

Nigerian Children's Prose Fiction: A Critical Appraisal.

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Abstract:

The thesis attempts to draw attention to the much neglected field of children's literature on which very little critical work has so far been done.

The methodological approach to the thesis is descriptive as well analytical. A distinction is made between children and adult literature by comparing the literary works of see authors who have written both for children and adults. This way the special features of children's books are isolated. A field survey of critical comments by children on the books they have read is made to establish how Children evaluate their books.

A review of critical writings on children's book by adults is also undertaken and some literary standards for judging children's book established. The literary features of Nigerian children's books are studied and analysed. These are then related to the critical criteria for judging children's books established.

Children because of their limited experience in literary appreciation appear to judge their books from the way the events of the stories effect their emotion or sense of justice. On the other hand adult tend to judge children's books with certain literary criteria in mind. Nigerian children's prose fiction is divided into two broad categorise namely folk tales and fantasy stories on the one hand and modern realistic stories on the order. The stories draw their themes motifs and stylistic features from Nigerian oral literature as well as contemporary events.

The variety of prose fiction available to Nigerian children and the forms adopted in the stories are rather limited. Based on these findings, it may be necessary to further investigate the reading interests of Nigerian children as a means of providing more varied literature for them.

Keywords: children's literature/ prose/ fiction/ literary works

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