

■ Read the following critical quotations. They deal with central issues in children's literature. Identify these issues and compare the opinions voiced with your own:

1. "Children's literature per se does not exist. Literature intended for young readers is always written for the author and for editors".

Jack Zipes. "The Radical Morality of Rats, Fairies, Wizards and Ogres". *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*. 2002. p. 207

2. "It is never clear when we use the term children's literature what we mean by either children or literature. Do we mean the age group from four to ten? Four to fifteen? Why have we introduced the term young adult literature? Is the literature that children read always specific to their own age group?", Ibid 207.

3. "Children's literature is part of a montage of adult cultural practices ... bent on exercising and justifying adult power over the child. ... *The New England Primer* flourished as a school text for close to two centuries and remains representative of the way in which the dominant culture reproduces itself".

Joseph Zornado. *Inventing the Child: Culture, Ideology and the Story of Childhood*. 2001. xviii, 15.

4. "The most important thing we've ever learned, so far as children are concerned, is never, never, NEVER let them near your television set, or better still, just don't install the idiotic thing at all... They sit and stare and stare and sit until they are hypnotised by it, until they are absolutely drunk with all that shocking ghastly junk.... 'All right!' You'll cry, 'all right!' You'll say. But if we take the set away, what shall we do to entertain our darling children? Please explain! We'll answer you by asking you, What used the darling ones to do? How used they keep themselves contented before this monster was invented? ... THEY USED TO READ! They'd READ and READ, Great Scott, Gadzooks! ... The younger ones had Beatrix Potter with Mr Tod, the dirty rotter, and Squirrel Nutkin, Pigling Bland, and Mrs Tiggy-Winkle and Just How the Camel Got his Hump... Oh, books, what books they used to know those children living long ago!. Roald Dahl".

"Mike Teeve is Sent by Television". *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. 1964. 137-40.

5. "While there is no doubt that the Harry Potter books are cleverly written and provide a sense of hope and empowerment for young readers, they are also very conventional, predictable, and ideologically conservative with a strong investment in the restitution of male hegemony ... there is something wrong when the world is painted so conventionally black and white ... If a text does not somehow stimulate a reader/viewer to reflect creatively and critically about his/her surroundings, to question himself or herself and the world, then it has, in my opinion, very little value for the social, moral, and psychological development of young people".

Jack Zipes. "The Radical Morality of Rats, Fairies, Wizards and Ogres". *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*. 2002. 207, 210, 215

6. There is also a major difference between learning how to read functionally and critically. Ibid 210

