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What Do We Tell the Children? Critical Essays on Childrens Literature

Ciara Ni Bhroin

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This peer- reviewed collection of critical essays on children's literature addresses contemporary debates regarding what constitutes suitable texts for young audiences. The volume examines what adult writers tell their child readers with particular focus on the following areas: the representation of sexuality, gender and the body; the treatment of death and trauma; concepts of race, prejudice and national identity; and the use of children's literature as a tool for socializing, acculturating, politicizing and educating children. The focus of the collection is on Irish and international fiction addressed at readers from mid-childhood to young adulthood. One section of the book examines what child readers were told in the past while the final section examines young readers' capacity for self-invention through the participatory culture of the twenty-first century. Topics explored include the controversial issue of teenage prostitution and the commodification of the male body in contemporary young adult fiction, the allure of celebrity and the impact of today's surveillance culture on young people, the representation of the Holocaust for young readers and representations of Muslim characters and culture in a post-9/11 mediascape. Subject matter ranges from the contemporary realistic fiction of Melvin Burgess to Joy Kogawa's historical narrative, Obasan and its subsequent adaptations for children, to print material produced by Inghinidhe na hEreann aimed at politicizing young Irish readers in the early twentieth century. Contributors are all respected academics in their field and include international experts such as Professor Kimberley Reynolds, Professor Kerry Mallan, Professor Norma Clarke and Professor Kay Sambell. Contributors: Jane Suzanne Carroll, Norma Clarke, Shehrazade Emmambokus, Michele Gill, Marnie Hay, Eimear Hegarty, Nora Maguire, Kerry Mallan, Anne Markey, Kimberley Reynolds, Beth Rodgers, Kay Sambell. This is the fifth publication of the Irish Society for the Study of Children's Literature (ISSCL). It follows the Society's publication of Studies in Children's Literature 1500-2000 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), Treasure Islands: Studies in Children's Literature (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), Divided Worlds: Studies in Children Literature (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007) and Young Irelands: Studies in Children's Literature (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011).

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