

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Newsletter</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Society for the History of Children And Youth</i></b></p>	
<p>Issue #7</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Winter 2006</p>

**To Our Readers:**

Film occupies an important space in popular culture and in our classrooms. Along with our regular columns, this issue of the Newsletter brings together a series of feature articles and reviews that address film depictions of children past and present from the vantage point of different cultures, different types of films, and, not least, different kinds of children.

Steven Mintz offers an overview of the topic that describes how the images of children seen in American films have changed over the decades. Also addressing the U.S. context, Julie Smith looks at "children on the margins," challenging us to think more carefully about how orphans have been depicted in such classics as *Wizard of Oz* and *Blossom in the Dust*.

Three additional essays discuss films about children and youth in recent history. Beth Sneyd's analysis of the Japanese animated films of the 1980s and 1990s from Studio Ghibli demonstrates how films from a specific cultural context reflect universal themes. Jennifer de Forest asks us to consider the themes of parenting and community in her examination of the deaf community depicted in *Sound and Fury*. Allison Wright Munro's article on *Thirteen* reminds us that films about juvenile delinquency continue to intrigue us and that the images of children we see in films will continue to be unnerving, but also essential to our understanding children's lives.

Reviews of individual films from Israel, Great Britain, Italy, Argentina, and Japan point to a common theme: the experiences of children in times of war. Jennifer de Forest examines the interactions of Jewish and Arab children in Jerusalem in *Promises, Promises*. In her review of *Hope and Glory* Moira Hinderer considers the impact of war on children and discusses her use of this film in the classroom. Kenneth Pearl examines the effect of war on children in the classic film, *The Bicycle Thief*, while Greg Johnson shows us how life changed for children in postwar Japan in his study of *Good Morning*. Colleen A. Vasconcellos turns her eye to *Machuca*, a film from Chile depicting the effects of the 1973 revolution on two boys from different class backgrounds.

Finally, Cathlena Martin has provided a thorough introduction to her course on film and children's experiences, giving us an opportunity to see how this diverse material might be used effectively for students.

These articles and reviews represent only a brief introduction to the subject of children and film. Nonetheless, we hope that, taken together, they will pique the interest to scholars in children's studies, encourage students to undertake further research, and provide inspiration for the use of film in the classroom. Of course, you will also find in the Newsletter the regular columns with news about members, events, and publications. And, a membership form to join us in the Society for the History of Children and Youth.

Happy viewing -- and teaching!  
Sean Martin and Kathleen Jones

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## Some Thoughts from the President

**Kriste Lindenmeyer**  
**University of Maryland, Baltimore County**  
**February 9, 2006**

To paraphrase an American advertising campaign, "SHCY has come a long way, baby." Founding members ratified the organization's mission statement in July, 2001 stating:

- 1) *SHCY was founded to promote the history of children and youth.*
- 2) *The organization (a) supports research about childhood, youth cultures, and the experience of young people across diverse times and places; (b) fosters study across disciplinary and methodological boundaries; (c) provides venues for scholars to communicate with one another; and (d) promotes excellence in scholarship.*
- 3) *Membership is open to all individuals as well as to cultural and educational institutions.*
- 4) *SHCY resources for scholars include regular conferences, an email discussion list, a website, and publications.*

The combined efforts of many individuals have helped SHCY to great strides toward fulfilling its mission. As of February, 2006, SHCY has 174 dues-paying members and H-Childhood has 735 subscribers located in 33 separate countries (<http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~child>). The list editors, Thomas Cardoza, Sarah Carter, Daniel Kline, Julie Smith, Shirlee Swain, and our book review editor, Patrick Ryan maintain an outstanding site of the Internet promoting our field. Special thanks also go to Kathleen Jones, Sean Martin, Colleen Vasconcellos, Margot Hillel, Nancy Zey, David Pomfret, Mona Gleason, and Moira Hinderer for their work preparing the outstanding *SHCY Newsletter*. We have also had recent success through SHCY's third biennial conference, held at Marquette University last summer. These accomplishments are evidence of the excitement in the field as well as the hard work and dedication of many people involved in SHCY. Thank you to everyone who supports this young and growing organization.

But SHCY cannot sit on these laurels. Every SHCY member should start making plans to attend the next SHCY conference to be hosted by Linköping University in Sweden in mid-summer 2007. We are grateful to Bengt Sandin for his willingness to welcome our members to his Child Studies program and we hope meeting in Europe is a new opportunity for creating stronger links in interdisciplinary scholarship as it helps SHCY build bridges over national boundaries. Housing costs will be very inexpensive and we are working to find the best means to support graduate students and young scholars wanting to attend. What better reason could you have to go to Sweden in 2007?

In preparation for our meeting in Sweden, SHCY President-elect Paula Fass and I are initiating a new membership challenge. We are asking all SHCY members to bring at least **two new members** to the organization. Many researchers examining topics related to children and youth do not realize SHCY exists. Others do work focused on young people, but they often do not see themselves as historians of childhood. Open their eyes! Invite them to join SHCY. Membership forms are available in this newsletter and on the H-Childhood website at: <http://www.h-net.org/~child/SHCY/registration113.htm>. As part of this membership drive we are anxious to continue to strengthen membership in North America and scholarship centered on the history of children and youth in the United States and Canada. However, we also want your help attracting researchers working outside North America and/or on topics looking at children and youth in other parts of the globe. Let's make SHCY a truly "global" organization and help us bring in new members from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and topics. I believe it is possible to double our membership by the Fall of 2007. **Be a part of this exciting expansion by bringing at least two new members to SHCY.**

Besides the conference in Sweden, SHCY is also expanding its outreach by establishing a scholarly journal. I want to personally thank Jon Pahl, Michael Grossberg, and James Marten for their efforts designing, vetting, and implementing the journal proposal. And special thanks to Laura Lovett for organizing the necessary institutional, financial, and research support. Watch your email boxes and this newsletter for further updates and begin to prepare for your university or college to subscribe. Institutional subscriptions will be key to the journal's success and SHCY's future.

One final thought. I recently participated in a very interesting inter-disciplinary workshop examining children's cultures. After a very intriguing presentation by a scholar in a non-history field, I commented that the contemporary issue he was examining had also been the focus of debate in the 1930s. He politely nodded, but later asked, "Why is it that this same debate had roots in the past?" A great question. It matters because the study of the history of children and youth can help to uncover strategies that will improve lives of children and youth living today and in the future. Asking "why?" (the favorite question of historians and of the bane of students) can lead to the discovery of patterns in the human experience that get to the root of today's problems. Such causes are often difficult to discern amid the emotion of contemporary debates. As one of the workshop members commented, children are often "the canary in the mine" alerting a society about injustice. I believe that this reason alone is evidence there is no more important area of historical investigation than the history of children and youth.

## Children on the Silver Screen

Steven Mintz

For more than a century, Hollywood has been our society's most important educator. The movies shaped our ideas of beauty, glamour, femininity, masculinity, and America's role in the world, and were instrumental in defining and disseminating ethnic and racial stereotypes. The movies also shaped our images of childhood.

There have been heart-warming infants, wide-eyed waifs hungering for a home, curly-haired cherubs, and savvy street urchins. Among girls, we have had an assortment of Pollyannas, princesses, tomboys, bobby-soxers, and prepubescent Lolitas and prostitutes, not to mention an endless stream of Cinderellas. Among boys, we've had mischievous scamps, rambunctious ragamuffins, little rascals, angry and alienated adolescents, and, more recently, a parade of pranksters, burnouts, stoners, and homeboys.

The movies are not merely a form of popular entertainment. Like a seismograph, the movies record shifts in the public mood. The screen offers an indelible record of the public's shifting anxieties, aspirations, fears, and fantasies. The movies both reflect and promote cultural change.

The subject of children and film can be approached from multiple directions. We can look at the shifting representation of children in film or at child stars or at the business of children's films. We can concentrate on films that foreground children, many of which are aimed at adults, or we can look at the films that children of various ages actually watch, including cartoons and the handful of films, like "The Wizard of Oz" (1939), that have become part of the shared imagination of generations of children. An important but understudied topic involves the ways that children absorb and respond to movies and how they use movie characters, themes, and plot elements in their play. In this brief overview, I will look primarily at how the movies depicted children over the past century and how these changes reflect broader social and cultural shifts.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Victorian image of the child as a little angel gave way to a new ideal. The new standard, as Gary Cross has suggested, was spunky, sassy, naughty, willful, and cute. The movies drew this image from the earliest comics. First came the Yellow Kid, the first American comic strip character and the prototype for Dennis the Menace, Bart Simpson, and other gap toothed rascals and troublemakers. Then came Buster Brown, the little rich kid with a blond pageboy haircut who was always getting into mischief, but a milder brand than the Yellow Kid.

Today, many movie kids act like adults. When the movies' first century began, the most influential screen kid was played by an adult. Mary Pickford embodied the new ideal of childhood. She was naughty and coquettish, but also innocent and sweet. Mary Pickford grew older in real life but played ever younger children on the screen.

The first true child stars did not appear until the 1920s. The first was six-year-old Jackie Coogan, now best remembered as Uncle Fester in "The Munsters," who appeared in "The Kid" (1921) with Charlie Chaplin. There was also Baby Peggy Montgomery, the precursor for Shirley Temple. Few recognize her name today, but she made banner headlines when she signed a three picture \$3.5 million contract. Her life served as the basis for "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962).

Beginning with the birth of the nickelodeon, adults worried about the movies' impact on children. Some Progressive era reformers praised movies as a benign alternative to dance halls and city streets and thought they could serve a valuable educational function. Others, however, viewed nickelodeons and movie theaters as breeding grounds of delinquency and sexual promiscuity. Settlement House founder Jane Addams called the nickelodeon "a house of dreams," and described how, after seeing a western, a nine-year-old and a thirteen-year-old boy bought a lariat and a gun, and ambushed a milkman, nearly killing him. In 1907, the *Chicago Tribune* threw its editorial weight against the movies, declaring that they were "without a redeeming feature to warrant their existence...ministering to the lowest passions of childhood." That year, Chicago established the nation's first censorship board, to protect its youthful population "against the evil influence of obscene and immoral representations."

It was not, however, until the late 1920s, that social scientists conducted the first serious studies of movies' effects on children. With support from the Payne Fund, a private foundation that financed research on children, nineteen psychologists and sociologists from seven universities investigated film's impact on children's conduct, attitudes, and emotions. The researchers wanted to know the extent to which the movies' unique features—the darkness of the theater and the intense emotionality and hypnotic quality of the images—had on children's sleep patterns, their school work, moral standards, delinquency, and ideas about race and world affairs. The project's funders had their own agenda: to demonstrate that the movies "constituted a serious menace to public and private morals." The studies were sober, if methodologically flawed, attempts to understand the movies' impact. The researchers found that children attended movies more frequently than adults and that even very young children attended movies unchaperoned. They also discovered, on the basis of a content analysis of 1,500 films, that virtually no movies were produced exclusively for children, identifying just one such film in 1930. The investigators found that children had an impressive ability to recall information from the movies; that movie-going influenced children's attitudes toward race, ethnicity, and crime; that films featuring violence or horror interfered with children's sleep; and that frequent movie-goers performed worse in school than their classmates. A summary volume, entitled *Our Movie-Made Children*, provided a misleading, but popular, digest of the studies' findings. The volume, which went through seven printings between 1933 and 1935, asserted that the movies fueled cravings for an easy life and wild parties, and contributed significantly to juvenile delinquency. The movies, according to the Payne Studies, helped explain the far-reaching transformations taking place in young peoples' lives. Like later moralists, their focus was on the mass media rather than on the broader institutional changes—such as the expansion of an age-

segregated realm of youth, cut off from the world of adulthood—that were at the heart of the emergence of a modern youth culture.

The Great Depression brought many new images of childhood. The Depression sparked fears of a lost generation of children, like the street smart Dead End Kids, who might fall into crime and be susceptible to demagogues. But there were also efforts to sentimentalize boyhood, like the Little Rascals, the urban offspring of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, also idealized versions of girlhood, notably the March sisters in “Little Women” (1933).

It was during the Depression that Walt Disney became synonymous with children’s movies and that his films developed their trademark traits. The Disney studio self-consciously reworked fairy tales, myths, and classic children’s stories, erasing elements that it considered inappropriate for kids and making the stories more didactic and moralistic. Thus, for Pinocchio (1940) to become a real boy, he must prove himself “brave, truthful, and unselfish.” “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” (1937) emphasized proper gender behavior. Foreshadowing later Disney films, the heroine finds fulfillment in housework and makes marriage her life’s ultimate goal.

The most popular child star of the 1930s was Shirley Temple, who topped the box office every year from 1935 to 1938. She was America’s little darling, tap-dancing and singing through the Depression in fifty shorts and features by the time she was eighteen. Part of her attraction was her cuteness, charm, dimpled cheeks, and bouncing curls. She was adults’ ideal girl—athletic, flirtatious, independent, even-tempered, and infectiously optimistic. She was undeniably talented: she could sing, dance, act, and melt the heart of the grouchiest sourpuss. Escapist fantasy, too, was part of her appeal. Lacking a mother in almost all of her movies, she was free from domestic constraints. But her appeal went beyond escapism. In many films, she served as a “spiritual healer” who resolved family disputes, bridged class differences, and restored adults’ confidence in themselves. Oblivious to class and racial differences, she moved easily between poor and wealthy homes without ever being greedy or envious.

At the end of the decade, a new cinematic stereotype appeared, supplanting even Shirley Temple in popularity. This was the all-American teen, personified by Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland in the Andy Hardy movies, which focused on middle-class teenagers’ crushes, infatuations, and humorous and embarrassing mishaps. Such “Kleen Teens” as Deanna Durbin, Roddy McDowell, Dickie Moore, Lana Turner and Jane Withers provided the caricature that the troubled, misunderstood, and alienated teen characters of 1950s films rebelled against.

During World War II, a highly sentimental view of childhood appeared on the screen, one which bore little resemblance to children’s actual wartime experiences. A deeply romanticized view of childhood was apparent in movies like “National Velvet” (1944) and “A Tree Grows in Brooklyn” (1945), and, shortly after the war, in “Miracle on 34th Street” (1947).

The 1950s marked the beginning of the end of innocence. Before World War II, the mystery and otherness of childhood had been rarely depicted by the movies. It would not be until the 1950s that we would see depraved children, anticipated in "Mildred Pierce" in 1945, then realized in "The Bad Seed" (1956) and such later films as "Children of the Damned" (1964) and "The Exorcist" (1973), and not until the 1970s that we would see children depicted as precocious, miniature adults, as in "Harold and Maude" (1971), or as emotional footballs, in "Kramer v. Kramer" (1979), or the death of childhood innocence in Louis Malle's "Pretty Baby" (1978). Few American films before the 1960s explored children's psychological life or tried to see the world through children's eyes; but many, like the Our Gang comedies and Walt Disney cartoons, tried to depict the world of a child's imagination.

