

Boyhood and Children's Literature 2023-24

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Dr Pádraic Whyte, whytepa@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught: MT

Year: JS

Module Content

Week 1: Introduction: Children's Literature, Boyhood and Theory

Week 2: Boyhood, Masculinity and Nostalgia

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876)

Critical Reading: John Stephens, 'Preface' (pp ix-ixv) and Perry Nodelman, 'Making Boys Appear: The Masculinity of Children's Fiction' (pp. 1-14), in John Stephens (ed.), *Ways of Being Male: Representing Masculinities in Children's Literature and Film* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).

Week 3: Power and Adventure

R.L Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (1883)

Critical Reading: RW Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Oxford: Polity, 2000), pp. 3- 14. Preparing for Student Presentations in Week 8.

Week 4: Performance and Child/Adult relationships

JM Barrie, *Peter Pan* (1904). Playtext – see JM Barrie, *Peter Pan and other Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

Critical Reading: Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 1-11.

Week 5: Myth and Nationalism

Rosemary Sutcliff, *The Hound of Ulster* (1963)

Critical Reading: Ciara Ní Bhroin, 'Mythologizing Ireland', in Valerie Coghlan and Keith O'Sullivan (eds), *Irish Children's Literature and Culture; New Perspectives on Contemporary Writing* (2011)

Week 6: Masculinities and Contemporary Politics

Robert Cormier, *The Chocolate War* (1974)

Critical Reading: Michel Foucault, 'Discipline and Punish' (1975), in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (eds.), *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998)

Week 7: Reading Week – No Class.

Week 8: Student Presentations on the Pollard Collection of Children's Books/Children's Book Archives

Formative Assignment: With a partner, identify what you think is a significant book from the Pollard Collection of Children's Books (held in TCD Library) or a text published pre-1914 that is available online. You and your partner will make a short 5-minute presentation to the class, addressing the merits/significance/importance of the book and its author, and incorporating a theoretical approach related to boyhood.

Detailed instructions will be made available on Blackboard. I'll also offer guidance in class.

Read: RW Connell, *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). (Oxford: Polity Press, 2005)

Visit the National Collection of Children's Books website (nccb.tcd.ie).

Week 9: Race and Bodies

Walter Dean Myers, *Monster* (1999). Novel (not the graphic novel version). This can be difficult to get – you might need to order online.

Critical Reading: Tim Engles and Fern Cory, "'What did she see?'" the White Gaze and Triple consciousness in Walter Dean Myers's *Monster*, in *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 2014 Spring; 39(1), 49-67.

Week 10: Coming of Age

Aidan Chambers, *Dance on My Grave* (1982)

Critical Reading: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'Epistemology of the Closet' (1990), in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (ed), *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Second Edn) (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 912-921.

Week 11: Emotions

Patrick Ness (illustrated by Jim Kay), *A Monster Calls* (2011). Must use illustrated edition.

- 'Different for Boys', short story in Keith Gray (ed), *Losing It* (2010).

Week 12: Fathers and Sons

Roald Dahl, *Danny, the Champion of the World* (1975).

Critical Reading: Ann Alston and Catherine Butler (eds.) *Roald Dahl* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 1-13.

Revision.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students should be able to

- Discuss and evaluate the construction of 'boyhood' in a broad range of children's texts
- Identify key theoretical approaches specific to the study of children's literature
- Relate textual analysis to broader cultural debates
- Undertake independent research and take responsibility for their own learning experience
- Develop existing critical and analytical skills, become empowered citizens, and think beyond the confines of 'learning outcomes'

Learning Aims:

This module facilitates the exploration of 'boyhood' in children's literature. Through the lens of 'boyhood' students will be introduced to a series of subject areas including adventure, myth, child-adult power-relations, education, national identity, narrative voice, gender, and sexuality. Discussions will be positioned within the context of broader cultural and literary debates and will incorporate a number of theoretical approaches, particularly those related to gender theory, feminist theories, and theories of masculinities. The analysis of texts will also focus on theoretical approaches specific to the study of children's literature. Students are expected to read the assigned texts **as well as** any assigned critical material for each week.

