



The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders (Children's Literature and Culture)

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From creepy picture books to Harry Potter, Lemony Snicket, the *Spiderwick Chronicles*, and countless vampire series for young adult readers, fear has become a dominant mode of entertainment for young readers. The last two decades have seen an enormous growth in the critical study of two very different genres, the Gothic and children's literature.

The Gothic, concerned with the perverse and the forbidden, with adult sexuality and religious or metaphysical doubts and heresies, seems to represent everything that children's literature, as a genre, was designed to keep out. Indeed, this does seem to be very much the way that children's literature was marketed in the late eighteenth century, at exactly the same time that the Gothic was really taking off, written by the same women novelists who were responsible for the promotion of a safe and segregated children's literature.

This collection examines the early intersection of the Gothic and children's literature and the contemporary manifestations of the gothic impulse, revealing that Gothic elements can, in fact, be traced in children's literature for as long as children have been reading.

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Editorial Review

Review

The prevalence of Gothic themes in literature for young readers is the impetus for this collection, which fills a void in children's literature criticism. This timely collection presents a variety of perspectives and discusses a variety of texts, and so is a valuable addition to the literature. Recommended. -- *P. J. Kurtz, Minot State University, Choice*

About the Author

Anna Jackson is Lecturer in English at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand.

Roderick McGillis is Professor of English at the University of Calgary. He is author of *Nimble Reader: Literary Theory and Children's Literature*, winner of the 1997 IRSCL Award for Distinguished research. His other books include *A Little Princess: Gender and Empire* (Twayne, 1996) and *We Was Some Kind of Man: Masculinity in the B Western* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, forthcoming). He was one of six Senior Editors for the *Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

Karen Coats is Associate Professor of English at Illinois State University. She is author of *Looking Glasses and Neverlands: Lacan, Desire, and Subjectivity in Children's Literature* (University of Iowa Press, 2004), which was selected as a Choice Outstanding Academic Title of 2004.

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