During the 1950s, amused condescension gave way to concern and bewilderment. No longer were portraits of children exclusively images of wholesome naughtiness, mooning boys, and puppy love. Kids increasingly became a vehicle for exploring the confusions of modern society. The cute child was replaced by the evil child, like Rhoda Penmark, the eight-year-old pig-tailed murderer in "The Bad Seed" (1956). The movies also brought to the screen rebellious and alienated adolescents, as well as the world of leather-clad juvenile delinquents, switch blades, and drag racing

During the 1960s, there were attempts to recapture an image of childhood innocence, evident in such movies as "Mary Poppins" (1964), "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" (1968), "The Sound of Music" (1965), "40 Pounds of Trouble" (1962), and "Oliver!" (1968). But there were also more psychologically nuanced portraits of childhood. "To Kill a Mockingbird" (1962) viewed racism through the eyes of a child. "The Effects of Gamma Rays on Man in the Moon Marigolds" (1972) portrayed the psychological and emotional abuse of a child.

During the 1950s and 1960s, specific genres of movies were, for the first time, marketed directly to the young, including science fiction films, motorcycle and juvenile delinquent movies, and beach blanket and surfer films. After 1970, the targeting of children and adolescents became much more intensive and self-conscious. One recurrent formula involved a teenage outcast mocked by her popular, style-setting classmates, who has a makeover and ends up going to the high-school prom with the handsomest boy in the football squad. Yet we have also had deeply disturbing images of youthful depravity. The movies portrayed kids as demons in such films as "Carrie" (1976) and "The Exorcist" (1973), as prostitutes in "Pretty Baby" (1978) and "Taxi Driver" (1976), and as incipient murders in "Basketball Diaries" (1995). Portraits of indifferent, uninvolved, unobservant, and uncomprehending teachers and clueless, disconnected, self-deceived, and self-absorbed parents became much more common. The impact of family breakdown and disconnection was a particularly popular theme, apparent in movies as diverse as "WarGames" (1983), "ET: The Extra Terrestrial" (1982), and the "Home Alone" films.

A number of the most memorable recent American films dealing with childhood paint particularly unsettling portraits of the psyche and culture of the young. There was "River's Edge" (1986), based on the true story, which looks at how a group of working-

class northern California teens responds after one of the boys murders his girlfriend. It paints a picture of emotionally numbed kids disconnected from the adults around them. There was “Thirteen” (2003), which shows an adolescent world of body piercing, self-mutilation, tattoos, sexually provocative clothing, underage sex, and casual drug use. And there was the Columbine-inspired “Elephant” (2003), which portrays high schools as a brutal Darwinian world of cliques and taunting and tormenting culminating in violence.

Today, children's entertainment is a cornerstone of the American movie industry. Movies catering to the young are Hollywood's most profitable sector. Popular children's films range from cheery animated musicals to shadowy fantasies making extensive use of intense, cutting-edge computer graphics. If one wishes to move beyond gender stereotyped Disneyfied films or sanitized versions of Roald Dahl's subversive novels or John Hughes' portraits of growing up suburban or big budget magical fantasies like the Harry Potter movies, one must turn to foreign films. Films like “Innocent Voices” (2004), a wrenching documentary-like exploration of the effects of El Salvador's civil war on an 11-year-old, show broader historical events through the eyes of a child. Like such earlier foreign films as “Pixote” (1981), “Sugar Cane Alley” (1983), “Fanny and Alexander” (1982), “The Wild Child” (1970), “Small Change” (1976), and “Pather Panchali” (1955), “Innocent Voices” addresses themes crucial for the history of childhood—such as the gendered experience of childhood and coming of age-- in an insightful and nuanced way alien to contemporary Hollywood film.

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Where was Dorothy's Mother?

Julie Smith

In 1939, when *The Wizard of Oz*, swooped into theaters, Hollywood was in the midst of a series of movies about orphaned or institutionalized children. In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy lives with Auntie Em and Uncle Henry. But, where was Dorothy's mother or father? Was she an orphan? It was clear from the ensuing film where and with whom Dorothy lived. She ran away from home, she returned home during the storm, and when she clicked to her heels saying “there's no place like home” it was to Auntie Em and Uncle Henry's home she wanted to return. Movies about children on the margins of American families, orphans, illegitimate or institutionalized children, appear periodically but how have such films viewed these children? Three films from the late 1930s and early 1940s stand out as examples of how children are portrayed when the life of marginalized children is the topic. Avoiding overly sentimental, maudlin, or romanticized views of impoverished childhoods, *Boys' Town*, *Penny Serenade*, and *Blossoms in the Dust* attempt to balance the lives of the children portrayed with the experiences of their parents or guardians.

According to Hollywood, orphans or parentless children abounded during the Great Depression. In MGM's 1938 movie, *Boys' Town*, Spencer Tracy portrays Father Edward Flanagan, the Catholic priest who built the famous home outside of Omaha

Nebraska. For the most part, the movie relies on the stock characters of boys and citizens of the community. Father Flanagan is the picture of patience and the local pawnbroker has a heart of gold demonstrated by his contributions to constructing Boys Town. The children portrayed in *Boys' Town* are supposed to be delinquents, but appear to be "angels with dirty faces." Each boy attempts to turn his life around through his Boys' Town experience. Using the motto "there's no such thing as a bad boy," Boys' Town operates as a little democracy, electing their own mayor and policing themselves. Each boy has the opportunity to succeed if he so chooses. The other boys reward or punish residents within the framework established by their community. While Father Flanagan soothes the weary and reproves the malcontents, the boys help new arrivals adjust to their new community.

Into this juvenile ideal, comes Whitey (Mickey Rooney) who immediately attempts to exert his own authority in Boys' Town. He is not about to let a priest or the other boys tell him what to do. But when his actions nearly cause the death of another resident, Whitey's actions jeopardize Boys' Town. Whitey's character is revealed through his language, his clothing and his swagger. Whitey's gradual transformation from street tough on his way to the big house to respectable citizen permits the film to "redeem" America's youth.

The film itself offers a glimpse into institutional life that is rarely revealed on film. Showing many of the themes explored in LeRoy's Ashby's *Saving the Waifs* or Peter Holloran's *Boston's Wayward Children: Social Services for Homeless Children 1830-1930*, the residents of Boys' Town live in an age integrated dormitory rather than in age segregated cottages. The boys are each taught a marketable skill. Individual counseling, usually in the form of conversations with the priest is available. By the end of the film, the boys each consider Boys' Town their home, and just like Dorothy, when they think of home, it is not with a mother and father, but with the people who created a place for them.

*Blossoms in the Dust* takes a different view of family. Like *Boys' Town*, this 1941 MGM release is also a biopic about someone who transformed the lives of children. The similarities between *Boys' Town* and *Blossoms in the Dust* are significant. Both films focus on the life of one adult who helps change the lives of a number of children and both protagonists create new facilities for children on the margins of families. But *Blossoms in the Dust* does not end with the redemption of a child; it includes a study of Gladney's campaign to change in Texas state law.

*Blossoms in the Dust* begins with main character Edna Gladney (Greer Garson) looking back on her life. The two turning points of Gladney's life were the suicide of her adoptive sister Charlotte and the death of her own son. The first crisis appeared when Charlotte's fiancé sought his parent's permission to marry and introduced Charlotte to his family. The parents were willing to let their son marry an adoptee, not an illegitimate one. The family discovered Charlotte's birth status because her birth certificate had been stamped illegitimate. Unable to bare the shame, Charlotte committed suicide. Later, Gladney married a successful flower mill owner and appeared to have a happy life until the second

crisis, the death of her child. To relieve her grief, Gladney decided to devote her life to children.

Even though she founded the Texas Children's Home and Aid Society in Ft. Worth, Gladney believed that even a great orphanage was no match for a home. To make this point, *Blossoms in the Dust* focuses on the relationship between Edna and an individual orphan, Tony. Balancing the knowledge of Tony's inevitable adoption with his need for love while in the orphanage, Edna bonded with Tony and both appeared to want to cry when Tony left the orphanage. Following Tony's adoption, the final part of the movie is about Gladney's campaign to remove the stamp illegitimate from birth certificates. Using a reoccurring phrase, "there are no illegitimate children, only illegitimate parents," the movie ends with Edna's triumph of removing the stigma of illegitimacy from Texas birth certificates.

As in *Boys' Town*, this film also exposes a number of themes typically discussed in children's history or family history. Using the themes explored by E. Wayne Carp in *Family Matters: Secrecy and Disclosure in the History of Adoption* and Barbara Melosh in *Strangers and Kin: The American Way of Adoption*, the secrecy of Charlotte's adoption is explored through an impending marriage but also discussed when Edna's inability to have another child is revealed. The meaning of being a family is being explored through adoption and the role of orphanages placing children into homes to "complete the family." Again institutional life is examined, but rather than focusing on children in the orphanage, how they lived, and the relationships they formed, this film focuses on how the institution functioned.

*Penny Serenade* looks at what happens when a child is adopted into a family. This 1941 MGM film looks at a marriage and the role a child played in defining the couple as a family. The story is told through a series of Julie's (Irene Dunne) flashbacks of her marriage to Roger Adams (Cary Grant). After marrying quickly and moving to Japan just before the Tokyo earthquake, Julie is pregnant. The earthquake injures Julie, however, leaving her unable to bear children. Following a chance suggestion by a friend to adopt, the couple goes to an adoption agency where they expected to leave with a child. Roger wanted a "boy, about two because they are housebroken by that age" and Julie wanted a two year old boy, with golden curly hair, because that would be the age of the child they lost after the earthquake. The softhearted agency director intercedes on their behalf to find them a child and within weeks they quickly have a 5-week-old girl on a one-year probation for adoption.

The only child with a speaking part was Trina, their daughter, a typical precocious child – cute, smart, and everything both of her parents want. Trina's sudden death at the age of seven was not shown, but the effect of her death on the family is devastating. Writing to the agency director, Julie poured out her heart to the director and on the eve of leaving Roger, the director contacts the couple to let them know that the boy they asked for those years ago is available, but another couple should "by rights" have the opportunity to get him first. Julie asks that they be allowed to see the boy first. This child then saved not only the marriage, but also created a new family.

The themes explored in this film are subtler than those in *Boys' Town* or *Blossoms in the Dust*, and for the most part are a better exploration of marriage or family formation than a view of childhood. The first few scenes of courtship in the 1920s are interesting and realistic to changes in dating practices during this period. But while not discussing much about Julie's inability to bear children, the film does however closely look at how a child completes a family portrait, even as the reality of adoption is obscured. The humor of adoptive parents and their first night with a child is clearly shown. But Julie and Roger's expectations of simply attending an interview and receiving a child were unrealistic. On several occasions, the parents search for physical similarities between themselves and their adopted children. But Roger's appearance in court to beg to keep Trina when he has no job and is bankrupt, while heartfelt, was unrealistic. The idea that any judge would be swayed by a simple argument without a concrete plan demonstrates a lack of understanding of the "best interest of the child" doctrine. The agency director, while sympathetic, voiced little support during Roger's pleading. When Roger returned home with Trina, both parents are overjoyed. The aftereffects of Trina's death are realistic, but the agency director receiving a Christmas card and suddenly finding an available child is again unrealistic. Overall the film captures the angst of adoptive parents in the 1930s without truly capturing the reality of Depression Era adoptions.

Taken as a whole, these films represent examples of how Hollywood has viewed children on the margins of the family. Dorothy's situation is ignored. Whitey is a delinquent with a heart of gold. Tony is disabled but loveable. Trina is a newborn who completes a family. All of the children find a home, but it is with a family they define not necessarily with their biological family. What binds all of these children was where they lived. With the possible exception of Whitey, all of these children were living in rural communities. Pamela Riney-Kehrberg's recent work on farm children, *Childhood On The Farm: Work, Play, And Coming Of Age In The Midwest*, explores how few Midwestern farm children ever entered state homes before the 1920s. Often neighbors, family, and friends helped a family in need. As the depression appeared and continued, the need for institutions helping families and children were needed and institutions like Boys' Town and The Fort Worth Children's Home appeared to serve the needs of children and families struggling to survive. Hollywood represented all of the institutions as caring, necessary, and filling a vital gap in the nation's welfare network; all of the children deserved a family; and all of the families were loving.



**Celebrating the Ordinary:  
The Portrayal of Japanese Children in Studio Ghibli Movies**

**Beth Sneyd**

Animated films generally gravitate towards fantasy or science-fiction in order to bring life to ideas that we would generally see as impossible. Indeed, many live action films rely on animated sequences for just that purpose, with computer-generated effects that

have become commonplace. Even the animated genre continues to be an arena of one-upmanship. This competition is certainly not restricted to the North American studios. On the contrary, it is just as strong in Japan, where studios such as Studio Ghibli and Toho share a rivalry as strong as Pixar and Dreamworks.

Some of Studio Ghibli's greatest and best-known films are based on fantasy. *Spirited Away* (*Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi*, 2001) won a well-deserved Best Animated Feature Academy Award for its depiction of a little girl's adventures in the spirit world. The film is a visual feast, so full of colour and life that you forget you are watching an animated film. But it is the heroine, Chihiro, who is clearly the star of the film. The director of *Spirited Away*, Hayao Miyazaki, commented in an interview that it was necessary to have a heroine who was an ordinary girl, not someone who could fly or do something impossible. Just a girl you can encounter everywhere in Japan. Every time I wrote or drew something concerning the character of Chihiro and her actions, I asked myself the question whether my friend's daughter or her friends would be capable of doing it...Because it's through surmounting these challenges that this little Japanese girl becomes a capable person. (1)

Unlike the more recent North American animated films which star magical creatures or unusually talented (and attractive) humans, many of the Studio Ghibli films revolve around ordinary children like Chihiro. They find their lives disrupted when they are faced with unusual circumstances, but the results are generally positive. The children at the end of the film end up more mature and well-adjusted than when they started. Above all, though, they are ordinary.

Chihiro starts out as a rather whiny ten-year old who is travelling to her new house with her parents. She is unhappy, clutching onto a card given to her by one of her friends, and generally unresponsive to her parents' encouraging words. The family gets lost and stumbles on what appears to be an abandoned amusement park. Chihiro soon discovers that it is actually a bathhouse for the inhabitants of the spirit world and that her parents have been turned into pigs. Chihiro is then hired by the witch Yuubaba as one of the bathhouse attendants, although she is given all the menial jobs because she is human. As a 21st-century Japanese girl, Chihiro is completely out of her element in the spirit world. She does not know the old stories and taboos that used to be so integral to Japanese beliefs, and makes numerous mistakes, including letting a hostile spirit into the bathhouse. With a little help, though, she is able to learn, and to make friends. Even when in the spirit world, Chihiro is able to remain herself and she emerges a more confident (and happier) girl.