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 1
- Name/Type of Component(s): Essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 5,000 – 6,000 words
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 100%

Preliminary Reading List:

Theories of Children's Literature

Hollindale, Peter, *Signs of Childness in Children's Books* (Gloucester: Thimble Press, 1997)

Hunt, Peter (ed) *Children's Literature Vols 1-4* (London: Routledge, 2006)

- *Literature for Children: Contemporary criticism* (London: Routledge, 1992) Mallan, Kerry, *Gender Dilemmas in Children's Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

Reynolds, Kimberley (ed), *Modern Children's Literature: an introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Rose, Jacqueline, *The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, Revised edn (London: Macmillan Press, 1994)

Stephens, John, *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (London: Longman, 1992)

- (ed) *Ways of Being Male: Representing Masculinities in Children's Literature and Film* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002)

Trites, Roberta Seelinger, *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in*

Adolescent Literature (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2000)

Wall, Barbara, *The Narrator's Voice: The Dilemma of Children's Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1991)

Gender

Belsey, Catherine and Moore, Jane (eds), *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism* (2nd ed), (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997)

Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990)

- 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution' (1988), reprinted in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (eds), *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)

Connell, RW, *The Men and the Boys* (Oxford: Polity, 2000) - *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). (Oxford: Polity Press, 2005)

de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage, 1974)

McCann, Carole R. and Seung-kyung, Kim (eds), *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2013)

Mackinnon, Kenneth, *Representing men; Maleness and masculinity in the media* (London: Arnold, 2003)

Macnamara, J.R. *Media and male Identity; The making and remaking of men* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

Whitehead, Stephen M and Barrett, Frank (eds), *The Masculinities Reader* (Oxford: Polity, 2001)

Suggestions for general reading

Alston, Ann and Butler, Catherine (eds.) *Roald Dahl* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

Appleyard, J. A., *Becoming a Reader: the Experience of Fiction from Childhood to Adulthood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Bradford, Clare, Mallan, Kerry, Stephens, John, and McCallum, Robyn, *New World Orders in Contemporary Children's Literature: Utopian Transformations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

Chambers, Aidan, *Booktalk: Occasional Writing on Literature and Children* (London: Bodley Head, 1985)

Grenby, M. O., *Children's Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008)

Joosen, Vanessa, and Vloebergs, Katrien (eds), *Changing Concepts of Childhood and Children's Literature* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006)

Knowles, Murray and Malmkjær, Kirsten, *Language and Control in Children's Literature* (London: Routledge, 1996)

Lesnik-Oberstein, Karín (ed), *Children's Literature: New Approaches* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Mallan, Kerry and Pearce, Sharyn (eds), *Youth Cultures: Texts, Images and Identities* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003)

McCallum, Robyn, *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction: The Dialogic Construction of Subjectivity* (New York: Garland, 1999)

McCallum, Robyn and Stephens, John, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture. Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature* (New York and London: Garland, 1998)

Nikolajeva, Maria, *Children's Literature Comes of Age; Towards a New Aesthetic* (New York and London: Garland, 1996)

- *From Mythic to Linear; Time in Children's Literature* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2000)
 - *Aesthetic Approaches to Children's Literature: an Introduction* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2005)
 - *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Children's Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009)
- Nikolajeva, Maria and Scott, Carole, *How Picture Books Work* (New York and London: Garland, 2001)
- Nodelman, Perry, *Words About Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Book* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988)
- Nodelman, Perry, *The Pleasures of Children's Literature*, 2nd. edn. (New York: Longman, 1992/1996)
- Tucker, Nicholas, *The Child and the Book: A Psychological and Literary Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)
- Warner, Marina, *Managing Monsters; Six Myths of Our Time* (London: Vintage: 1994)
- Zornado, Joseph L., *Inventing the Child. Culture, Ideology, and the Rise of Childhood* (New York: Garland, 2001)

Online Journals: (available through Library website) *These are really useful!*

The Lion and the Unicorn

Children's Literature in Education

Children's Literature Association

International Research in Children's Literature Men and Masculinities

Websites:

www.irscl.com

www.childrensbooksireland.ie