

Dr. Kenneth Kidd
LIT 6856
Fall 2008
W 6-8

Office: TUR 4012C
Hours: TBA and
by appointment
kbkidd@english.ufl.edu

Into the Archive: Reading in the Baldwin

Enjoy your archive! That's the idea, anyway (or as Zizek says, the compulsion); this semester, we will haunt and be haunted by the archive, specifically the Baldwin History Library of Children's Literature, housed in our very own Smathers Libraries. Rita Smith, the Curator of the Baldwin, will participate in the seminar and will be our intrepid guide. In this course you'll be working on one or more archival research projects, so expect to spend quality time in the Baldwin. You will give regular oral and written reports on your work in progress. The Baldwin is an extraordinary resource even for those not specializing in children's literature, and one aim of the course is to encourage you to explore the collection. Not a few graduate students in English have forged theses and dissertations out of Baldwin material; if you look around, something will catch your interest, no matter your primary subject or field. You can develop projects by period (eighteenth-century forward), or subject clusters (empire/post-colonial studies; sexuality and gender; environmentalism and social justice; science and mathematics; textual studies; history of illustration; didacticism and religion, just to name a few) or genre/form (series books, chapbooks, primers, magazines, Little Golden Books, textbooks, alphabet books, fables, biographies, etc.), or some combination thereof.

We will simultaneously read theory, criticism, and popular nonfiction in three overlapping areas: the archive, library, and collection; children's studies; and English studies. For the first few weeks, as you begin reading projects in the Baldwin, we'll spend most of our class time on these materials, talking about their arguments, anxieties, and investments. These three areas seem the most useful given the nature of the course, but it's also true that these readings won't always or even often speak directly to our archival experiences. That's ok. They should give us a framework for thinking about what we do as scholars in and around children's literature and English studies more broadly. The reading is a bit heavier in the first few weeks but then tapers off, as you're developing your research. If need be, we'll cycle back to certain texts later in the semester. There is no assigned reading at all sometimes; my assumption is that you'll use that time to read in the Baldwin.

The course is experimental and we may need to make some adjustments along the way. No doubt you will want to supplement the theoretical and critical material, so I look forward to your suggestions and amendments. We'll stick to the reading schedule as outlined below but we may also add some essays here and there, particularly on days where most of our class time will consist of show and tell.

Rita and I are excited about the class and hope you are, too. Let us know how we can make it more productive and fun.

Texts

Nicholson Baker, *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper*
Nicholas Basbanes, *A Splendor of Letters*
Matthew Battles, *Library: An Unquiet History*

Pierre Bayard, *How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read*
 Michael Bérubé, *The Employment of English*
 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*
 Jerry Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*
 Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*
 Francis Spufford, *The Child that Books Built*
 Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*
 Susan Stewart, *On Longing*

And selections from e-reserves, under my name and LIT 6856 (section 5629)

Assignments and Evaluation

For this class, you'll write two short essays of 5-7 d-s pp. each on your archive project or projects, in which you describe the material and offer some provisional analysis, drawing from whatever scholarly materials and methods are most helpful. You may report further on the same project in essay 2, or do something different. Please document all sources.

You'll also give two in-class, informal oral reports on your research, in which you describe what you're doing, bring in materials, take questions, and lead discussion about your project. The report and discussion should run around 20-30 minutes. I'd suggest that you provide some written materials for everyone in class -- a draft of the essay, perhaps, maybe a short essay or bibliography. The format should remain informal, though; don't just read a paper to us. I'll look for volunteers to present each day we're focusing on reports.

And the usual longer essay, this time only 15-20 d-s pp., in which you offer analysis of your archive materials/subject. The longer essay may be an elaboration of either or both of the shorter ones. If you want to do a more theoretical piece, that's fine, but you must make productive use of your archive research.

Regular attendance and active participation are essential; come prepared and plan to miss no more than 1 class. I'll assign your course grade based on your level of general engagement as well as the quality of your written work.

Schedule

August

27 Introductions and Baldwin Library tour

September

3 Battle, *Library*; Baker, *Double Fold*
 10 Basbanes, *A Spondor of Letters*; Basbanes, "Obsessed Amateurs"; tour of Preservation in Smathers with John Freund
 17 Derrida, *Archive Fever*; Bayard, *How to Talk...*
 24* Stewart, *On Longing*; Taylor

October

1 Reports; Benjamin, "Unpacking..."; Chow; *Walter Benjamin's Archive*

- 8 Spufford, *The Child that Books Built*; Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan*
 15 Reports; Essay 1 due
 22* Steedman, *Dust*; reports
 29 Reports

November

- 5 Benjamin, "Old Forgotten.."; Cambon; Clark; Hager; Kidd; O'Sullivan
 12 Reports
 19 Berubé, *The Employment of English*; Essay 2 due
 26 No class (Wed. before Thanksgiving)

December

- 3 Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*; reports
 10 Reports, wrap-up, tearful goodbyes

Seminar essay due December 15

*meet in Special Collections seminar room, not regular conference room