The Politics of Childhood in Ellis’s Three Wishes

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Abstract
In "The Politics of Childhood in Ellis's Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak," Wafaa Hasan outlines the recent controversy in Canada over the restrictions that shape children's literature. Using Neil Postman's and John Locke's conceptions of childhood, Hasan unpacks the ways in which Ellis's Three Wishes has threatened popular conceptions of childhood. Specifically, as her analysis shows, Ellis's work redefines the boundaries of children's fiction by heterogenizing childhood experience and by affording its readers -- limited but consequential -- authorial agency. Further, Hasan asserts that Three Wishes liberates the idea of childhood as a developmental stage of ignorance by revealing the ways in which the "child" is a subject position that is applicable to different age groups (particularly adults who are racially or politically marginalized) and is often characterized by subordination. In the end, Hasan's article serves as a response to the censorship Ellis's text endured in 2006, highlighting and questioning the fervent investment some Ontarian adults have had in securing the illusion of apolitical and innocent childhoods.

Recommended Citation

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

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The child's relative understanding of world and society comes from the parents and their interaction with the child. A child's first trust is always with the parent or caregiver; whoever that might be, however, the caregiver is secondary whereas the parents are primary in the eyes of the child. If the parents expose the child to warmth, regularity, and dependable affection, the infant's view of the world will be one of trust. The development of courage and independence are what set preschoolers, ages three to six years of age, apart from other age groups. Young children in this category face the challenge of initiative versus guilt. As described in Bee and Boyd (2004),[12] the child during this stage faces the complexities of planning and developing a sense of judgment.