



Embodying an Image: Gender and Genre in a Selection of Children's Responses to Picturebooks and Illustrated Texts

By Sarah Toomey

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Drawing upon a diverse range of theoretical perspectives, and the rich resources of feminist cultural analysis hitherto little applied to the study of picturebooks and illustrated texts, 'Embodying an Image' offers fresh and original insights into the gendered politics of identity and the sexual politics of looking in contemporary visual culture. In a fascinating collection of case studies, Toomey successfully combines an analysis of the way in which artists and writers convey gendered representations through character, theme, setting and story, with a detailed investigation into the child's perspective of meaning. This book is a first in its field and is a must for all those interested in new ways of thinking about the power of visual imagery to embody and make real the fantasies and desires of young children.

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Editorial Review

Review

I can recommend this book very highly: it is original, exceptionally well-researched, and has an impeccable theoretical base. It brings together four important factors, highly relevant to both the theory and practice of visual texts - the theory of word-image relationship in picture-books and illustrated texts - the interactions of and with Key Stage One children - gender issues - feminist art criticism. This fusion is developed through a lively, highly readable, and meticulously researched thesis, that provides essential - and much-needed - underpinning to the burgeoning theorising of picture-books. The focus on the child's perspective of meaning, backed up by detailed, empathetic research, puts this book into the forefront of the developing movement of crossing disciplinary boundaries. ... The framework of introductions to each part, and the concluding chapter could stand alone as a manifesto for what can be achieved in the classroom, and what can be fed out to a wider world of education and theory. --Peter Hunt, Professor Emeritus in Children's Literature, Cardiff University

A fascinating, well informed, highly readable study of children's responses to picturebooks with an emphasis on gender. It's going straight on our reading list! --Morag Styles, Reader in Children's Literature, Homerton College, Cambridge

I wholeheartedly recommend this book and consider it indispensable to anyone seeking to learn more about children's responses to fiction and how they read and interpret the images they encounter in the picture books and illustrated texts which adults create for them. --Dr Susan Hancock, Senior Lecturer in Children's Literature, Roehampton University, London

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About the Author

Sarah Toomey is a primary school teacher, freelance researcher and graduate of the MA in Children's Literature run by the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (NCRCL). Her interests include female myths and symbols in art and literature, gender and diversity, and the impact of popular culture and critical literacies in the primary classroom.

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Carlos White:

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