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## Introduction

## Wprowadzenie

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The term *crisis* refers to a difficult, often long-lasting, dramatic situation that brings with it the feeling of escalating anxiety transforming into fear or threat. Mainly maintained in the media, the appearance of the deadly consequences of war crises and environmental crises in various parts of the more distant and closer world is an everyday reality for contemporary children. We would gladly shelter them from any emerging evil in alternative fiction; we would like to hide them away and wait until the crisis ends. However, this is not possible if we want to take children seriously. In the contemporary children's culture, picturebooks and other iconotexts have been around since the 1970s. They are an extremely idiosyncratic genre of art that aims to sensitise even the youngest audiences to issues of broadly understood contemporary crises and challenges facing our world. Due to such works it is possible to understand the world, to immerse in it and, at times, to commit oneself to possibly change its conditions.

The core of this volume consists of texts produced by iconotext researchers that not only reveal their theoretical and methodological skills (mainly based on critical theories, postcolonialism, posthumanism, ecocriticism), but also their knowledge of the themes explored in the picturebooks analysed (war, ecology, pandemic, population migration, diversity, sexuality, death). They are an opening for discussion about possible (often controversial) representations and interpretations of world crises present in contemporary picturebooks for children. We hope that they will inspire all kinds of polemics, as well as exchange of ideas and views.