

# Food and/in Children's Culture

National, International and Transnational Perspectives

Università Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy

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Palazzo Cosulich – Zattere Dorsoduro, 1405, 30123 Venezia – Italy

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Food is a prominent element in children's literature and culture. As Carolyn Daniel puts it, by reading about food children learn "what to eat and what not to eat or who eats whom" (2006, 4). In children's narratives food can be, simultaneously, a mark of national identity, and a bridge between cultures, through which children can both learn about their own national culture and encounter other cultural identities and experiences. It can be a mark of kinship, but also a mark of difference and monstrosity, a symbol of desire, but also a vehicle of danger and death. Food scenes at times represent moments of intense pleasure for characters in movies, books, and different kinds of performances and, therefore, vicariously, for the reader/spectator, who becomes involved in what Gitanjali Shahani has called "food ekphrasis" (2018, 3) and consumes fictional banquets through vivid descriptions. At other times, these vivid descriptions may place before the reader/spectator/listener foods that are decidedly unappealing, at times monstrously so; and in some cases they may represent, equally vividly, scenes of hunger, poverty, and longing for unreachable food.

There are indeed few elements so multifaceted, counterintuitive, and contradictory as food, and its role in children's literature and culture usually bears heavy ideological, political, and/or cultural connotations. This conference invites broad, interdisciplinary interpretations of this theme encompassing, but not limited to:

- Children as eaters and/or food
- Medicine and science: diets, "clean vs un-clean" eating, nutrition
- Food and gender
- Picturebooks: picturing food and food fantasies/nightmares
- Period-specific perspectives (Early Modern, Eighteenth Century, Victorian and Neo-Victorian, post-War, contemporary ...)
- Food and the child body: normalized, codified, modified, rejected/accepted
- Trans/national perspectives
- Images of food and intercultural dialogues/issues
- The press (childcare, cooking and house management magazines, children's periodicals)
- Eating at home and abroad (in institutions [hospital, workhouse, school ...], in different countries, picnics, the family meal, feasts and special occasions ...)
- Magical food
- Food fantasies/nightmares
- Children, food, and the environment: climate change, ecocriticism, access to food based on class/nationality ...
- Expressing concern about food: alcoholism and temperance, food disorders, poverty and hunger

## Confirmed keynote speakers include:

Emeritus Professor Peter Hunt, Cardiff University (UK)

Professor Nicola Humble, University of Roehampton (UK)

Professor Björn Sundmark, Malmö University (Sweden)

Dr Zoe Jaques, University of Cambridge (UK)

Please send abstracts of 300-500 words for 20-minute papers and a 100-word biography to the Conference Organizers, Dr Anna Gasperini and Professor Laura Tosi, at [foodchildrenculture2021@gmail.com](mailto:foodchildrenculture2021@gmail.com) by **30 November 2020**

For further information, please visit the website [FED - Feeding, Educating, Dieting](http://FED-Feeding, Educating, Dieting)

**Note: the conference is envisaged as an in-person event; should this not be possible, an on-line version will be organized. We will provide updates about this in due course.**

