



Aesthetic Approaches to Children's Literature: An Introduction

Maria Nikolajeva

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As undergraduate and graduate courses in children's literature become more established and numerous, there is an intense need for a textbook that offers aesthetic rather than educational approaches to children's literature. This work fills that void by providing students of children's literature with a comprehensible and easy-to-use analytical tool kit, showing through concrete demonstration how each tool might best be used.

The chapters are organized around familiar and easily recognized features of literary texts (e.g. author, genre, character). Theoretical issues are illustrated by specific texts from the North American children's literature canon. The book explores the particular aesthetics of children's fiction and the ways critical theory may be applied to children's texts, while remaining accessible to a college readership without prior specialized knowledge of literary theory. Each chapter includes a short introduction to a specific theoretical approach (e.g. semiotics, feminist, psychoanalytic), an example of its application to a literary text, a number of activities (study questions, reading exercises), and suggestions for further explorations.

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