



# UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

24–25 October 2024  
Department of Culture and Media Studies  
Umeå University  
Sweden

## The Child Subject within Children's Literature and Beyond: Aesthetic and Pedagogical Approaches

### Call for papers

We would like to invite you to participate in this international symposium on children's literature. The theme of the conference is **the child subject**. The conference will take place at Umeå University in Umeå, Sweden on October 24 and 25. The deadline for full panel or individual paper proposals is **Monday June 3, 2024**.

Children's literature research within academia has traditionally been situated either in relation to pedagogy and education or to comparative literature. The pedagogical tradition often explores how children's literature is or could be used in primary education, while research in a comparative literature tradition tends to study the work and its aesthetic aspects "in itself". Contemporary children's book scholars such as Clémentine Beauvais and her influential *The Mighty Child* (2015) have however effectively breached the gap between didactics and aesthetics. Beauvais theorizes how children are constructed as subjects both within and outside the book, and how this is shaped by the adults' desire for the child to become a (certain kind of) subject. For this conference, we are interested in presentations that explore **how children are constructed as subjects, either in the shape of characters within the book, or how the books attempt to structure the subjectivity of the intended reader**. We especially encourage theoretically innovative approaches.



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Topics could include, but are not limited to:

- Children's ideals, such as the emancipated child or the innocent child
- Transgressions of ideals, such as queer or evil children
- Transgressions of the boundaries of the subject, either in a physical or spiritual sense
- Children's books and activism
- New materialistic readings
- Posthumanistic readings
- How children's literature shapes the subjectivity of the reader
- Interactive books
- Aetnormative critique
- Coming of age, adult subjects
- Migrating subjects, displaced subjects

Individual presentations will be given 20 minutes each. We also encourage complete panels, which should include at least three papers and presenters. Other formats, including roundtable discussions and book sessions, are also possible. Proposals consist of an extended abstract, between 400 and 500 words, and are accepted in English and Swedish, but the presentations must be in English. Participation for accepted presenters is free of charge and costs for lunch and dinner will be partially covered, but the number of participants is limited. **Proposals are submitted to each member of the organizing committee:**

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If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us!