

## Children's Literature as A Mean of Knowing Who You Are

**Prof Dr.Sylvie Berthelot-Dilk**

*Université de Saint-Boniface, Canada*

### **Abstract**

"Committed children's literature explores how works of fiction for children and adolescents can address and defend an ethical, political, social, or racial cause. It aims to make children's literature a tool for education and awareness on sensitive subjects that the world struggles to address for fear of shocking, such as transgenderism. It is said that young people are not ready, that they are too young in elementary school, to talk about it, that there are no resources to talk to them about it, and that it will confuse them. But thanks to books, they discover themselves, they understand themselves, they develop empathy, and they open to others. Canadian children's literature is very rich in this area, and many authors delve into this theme. Annie Pullen Sansfaçon states that children as young as 2 or 3 years old can self-identify (Vieira, 2023). Whether it is Simon Boulerice, Elise Gravel, Sophie Labelle, or Carine Paquin, they all agree on normalizing transness. However, what is happening with our southern neighbour is starting to make waves in Canada, and we must fight not to fall into the same state of mind. Our curriculum is already very puritanical; how can we make it more inclusive, more queer? Through children's literature. We will talk about Canadian literature and how it is rich and powerful to deconstruct transphobia, exclusion and heteronormativity for young children.

**Keywords:** transgenderism; Canada; children's literature; elementary schools