

FICTIONS OF CHILDHOOD : PUERILITY IN FRANCE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

This course could be taught in French or in English. I have calibrated the length and frequency of the papers according to the former possibility, but the length of both readings and assignments could be expanded if I were to teach this course in English. For the reader's convenience, all the works cited here are given in their English translation, except for a few texts that have not been translated. A French version of the syllabus is available on my teaching portfolio website at www.pdetholozany.weebly.com.



SUMMARY

This class will explore nineteenth-century representations of childhood from historical and literary point of views. From early pedagogical thought to wider questionings about the nature of humanity (the Aveyron “Wild child” case as discussed by Itard), this course will provide different perspectives on the subject. As French children’s literature developed in the nineteenth century (with the Comtesse de Ségur and Jules Verne in particular), so did a new interest for childhood as an important stage of life: writers like Stendhal and Vallès initiated a tradition of autobiographical texts that now included long and detailed accounts of their own childhood.

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at every meeting and completion in due time of the assigned readings are mandatory. Work in this class will consist of active class participation, a presentation, two short response papers on the readings assigned, a midterm paper (5-7 pages) and a final paper (10-12 pages). The grade will be calculated as follows:

Final paper: 35%

Short response papers: 25%

Midterm paper: 15%

Class participation: 15%

Presentation: 10%

SCHEDULE

Reading marked with an asterisk are pdfs available online, either through *Gallica* (G) or the MyCourses website.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

- General introduction of the course and its objectives.
- Presentation of *Gallica* and other digital resources.

EDUCATING CHILDREN: PEDAGOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

WEEK 2: THE BIRTH OF CHILDHOOD?

- Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*. “The idea of childhood” I & II (15-49); “From the medieval to modern family” (381-386).
- Rousseau, *Emile*, (Book 1 and 2).
- * Document analysis on two XIXth-century child-rearing books (excerpts): Fabre d’Olivet. *Conseil à mon amie sur l’éducation physique et morale des enfants*. Paris: Delaunay, 1820; T. Braun, *Le livre des mères, ou l’éducation maternelle*. Bruxelles: Parent et fils, 1863.

WEEK 3. NINETEENTH-CENTURY PEDAGOGY: JOSEPH JACOTOT, OR THE IGNORANT SCHOOLMASTER.

- Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (excerpts).
- * Selection of primers and alphabets (available online), document analysis. Class held at the Library, consultation of the collections (Alphabets and primers, Editions of Jules Verne’s books as published by Hetzel, nineteenth-century illustrated children’s books).

WEEKS 4/5. NATURE AND CULTURE: VICTOR, THE WILD CHILD OF AVEYRON.

- Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (excerpt)
- Jean Itard: “On the Education of a savage man,” 1800.
- Jean Itard: “Report on the developments of the young savage caught in the woods near Aveyron,” 1806 (transl Fawcett, Ayrton & White).

RECOMMENDED:

- Jean Starobinski: “The Discourse on Inequality,” in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Transparency and Obstruction*.

- *The Wild Child*. François Truffaut, 1970.
- Peter France, “*The wild child*: Truffaut, Itard, and the Two Faces of Enlightenment.” In *Enlightenment and emancipation*.

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE AND CHILD CHARACTERS

WEEK 6. THE CHILD AS A CHARACTER: FROM FAIRY TALES TO SHORT STORIES

- Perrault: “Hop o’ my Thumb,” “Little Red Riding Hood.”
- Bettelheim: “Little Red Riding Hood” in *The Uses of Enchantment* (166-182).
- * Berquin, *The Looking-Glass for the Mind*: “The Snow,” “Amand,” “Clémentine and Madelon” (17-39).

- Jules Verne, *Un an de Vacances* (excerpt).
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WEEK 7. COMTESSE DE SÉGUR'S NAUGHTY CHILD

- Comtesse de Ségur, *Sophie's Misfortunes*.

MIDTERM PAPER DUE

WEEK 8. HUGO'S CHILDREN (1): COSETTE

- Victor Hugo, *How to be a Grandfather*.
- Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*. Part II, Book Third: « Accomplishment of the Promise made to the Dead Woman »
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WEEK 9. HUGO'S CHILDREN (2): GAVROCHE

- Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*. Part Four, Books Eleven (« The Atom fraternizes with the hurricane»), Fourteenth (« The Grandeurs of despair, » excerpt) ; Part Fifth, Book First (« The War between four walls ») chapters XV, XVI, XVII.

WRITERS AND THEIR CHILDHOODS

WEEK 10. STENDHAL'S ANGRY CHILD: *HENRY BRULARD*

- Stendhal, *The Life of Henry Brulard*. Chapters 3, 4, & 5 “Little things remembered from Early Childhood” (17-48).
- Michel Crouzet. *La vie de Henri Brulard, ou l'enfance de la révolte* (excerpt).
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WEEK 11: VALLÈS' UNFORTUNATE CHILD: *L'ENFANT* (1)

- Jules Vallès, *The Child*
- Rosemary Llyod. *The Land of Lost Content* (excerpt).
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WEEK 12: VALLÈS' UNFORTUNATE CHILD: *L'ENFANT* (2)

- Jules Vallès, *The Child*
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WEEKS 13/14: PERSPECTIVES ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

- Marcel Proust, *A la Recherche du temps perdu*. Combray (1)
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FINAL PAPER DUE