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978-1-107-10472-3 - Puberty in Crisis: The Sociology of Early Sexual Development

Celia Roberts

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Puberty in Crisis

Puberty has long been recognised as a difficult and upsetting process for individuals and families, but it is now also being widely described as in crisis. Reportedly occurring earlier and earlier as each decade of the twenty-first century passes, sexual development now heralds new forms of temporal trouble in which sexuality, sex/gender and reproduction are all at stake. Many believe that children are growing up too fast and becoming sexual too early. Clinicians, parents and teachers all demand something must be done. Does this out-of-time development indicate that children's futures are at risk or that we are entering a new era of environmental and social perturbation? Engaging with a diverse range of contemporary feminist and social theories on the body, biology and sex, Celia Roberts urges us to refuse a discourse of crisis and to rethink puberty as a combination of biological, psychological and social forces.

CELIA ROBERTS is Senior Lecturer and Co-director of the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies in the Department of Sociology at Lancaster University. She is a long-standing editor of the journal *Feminist Theory* and author of *Messengers of Sex: Hormones, Biomedicine and Feminism* (Cambridge, 2007).

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This book is dedicated to my parents, Hugh and Hilary Roberts, in grateful recognition of the care and love with which they saw me through my childhood and beyond.

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