

## **CALL FOR PAPERS FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE OF *INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE***

### **INSTITUTING, FORGETTING, AND REMEMBERING: (POST-)COLONIAL PRACTICES OF CHILD REMOVAL IN CHILDREN'S MEDIA**

The (forcible) relocation and re-education of Indigenous children at the peripheries of empire was a wide-spread form of colonial governance. Children were considered to be more malleable than their adult counterparts, meaning that colonial regimes considered it possible to 'take the Indian out of the child', or to 'breed the color out of aboriginals' or to transform Indigenous children up to the points at which they could make themselves useful as local intermediaries between the colonizer and colonized. Thus, Indigenous children have often figured as both targets and tools of Western civilising projects, as a tentative solution to the perennial problem of how to govern vast nations by means of a relatively small number of colonial administrators who, moreover, often lacked in-depth knowledge of the languages and cultures of the nations they were supposed to rule.

As Karen Sánchez-Eppler has argued convincingly in *Dependent States*, colonial strategies for governing the peripheries of empire and pedagogical regimes for raising metropolitan children were interdependent. Empires were 'raised like children' and children were 'civilized like savages.' The intimate link between imperial nation and domestic nursery may help to explain why children's literature and affiliated media such as textbooks have played such a pivotal role in instituting, forgetting, and remembering the systematic instrumentalization of Indigenous children in (post-)colonial contexts. Educative discourses such as children's literature and textbooks were bent on piquing metropolitan children's interest in the colonies in a concerted effort to recruit the next generation of colonial administrators, missionaries, and entrepreneurs. Later, these discourses were complicit in the embarrassed silence in which the colonial past was shrouded after decolonization. At the same time, however, the existence of these discourses and texts also preserved the past and eventually contributed to the disruption of the silence about the 'stolen generations,' 'lost birds,' *déracinés*.

This special issue aims to analyze how children's literature and affiliated media instituted, silenced, and remembered forcible child removal from a transnational comparative perspective, including but also moving beyond the conventional focus on the former British Commonwealth. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the following issues:

- How was the relocation and re-education of indigenous children 'sold' to metropolitan children?
- What versions of 'family' and 'family values' were propagated by children's media that targeted Indigenous children at the peripheries of empire?
- How did children's literature and textbooks respond to decolonisation?
- Have exotic colonial themes, settings, and plot structures vanished from children's media? If so, when did this occur?

- When do efforts to re-present and remember child removal through children's media gain ascendancy over silence and oblivion? How does children's fiction relate to historiography in this respect?
- Is the question of the 'decolonisation of childhood' still topical? How do contemporary forms of neo-colonialism, post-colonialism, and anti-colonialism impact on the cultural construction of childhood as articulated by children's media?

We particularly welcome transnational comparative approaches.

Time path:

Abstracts due: 1 March 2019;  
completed papers 1 September 2019,  
publication July 2020.

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We are open to any further questions you may have concerning this special issue.