

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH IN CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

ESW Open Seminar Series

Tuesday 12 June, 12-1.30pm
Room G36, Jubilee Building

Dr Dominic Dean

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Thatcherism's Children in Literature

Thatcherism offered a promise of future prosperity based on unleashing the young man's ambition, whilst its 'Victorian values' sought to retrieve a moral past.

Literary depictions of Thatcherism make the child central to a resulting contradiction between imagined moral past and ecstatically materialistic future.

In this seminar, Dr Dean traces how this contradiction is explored and parodied in major literary works on Thatcherism from Ian McEwan, Peter Ackroyd, Hanif Kureishi, and Alan Hollinghurst. The common thread in these novels is that Thatcherite materialism leads - unintentionally and ironically - to unacceptable ambitions in the child; the child indulged by Thatcherism becomes its undoing.

Dr Dean will read this theme across from literature to the political and cultural history of the long Thatcherism, its current legacy, and the complex history of Thatcherism and childhood. In the Q&A following his presentation, there will be a chance to further explore the resonances between literary, cultural, and political history.

Dominic Dean has previously published on this topic in 'Literature and History', and has presented on it to a major interdisciplinary conference on Thatcherism's legacies.

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