Chihiro is not the only Ghibli heroine to have encounters with supernatural creatures. Both *The Cat Returns* and *My Neighbour Totoro* have plots based on this concept. *The Cat Returns* (*Neko no ongaeshi*, 2002), directed by Hiroyuki Morita also tells the story of a girl trapped in another world. Haru is somewhat older than Chihiro; she is a first-year senior high school student. (2) Like most Japanese teenagers, Haru's life revolves around school, particularly around her friends and her clubs. She is never on time for class, and she has a crush on a boy who doesn't return her interest. Life for Haru is pretty dull, and

she questions if she will ever fit in. Then she saves a cat from being hit by a truck. The cat thanks her profusely, and that night, Haru is visited by the King of the Cats and his entourage. It turns out that the cat she saved is the King's son, Prince Lune. The grateful cats give Haru a number of gifts, including mice in her locker at school, and Haru is informed that part of her reward is marriage to Prince Lune. Unwilling to marry a cat, Haru seeks help from the Cat Bureau, headed by a china cat called the Baron. While visiting the Baron, Haru is kidnapped and taken away to the Cat Kingdom. Haru falls in love with the Kingdom, until she begins to turn into a cat herself. Only by believing in herself can she return home. And when she does, she discovers that she's much happier about herself, and that her crush really wasn't that strong after all.

Like Chihiro, Haru does not know how to deal with the world she finds herself in. She is dazzled by the Kingdom, and begins to convince herself that cats have much better lives than humans, so staying in the Kingdom wouldn't be so bad. Unlike Chihiro, who is working to save her parents from being eaten, Haru has no driving motive to leave the Cat Kingdom once she has arrived. It is only until she begins to turn into a cat herself, that she realizes the danger she is in. To be fair to Haru, though, the timeline of her story is much shorter than Chihiro's. *The Cat Returns* takes place over three days. *Spirited Away* takes place over weeks, if not months. Chihiro has much more time to learn about the spirit world, and she is able to use that knowledge herself. Haru does not have that luxury, and has to rely on the Baron and other sympathetic cats for assistance.

In both *The Cat Returns* and *Spirited Away*, the heroines find themselves thrust into a magical world, but this is not quite the case in *My Neighbour Totoro* (*Tonari no Totoro*, 1988) another film directed by Hayao Miyazaki. In this film, we see the adventures of two children whose ordinary lives occasionally interact with a magical world. Satsuki and Mei Kusakabe move with their father to a new house in the countryside in order to be close to their mother, who is staying at a nearby hospital for treatment of her tuberculosis. They make friends with Granny, the old lady who lives at the next farm, and Satsuki starts to attend the local elementary school. Mei, only five years old, has no friends her age to play with and is too young for school, so she usually plays alone. One day, Mei discovers that the camphor tree next to their house is inhabited by three *totoro* (magical creatures who look like a cross between a cat and an owl). Eventually, despite some scepticism, Satsuki also meets the *totoro*, and the two children have a number of fun adventures with the creatures.

It is really the relationship between Satsuki and Mei that is the basis for the film. They spend much of their time discovering their new home, but then Satsuki starts school. Satsuki considers her sister to be a pest in some ways, particularly when Mei insists on joining her at school. Satsuki also has a tendency to be impatient, and to take her emotions out on her sister. Mei has a tantrum when she discovers that their mother is not coming home as planned. Satsuki loses her temper, and Mei disappears. Satsuki is overwhelmed with guilt and fear and literally runs all over the countryside looking for her. It is only with Totoro's help that the two sisters are reunited.

Not all Studio Ghibli movies have such happy endings. *Grave of the Fireflies* (*Hotaru no haka*, 1988), directed by Isao Takahata, also focuses on sibling relationships, but in greatly different circumstances. Based on a true story, the film takes place during the dying days of the Pacific War. It tells the story of Seita, a teenaged boy and his young sister Setsuko. Their father is serving in the Japanese navy, and their mother dies after a firebombing on their city. Initially, the children stay with a relative of their father's, but they leave when it becomes abundantly clear that they are not welcome. They take up residence in an abandoned air raid shelter, and Seita does everything he can to protect his sister from the horrors of war. In the end, however, Seita's efforts are futile, and both children die of malnutrition.

Seita has no magical creature to assist him, no magical world for him to escape into. He has the impossible task of trying to shield his baby sister from the horrors of war. (3) He conceals their mother's death (and her ashes) from Setsuko. He distracts her with music, games, and trips to the beach. When Setsuko discovers a covered corpse on the beach, Seita pulls her away. When she is hungry, he gives her a fruit drop candy. Several times, Seita is derided as a slacker because he is not working in a factory or on fire patrol. But Seita knows that Setsuko is one of the few parts of his pre-war life that still exist, and he will not give it up for anything. Instead, he tries to recreate his "ordinary" life, and even succeeds for a time. The circumstances in which Seita finds himself are by far the most extreme of all Ghibli children. We see him mature, but we already know that he will not survive. Sadly, his circumstances, while extraordinary for him, were not extraordinary for Japan as a whole sixty years ago.

I have already discussed several Studio Ghibli movies in which the protagonist finds her or himself in unusual circumstances. There are two additional films, however, which celebrate ordinary childhoods. *Only Yesterday* (*Omohide poro poro*, 1991) tells the story of Taeko, and *Whisper of the Heart* (*Mimi wo sumaseba*, 1995) introduces us to Shizuku. (4) *Only Yesterday*, also directed by Takahata, follows a different format from other Ghibli movies. Taeko, an office lady, travels to the country for a well-earned vacation. While on the journey, she reminisces about her childhood, in a number of flashbacks. Taeko uses these flashbacks to explain herself not only to the audience, but also to her friends. She grew up in 1960s Tokyo, the youngest child in a house shared with her sisters, parents, and her grandmother. Taeko, like Haru or even Chihiro, is an ordinary child. She lives in the shadow of her older sisters – one is beautiful, one is brainy, and can be a bit of a brat. But like other Ghibli children, Taeko has her struggles. She is just beginning puberty, and has difficulty adjusting to the changes her body is experiencing. She has also begun to develop an interest in the opposite sex, even though she is humiliated when her name is written up with a boy from another class. Looking back, Taeko realizes that her prejudices were formed during this time, and that it is time to overcome them. Her heart belongs in the country, not in the city where she was raised. Shizuku, in *Whisper of the Heart* (directed by Yoshifumi Kondo), is also the youngest child in her family. She is in her final year of junior high school, and is faced with the daunting exams required to enter senior high. Shizuku knows that she really wants to be a writer, and spends her time working on stories rather than studying. Her family does not understand this, particularly her older sister, a university student. Shizuku notices that a

boy named Seiji has previously borrowed all of the books she has signed out of the library. Intrigued and annoyed, Shizuku seeks Seiji out. She discovers that he is a young violinist who lives with his grandfather. Shizuku starts to spend a lot of time with Seiji and his grandfather. These visits, in turn, foster her imagination.

*Only Yesterday* and *Whisper of the Heart* are more difficult to summarize than the others. There are no overarching stories as there are in the others, no parents that need saving or magical creatures to befriend. Instead, we simply view a crucial period of development in the protagonist's life. Even then, these periods are not as earth shaking as they could be. Still, we learn more about Taeko and Shizuku than we do about the other children (except perhaps Seita), because their films are so introspective.

The Studio Ghibli films capture Japanese childhood in a unique way. Each film is full of details that merge together to create an overall impression. The protagonists are kindred spirits, in a way. They are all ordinary children, trying to live ordinary lives. That they are Japanese children is abundantly clear in their behaviour and habits. At the same time, these children are faced with universal problems: love, loss, and a quest to discover themselves. This is what makes them so appealing to viewers from Japan and abroad.

#### Notes:

(1) Tom Mes. "Interview: Hayao Miyazaki", *Midnight Eye: The latest and best in Japanese Cinema*. July 1, 2002. Published at [http://www.midnighteye.com/interviews/hayao\\_miyazaki.shtml](http://www.midnighteye.com/interviews/hayao_miyazaki.shtml).

(2) Education for Japanese children consists of elementary school (6 years), junior high school (3 years), and senior high school (3 years). School is mandatory only up to the end of junior high, although most Japanese go on to senior high in order to go to university.

(3) The Italian film *Life is Beautiful* (1997) shares a similar premise, although unlike Roberto Benigni's character, Seita never pretends that the war itself is a big game.

(4) *Only Yesterday* is not yet available with an English dub. *Whisper of the Heart* is due to be released on DVD in North American this spring.

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***Sound and Fury***

**Jennifer de Forest**

*Sound and Fury*, Aronson Film Associates, Inc. and Public Policy Productions, Inc. in association with Thirteen/WNET New York and Channel 4 (UK), 2001.

The documentary film *Sound and Fury* chronicles an extended family as two sets of parents, one hearing and one deaf, struggle over whether to implant their deaf children with cochlear implants, devices that use a minicomputer to amplify speech. Peter and Nita Artinian, who are deaf, decide to forego an implant for their daughter, Heather, while Peter's hearing brother, and his wife, Mary, choose the implant for their son. To add to the complexity of the decisions for the Artinian family, Mary is hearing but her

parents are both profoundly deaf and she is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). The various pairings anguishing over the future of the two children (hearing mother/deaf mother, hearing father/deaf son, deaf husband/deaf wife, etc.) intensely argue issues ranging from the nature of disability to the quality of deaf education in America. Because the Artinians generously allow viewers to witness their painful deliberations over what is in the best interest of their children, *Sound and Fury* also provides an incisive look at parenting, and the role of shared language and culture in family.

Through the struggles of the Artinians, we can observe the powerful parental impulse to have a child who shares their language and culture. The one thing everyone in the Artinian family can agree upon is that there is a deaf world and there is a hearing world, and that a chasm separates the two. At a picnic for the deaf community a group gathers around Mary as she announces her decision to implant her infant son. The group bemoans the loss of a member of their culture, fears that he will not learn ASL, and predicts that he will “migrate” to the hearing world. When the boy emerges from surgery with the implant, his hearing grandmother is joyful, while his deaf grandmother weeps, dreading the boy will reject her as different from him. In light of what we have learned from the film, a typical scene of the father coaxing his implanted son to imitate his baby talk takes on new meaning – he wants his son to be like him.

The decision of the deaf parents, Peter and Nita, to *not* implant Heather is considerably more painful, and is revelatory of the pressure of the dominant culture on a minority group. Peter and Nita are committed to acting in Heather’s best interest, and consider that the cochlear implant will expand her options. However, they are also repelled by the concomitant suggestion that being deaf is a disability, a point brought home by Nita in conversation with Mary. Mary pushes Nita, asking her a version of the question she has heard countless times: “Don’t you want to hear the rain hit the ground?” Nita replies, explaining the obvious, that she is deaf and that hearing means nothing to her. “It doesn’t matter to me to hear it,” she says. Despite his parents’ intense pressure, her husband Peter goes further and asserts that if given a pill to make him hear he would throw it up. For Peter and Nita, the solution to expanding Heather’s option and for keeping their family intact is not an implant, but moving to Frederick, Maryland, which has a large deaf community and one of the nation’s best schools for the deaf.

Viewers interested in further exploring the issues raised in *Sound and Fury* can explore the PBS website at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/soundandfury/>. I also suggest pairing the film with Douglas Bayton’s *Forbidden Signs: American Culture and the Campaign Against Sign Language* (1996). Bayton details the history of deaf education in America and traces the late nineteenth-century campaign to replace “manualism,” or ASL, with “oralism,” which forced children to learn to read lips and speak. I do not mean to suggest that the two sides of the debate in *Sound and Fury* are identical to the positions of the manualists and oralists. However, there are revelatory echoes of these groups’ rhetoric in the Artinian family’s deliberations. In particular, Bayton traces the ways sign language was defended as a “natural language” by the manualists, while the oralists deplored it as not “normal.” These terms pepper the arguments of the Artinian family. Nita questions why Mary would implant “a beautiful natural deaf boy.” She is also overjoyed when her

own daughter engages with a classroom full of deaf children, commenting that “communication was so natural for her.” In contrast, Mary defends her choice by arguing that with the implant life for her son will be “more normal.”

*Sound and Fury* deserved its many film festival awards and its Academy Award nomination for best feature documentary. Neither the filmmakers nor the Artinians find easy answers. However, they leave the viewer satisfyingly puzzling over essential questions in new ways. We are left wondering, what is normal? What is natural? And, what is the role of shared language and culture in family?

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### **An Adolescent’s Story: Youth-Made Media and the Study of Youth**

**Allison Wright Munro**

*Thirteen*. Dir. Catherine Hardwicke. Perf. Evan Rachel Wood, Nikki Reed, and Holly Hunter. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2003.

Catherine Hardwicke’s 2003 film *Thirteen* highlights one of the truths of adolescence that is the most difficult for adults to accept: you don’t always know what kids are doing, even in their own bedrooms. And, *Thirteen* suggests, what they are doing may be more horrifying than anything your adult brain ever imagined. The opening scene of the film exemplifies just how troubling this prospect is, as Tracy (played by Evan Rachel Wood) and Evie (played by Nikki Reed) engage in a game of “hit me” – the girls take turns inhaling the contents of an aerosol can of compressed air and then hitting each other in the face – in the privacy of Tracy’s bedroom. “Hit me!” “I can’t feel anything!” “Do it harder!” they shout amidst laughter and smiles, only their increasingly bloody faces betraying the seriousness of the game. Never underestimate the creativity of teenagers, this scene reminds us.

Co-written by director Hardwicke and teen actress Nikki Reed, *Thirteen* is the story of what happens to seventh grader Tracy – unpopular, smart, straight-A student – when she befriends the more popular and dangerous Evie. Evie is the sexy, popular girl all the boys, including Tracy’s older brother and his friends, think is the hottest girl in school, never mind that she’s only thirteen. In order to keep up with Evie, Tracy quickly ruins her perfect grade point average by skipping school and staying out past curfew. Together Evie and Tracy chain smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, take acid, smoke pot, snort prescription drugs, have sex, shoplift, and pierce their bodies. Tracy alone becomes anorexic and engages in an all too common practice called cutting, in which people (usually females) induce physical pain by cutting themselves with sharp objects as a way of escaping emotional pain.

Tracy’s pain, we are to understand from the quick, jumpy scenes and nauseatingly fast soundtrack, stems from her dysfunctional home life. Her absent father appears sporadically, talks about his new job, and apologizes for not spending even his court-

ordered time with Tracy and her brother; her mother (played by Holly Hunter), a reformed substance abuser, supports her two children by supplementing their child support payments with a hair salon she runs out of her kitchen. To complicate matters even further, Tracy's mother treats their home like a halfway house for her down-on-their-luck friends and Tracy is especially upset with her mother for taking back her ex-cocaine addict boyfriend who Tracy witnessed overdosing before his latest stint in rehab. Added to this is Tracy's entrance into adolescence, that indescribably confusing stage between childhood and adulthood when one's hormones and emotions often overwhelm one's intellect and common sense. Located precisely at the juncture between girlhood and womanhood, *Thirteen* offers an answer, albeit a chilling one, to the question of how girls negotiate adolescence.

