalo was pictured more furious than what the mouse has described, "which builds the tension and makes the climax far more terrifying" (Craig, 2004). The illustrations are participating of increasing the tension in the story. For example, the illustrations give picture of "the dark hues and saturated colours of the forest – the deep greens and dark browns" (Craig, 2004) which adds more tension to the atmosphere of the story. Here, the suspense is the active feeling in that it creates psychological milieu. The wood may stand also for the state of the unconscious, the same as in many of the fairy tales. The harmony between the pictures and the words goes far to embrace the rhythm of the

book's design as well. The triumph of Scheffler and Donaldson in joining the bright visual storytelling along with the textual materials is an achievement that will last for decades at least (Creasy, 2015, 1).

5. Conclusion

The Gruffalo comes to be one of the most prominent landmark in the realm of the children's literature. In the form of story-poem, *The Gruffalo* and its sequel *The Gruffalo's Child* have powerful charming traits and take the reader/listener to the land of imagination where the forces of good and evil are still fighting. In fact, these two stories are matching the criteria of the children's literature for having strong and believable story lines, well-written language, and good illustrations that support the story. Moreover, these two stories can be named as children's literature because the ideas, relationship and language are simple.

On the pedagogical level, the child may create monsters and beasts in his mind due to the situation or the psychological state at a given moment. Thus, these stories feed the brain with new ideas that may be helpful one day. The methods and techniques that the child needs to learn to overcome these fears are concealed in these stories. Besides, the child may learn how to control his/her problems and anxieties whether they are real or just fantasy. The identification with the character of the mouse may have different affects because the strategy of each person may differ from person to another. Definitely, these two stories are not drained from notable moral lessons. When the adults pave the way for the children to be more assertive and give them a chance to develop the internal power of control, the children will have strong personalities. Moreover, these stories invite the children to face what happens by using the power of brain. Here, it is clear that the brain can be more powerful than muscles in some difficult situations.

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