

CALL FOR PAPERS - Devils and Dolls: Dichotomous Depictions of 'The Child'

Conference details:

Wednesday 27 March 2013

University of Bristol, Graduate School of Arts and Humanities

Confirmed plenary speaker:

Professor George Rousseau, (Magdalen College, University of Oxford) Co-Director of the Oxford University Centre for the History of Childhood.

Second plenary to be confirmed.

An inter-disciplinary conference open to both postgraduates and academics at any stage of their career, seeking to examine the contrasting images and representations of children as angels or devils, innocent or evil, light or dark in fiction and culture and the field of Humanities. Why are children offered little dimension in representations? What is the significance of representing the child either as innocent or evil – to both the originating discourse and in a wider context? Is such polarization detrimental to our understanding of what it means to be a child and how we respond to real children?

The “humanities” is intended as a fluid term; depictions from any period of history, any social or cultural context, fictional or media representations are encompassed. In light of this, submissions are invited from a range of disciplines and topics may include, but are certainly not limited to, depictions of the child as:

- A devil, demon, monster, wicked/sinful (for instance Heathcliff, Damien from *The Omen*, the child *Sir Gowther*)
- As angelic, child-saints or martyrs, innocent (paintings of putti, Romantic child figures, Little Nell)
- Contrasting images of the two in various fields; e.g. philosophical thought, religious doctrine
- The child as “uncanny”
- The child in art (Blake’s illustrations, Millett’s *Bubbles*, the Virgin and child)
- Televisual, cinematic or dramatic depictions.
- The Freudian child as depicted by psychoanalysts or psychoanalytic readings of figures.
- The child in horror/gothic fiction
- Monstrous births
- Supernatural children; vampires, werewolves, ghosts, zombies
- Contrasting images as represented in adult fiction and/or children’s literature
- Children in Victorian chapbooks – models of religious virtue?
- The sexualised child – innocent or corrupt?
- The child in myths, fairy and folk tales
- The “foreign”, tribal, refugee or postcolonial child

- Media representations of children.

We invite abstracts of **250-300 words** for 20 minute (previously unpublished) papers, sent in Word format to **devils_dolls@live.co.uk** by Friday 31st August 2012 with the “subject” of the email as ‘Devils and Dolls abstract’.

Please ensure your abstract appears in the following format:

- ❖ Paper title
- ❖ 250 – 300 word abstract in plain text
- ❖ Name of author and affiliation
- ❖ Email address
- ❖ Up to ten keywords (these can be compound terms)
- ❖ Please also indicate whether, if required, you would be happy to chair a panel.

All abstracts will be acknowledged by email receipt, and you should therefore receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days.

Once the deadline has passed, a panel will review the abstracts anonymously and a draft conference plan will be constructed. We will reply to all submissions to offer both a decision and some feedback. If your paper is not selected at this time, we hope you are still able to attend the conference and contribute to the discussion.

Some papers may be selected to comprise a collection of essays in the first edition of the *Bristol Journal of HARTS* following the conference.

We look forward to reading your abstracts and hopefully meeting you at the conference!

Kind regards

Jen Baker
Daniel Bowers
Liz Renes

(University of Bristol, UK. Graduate School of Arts and Humanities)

contact email: **devils_dolls@live.co.uk**

*Please note that the webpages for this conference are currently under construction but shall be available via links on the University of Bristol Faculty of Arts research pages within the next few months <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/research/>