*Thirteen* is semi-autobiographical; Reed was thirteen years old when she collaborated with Hardwicke on the screenplay. Reed was fourteen when the movie was shot and won the Movieline Young Hollywood "One to Watch" Award for her portrayal of Evie. Though she plays Evie in the film, Reed's own experiences specifically inform the character of Tracy. In interviews about the film, Reed repeatedly emphasizes the disconnect female youth experience when they are thirteen but look and are treated as though they are eighteen. Such emphasis implicates the broader American issue of society's expectations of women and teenage girls' responses to them. In a celebrity culture that celebrates a particular type of youth – thin, attractive, twentysomething – how do female adolescents respond to pressures to conform to such standards? According to Reed and *Thirteen*, they become anorexic, pierce multiple body parts, smoke, drink, do drugs, and shoplift to acquire the various accoutrements of the lifestyle they want to emulate but ultimately cannot afford. *Thirteen*, then, not only offers an answer to the question of how girls navigate adolescence but also offers an answer to the question of how girls negotiate the shifting parameters and unrealistic expectations of womanhood.

*Thirteen* is not a perfect film. As others have suggested, it lacks character development, isn't always compelling, and employs racist stereotypes throughout.(1) It may, in fact, be a(nother) variation on the by now old fashioned theme of juvenile delinquency as well.(2) However, one cannot overestimate the importance of Reed as its co-writer. Even allowing for the numerous decisions made by Hardwicke that undoubtedly shaped the film, its story is thirteen year old Nikki Reed's own, largely in her own words. Co-written by Reed, Tracy and Evie (played by Reed herself) are thirteen year olds' representations of thirteen year olds. Yes, the film was influenced by adults and it may or may not accurately reflect the lives of all twenty-first-century American youth. But it is at least partially an example of youth-made media and this is the crux of its significance to me. As a researcher of children and youth who strives to include the voices of actual children and youth in her scholarship, *Thirteen*, with its screenplay co-written by its teenage actress, represents a new and exciting way to study the lives of youth.

**Notes:**

(1) See, for example, Robert Goethals, rev. of *Thirteen*, dir. Catherine Hardwicke, *Cineaste* 29.1 (Winter 2003): 22-24; Jeffrey M. Hornstein, "Reflections on Race in *Thirteen*," *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education* 2.2 (Fall 2003): 1-3.

(2) Daniel Eagan, rev. of *Thirteen*, *Film Journal International* 106.9 (Sept. 2003): 42.

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### **Promises, Promises Film Project (2001)**

#### **Jennifer de Forest**

*Promises* is a revealing documentary film about seven Jewish and Arab children, aged nine to twelve, who live in and around Jerusalem. Despite living within twenty minutes of each other, the children of Jerusalem's various ethnic and religious groups rarely interact. They are separated by the barriers of religion, culture, and language, which in some instances are made impassable by barbed wire and armed checkpoints. The filmmakers periodically interviewed the children from 1995 to 2000, eliciting their views on topics including the fate of Jerusalem, intercultural relations in the city, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. *Promises* demonstrates that even very young children can become entrenched in their parents' irreconcilable positions. However, the film also suggests that when children have the opportunity to be in contact with one another, their youthful impulses to play and interact can trump ideology and stereotype.

The children in *Promises* offer plausible and contradictory explanations of why their people can claim the Holy Land. Mahmoud, the son of a Muslim coffee merchant in the old city, describes how he feels close to God when he prays in Jerusalem. "This is my land," he bluntly explains, "I was born and raised here." Moishe, who lives in a West Bank settlement, claims Israel for the Jews. He quickly scrolls to the Torah passage where Abraham gives the Holy Land to the Jews. "He only gave the land once," Moishe insists, "the land belongs to us." Faraj, who lives in Deheishe Refugee Camp, counters with proof that the land belongs to the Palestinians. He exhibits tax records from the house his grandparents' owned in a village that is now inside Israel. His grandmother has given Faraj the key to his grandfather's house, imploring him "keep this key. Don't ever neglect it." Before the children meet, even the very young ones have developed hardened positions that would make peace impossible. They strike the viewer not as neighbors, but as nascent enemies.

*Promises* reaches an emotional climax when Yarko and Daniel, secular Israeli twins, make the fifteen-minute trip to Deheishe Refugee Camp to visit Faraj and his friends. Faraj and Sanabel, whose father has been in jail for two years without trial, show the twins their neighborhood, proudly pointing to evidence of the intifada. As the day progresses, the children play soccer, Sanabel teaches the brothers patriotic Palestinian dances, and the boys playfully wrestle. In the late afternoon the filmmaker gathers the children to discuss the day. Here the contrast between Faraj's reaction and that of the twins evinces the very real obstacles that divide them. Faraj weeps and tells the twins, "part of me wants to connect with you and part of me doesn't." Faraj understands that

the twins will return home that evening, easily passing through the checkpoint that separates him from his grandfather's house. They will also, Faraj claims, soon forget him. Indeed, we discover that while Faraj attempts to maintain the relationship with the twins, they become involved in their own teenaged lives and do not return his calls.

In the final scenes of *Promises*, the children have all noticeably matured into adolescents. They all understand that unless the children who live in and around Jerusalem can become familiar with each other the violence will continue. As Mahmoud simply puts it, "Peace between you and me is impossible unless we get to know one another." The filmmakers close with the image of a nursery full of newborn babies, clearly pointing to the promise of the next generation of Jerusalem's children. However, we are left unsure of what this promise holds – we have seen that conflict is easily passed down from generation to generation. However, we have also been introduced to resilient children such as Motassim, a Palestinian boy living in Deheishe Refugee Camp. Motassim, whose younger brother was shot by Israeli soldiers for throwing rocks, nevertheless hopefully maintains that, "I believe all children are born innocent." *Promises* contributes well to our understanding of the all-too-timely issue of children living in regions under conflict.

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### ***Hope and Glory: Wartime Through the Eyes of Children***

**Moira Hinderer**

When I introduce topics in the history of childhood to my undergraduate students, I often begin by asking a series of theoretical questions. Are children a group of people in a developmental stage or are they a class of people? How does a generation form and what defines a generational consciousness? How can we best locate the child in history? Embedded in these questions is the idea that in order to view childhood history critically we must question the seeming naturalness of childhood.

I find that as students try to work through these questions they need a wide variety of textual evidence, texts which reflect the diversity of opinions found among historians, child professionals, social reformers, publishers, filmmakers, parents, and children. Movie clips and other visual media are useful to this project because they provide additional voices without additional reading.

One of my favorite movies to use in class is John Boorman's 1987 film, *Hope and Glory*. This autobiographical film follows a family on the British home front during World War II, primarily through the eyes of a young boy. The movie provides an interesting picture of "children's culture," particularly in wartime. It is undisputed that World War II was an event of terrible destruction and particularly dangerous to children who were the victims of genocide, bombings, hunger, exposure, as well as separation from family and community. However, Boorman also presents an alternate narrative that explores the excitement of wartime, as his young characters exploit the disrupted authority of adults around them. Even the landscape of wartime childhood is disrupted as bombing creates seemingly endless piles of rubble where there were once neat rows of suburban homes. In

Boorman's retelling this destruction becomes a fantastic playground for the young. Like the Lost Boys in *Peter Pan*, the boys in *Hope and Glory* create their own society as they frolic. The danger they and those they encounter face as the boys look and sometimes play with live ammunition is presented as a wild kind of innocence.

Boorman intimates that the destruction of adult authority during wartime, particularly the authority of teachers, signals a generational shift, as the young are released from the strictures of the English educational system. In several scenes that examine the experiences of children at the local school during the War, Boorman illustrates the declining control of principals and teachers as air raids wreak havoc on lines and lessons. In a final scene, upon realizing that their school has been ruined by a stray bomb, teeming masses of children overwhelm their teacher, as one young boy yells skyward, "Thank you, Adolf!"

When I show this clip in class, I draw parallels between children's descriptions of the experience of war with children's descriptions of labor fifty years earlier. While child labor reformers offered one narrative of the horrors faced by working children (a narrative would later become dominate in popular consciousness), children often spoke proudly of their work, celebrating the power and goods they accrued as workers. Similarly, students of history need to consider the multiple and sometimes contradictory experiences of children in wartime. Ultimately, my goal in using a movie like *Hope and Glory* is to leave students with no simple answer to the question, how do children experience war?

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### **Locating the Child in the Postwar Landscape in Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief***

**Kenneth Pearl**

Vittorio De Sica's classic work *The Bicycle Thief* (1948) offers one of the most powerful portrayals of the parent-child relationship ever put on film. While some critics have seen his use of children as being overly sentimental, others have credited him with revolutionizing the way children are used in film. Andre Bazin, the pioneering film critic, noted that "Before De Sica, filmmakers had managed to make children play-act..." but that now for the first time "one can see here a ten- or eleven-year-old youngster express in ten minutes a gamut of feelings whose variety equals that of his grown-up partner, in this case De Sica himself." (1) Yet *The Bicycle Thief* offers something more for those who wish to incorporate it in courses dealing with the history of childhood. The film offers a compelling look at the physical and emotional environment facing children in Europe at the end of the Second World War, while also offering an introduction to postwar neorealist cinema – a brief moment in film history when children appeared at the center of the narrative.

The plot of *The Bicycle Thief* is deceptively simple. In postwar Rome Antonio Ricci, who has been unemployed for over a year, gets a job as a hanger of movie posters. The

job, however, depends on the possession of the bicycle, which has previously been pawned. While Ricci is quick to give up, his wife Marie gathers up the family's bed linen and brings it to the pawnshop to retrieve the bicycle. The financial stability promised by the new job, however, comes immediately into jeopardy when the bicycle is stolen on Ricci's first day on the job. The remainder of the film consists of Ricci and his young son Bruno in a desperate search through the streets of Rome in a vain search for the bicycle.

References to the *Odyssey* abound throughout *The Bicycle Thief*, but Ricci is burdened with something that Ulysses never had to consider – his journey through Rome takes place under the telling gaze of his young son, Bruno, and it is this relationship that remains at the center of the film. Due to the fraught reality of the postwar situation, the child displaces the father and even the dangers of the journey are mostly borne by the child, who has to dodge out of the way of buses and trains, while a pederast offers to buy him a bell. Bruno works at a gas station, so he has gainful employment before his father. The son knows the bicycle better than his father and criticizes his father for not complaining to the officials at the pawnshop over a dented pedal, while the childlike father leaves the precious bike with strangers as he goes into an apartment building. Even in their increasingly desperate search through the streets of Rome it is Bruno who is more practical, leading the frustrated Ricci to strike the child's face and yell, "You act like a father-in-law!" The son ultimately proves to be the father's savior, as it is pity for him that leads the angry mob to stop brutalizing the father after being caught attempting to steal another bike. The famous last image of the film shows the father in tears as father and son walk off hand in hand.

*The Bicycle Thief* is not an overtly political film. While some critics, including Bazin, view the film as being deeply sympathetic to the ideals of the political left, others have criticized it for not showing enough solidarity among the poor. (2) Sergio Amidei, who worked as a screenwriter on several of De Sica's earlier films, dropped out of the project because he thought it was unrealistic that Ricci's friends, good unionists, would not just provide him with another bike. (3) Also, the lack of an explicitly political context means that one would not get a sense from the film that 1948 was the first year of the new Italian constitution, marking the nation's establishment as a republic, or the year that critical elections were held, with the victory of the Christian Democrats over the combined forces of the left. Nevertheless, there are many elements in the film that reflect the recent upheavals in Italian life. The thief wears a German cap – perhaps De Sica's way of blaming Germany for the tragedy of Italy's recent past. The new buildings that dot the blighted landscape and references to family allowances are partly the result of the influx of Marshall Plan money. There is an implied criticism of the postwar Italian authorities, particularly the police, who dismiss Ricci's loss as "nothing, just a bicycle." The political opposition doesn't fare much better, since the Communists that Ricci comes across, in the midst of a meeting in which they speak of the struggle of the working class, show no concern for Ricci and his individual plight.

Neorealist cinema, a response to the total control of the film industry by the Fascist government, offers some of the most compelling use of children in the history of film, in part due to the stress on everyday themes as well as the need to use nonprofessional

actors. De Sica's own neorealist work displays a rare sympathy for the plight of children and often focused on the theme of childhood disillusionment. In *Children are Watching Us* (1942) a child witnesses the suicide of his father, while *Shoeshine* (1946) shows the harsh life of street boys in Rome. One should not, however, mistake neorealism for reality, since as De Sica noted, "It is reality filtered through poetry, reality transfigured," and in *Shoeshine* the director substituted other children for the two actual boys who served as the basis for the story, since he found them to be too ugly.(4)

Italian neorealist cinema proved to be more popular in Britain, France, and the United States than in the country of its birth, where such films were derided in the press as "stracci all'estero (rags for abroad)".(5) The Italian public preferred the movies on offer from Hollywood and it is a telling detail that the poster that Ricci is putting up when he starts his job is for *Gilda*, a Rita Hayworth film. While the Italian public may have yearned for more escapist fare, for the classroom instructor, *The Bicycle Thief* offers a moving view of the ever-complex parent-child relationship placed in the historical context of a Europe burdened with the herculean task of reconstruction.

#### Notes:

(1) Andre Bazin, "Bazin on Post-Neorealist Rossellini, De Sica, and Visconti: Three Original Reviews" *Massachusetts Review*, vol. 43, no. 1: Spring 2002, p. 96. Reprinted from André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958-1962), pp. 97-99.

(2) Frank P. Tomasulo, "Bicycle Thieves: A Re-Reading," in Howard Curle and Stephen Snyder (Eds.), *Vittorio de Sica: Contemporary Perspectives* (University of Toronto Press, 2002), p. 163.

(3) Bert Cardullo, *Vittorio De Sica: Director, Actor, Screenwriter* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. 2002), p. 37.

(4) Charles Thomas Samuels, *De Sica on De Sica*, in Howard Curle and Stephen Snyder (Eds.), *Vittorio de Sica: Contemporary Perspectives* (University of Toronto Press, 2002), p. 31; Bert Cardullo, "Actor-Become-Auteur: The Neorealist Films of Vittorio De Sica" *Massachusetts Review* vol. 41, no. 2, Summer 2000, p. 179.

(5) Bert Cardullo, *Vittorio De Sica: Director, Actor, Screenwriter* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. 2002), p. 43.

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### Ozu Yasujiro's *Good Morning* and Technology in Postwar Japanese Childhood

**Greg Johnson**

Ozu Yasujiro's (1903-1963) *Good Morning* (1959, *Ohayo*) depicts the lives of suburban Japanese in the late 1950s, just on the eve of Japan's "economic miracle" and technological renown. The film offers a mild comical critique of the changes that technology and consumerism were to inflict on Japanese childhood. The daily lives of residents of a small enclave of identical modest single family homes and a nearby large

dingy apartment block are disrupted by the effects that the intrusion of a television set into their midst has on a set of young brothers, Minoru in middle school and Isamu in primary school. The neighborhood is flanked by a grass-covered levee, upon which young pupils banter and joke their way to school, and covered from above by high tension electrical wires. The scene of children walking to school or playing on a suburban river embankment has become something of a trope in Japanese culture, frequently seen in everything from the often-resurrected middle school TV drama *San-nen B-gumi Kimpachi-sensei* (Mr. Kimpachi and his homeroom, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class B) to the Doraemon animation film series that features a primary school boy and his cat-shaped robot friend from the future. Perhaps this is merely because there are few other open green expanses in most of metropolitan Tokyo.

