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VICTORIAN LITERATURE: THE LIFE CYCLE AND AGEING
ENG 333, South Hall 10, Term 7 2015-16

Overview

This course will critically examine literary images of the life cycle and ageing in Victorian Literature, with emphasis on the mid-Victorian period. Close readings of novels, short stories, poetry, and scholarly articles will help us to interrogate and historicize conceptions and attitudes about the stages of life now referred to as childhood, adolescence, middle-age and old age. While many concepts will be familiar, some will seem alien—students should try to take the literature of the period on its own terms, in the spirit open inquiry, rather than assuming that a concept like “childhood” was precisely the same for Victorians as it is for us today. Class format will include daily reading quizzes, small group work, class discussions, and mini-lectures. Students are expected to be active contributors to the group’s learning.

Required Readings:

George McDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*

Charles Kingsley, *Water-Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby*

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

Margaret Oliphant, *Hester*

Anthony Trollope, *The Warden*

Anthony Trollope, *The Fixed Period*

Reserve Readings available through Moodle: you must have these in class for discussion, either on paper or on a tablet (no cell phones or laptops, please).

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

(subject to change as needed)

Class meets daily from 8:30-11:30. Reading quizzes will be administered promptly at the start of class, and cannot be made up if missed. We will not have afternoon class, but I expect you to spend significant blocks of time on your reading, note-taking, and writing per day, around 4-6 hours.

Week 1:

Mon	Introductions Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market” (Moodle).
Tues	The Victorian Period (Longman Anthology) Claudia Nelson, “Growing UP: Childhood” (Moodle); Loralee Macpike, “Childbirth” (Moodle);
Wed	Lewis Carroll, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> ; Karoline Leach, “A Necessary Otherness” and “Photographing Angels” (Moodle); review of Leach’s book (Moodle).

Thur	Charles Kingsley, <i>Water-Babies</i> .
Fri	George McDonald, <i>The Princess and the Goblin</i> ; Avery and Reynolds, Introduction, <i>Representing Childhood Deaths</i> (Moodle); excerpts from Dickens, <i>Wood</i> (Moodle).
Sun. noon	Paper 1 Due. (Submit to Moodle before noon. Early submissions appreciated.)

Week 2:

Mon	Chris R. Vanden Bossche, "Moving Out: Adolescence" (Moodle); research workshop
Tues	Oliphant, <i>Hester</i> ; "The Romance of the Bank of England" (Moodle)
Wed	Oliphant, <i>Hester</i> .
Thurs	Oliphant, <i>Hester</i> ;
Fri	Oliphant, <i>Hester</i> . DUE: Group project proposals

Week 3:

Mon	Poetry selections (Moodle); Teresa Mangum, "Growing Old" (Moodle);
Tues	Article Presentations , 1
Wed	Trollope, <i>The Warden</i> . Article Presentations, 2
Thurs	Trollope, <i>The Warden</i> .
Fri	Trollope, <i>The Warden</i>
Sat., 5:00	Paper 2 Due. Submit to Moodle before 5:00 P.M.

Week 4:

Mon	Anthony Trollope, <i>The Fixed Period</i> .
Tues	Final Exam
Wed	Group Project Presentations.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Quizzes and Participation 10%

Daily quizzes will help you to understand my expectations for your reading, and to help you assess how effective your reading strategies are. If you want suggestions for improving your reading strategies at any time, don't hesitate to ask me.

The energy and commitment you bring to readings and assignments will also count toward this portion of your final grade. I expect universal participation, which means that everyone will contribute daily to our shared learning.

Paper One 20% (4-5 pages)

An analysis of one of our primary course texts as it relates to children's literature and concepts of childhood of the Victorian period. The paper should be informed by Victorian scholarship on children's literature and/or childhood (whether assigned course readings or your own supplemental research), but should consist primarily of your own analysis of the characters, plot, and/or themes of McDonald's or Kinsley's tale. Whatever your topic, see "Writing in English" on Moodle for writing tips, and the grading rubric at the end of this syllabus.

Paper Two 25% (7-8 pages).

