

Romanticism and the Cultures of Infancy
Seminar at [ESSE2016](#), NUI Galway, 22-26 August 2016

Call for papers

Wordsworth's assertion that 'the child is father of the man' is one of the most familiar statements of the Romantic interest in the relationship between childhood experience and adult identity. Indeed, it has become something of a commonplace now to assert that the Romantics invented childhood as we understand it. This seminar will investigate the extent to which the wider concept of 'infancy' became a key trope of European thought across a range of different areas of enquiry, genres of cultural productivity, and national contexts, during the 'long eighteenth century' (1700-1830), from speculation about the age of the cosmos to discussions of the history of civil society.

Potential topics for papers include:

- Depictions of infancy in literature and the visual arts
- Speculation about the relationship between childhood experience and adult identity
- Descriptions of childhood in medical writing
- Romantic nationalisms and the infancy of nations
- The use of 'infancy' as a trope in natural philosophy (geology, chemistry, botany, etc.)
- Infancy as a concept in writing about the history of poetry, painting, sculpture, etc.
- 'Infancy' as a trope in histories of civil society, economics, etc.
- Eighteenth-century and Romantic-period writing for children (fiction, conduct, etc.)
- 'Infancy' and/in education

Proposals of no more than 300 words for papers of 15 minutes should be sent to the organisers by 28 February 2016. Successful proposers will be notified by 31 March 2016.

Cian Duffy is professor of English literature at St. Mary's University, Twickenham, UK. He has published widely on various aspects of the intellectual life and cultural history of the late eighteenth century and romantic period. (cian.duffy@stmarys.ac.uk)

Martina Domines Veliki lectures in English literature at the University of Zagreb. She has published on Wordsworth and Rousseau, and is the current president of HDAS - the Croatian Association for Anglophone Studies. (mdomines@ffzg.hr)

Further information about the conference can be found at: [www.http://www.esse2016.org/](http://www.esse2016.org/)