The image of power lines, however, is clearer. It invokes the changes technology is delivering to average Japanese lives. In the final scene, two shy young adults stand on a train station platform and make small talk about the lovely weather to avoid any hint of their unspoken mutual affection. Ironically, they appreciate the sunshine while gazing through a twine of electrical wires, with smoke from factories hard at work on the economic miracle wafting in the distance.

The film highlights childhood in a Japan on the verge of an unprecedented high growth period, the Iwato Boom from 1959 to 1961 that provided an average growth rate of over 12%, and the start of Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato's Income Doubling Plan, which was implemented from 1960-1965. Based on Japan's prewar advances in technology, the economy was primed for technological ascension as well, particularly after Sony's 1955 introduction of the transistor radio.

Japan had profited from its position as an American military launch pad during the Korean War, but there were subsequent economic fluctuations through the 1950s, as the situation of the boys' English tutor attests. He lost his job when his employer went under so he teaches English and does technical translation work. Some aspects of the story are nevertheless remarkably contemporary. Jobs today are also being lost due to companies folding or "*risutora*" (from the English word "restructuring"), the Japanese word for downsizing due to mergers or outsourcing.

In contrast to the 1950s, though, unemployment and a weakened work ethic are postponing full adulthood for some Japanese youth now. Parents and politicians currently fret about semi-employed "*freeters*" (from the English word "free" and the German word "Arbeiter") meaning in Japanese part-time or temporary workers who may quit jobs at will, and "*neets*" (those Not in Education Employment or Training). Such young people are spending an increasingly longer time financially dependent on their aging parents, creating a type of extended adolescence.

The increasingly later average age at first marriage and delayed or avoided parenthood in Japan are blamed partly on the hesitation of contemporary youth to take on family responsibilities in light of financial insecurity that their parents, who married in an era of high economic growth, did not experience. The 1950s English tutor in *Good Morning* is

actively seeking work, so he doesn't look like today's *freeter* or *neet*, but he does express reluctance to pursue a romantic relationship with the boys' aunt because he lacks a stable job. Another common point with today's Japan is the case of Minoru and Isamu's father, who is approaching mandatory retirement age with his oldest child still in middle school. This is a situation that will become increasingly familiar with the rising marriage age.

The Japanese birthrate has plummeted from the 1950s and in 2005 the nation experienced its first recorded population decline in the modern era. The government and businesses fear a decline in the supply of workers and consumers. Although children were not in short supply in Ozu's day, one can imagine from the film a future with fewer children and more resources expended per child. In fact, the steepest drop in Japan's postwar fertility rate occurred between 1950 and 1960, from 3.65 births per woman at the start of the decade, to 2.0 births at the end.<sup>(1)</sup> The suburban families in *Good Morning* reflect this trend, having only one or two children, invariably boys. The slovenly young couple who have a TV are childless. The brothers' English tutor lives with his mother in a childless home. In contrast to today, however, none of the married women in the film are working outside the home.

Television poisons relations in the small community. The wife with a television prances around in a bathrobe in the afternoon with a cigarette dangling from her mouth, in contrast to the more prim, kimono-clad and TV-less matrons of the neighborhood. Minoru and Isamu neglect their homework, skip their English tutorial, and steal away every afternoon to watch the forbidden electric box. They talk back when their mother rebukes them, and remain defiant with impunity when their father comes home from work and gives them a rather weak dressing down.

The boys go on strike, vowing not to speak in the presence of adults until their father buys a TV. The children are mocking meaningless adult speech and protesting their father's refusal to join the new appliance consuming society. Their silence provokes gossip of an imagined conflict between their mother and the other women of the neighborhood. News that a second neighbor has purchased a major electrical appliance, a washing machine, incites rumors about missing neighborhood association dues and the possibility of malfeasance.

When the recalcitrant boys' mother retaliates by denying them snacks, they abscond with the family rice pot. Since rice is the staple food in Japan, that would leave the family with a meager dinner. The English tutor brings the larcenous youngsters home. But instead of punishing them, their father gives in and buys the TV the brothers demand, ironically from a newly retired neighbor who has taken up a second career in electrical appliance sales.

Japanese adults today are increasingly frightened by children's use of technology. An even more insidious phenomenon than *neet* or *freeters* are the *hikikomori*, extreme cases of youth withdrawal from society. Unable to work or even leave their homes, they stay in their own rooms and create fantasy worlds with the internet and other media. Further dangers to childhood lurk in technology. In 2004, an eleven-year-old girl stabbed a

classmate to death at school in retaliation for perceived slights in messages the victim had posted in a chat room. Both girls were known as being enthusiastic chat room participants. The perpetrator is said to have been a fan of the film (Fukasaku Kinji, 2000) and internet game *Battle Royale*, in which teenage classmates are isolated on an island and made to kill each other or be killed. A lack of face-to-face interpersonal communication skills among contemporary children due to excessive cell phone and internet use was cited as a factor in this crime. Cell phones link adult men to underage school girls for prostitution, so-called *enjo kosai* ("compensated dating"). Concern about protecting children and childhood remains high and a number of contemporary films evince anxieties about the potential threats conveyed to children by electronic media. (2)

The children of *Good Morning* fortunately live in a safer world. The most unsavory character in the film is a knife-wielding con man who teams with a suave partner to coerce housewives into buying home safety equipment. The only danger TV poses to the boys is that they will neglect their studies and join the throngs of idiots that the new electrical device is going to create. However, Ozu constructs a conflict between parents who distrust the latest technology and the children and irresponsible adults who become its eager consumers. And, significantly, the conflict is resolved when the parents relent to the insidious new gadget and the children get a TV.

Ozu's film *Good Morning* portrays family life and quotidian concerns, the trappings of school children, and the position of organization men just as Japan is entering a period of rapid economic and technological growth. Moreover, it imagines the creation of a new dubious role for Japanese children as consumers of technology. These aspects can be compared readily with Japanese images of childhood and technology in today's post economic miracle era. It is a mild comedy but it nevertheless initiates a discussion in Japanese film of the possibility that technology will create dubious new spaces for children, spaces that are outside adult supervision, in contradiction to parental values, and beyond parental understanding.

#### Notes:

(1) See J. Sean Curtin's "The Declining Birthrate in Japan: Part Eight – Population Scenarios and Economic Consequences" *Social Trends* #25: January 28, 2003, [http://www.glocom.org/special\\_topics/social\\_trends/20030128\\_trends\\_s25/index.html](http://www.glocom.org/special_topics/social_trends/20030128_trends_s25/index.html). Accessed January 7, 2006.

(2) Here are just a few examples. In Ichikawa Jun's 1989 film *No Life King* (*No Raifu Kingu*) children become absorbed in a video game supposedly containing a fatal curse. Nakata Hideo's *Ring* (*Ringu*, 1997) similarly accosts children (and adults) with a mysterious videocassette that is killing youth who watch it. In Miike Takashi's 2003 *One Missed Call* (*Chakushin ari*), teenagers receive via their cell phones prophetic voice mail containing their last words. Inadvertently repeating their message causes their sudden demise. *Install* (*Insutoru*, 2004), directed by Kataoka Kei, depicts a 10 year-old primary school boy who recruits a 17 year-old high school girl into participating in cybersex.

## *Machuca*

Colleen A. Vasconcellos

Film Review: *Machuca*

Director: Andres Wood

Release Date (USA): October 2005

Availability: Netflix

Set in Santiago, Chile, in the brief days before a fierce coup which would topple Allende's socialist government in 1973, Chilean director Andres Wood's brilliant film *Machuca* (2004) tells the story of this revolution through the eyes of two eleven year old boys struggling to deal with their own complicated childhoods in the midst of such political turmoil. Pedro Machuca, played by Santiago-born Ariel Mateluna, is a young boy of Amerindian descent from the wrong side of the tracks attending a posh private school with Gonzalo Infante, played by Matías Quer, a boy from a more affluent family. As would be expected, Pedro's time in school is not easy and many of his own classmates spend their free time bullying him. Gonzalo befriends the outsider and takes him under his wing, and the two embark on a friendship that becomes tested by the political environment around them.

As the movie progresses, the boys become two peas in a pod. Economic opposites, each boy has something to offer the other, and their personalities and experiences balance each other out. While Gonzalo's life has been sheltered and carefree, Pedro's childhood has been anything but secure in such extreme poverty. In fact, Pedro's admission to this school is an experiment in socialist benevolence conducted by the priests running the school, a fact that has not been kept secret from the children in Pedro's class. Therefore, to Pedro, Gonzalo has it all. Yet, Pedro learns that such affluence does not come without its own problems, as he sees his young friend deal with an unfaithful mother. Young Gonzalo is often taken along with his mother on her afternoon trysts, only to have to wait in sitting rooms and hallways while she takes care of her own needs. He has to watch his own father deal with the knowledge of her infidelity without fighting for his own marriage.

So, the boys are perfect for each other, and they become fast friends who rely on each other for friendship, validation, and security. While introducing and educating each other about their vastly different worlds, Pedro and Gonzalo still act like two eleven year olds. They both share a devotion to Lone Ranger comic books. They enter into kissing games with Gonzalo's young neighbor Silvana, played by Manuela Martelli. So, while they have very real problems of poverty and unstable home environments, the two boys definitely act their age, and often a little below their age.

Yet, Andres Wood is extremely careful to portray a less than perfect childhood. Life in Santiago during the early 1970s is anything but comfortable for any class of society as the country drifts towards civil war. Based on his own childhood during this turbulent time, Wood is able to recreate the political environment as he works to create a childhood

on film. When Allende came to power in 1970, the Chilean economy and society were already racked by stagnation, inflation, and unequal income distribution. The majority of the Chileans were members of the lower classes teetering on the poverty line, but most already sinking well below it. Under Allende's mismanagement, these economic and social conditions only worsened. So, by the time Wood's film begins, you can clearly see these problems and how Chileans from both the lower and upper classes are dealing with them. Yet, while you see the economic instability just before the coup, you also see the political environment that is beginning to take a life of its own in 1973.

The viewer sees signs throughout the film that Allende's end is imminent, and Wood is careful to add subtleties like signs in shop windows alerting customers to the shortage of milk, butter, and eggs. More and more demonstrations are seen as the film progresses, and Wood uses the young Silvana to merge the history of the period with the boys' story. While the young Silvana educates the boys in the art of kissing, she also introduces them to the political instability that is Santiago just before Allende was overthrown. Under her tutelage, the boys take part in protest marches, chanting as loudly as the adults marching for the Left. They sell cigarettes and flags to demonstrators from both camps, whether they be for the Left or for the Right. Yet, the kids realize that they can only do so much. They are just kids after all.

This realization is brought even harder when the coup erupts in September of 1973. Troops led by General Pinochet storm the capital and bomb the palace, but Allende refuses to surrender. He will ultimately die in this coup. In the midst of this revolution, we see Pedro and Gonzalo struggle with the changes taking place in the world around them. While their personal problems are still very real, now they are experiencing childhood in the midst of a civil war. Suddenly their worlds become different, and that gap between their classes is becoming all too real. As a result, the kids must face certain moral tests that no child should have to face.

*Machuca* is a wonderful film, and it is highly recommended by this reviewer, not only for a personal viewing, but also for a variety of classes on childhood and Latin American History. In 2004, *Machuca* was nominated for eleven awards, winning a total of eight. It is in Spanish, but English subtitles are available, and it runs about two hours. For more information on this film, please visit *Machuca*'s official website at <http://www.machucacine.cl/>.



### **Websightings: Film Online**

**Sean Martin**

The first place to look online for more information about all of the films discussed in this issue of the newsletter is the Internet Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)). This comprehensive site, including information on both movies and television productions, includes a database that is truly impressive in its ability to pinpoint specific information

about films, their directors and producers, and their casts. One can find information on titles from the early days of film and from most, if not all, foreign countries where films are produced. The database allows the researcher to search by title, cast/crew, character, word, language, genre, plot summary, and filming location, among other options. Trivia buffs will be pleased with the “On this Day in History” feature, compiling information about events in film for each day of the year. Those interested in following film production and releases in specific foreign countries will appreciate the “Recent Releases” search option, which allows the researcher to highlight a country to identify which films have just been released there. Films are listed by the day of release, allowing the researcher a glimpse into what’s playing across the world. The Internet Movie Database is easy to navigate and serves the needs of the casual viewer and the researcher looking for specific information about specific titles. In addition to the database itself, the site includes features on DVD and videos, TV, movie and TV news, showtimes and tickets for U.S. cities, and video gaming.

Facets Multimedia ([www.facets.org/asticat](http://www.facets.org/asticat)), a film distribution company based in Chicago, also provides a wealth of information about film and, like mainstream companies like Netflix and Blockbuster, offers an opportunity to rent films online. Facets is devoted to all aspects of film, and its comprehensive online (and print) catalog will offer many options for private and classroom viewing. The site also includes a section especially devoted to children. Facets sponsors the Chicago International Children’s Film Festival ([www.cicff.org](http://www.cicff.org)), billed as “the largest festival of films for children in North America”.

Film festivals seem to update their sites yearly and so do not necessarily serve as the best sources of information on specific films. Still, it may be worthwhile to see which films have been highlighted in a specific year. For example, the 2005 New York Children’s International Film Festival ([www.gkids.com/index.html](http://www.gkids.com/index.html)) featured a series of Czech animated films. To follow the festival circuit, film fans might want to point their browser to the site of the European Children’s Film Association ([www.ecfa.web](http://www.ecfa.web)), where can be found information on the 2005 Conference of International Children’s Film Festivals in Europe, held in Poznan, Poland.

Those interested in the preservation of film should visit Moving History ([www.movinghistory.ac.uk](http://www.movinghistory.ac.uk)), a site initiated by the Centre for British Film and Television Studies and hosted and managed by the University of Brighton. The site allows the researcher to view over one hundred film clips, as a small sample of what is available in film archives throughout Great Britain. Two of the archives for which information is included are the British Film Archives and the archives of the Imperial War Museum. British regional archives can be found here as well. The site also allows one to browse film titles by themes, which include family life and gender and cultural diversity.

Scholars may also be interested in learning more about the International Association for Media and History ([www.iamhist.org](http://www.iamhist.org)), based in Washington, Connecticut. This site provides an impressive listing of conferences and professional activities related to the field that will benefit any student or researcher.