An analysis Oliphant's *Hester* and/ or *The Warden* as it relates to the aging process, focusing on representations of (gendered) adolescence, middle age, and/or and/or (gendered) old age. The paper should incorporate relevant scholarship on the novels and/or on aging. You may use class readings but should also include additional scholarly work located through appropriate library subscription databases, like MLA or JSTOR.

Article Presentation 15%

For this assignment, you'll closely read, analyze, and present a peer-reviewed scholarly article, or a chapter from a scholarly monograph, about Victorian literature or history related to age or ageing. No two students will present on the same article/chapter. The piece you choose should be of substantial length (at least 16 pages) and published in the last decade. If you wish to present something shorter or published earlier, see me in advance for approval.

Everyone must submit the selection at least 24 hours ahead of presenting by adding an entry to our Moodle wiki titled "Scholarly Essays." Simply add your name, then the article's bibliographic information in MLA format, and link the title to the full text. If the piece is not available full text through our library (for example, if it is a chapter of a book in our stacks) you should scan and upload it. The earlier you select your piece, the more likely that you will get your first choice. If you are uncertain whether a piece is scholarly, speak with the librarian or with me for assistance. Good indexes for scholarly works in English include Project Muse, the MLA international database, and sometimes Google Scholar. Avoid book reviews, which differ from articles in significant respects.

Your presentation should address the following, not necessarily in this order, with emphasis on the article's content—

- What is the publication context (book, journal, other) and what do you know about this source (readership, submission and publication policies, peer-review board, etc.)?
- Who is the author and what are his/her academic credentials (e.g., PhD, Professor of Spanish at Cornell College, etc.)?
- What is the problem or dialogue that the article is intervening in, and what is the essay's thesis?
- How does the author go about making the argument to support it? I.e. How is the essay structured? What evidence does it present? Is the approach to the novel primarily intrinsic or extrinsic? What theoretical framework does the author explain or assume (for example, New Criticism, Feminist Theory, Marxist Theory, Cultural Studies, New Historicism, etc.)?

- What did you learn from the article that was new or interesting to you?
- What are the article's strengths—what points are most persuasively argued? how so? What does it make us think about? What new questions does it suggest for future research?
- What are the article's weaknesses—are any points made problematic, or less persuasive than others? how so? Having read the novel, do you see ways that the text resists this author's reading of it?
- What new research or interpretive questions does this piece raise for you about this novel, or about the novel as a genre?

The presentation may be no longer than 12 minutes, with 3 additional minutes for Q and A. Prepare and utilize a handout that includes bibliographic information as well as any excerpts that you wish us to examine together. Do not prepare more than you can present in about 10 minutes—stay focused.

Final Exam 15%

In this comprehensive, take-home essay exam, you'll identify passages and write one or two essays tying together threads from the course readings and discussions. You can best prepare for this exam by consistently taking accurate notes on readings and on class discussion.

Group Project 15% (one grade for group)

Your assigned small group will design and complete a creative project or service-learning project on one aspect of age and aging in the 19th and/or 20th century. The project should represent your best creative energy and solid critical thinking. It should aim at deepening our class's thinking about age, ageing, and ageism, and their relationship to the creative arts. You will elect a group leader, and your group will meet on a regular basis to plan and execute your project, logging time spent and activities completed individually and together. You will present your work to the class on the last day of the term. You'll submit a group proposal in week two and we'll create a project assessment rubric together.

POLICIES

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is using others' words, research, or ideas without crediting them fully and accurately, and it is a serious academic offense. Plagiarism can include writing a classmate's paper, stealing (or buying) an essay and submitting it as your own, or paraphrasing an article but forgetting to document it. Strive for integrity and proudly claim responsibility for your work at every stage! Feel free to ask me questions about proper documentation at any time. If you plagiarize or cheat, you'll earn an F as your final course grade. Here is Cornell's official policy:

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in *The Compass*, our student handbook, under the heading "Academic Policies – Honesty in Academic Work."

The Compass may be found on Cornell's website and located through the student portal.

