

Call for Papers

Literary Juvenilia, material imagination and 'things'

A young writer's learning and creative experience is built around things. Drawing on Gaston Bachelard's evocative phrase 'material imagination', this conference will explore the material culture of juvenilia: the relationship between 'things' and literary imagination and practice.

Young writers ranging from Pope, Chatterton and Burns in the eighteenth century, to Austen, the Brontës, Eliot and Dickens in the nineteenth, and Edith Wharton, C.S. Lewis, Judith Wright, Margaret Atwood, and J.K. Rowling in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have found inspiration and example in the everyday context of their writing practice—in a materiality related to their physical, social and cultural worlds and in the material conditions of their play, learning, imitation and critique. They have also experimented with what might be termed the concrete forms of early writing, with the making of books and magazines but also with a variety of genres that manifest variously on the page, suggesting an early awareness of relationship between content and form. Thus we will consider especially questions of material agency: how things structure early lives and writing habits; and how young writers imagine place, space and history through literary and visual artefacts.

We welcome papers that address both theoretical issues and close readings, both general discussions and individual case studies. It is anticipated that these papers relating to literary issues may also have multidisciplinary implications that extend to cognate areas of cultural enquiry, such as history, art history, education, media, philosophy, politics and theology.

Suggested topics:

- 'Things', imaginary or real, that have inspired or have a special relationship with literary juvenilia.
- Ways in which the material world is imagined in literary juvenilia.
- Landscapes of early literary practice (natural or built environment; imaginary or real).
- The role of 'things' in imitation and experiment.
- The materiality and/or cultural history of early writing: book making, writing materials, diaries, source books and the like.
- Readings of aspects of the material world in early writings (aspects that may facilitate, inspire or constrain the child writer).
- School magazines and journal culture.
- Collecting juvenilia: past and present; the juvenilia archive.
- The relationship of visual and verbal in juvenilia; the material image and written word; illustration and marginalia.
- The juvenilia of the Brontës, Jane Austen, or other writers in relation to the above issues.
- Australian juvenilia in relation to the above topics.
- Other related issues.

Potential presenters are asked to submit the following:

- **Abstract of 300 to 600 words** for consideration
- **Bio of 100 to 200 words**

Papers will be 20 minutes, plus ten minutes for questions. They will be pre-recorded and should be submitted as a good quality recording.

Abstract submissions closed 30 January 2022