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## Canadian Happenings

Mona Gleason

### Upcoming Conferences of Interest

The Canadian Historical Association (CHA) meets in Toronto, Ontario at York University at the end of May, 2006. The History of Children and Youth group of the CHA has proposed four sessions for the conference: new theoretical and methodological directions in the history of children and youth, the history of juvenile justice, and two open sessions on the history of girls and the history of boys. We hope to hear soon whether these proposed sessions have been accepted.

In October of 2006, the Canadian History of Educational Association will hold its biennial meeting jointly with the History of Education Society (USA). The conference, entitled "The Educational Past: From Margin to Centre", will be held in Ottawa, Ontario. Paper and session proposals are due 1 March, 2006. Panels that bring together scholars from both the Canadian and American national contexts are especially encouraged. More information can be found at [www.ache-chea.ca](http://www.ache-chea.ca).

The following special column investigating film as a historical source is written by Brian Low, a historian of children and youth currently teaching at Xiamen University in China, and author of NFB Kids: Portrayals of Children by the National Film Board of Canada, 1939-1989 (Waterloo, 2002). Here, Brian underscores the underutilization of this valuable resource by historians and possible reasons for it. Thanks to Brian for sharing his insights with us.

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### **The National Film Board of Canada as a Resource for Historians of Children and Youth** Brian Low

In Canada, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) houses an exceptional cinematic resource for historical research into post-WWII Canadian childhood. Founded in 1939 by John Grierson, father of the British documentary film movement, the NFB archival collection preserves more than a half-century of cinematic representations of Canadian young people in their family, school, and community contexts. Produced under the Film Board's mandate to "interpret Canada to Canadians," this immense body of films (there are more than 9,000 productions in the entire collection) offers a comprehensive record of the social and educational issues involving Canadian children and youth from all regions, racial and ethnic backgrounds from World War II to the present. It is thus somewhat remarkable how underutilized the NFB archival films have been as a resource by social

historians in general and by historians of childhood and youth in particular. With the exception of my broad survey of cinematic portrayals of Canadian children (see *NFB Kids: Portrayals of Children by the National Film Board of Canada, 1939-1989*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002, as well as “The New Generation: Mental Hygiene and the Portrayals of Children by the National Film Board of Canada, 1946-1967” in *History of Education Quarterly*, 43, 4 [Winter] 2004), the NFB collection has been infrequently exploited by historians of childhood and youth, and then almost invariably to illustrate arguments derived from other sources. This holds true, as well, for the historical use of childhood images produced by independent Canadian filmmakers, and for images produced for television by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) from 1952 to the present. Indeed, what is most apparent about historical work to date using filmed portraits of Canadian children is how very little has been undertaken.

In large measure, this overall neglect of cinema portraiture by Canadian social historians is due to an uncertainty about film as a historical document. Specifically, what does film document? Although they seem seductively attractive as a historical resource, what physical, social, or intellectual realities of any place or time can be credibly derived from motion pictures? Mainstream wisdom has held that since no film escapes fiction, films should be studied primarily for the attitudes they forward into a society, rather than as credible reflections of that society—a convention that entrenches films in a supporting role in written social histories: *i.e.*, as supporting documents for arguments constructed elsewhere. However, the little work that has been done to date with cinematic portrayals of children in Canada suggests that the historical value of cinematic images might extend beyond that, both for single productions and whole bodies of films, owing to the unique attributes of motion pictures as primary documents.

The first of these attributes is the high cost of even the shortest of productions meant for mass distribution and, consequently, the large volume of paper that is often generated for an individual film. Most production files for single films contain correspondence among all the interested parties in a motion picture, from its conception to its reception, and thus a paper trail to underlying motives and agendas for a production that would not be readily apparent to its audience. Likewise, production photographs, script versions, expense and receipts statements, newspaper clippings, and audience reports often found in production files can be equally revealing as to the degree of credibility to be afforded to a particular portrayal, as well as to the filmmaker’s intent and audience reception.

The second attribute that distinguishes film from all other primary sources is movement. Movement is the essence of film. Thus, an historian using film documents as a primary resource might utilize whatever is to be found in motion picture movement that escapes other documentation—social relations, for example. As E.P. Thompson observed in his classic text, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968), social relations are best observed within the passage of time: their subtleties by necessity requiring examination in movement. Historically speaking then, social relations of the past (as well as social practices of the past) might be best observed in a massive body of films from that past—as only film suspends segments of the passage of time without stopping movement. In my study of NFB images, for example, the social relations of children and youth with

their parents, teachers, other adults, and each other change markedly over time—though the degree to which these parallel historical shifts in Canadian society cannot, of course, be established conclusively.

In sum, some pioneering work has been done in Canada to make more effective historical use of cinematic images of children, some methodologies explored to advance beyond the accepted wisdom concerning film as a historical document, and one historical exploration undertaken of a major Canadian source of such images. But it is a vast understatement to say much more remains to be done. As I observe in my study, “They are a forest of images, the children in the cinematic society.” In Canada, childhood historians have only begun to clear a pathway into that forest.

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## Pedagogy

### Introduction to Film: Through the Eyes of a Child Cathlena Martin

In film, children run the gamut of character types. They can be glad little angels like *Pollyanna* (1960) or murdering heathens from *Children of the Corn* (1984). They can possess and define a historical moment like the youth of *Newsies* (1992) or they can just plain be possessed like Regan in *The Exorcist* (1973). Movies can feature a return to childhood as in *Hook* (1991) or present a new slant on a traditional fairy tale like in the anime *Jin Roh: The Wolf Brigade* (1998). From the earliest of silent films, sounding off into talkies, past black and white spilling into vibrant color and forward into animation and CGI, children and youth have dominated the silver screen. The majority of movies, even if they are not rated G for General Audiences or are not marketed specifically to children, have either children in their cast or relate to childhood through some facet or theme.

Because of the numerous film genres and movements that use childhood, I was able to create an introductory film course focused on the theme of children and childhood. My class is not a special topics course, but a general introduction to film analysis; therefore, I am not teaching children’s culture through film, but I am using films with children and childhood themes to span the breadth of an introductory film course. This course would fulfill most any introductory college film requirement.

At the University of Florida, there are several different sections of ENG2300 Film Analysis. Each teacher is responsible for creating his or her own syllabus for this class. As you have probably ascertained, I designed the course with my research focus as the overarching theme—children’s literature, culture, and media. Because the readership for this newsletter is probably more interested in the aspects of the class pertaining to children and youth, I will skip the course objectives, text selection, class readings and general film analysis pedagogy and explain the theme of my class and detail my movie selections.

The theme of my class is “Through the Eyes of a Child” which constructs a paradox with which to examine films. While theorists like Laura Mulvey have discussed the camera as an active male gaze, this class will look at films where the camera creates an intrinsically adult gaze with the child as a subject. For this film class I will use the theme of children and childhood with which to analyze and study both film history and film theory. However, just because the films deal with childhood does not mean that they are all about Happy Elves, woodland creatures, and butterflies (think the opening to *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events* (2004)). Some of these films will be disturbing and require a mature audience.

Each week, my class has a three-hour block dedicated to film screenings in addition to a traditional fifty minute Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule. I have loosely divided the class into four viewing units: film introduction, film basics, film movements, and film ideology.

### **Film Introduction**

The class begins with an introduction to film production and the mechanics of the movies. While looking at the progression of film, I begin with the silent film *The Kid* (1921). Most students have never seen a silent film even though they know who Charlie Chaplin is. This comedy/melodrama forces them out of their film-going comfort zone of sound dialogue and color. I try to balance popular movies that my students have seen with more “artsy” films that they may not have been exposed to. *The Kid* presents themes of child abandonment, adoption, and parental longing and stars the famous child actor Jackie Coogan.

To return to a classic that everyone has seen, I then show *Wizard of Oz* (1939). This helps transition the class from black and white to color by screening part of the original and part of the Technicolor version. *Wizard of Oz* provides an example of Classical Hollywood Cinema and feeds our class discussion on narrative construction and form. It also provides a look at musicals and stars another famous child actress, Judy Garland. Based on the book by L. Frank Baum, *Wizard of Oz* links children’s literature and popular culture.

The final introductory film, *The Shining* (1980), grounds our discussion in genres as an example of a horror genre. With this film we can continue discussion on narrative formats, film types, and I can introduce the aspect of an auteur. It presents a child actor with special “shining” abilities, as well as disturbing perspectives on children’s imaginary friends and child trauma. *The Shining* provides a nice segue way into the second unit on film basics because Kubrick’s editing in this film utilizes a unique relationship of shot to shot.

### **Film Basics**

Once we begin our discussion of film basics, it is important to use more clips during the normal class periods so that students can visually see the film style discussed. However, *Taxi Driver* (1976) presents a detailed cinematography, particularly in regards to maintaining tonality and through the use of lights. The students who have not seen this

movie know the tabloid scoop on Jodie Foster as a child prostitute and John F. Hinckley Jr.'s trial. I am always prepared to spend at least one class discussion on the effects of movies on people and potential copycat deeds. This movie can also spark discussion on what roles are acceptable for children in movies. The horrors of real life transition into the horrors of fairy tales in our next screening.

Students need to be forewarned about the graphic nature of the following film. Because it is a modern retelling of Little Red Riding Hood, some students expect *Freeway* (1996) to be happily ever after. I use *Freeway* to discuss adaptation and to continue with film basics by inspecting aspects and narrative functions of mise-en-scene. Other movies such as *Pretty Woman* (1990) present fairy tale retellings, but none do it in such an obvious way with a postmodern twist. The day after viewing the film, we return to class and re-watch the opening credits of *Freeway* to discuss retellings, foreshadowing, animation, audience, theme, tone, and style.

The class returns to Jodie Foster in a much different role than we first saw her in *Taxi Driver*. Foster both produced and starred in *The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys* (2002), which wraps up the section on film basics by providing examples for mixed media, animation, style, and sound. This movie is a perfect blend of comics and childhood. The homo-social friendship of the four main actors details realism and the use of comic heroes to express their innermost thoughts as a second narrative is perfectly illustrated. If you have not seen this movie, rent it today.

### **Film Movements**

After providing students with the vocabulary with which to address film in general, the class begins looking at a sampling of film movements. We revert back in time to a black and white film of German expressionism. *M* (1931) presents a horrific child abductor whom both the police and the criminal underworld search for. German expressionism, and therefore *M*, depends heavily on mise-en-scene and sound and links the film basics with the first film movement. It also can be compared thematically with *Freeway* regarding violence and serial killers that prey on children.

The second film movement that we explore is the French New Wave. *Les Quatre Cent Coups* (*The 400 Blows*) (1959) follows the main child character around the gritty side of Paris to view a marriage gone terribly wrong, violence, and a judicial system out of whack. Truffaut's realism compares nicely with the boyhood troubles and friendships presented in *The Dangerous Lives of Alter Boys*.

### **Film Ideology**

To conclude the semester we briefly address film ideology. This could have been any number of approaches to critical analysis of film, but I choose queer theory and gender politics as a firecracker to end the semester with good debate begun with *Taxi Driver* of what roles and themes are appropriate for child actors to portray. *Ma Vie En Rose* (*My Life in Pink*) (1997) covers gender and gender policing in an interesting way. It connects the family's social status with the child's gender performance and portrays a remarkable enforcement of social control through the parents' role.

These are just a sampling of films to use in an introductory film class. Other possible films and categories include the following:

- Musical: *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944),
- Western: *Shane* (1952),
- Memory and childhood: *Citizen Kane* (1941),
- Soviet montage: *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929),
- Mexican Foreign Film: *Los Olvidados* (1950),
- Sci-fi: *Invaders from Mars* (1953),
- War: *Ivan's Childhood* (1962),
- Documentary: *High School* (1968),
- Horror: *It's Alive* (1975),
- Iranian Foreign Film: *Where is the Friend's Home?* (1987),
- Autobiography: *Tarnation* (2004).

With the large number of choices, the difficulty comes in deciding which films to screen and which films you don't have time for. But as you can see from this small sample, one can easily design any type of film class, from introductory to special topics, using children and childhood. A genre specific course could look at the progression of animation and cartoons in films. A themed youth class could look at the view of high school life in the movies over several decades. A Classical Hollywood class could focus on child actors and actresses. Those are only some of the choices for specific film classes. Films can be used to enhance any college classroom no matter what the topic. The possibilities are endless. Happy viewing.

Please view my course web pages for additional information:

<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/cmartin>

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### **News from the Field** compiled by Nancy Zey and David Pomfret

#### **Member News:**

Congratulations to **Ilana Nash**, assistant professor of English at Western Michigan University, upon the publication of her first monograph: *American Sweethearts: Teenage Girls in Twentieth Century Popular Culture* (Indiana University Press, 2006). The book focuses on the history of how the category "teenage girl" was created and disseminated through the narrative entertainment industries (e.g., theater, fiction, film, television) during the 20th century.

**Lisa Ossian** has recently accepted a new full-time teaching position in the History Department at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny, Iowa.

**Troy Kickler**, recent PhD graduate from the University of Tennessee, is the new director of the North Carolina History Project, a project of the John Locke Foundation, a non-partisan, non-profit think tank in Raleigh, North Carolina. One of his duties is editing an upcoming online encyclopedia called [northcarolinahistory.org](http://northcarolinahistory.org), and he hopes to include entries about minors in North Carolina.

Last fall, **Rebecca de Schweinitz** served as a visiting fellow at Yale's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, & Abolition where she conducted research for a project on childhood, slavery, and the anti-slavery movement.

**Emma Alexander-Mudaliar** has recently been appointed an assistant professor in the History Department at the University of Winnipeg, Canada. She conducts research on children in India, particularly on child labor in the colonial period. She would be interested in hearing from those working on child labor in other contexts, on violence towards children, as well as those with an interest in juvenile offenders. Please email her at [e.alexander@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:e.alexander@uwinnipeg.ca).

Double congratulations to **Carolyn Cocca** who has been appointed the Director of the Women's Center at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury, and her book just won an award. The book is *Jailbait: The Politics of Statutory Rape Laws in the United States* (State University of New York Press, 2004), and it won one of the ALA's Outstanding Academic Titles of 2005. Taken from their website: "This year's Outstanding Academic Titles list includes 682 books and electronic resources chosen by the CHOICE staff from the 6,964 titles reviewed by CHOICE during the past year. These titles have been selected for their excellence in scholarship and presentation, the significance of their contribution to the field, and their value as important."

Congratulations to **Gail S. Murray** on her appointment as Chair of the Department of History at Rhodes College.

**Thomas Bergler** of Huntington University was recently appointed Associate Editor of *The Journal of Youth Ministry*, a peer reviewed, interdisciplinary journal published by the Association of Youth Ministry Educators. Those wishing to submit manuscripts on any aspect of the history of youth, youth ministry, or youth ministry education are encouraged to contact him at [tbergler@huntington.edu](mailto:tbergler@huntington.edu) or 260-359-4285. Submission guidelines may be found at <http://ayme.gospelcom.net/>

In March, **Meredith Eliassen** will be presenting a session on the Marguerite Archer Collection of Historic Children's Materials called "'A' is for Archer" that will be about two centuries of literacy education in America at the Reading the World VIII Conference at University of San Francisco. This presentation will be made in honor of Marguerite Archer (1917-2005) who died last summer. Mrs. Archer's collecting interest was literature that documented aspects of historic child culture. To learn more about the Archer Collection go to <http://www.library.sfsu.edu/special/archer.html>. To learn more about the conference see <http://www.soe.usfca.edu/departments/ime/rthconf/conference.html>.

