

## MT 2025

### Writing Childhoods: Power, Voice, and Agency

Module convenor: Dr Sinead Moriarty

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Lecturers: Dr Pádraic Whyte, Dr Jane Carroll, Dr Sinéad Moriarty

ECTS weighting: 5

Year: Junior Fresh

Term taught: Michaelmas Term

Assessment: Essay

This module involves both lectures and tutorials. Both are essential and obligatory parts of the module. See your timetable at [my.tcd.ie](http://my.tcd.ie) for details on tutorial times and locations.

#### 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, Growing Up, The 'Victorian' Child, Irish Childhoods, Childness, 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 Lecture Schedule

**Week 1: No Lecture.** No lecture

**Week 2: Introduction: Theorising Childhood | Sinéad Moriarty**

**Week 3: Romanticism and Preludes | Jane Carroll**

Extracts from William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789), and William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1850)

**Week 4: The 'Victorian' Child | Jane Carroll**

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

**Week 5: Irish Childhoods | Ellen Orchard**

Seamus Heaney, selected poems – see blackboard

**Week 6: Growing Up | Pádraic Whyte**

JD Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951)

**Week 7: Childness | Sinéad Moriarty**

Peter Hollindale, *Signs of Childness in Children's Books* (1997) – see Blackboard for extracts, J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan* (1904)

**Week 8: Power | Jane Carroll**

Mary Norton, *The Borrowers* (1952)

**Week 9: Life-Writing | Pádraic Whyte**

Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969)

**Week 10: Visual Narratives | Sinéad Moriarty**

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006)

**Week 11: Agency and Rebellion | Pádraic Whyte**

Carolyn Swift, *Robbers on TV* (1989)

**Week 12: Picturing Childhood | Sinéad Moriarty**

bell hooks, *Happy to be Nappy*, 1999, Chris Raschka (Illus)  
Bao Phi, *A Different Pond*, 2017, Thi Bui (Illus)

### 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 Vloeberghs, 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