Attendance: You'll have a better experience and learn more effectively if you attend class regularly and participate constructively. Any absence after two missed class periods will negatively impact your final course grade, and more than three missed class periods may be grounds for failure. I will take perfect attendance into account when determining your final grade, should your grade be borderline. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, but if you know you will need to miss in advance, please make me aware of the circumstances.

Contacting Me: I am always willing to set up an appointment to talk about your work, so don't hesitate to approach me for help as needed. I can be reached most easily by email during the day. If you need to reach me during the evening or on weekends, you may call me at home (895-8625), but as a courtesy please do not call after 9:00 p.m. unless urgent.

Deadlines: I typically will not accept late papers. If you cannot meet a deadline, it will be excused only if I consider your reason to be a *true* emergency, or if we have arranged an extension several days in advance. If you find yourself falling behind in the readings, see me as early as possible so that I can help you to strategize and manage your time effectively.

Learning Needs: Cornell is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented learning disabilities. I will be happy to consider accommodations if you make me aware of your documentation within the first two days of class, and if your documentation has been filed with the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising (Kate Fashimpaur). Here is Cornell's official policy:

Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml.

Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. Ideally, this meeting would take place well before the start of classes.

At the beginning of each course, the student must notify the instructor within the first three days of the term of any accommodations needed for the duration of the course.

Technology: Laptops and cell phones may not be used in class. You may use small-sized e-readers such as a Nook or Kindle, but if you are having trouble finding page numbers when called upon or keeping up with discussion, I will ask you to purchase and use a print copy of the reading instead. Be certain that your cell phone is turned off (not on vibrate) at the start of each class.

GRADING RUBRIC—PAPERS

An “A” Paper

delivers a thoughtful, complex, and nuanced analysis of the primary text. It addresses the topic effectively—it sees complexity where there is complexity and is able to deal with it in a clear and cogent manner. It has a strong sense of audience (a general readership of educated peers who have some familiarity with the primary text) and is stylistically mature.

Its strengths may include:

- a strong introduction, which introduces the topic clearly and includes a strong thesis; a thoughtful and striking conclusion;
- brief plot summary to ground readers in the analysis;
- strong subordinating points in support of the thesis, typically as topic sentences, and well-developed paragraphs;
- relevant, well-chosen supporting details from the text to support subordinating points;
- logical development of the argument, clear transitions, and strong organization;
- stylistic maturity (sentence variety, mature vocabulary, and consistent, appropriate tone).
- freedom from surface errors, including spelling, grammar, and word usage.

A “B” Paper

is typically less rich in content than a clearly excellent “A” paper, but it is fully competent; it fulfills the assignment, providing subordinating points, strong evidence, and elaboration. It may not include the critical and imaginative engagement, and surprising insights, of an A paper. It may also exhibit an occasional inconsistency in tone or an occasional flaw in organization and development.

Its strengths include:

- a clear aim, a good introduction, and a good conclusion;
- good sense of necessary supporting evidence from the text;
- logical development and clear organization;
- sentence variety and paragraph development;
- general freedom from surface errors.

A “C” Paper

completes the assignment and has recognizable strengths; these strengths, however, are obscured by unevenness of development, minor problems in logic, or by gaps in evidence and information. Parts of the essay may lack clarity, it may have unnecessary plot summary.

Its characteristics include:

- a clear aim, passable introduction, conclusion;
- recognition of the need for proper supporting evidence but thinness in use of appropriate detail;
- flawed development and organization, but will have mostly sound logic overall;
- distracting surface errors (these problems include but are not limited to spelling errors, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, subject-verb agreement problems).

A “D” Paper

acknowledges the topic and attempts to develop an analysis, but does little else.

Its weaknesses include:

- lack of a clear aim, thesis, introduction, or conclusion;
- failure to address any part of the text beside plot;
- lack of sufficient evidence and support;
- sloppy development and organization;
- weak sentence variety and paragraph development;
- numerous stylistic flaws and usage problems.

An "F" Paper

will acknowledge the topic but will wander aimlessly.