

Writing Childhoods: Power, Voice, and Agency

Module convenors: Dr Jane Carroll, Dr Pádraic Whyte

Email address: jane.carroll@tcd.ie, whytepa@tcd.ie

Lecturers: Dr Jane Carroll, Dr Jarlath, Killeen, Dr Pádraic Whyte

ECTS weighting: 5

Year: JF

Term taught: Michaelmas Term

Assessment: Essay

Module Description:

This team-taught module will explore the multiple ways in which literature has engaged with ideas of childhood across several centuries. Through an examination of mainstream/adult literature *about* childhood experience as well as literature written specifically *for* children this module will introduce students to a variety of expressions and cultural constructions of childhood in a diverse range of texts. The module will examine texts through the lens of 'childhood' – with a particular focus on issues of power, voice, and agency – and students will be encouraged to engage with subject areas such as Romanticism, Evil and Innocence, Growing Up, The 'Victorian' Child, The Narrator's Voice, Life-Writing, Families, Agency and Rebellion, Illustration, Gender, Race, Ability, Class and Sexuality.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- discuss and evaluate the construction of childhood and youth in a broad range of writing across several centuries
- distinguish between 'literary childhoods' and 'children's literature'
- relate textual analysis to broader critical and cultural debates
- take responsibility for their own learning experience
- develop existing critical and analytical skills, become empowered citizens, and think beyond the confines of 'learning outcomes'

Module Outline:

- 1 **Theorising Childhood** (JC/PW)
Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930* (1995); and Peter Hollindale, *Signs of Childness in Children's Books* (1997). With reference to: Philip Aries, James Kincaid, Erick Erickson, JA Appleyard, Jean Piaget etc.
- 2 **Romanticism** (JC)
Extracts from Maria Edgeworth's *The Parent's Assistant* (1796), William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789), William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1850)
- 3 **Evil and Innocence** (JK)
Lionel Shriver, *We Need to Talk about Kevin* (2003)
- 4 **Growing Up** (PW)
JD Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951)
- 5 **The 'Victorian' Child** (JK)
Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)
- 6 **The Narrator's Voice** (JC)
E. Nesbit, *The Story of the Treasure Seekers* (1899)
- 7 Reading Week
- 8 **Life-Writing** (PW)
Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969)
- 9 **Power & Might** (JC)
Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964)
- 10 **Agency and Rebellion** (PW)
Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials* (1995 - 2000)
- 11 **Transformative Potential** (PW)
Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials* (1995 - 2000)
- 12 **Images of Childhood** (JC)
Patrick Ness and Jim Kay (illus.), *A Monster Calls* (2011)

Indicative Critical Reading

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

- Beauvais, Clémentine. *The Mighty Child: Time and Power in Children's Literature* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2015)
- Bradford, Clare, Mallan, Kerry, Stephens, John, and McCallum, Robyn, *New World Orders in Contemporary Children's Literature: Utopian Transformations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)
- Grenby, M. O., *Children's Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008)
- 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)
- 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)
- Mallan, Kerry, *Gender Dilemmas in Children's Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
- 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)
- , *The Pleasures of Children's Literature*, 2nd. edn. (New York: Longman, 1992/1996)
- 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)
- Tucker, Nicholas, *The Child and the Book: A Psychological and Literary Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)
- Wall, Barbara, *The Narrator's Voice: The Dilemma of Children's Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1991)
- Waller, Alison. *Rereading Childhood Books: a Poetics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018)
- 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 in library)

The Lion and the Unicorn

Children's Literature in Education

Children's Literature Association Quarterly

International Research in Children's Literature