



**Mothers in Children's and Young Adult
Literature: From the Eighteenth Century to
Postfeminism (Children's Literature Association
Series)**

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Living or dead, present or absent, sadly dysfunctional or merrily adequate, the figure of the mother bears enormous freight across a child's emotional and intellectual life. Given the vital role literary mothers play in books for young readers, it is remarkable how little scholarly attention has been paid to the representation of mothers outside of fairy tales and beyond studies of gender stereotypes. This collection of thirteen essays begins to fill a critical gap by bringing together a range of theoretical perspectives by a rich mix of senior scholars and new voices.

Following an introduction in which the coeditors describe key trends in interdisciplinary scholarship, the book's first section focuses on the pedagogical roots of maternal influence in early children's literature. The next section explores the shifting cultural perspectives and subjectivities of the twentieth century. The third section examines the interplay of fantasy, reality, and the ethical dimensions of literary mothers. The collection ends with readings of postfeminist motherhood, from contemporary realism to dystopian fantasy.

The range of critical approaches in this volume will provide multiple inroads for scholars to investigate richer readings of mothers in children's and young adult literature.

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