Connection and Disconnection in *Tom's Midnight Garden*

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Abstract

This paper entitled 'Connection and Disconnection in *Tom's Midnight Garden*' aims to challenge a particular reading of Philippa Pearce's novel *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958) as nostalgic and concerned with aging and death. *Tom's Midnight Garden* is regarded by some literary critics as a nostalgic work concerned with the past rather than the present. Its protagonist Tom is sometimes considered as disconnected from the real world and living in the fantastic. This paper will argue that, quite the contrary, *Tom's Midnight Garden* stands against disconnection, between the child and the adult, the fantastic and the real, and the past and the present. *Tom's Midnight Garden* celebrates connection through the interrelation between the self and the other, through a fantastic world constantly interwoven with the real, and a past tightly tied to the present. This paper relies on a thorough reading of the novel, on findings on the child-adult relationship, and on the effects of connection and disconnection on the individual.

Keywords: 20th century children's literature, connection and disconnection, fantastic and real, Philippa Pearce, tom's midnight garden

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