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Special Journal Issue

Global Studies of Childhood

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Childhood in Literature, Media & Popular Culture

Literary, media and popular texts are a powerful means by which the broad category of childhood is constructed, maintained, protected and challenged. Whether cultural texts are produced for children or about them, their depictions of childhood provide important resources for those interested in exploring the logics and practices through which contemporary childhoods are imagined, produced and experienced. In recent years, scholars have considered how representations of children and childhood in cultural texts contribute to shared understandings and normative discourses about children’s place in the social world. For some, the pervasiveness of media and popular culture in the lives of children worldwide contributes to what is seen as an erosion of childhood innocence and imagination, producing instead new generations of individualistic, street-wise and tech-savvy young consumers whose identities rest on interaction through mediated images, online social networks and access to globally distributed commodities. For others, children’s safety and sanctity appear threatened because of a belief in the rise of children’s exposure to violence in the media, the sexualisation of youth, and the commercialization of childhood. In response, some scholars identify both of these perspectives as moral panics that are overly reliant on nostalgic, idealized versions of childhood that overlook the complexities and ambiguities of everyday life for the majority of the world’s children. Amid these debates, this special issue asks contributing authors to consider how childhood is represented in contemporary literary, media and/or popular texts, with one or more of the following in mind:

- What stories are currently being told about the lives and experiences of children, and in what ways do they reinscribe or unsettle cultural norms and un/certainties relating to childhood?
- In what ways do children’s picture books and works of literary fiction construct childhood as situated by, within and in relation to issues of global relevance?
- How are culturally-specific knowledges, identities and meaning-making practices shaped by the intertextualities associated with transnational flows of cultural texts, characters, storylines and products?
- What part do cultural texts and products produced by global branding and other transnational corporate activities play in constructing gendered and racialised norms of intelligibility within and across geographical and socio-cultural borders?
- What adult pleasures and/or ideological positions are being cultivated by fictional or non-fictional representations of childhood, including representation of threats to childhood purity and innocence?
- How are visual images of children and childhood utilized in contemporary cultural texts, and in what ways are they implicated in shifting social discourse and political agendas?
- How might critical, feminist, anti-racist, postcolonial, or poststructuralist critiques be
brought to bear in the analysis of cultural texts in order to substantively re-think normative assumptions of children and childhood?

**Guest Editors:** Dr Ummni Khan (Carleton University, Canada) and A/Prof Sue Saltmarsh (Australian Catholic University). Queries regarding the special issue can be directed to: sue.saltmarsh@acu.edu.au

**Submissions:** Manuscripts of 4000-6000 words should be submitted no later than 15 August 2011, to gsch@ied.edu.hk. The journal’s submission guidelines and information for authors can be found at [http://www.wwwords.co.uk/gsch/howtocontribute.asp](http://www.wwwords.co.uk/gsch/howtocontribute.asp)