**Shurlee Swain**, associate professor of history at the University of Melbourne, and **Margot Hillel**, associate professor and head of the School of Arts and Sciences at Victoria Australian Catholic University, have received a three-year grant (commencing this year) to pursue a project entitled: *Child, Nation, Race and Empire: A Critical Analysis of Child Rescue Narratives in Britain, Australia and Canada 1850-1915*. This innovative, inter-disciplinary, cross cultural project contributes to understandings of both contemporary child welfare practices and the complex dynamics of empire. By critically analyzing the construction and cultural transmission of nineteenth-century British child rescue ideologies it will offer a reinterpretation explain of the ways in which they shaped both popular and governmental discourses in Canada and Australia. This reframing of the debate will provide the basis of a new history which explores an explanation for both the attraction and failure of now much-condemned child removal policies and contextualize ongoing debates about the nature of children's citizenship and the rights of those harmed by past practices.

**Anthony Krupp**, assistant professor of German at the University of Miami (Florida), is a winner of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Innovative Course Design Competition. His course was entitled *Philosophies of Childhood in the Eighteenth Century*. Beyond the usual suspects of Locke and Rousseau, the course also examines philosophical texts by Descartes, Leibniz, and Wolff as well as a novel by Goethe. He will be honored for this award at the upcoming ASECS meeting in Montreal, and his course will then be available to the public on the ASECS website: <http://asecs.press.jhu.edu/tchgpmpmt.html>. Feel free to contact him at [krupp@miami.edu](mailto:krupp@miami.edu).

Kudos to **Steve Gennaro**, doctoral student in art history at McGill University, on the publication of a version of his M.A. thesis in the Winter 2005 edition of the *International Social Science Review*. The article is titled "Purchasing the Canadian Teenage Identity: ICTs, American Media, and Brand Name Consumption."

**Clementine Fujimura**, Professor of Language and Culture Studies at the U.S. Naval Academy, has a new book out: *Russia's Abandoned Children: An Intimate Understanding* (Preager, 2005). This book draws on interviews and other data to examine the lives and stigmatization of children in Russian shelters, orphanages, and streets from the perspectives of abandoned youngsters and their caretakers.

**Susan Boynton**, assistant professor of music at Columbia University, and **Roe-Min Kok**, assistant professor of music at McGill University, announce the publication of *Musical Childhoods and the Cultures of Youth* (Wesleyan University Press, 2006), a collection of essays about childhood and music in cross-cultural and transhistorical contexts. In a variety of historical, social, and cultural frameworks, these 10 essays address subjects as diverse as choirboys in early modern Seville, the griot culture of West Africa, and Jewish youth at summer camp. The collection sheds new light on children and youth cultures as alternately dependent upon and independent from the "grown-up" musical worlds that surround them.

**Patrizia Guarnieri** announces the publication of “Dall'accoglienza alla cura. La riforma sanitaria nel brefotrofo degli Innocenti di Firenze 1890-1918” in a monographic issue of *Medicina & Storia* (IV, 7) entitled *Bambini e Salute in Europa 1750-2000/Children and Health in Europe 1750-2000* (Polistampa, 2004). Please refer to the following site for more information: <http://www.polistampa.com/asp/sl.asp?id=3501>).

**Rebecca L. Berg** has a new book out: *The Great Depression in Literature for Youth: A Geographical Study of Families and Young Lives* (Scarecrow Press, 2004). This annotated bibliography guides readers to biographies oral histories, memoirs, and recollections photograph collections fiction and nonfiction books picture books international resources and other reference sources. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) state guides are included, as well as literature about the federal theatre, arts, and music projects. A comprehensive listing of museums and state historical societies complement this reference.

**Jeanine Graham** of the University of Waikato reports that the forthcoming April 2006 issue of the *New Zealand Journal of History* will be focused on children, childhood and youth. In keeping with the interdisciplinary approach that has characterized study in the field, the contributors come from education, law, and history, and **Neil Sutherland** in Canada gave generously of his time to provide feedback as the articles were being developed. **Colin McGeorge** has written on the long path to compulsory school attendance and **Logan Moss** has explored the introduction of the school bus system and associated rural school consolidation. **Geoffrey Troughton's** article focuses on religion, churches and childhood in New Zealand in the first half of the twentieth century; and **Rosemary Goodyear** investigates rural and urban children's work during the same period. **Sally Maclean** conducted a detailed analysis of legal cases involving violence against children in the late nineteenth century; and **Claire Breen** has provided a comprehensive overview of the evolution of children's rights in New Zealand, setting the national experience within an international context. **Jeanine Graham's** editorial introduction makes a conscious effort to alert graduate students to the rich potential for more work in childhood history, and there are several links in the footnotes to SHCY Newsletters which may encourage an increase in membership from 'down under.' Please refer to <http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/his/nzjh/> or write Jeanine Graham at [JMGRAHAM@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:JMGRAHAM@waikato.ac.nz) for more information.

**Janet McShane Galley**, doctoral student in history at Temple University, has two forthcoming publications: “For Shame: Accusations of Infanticide and Coroner’s Inquests into the Deaths of Legitimate Infants in Victorian Ontario” in *Infanticide in the Global Perspective* edited by Brigette H. Bechtold and Donna Cooper Graves (Ohio State University Press, 2006) and “‘If you lost everything you loved the most in this world’: Myths and Realities of Laurel Hill’s ‘Mother and Twins’ Monument” in *Markers XXIV* (2007). The first article explores how accusations of infanticide, a "woman's crime," were used to shame men for activities that transgressed community norms for appropriate masculine behavior even though the actions of the accused men had nothing to do with the deaths of their children. The latter examines and debunks some of the myths that surround a mid-nineteenth century memorial statue of a woman and two infants located

in Philadelphia's Laurel Hill Cemetery, charting the history of the man who carved the statue, locating the source of his inspiration, and discussing the symbolism of the motifs that are part of the memorial.

### **New Member Spotlight:**

New newsletter feature! If you're a new member and would like to introduce yourself to the others, please let us know.

Welcome to **Anne Lundin**, Professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her most recent book is *Constructing the Canon of Children's Literature: Beyond Library Walls and Ivory Towers* (Routledge 2004), which looks at the cultural politics of canon formation of children's classics within the competing fields of children's librarianship and academia. She is interested in reception, reading history, and print culture, especially the construction of childhood through the cultural work of children's literature. Currently, her research is related to the kindergarten movement, in particular the work of Kate Douglas Wiggin, with connections to children's literature and librarianship. Because these interests are marginal to the technological thrust of Information Studies/Science and to the theoretical realm of literary studies, she hopes that SCHY will offer a community of interest and concern in the history of childhood's continual presence. Feel free to contact Anne at [alundin@wsc.edu](mailto:alundin@wsc.edu).

### **Books**

Emily D. Cahan, Associate Professor of Psychology and Chair of Human Development at Wheelock College, notifies members that Alice Boardman Smuts' long-awaited book has been released. *Science in the Service of Children, 1893-1935* (Yale University Press, 2006) is the first comprehensive history of early scientific research on children.

### **Museums and Exhibitions:**

Torkild Hinrichsen of the **Altonaer Museum** in Hamburg announces the museum's integration of the Kinderbuchhaus, an organization which deals with the world of books from writing to illustrating and printing. Young children and youths have the possibility to meet writers, illustrators, publishers as well as editors. The museum is also in the process of establishing a "children's floor" which will be the forum for an experimental project on childhood. The results will flow into our planned childhood and children section which is forecasted for the near future. For more information, please refer to <http://www.altonaermuseum.de/de/>.

Among the virtual exhibitions hosted by the **McCord Museum**, there is a current one pertaining to childhood: "Growing Up in Montréal." The exhibition may be viewed at the following link: <http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/>.

**Museo di Santa Maria della Scala** in Siena is running an exhibition on "*Giving Birth in Siena from Middle Age to Modern History*" from December 16, 2005 to March 19, 2006. A catalog has been published in conjunction: *Nascere a Siena. Il parto e l'assistenza alla nascita dal Medio Evo all'età Moderna*, ed., by F. Vannozzi (Nuova Immagine, 2005).

### Forthcoming Conference Events

The Istituto Universitario L'Orientale in Naples Italy will host a conference on *The Ages of Life* on February 13-17, 2006, including three seminars on children and youth, given by Ottavia Niccoli (University of Trento), Patrizia Guarnieri (University of Florence), Roni Weinstein (University of Jerusalem/University of Pisa). Please refer to the following website: <http://www.iuo.it/dr/storiadonne/news.htm>.

The Canterbury Centre for Medieval and Tudor Studies and the School of English at the University of Kent will be hosting a conference on **Medieval Children 1200-1500** Conference on June 16-18, 2006. Professors Nicholas Orme (Exeter) and Derek Brewer (Emmanuel, Cambridge) will be giving Keynote Addresses. Drs. Eve Salisbury (Western Michigan), Gary Dickson (Edinburgh), and Jeremy Goldberg (York) will be giving Featured Speeches; and Prof. Peter Beidler (Lehigh) will act as the Featured Walking Tour Leader. Please contact conference organizer Christine Li Ju Tsai at [medieval.children@gmail.com](mailto:medieval.children@gmail.com) for more information.

The International Cultural Research Network and The Department of Education at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki are organising a conference in July 2006 on "**Exploring Cultural Perspectives.**" This includes a strand on 'Childhood and Youth – history, health, crime, substance abuse, religion.' For more details see: <http://www.icrn.ca>

The 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Society for **French Historical Studies** on 20-23 April 2006 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign includes a panel entitled "Women, Children and French Indochina." For more details see: <http://www.conferences.uiuc.edu/french2006/>

### Call for Papers.

The 7th International Conference of the **Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research (ACLAR)** will take place in Melbourne, Australia on July 13-14, 2006. The theme of the conference is "Children's Literature at the Edge: New Texts, New Technologies, New Readings, New Readers." Papers can address (but are not limited to) the following: emerging genres of children's literature; changing styles of narrative; new technologies and their effects on texts; traditional forms with a new twist; new scholarly directions; cultural shifts and children's texts; new versions of older texts; and marketing newness. Abstracts (of no more than 250 words) are due by 31 March 2006 to Professor Clare Bradford of Deakin University at [clarex@deakin.edu.au](mailto:clarex@deakin.edu.au).

Submissions are requested for the Institute for the African Child at Ohio University's sixth annual conference "**African Children in African Media**" scheduled for June 15-17, 2006, at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. The conference deals centrally with the issue of how African children have been represented in African audio-visual and print media. Submissions are due by 1 April 2006. More details at:

<http://www.ohio.edu/afchild>

The annual meeting of the **Society of Philosophy and History of Education** will be held in the Historic Menger Hotel in San Antonio Sept. 28-30, 2006. Presentations are solicited in the philosophy of education, history of education, and in contemporary issues in education. For more information, write David Snelgrove, Program Chair, at [dcsnelgrov@aol.com](mailto:dcsnelgrov@aol.com) and visit website <http://members.aol.com/sopheswpes/>.

The Fourth Annual **Fort Garry Lectures in History Graduate Student Conference** will take place at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba from 27-29 April 2006. Proposed paper topics include 'Family and Childhood' and proposals are due by 18 March 2006.

A conference entitled "**The Politics of Domestic Authority, Britain 1800-2000**" will take place at King's College Cambridge. Papers are invited on the topic of 'youth cultures' and among themes to be addressed is the issue of how technology, employment and education have impacted upon structures of family authority. For more information see: <http://www.domesticauthorityconference.com/index.html>

A panel on "**Children's Digital Literature and Culture**" at the 2006 MLA will explore intersections of children's literature and culture in digital media, including video games, websites, online diaries and blogs, software (like learning games, Flash games, Living Books), online libraries, and similar digital texts. In doing so, the panel will investigate how these media affect children's literature and culture, including digital media that complements traditional children's literature such as websites by authors and video game tie-ins. Examples include Jane Yolen's single author blog and Neil Gaiman's blog which he updates daily and where readers of all ages can post comments, as well as same-story versions of children's texts that are adapted for multiple media. Examples include *The Polar Express* and *Lemony Snicket*, which have texts, movies, websites, and video games. The panel will also examine how different media (blogs, webpages, video games, digital libraries, iPods, GPS, etc) impact and alter children's literature and culture. By investigating these media we will see how children's culture has become a multi-media and multi-disciplinary field of inquiry into childhood and literature. Possible media topics could include video games for children, digital libraries, blogs, Plug N Play gaming systems, ESRP Game Rating System, educational gaming systems (Leapfrog), misc digital media (iPod, GPS). Submissions can also focus on a particular aspect within a specific media. These could include digital media and gender, digital media and history, digital media and race, digital media and children as consumers, digital media and the environment, or digital media and policy/politics. DEADLINE: By March 1, 2006, submit detailed abstract, abbreviated c.v. or brief biographical note via email to

[cmartin@english.ufl.edu](mailto:cmartin@english.ufl.edu). Or through mail: Cathlena Martin, University of Florida, Department of English, 4008 Turlington Hall, PO Box 117310, Gainesville, FL 32611.

**Contested Bodies of Childhood and Youth Conference**, 17 - 18th July 2006, Department of Geography, University of Durham. The emergence of 'new social studies of childhood' (James et al 1998) has led to much needed reconceptualisations of childhood and youth, placing greater focus on the social construction of age and on young people's agency. There has, however, been relatively little engagement with questions of embodiment, despite the major attention that this issue has received in work on gender, sexuality and ethnicity. An edited collection by Alan Prout ('The Body, Childhood and Society', 2000) begins to bridge this gap, as does work in geography by Gill Valentine, Tracey Skelton and Elizabeth Teather. However, there remains much scope for debate on different ways of conceptualising the embodiment of childhood and youth and for mapping a broader conceptual terrain, especially at a time when concerns about rising levels of obesity in industrialised countries have led to a major upsurge in political and media interest, directed mainly at finding 'pragmatic' solutions that, too often, are based on narrow understandings of child development. This conference invites speakers from across the humanities and social sciences to discuss how and why bodies of childhood and youth are contested, reflecting on the potential for gaining new insights from a range of theoretical perspectives. Possible themes include:

- performativity and techniques of the body
- landscapes and scales of embodiment
- conceptualising and researching embodiment
- disorderly bodies
- gender and sexuality
- abuse and the disciplining of bodies
- race and ethnicity
- political and media discourses of child and adolescent embodiment
- emotion, affect and potentialities of the body
- educating bodies
- social inequalities, spatial disparities and health
- resisting bodies
- consuming bodies and the politics of food

If you have any questions please contact the organizers: Kathrin H<sup>o</sup>rschelmann ([kathrin.horschelmann@durham.ac.uk](mailto:kathrin.horschelmann@durham.ac.uk)) or Rachel Colls ([rachel.colls@durham.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.colls@durham.ac.uk)), Department of Geography, University of Durham, Science Site, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, To submit a paper, please send an abstract of 200 words to Kathy Wood ([kathy.wood@durham.ac.uk](mailto:kathy.wood@durham.ac.uk)) Final date for submission of abstracts: 28th April 2006. Additional information: Durham Geography Department website <http://www.durham.ac.uk/geography/>

## Websites

Members may be interested in checking out [www.kids-guernica.org](http://www.kids-guernica.org), site of the Kids' Guernica, a peace project for children in different places of the world through the creation of peace paintings on huge canvases the same size as Pablo Picasso's 1937 *Guernica*. School children in Kabul recently made a painting with the help of the Kids' Guernica movement, which held a huge festival in Bali last August. For more information, write project coordinator Takuya Kaneda at [Kguernica@aol.com](mailto:Kguernica@aol.com).

The Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research has a new website: <http://www.aclar.org.au>.

Kathleen Thompson, founding member of OneHistory, points members toward the organization's website [www.onehistory.org](http://www.onehistory.org), which has several links pertaining to children's history. Co-founder Mac Austin has recently created a remarkable resource about the best sources for imagery on the web, and it is posted on the site.

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### Conference Report

**Histoires d'enfant, histories d'enfance, Tours, France. November 18-19, 2005**  
**Helen Martin**

On November the 18th and 19th this year I attended the GRAAT (Groupe de Recherches Anglo-Américaines de Tours) Conference held at the Université François-Rabelais, on the banks of the picturesque Loire River in Tours, France. The conference entitled *Histoires d'enfant, histories d'enfance* (Stories for children, histories of childhood) attracted over sixty delegates from around the world including participants from Europe, United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, South America, India, Australia, Kenya and Nigeria. For two days there was a feast of papers exploring the notions of children and childhood and some sessions I managed to attend within my group of presentations and at other times ranged from a look at decadent childhood in Oscar Wilde's tales; the notion of 'child' in children's books; censorship in children's books; the 'romantic' child in Maori literature; working class 'dime' novels; childhood in Shelley's poetry; training children to be children through a consideration of Louise May Alcott's novels and childhood and literature in colonial India, and in imperial Japan.

The opening address preceded talks by keynote speakers Lynne Vallone (Texas) considering the child ghost in 'Haunted' Children's Literature; Paula Fass (Berkeley) on viewing children from a mainly global, Western, perspective to Colin Heywood (Nottingham) rethinking the child in modern France; Peter Hunt (Cardiff) on the unreliability of fiction as a portrayer of childhood and Hugh Cunningham on childhood and happiness in Victorian Britain. Well organised by the indefatigable Rosie Findlay and Sébastien Salbayre from Tours and assisted by Bill Findlay, who always attended to any technical hitches with good humour, the conference ran smoothly with much lively interchanges and networking between members. This combined with exquisite French cuisine and an opportunity to visit the old part of town or imbibe the new Beaujolais, provided both an enriching and inspiring symposium for researchers and teachers

working and studying in the field of children's literature, or grappling with concepts of childhood and what it means to be a child.

Ed.: Rosie Findley, one of the conference organizers, reports that a video of the keynote speakers is available at <http://www.univ-tours.fr/Graat>

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### **Recent Publications** (compiled by David Pomfret)

Among recent publications on the History of Childhood and Youth, Peter Stearns has brought a global perspective to bear upon childhood in *Childhood in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

David R. Ambaras's book, **Bad Youth: Juvenile Delinquency and the Politics of Everyday Life in Modern Japan**, is another contribution to the growing literature to the underdeveloped field of the history of young people in East Asia. Ambaras's study focuses on Japanese youth in the twentieth century. It sets this in context with a chapter on the early modern period and the book focuses on government policy toward 'problem' youth.

On the medieval and early modern period, several works have appeared recently. Marina Baldassarri has published a book entitled *Bande Giovanili e 'vizio nefando': Violenza e sessualita nella Roma barocca* (Rome: Viella, 2005). It is a study of youth and sexual customs, particularly 'deviancy', in seventeenth century Rome. Odd Magne Bakke's *When Children become People: The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005) examines the idea of childhood in the doctrines of the early church (before 1500). In his recent book, *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), Albrecht Classen revisits the issue of parent child relations during the medieval period, an issue which received considerable attention in the early years of the development of the History of Childhood and Youth as a field. Focusing on Britain, Nigel Parton has produced a new volume, *Safeguarding Childhood: Early Intervention and Surveillance in a Late Modern Society* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

Autobiographical accounts and memoirs as usual form a significant element of recent publications on youth and childhood. Among the texts to appear in this area are Denis Cassidy, *The Way Things Were: A Backstreet Boyhood* (Stroud: Sutton, 2005) which provides an insight into social and economic conditions of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK, between 1933 and 1952.

Accounts of the experience of war in childhood have continued to appear regularly. Toyin Falola's, *A Mouth Sweeter than Salt: An African Memoir* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004) provides an account of childhood and youth in Nigeria in the 1960s. Farida Huq's, *Journey through 1971: My Story* (Dhaka: Academic Press, 2004) examines the author's youthful experiences in Bangladesh and Pakistan, and includes an

account of the Bangladeshi liberation war. Luisa Lang Owen's *Casualty of War: A Childhood Remembered* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003) is an account of the author's experience of being a German in the Danube Valley at the end of the Second World War and of her eventual emigration to America. Accounts of youth in Nazi Germany have burgeoned during the last few years, and Hubert Meyer's *The 12<sup>th</sup> SS: The History of the Hitler Youth Panzer Division* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole, 2005) has now been translated from the German. Ella Hilton's *Displaced Person: A Girl's Life in Russia, Germany and America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2004) gives an account of the author (a Russian German) and her movement between refugee camps during the Second World War. Alain Shaffner's edited volume, *L'Ere du récit d'enfance en France depuis 1870* focuses on biographical writings in the history of French literature from the late nineteenth century.

On the Cold War era, Gareth Dale's *Popular Protest in East Germany, 1945-1989* (London: Routledge, 2005) includes a chapter on 'Emigration and Youth Rebellion' in the GDR.

Adding to the ever growing literature on the youth 'revolution' in the 1960s, but linking this to changing social conditions in the US into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, is Robert V. Daniels' *The Fourth Revolution: Transformations in American Society from the Sixties to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

Congratulations to the SHCY's James Marten, who recently published *Childhood and Child Welfare in the Progressive Era: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford, 2005). In *Spirits of Defiance: National Prohibition and Jazz Age Literature, 1920-1933* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005) Kathleen M. Drowne addresses the topic of youth and drinking culture in America. Her chapter "These Wild Young People" may be of interest to readers. S.J. Kleinberg's *Widows and Orphans First: The Family Economy and Social Welfare Policy, 1880-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006) offers an analysis of the 'cult of true childhood' in America during the New Deal era.

A recent contribution to the popular culture studies discussion of childhood in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century is *Childhood Lost: How American Culture is Failing our Kids* (Westport: Praeger). The volume is a collection of essays edited by Sharna Olfman and includes discussions of childhood and technology, sexualisation, media and parenting.

Recent articles include Moira J. Maguire and Seamus ÓCinnéide's, "A Good Beating Never Hurt Anyone": The Punishment and Abuse of Children in Twentieth Century Ireland," *Journal of Social History* 38, 3 (2005): 635-652.

Ning De Conick-Smith has published, "The Panopticon of Childhood": Harold E. Jones Child Study Center, Berkeley, California, 1946-1960," *Paedagogica Historica* 41, 4-5 (2004): 495-506.

On sport and young people, Pascale Garnier offers us a comparative study of the development of sports activities for the young in France, **“Le Développement des pratiques sportives des plus jeunes: Elements pour une histoire comparative en France”** *Sport History Review* 36, 1 (2005): 3-20.

Demographic history of childhood is the focus of Frans von Poppel, Marianne Jonker and Kees Mandemakers’ **“Differential Infant and Child Mortality in three Dutch Regions, 1812-1909,”** *Economic History Review* 58, 2 (2005):272-309.

In **“National History and Domestic Spaces: Secret Lives of Girls and Women in 1950s South Korea in O Chong Hui’s *The Garden of Childhood and The Chinese Street*”** appeared in the *Journal of Korean Studies* 9, 1 (2004): 61-95.

On youth, historians have now begun to analyse subcultural forms commented upon by sociologists for a generation. Examples of recent work include, Timothy Brown’s **“Subcultures, Pop Music and Politics: Skinheads and ‘Nazi Rock’ in England and Germany”** *Journal of Social History* 38, 1 (2004): 157-178.

Michelle Langfield has analysed young people and migration in **“Voluntarism, Salvation and Rescue: British Juvenile Migration to Australia and Canada, 1890-1939”** *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 32, 2 (2004): 86-114.

#### **Recent Dissertations** (compiled by Colleen A. Vasconcellos)

- Gillispie, Linda, PhD. “A Historical Analysis of Race on the Education of Black Children in Dayton, Ohio, During the Nineteenth Century.” University of Dayton, 2005.
- Gopinath, Sumanth S., PhD. “Contraband Children: The Politics of Race and Liberation in the Music of Steve Reich, 1965-1966.” Yale University, 2005.
- Green, Keith R., PhD. “A Fairy Tale World: The Myth of Childhood in Imperial Germany.” University of Illinois-Chicago, 2005.
- Hurlbut, Joanne E., PhD. “Shaker Children: Their Lives, Literatures and Literacies.” State University of New York-Albany, 2005.
- O'Connor-Floman, Karen, PhD. “The Naturalized Changeling in Victorian Literature of Childhood: Fairy Raids on Realism.” The George Washington University, 2005.
- Ringel, Paul, PhD. “Conceiving Childhood: Juvenile Magazines and the Acculturation of American Children, 1823-1918.” Brandeis University, 2005.
- Rougeau, R. Nichole, PhD. “Alice's Shadow: Childhood and Agency in Lewis Carroll's Photography, Illustrations, and Alice Texts.” Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College, 2005.
- Walsh, John Patrick, PhD. “What Children Say: Childhood in Francophone Literature of the French Antilles and North and West Africa.” Harvard University, 2005.
- Wellen, Lauren A., EdD. “The Influence of Lilian G. Katz on Early Childhood Education: An oral History.” Northern Illinois University, 2005.

Wood, Elizabeth Jane, PhD. "Objects Matter: The Meaning of Objects from Childhood." University of Minnesota, 2005.

**Dissertations in Progress**

Aird, Sheila Marie. Howard University, "The Forgotten Ones: Enslaved Children and the Formation of a Labor Force in the British West Indies"

Allen, Benjamin Mark. University of Texas-Arlington, "Children of the Sun!: Spiritual Bridges along the Spanish Frontier, 1500-1820"

Anuik, Jonathan. University of Saskatchewan, "Metis Children and the Christian Educational Agenda--The Formation of a Metis Childhood Identity in 19th-Century Northwest North America"

Audet, Caroline. University of Arizona "Colonizing Children, Colonizing Families: Youth and Youth Organizations in Colonial Tunisia, 1918-40"

Bates, Rebecca. University of Kentucky "Cultivating the British Nation, Saving the English Laborer: A Study of Working-Class Childhood, Labor, and Philanthropy, 1830-1924"

Birk, Megan E. Purdue University "Children in the Country: 19th-Century Solutions for Rural, Dependent Children"

Brian, Amanda. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign "Bonds of Empire: Growing Children in the Kaiserreich, 1871-1918"

Bullard, Katharine. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign "Imperial Children: Race, Citizenship, and Child Welfare"

Carriere, Michael. University of Chicago, "I Now Pronounce You Children of a New Age': Columbia University, Democracy, and Economy in New York City, 1960-98"

Chalmers, Elizabeth. University of Kentucky. "Children of the Occupation: French Children Living in German Occupied France during the First World War"

Chupik, Jessa. McMaster University. "The Institutional Confinement of 'Idiot' Children in 20th-Century Canada: The Case of the Orillia Asylum, 1900-35"

Collinson, Caroline. The Ohio State University "The Littlest Immigrants': Adoption, Migration, and Exploitation of Border Crossing Children in the Americas"

Drixler, Fabian. Harvard University. "Children of Fear: Population Policy and the End of the Low Fertility Regimes of Northern Japan, 1720-1920"

DuRocher, Kristina. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. "Lessons in Black and White: Violence as an Education in Race, Gender, and Southern Identities for Children in Jim Crow South, 1880\_1930"

Fu, Jia-Chen. Yale University. "Society's Laboratories: Mapping Children's Health in Republican China, 1928-49"

Gallop, Rachel. University of Minnesota. "Dirty Hippies, Earth Mothers, Love Children: California Counterculture in the Vietnam Era"

Gorshkov, Boris. Auburn University "Factory Children: Child Industrial Labor in Imperial Russia, 1780-1917"

Green, Rachel. University of Chicago. "'There will not be orphans among us!' Detdomovtsy, Foster Children, and Adoptees of the World War II Era"

Hartzok, Justus G. University of Iowa/ "Children of Chapaev: The Russian Civil War Cult and the Creation of Soviet Identity, 1918-82"

- Hinderer, Moira. University of Chicago. "Making African American Childhood: Chicago, 1890-1930"
- Jowers, Sandra. Howard University. "Ending the Educational Exile of Black Deaf Children in Washington: Miller v. District of Columbia Board of Education"
- Kickler, Troy. University of Tennessee. "Black Children, Northern Missionaries: The Freedmen's Bureau, and Southern Conservatives in Tennessee, 1965-70"
- Lachaussee, Alice Hull. University of Mississippi/ "Lessons in Heritage: Southern Children Inherit the Lost Cause"
- Livschiz, Ann. Stanford University. "Soviet Childhood as a Social, Cultural, and Political Institution, 1918-58"
- May, Michele. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign "The Republic and Its Children: French Children's Literature, 1855-1900"
- McKinley, Charles. Brandeis University. "The Illegitimate Children of the Enlightenment: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the 19th-Century French Anarchist Movement"
- Miller, Leslie. University of Georgia. "The Power of the Privileged: The Model of the White Middle Class Family and the Education of American Children, 1820-1920"
- Morley, Joselyn C. Carleton University. "'Mother Dead, Father Living, A Very Useless Man': Children in Need, the Protestant Orphan's Home, and Municipal Welfare in Ottawa, 1915-29"
- Myers, Sharon. New Brunswick. "The Governance of Childhood: The Discourse of State Formation and the New Brunswick Child Welfare Survey, 1927-30"
- Ransmeier, Johanna. Yale University, "'No Other Choice': The Sale of Women, Children, and Laborers in Late Qing and Republican China"
- Sribnick, Ethan. University of Virginia. "The Transformation of Child Welfare: Children, Policy, and the State, 1945-80"
- Stern, Gaius. University of California, Berkeley . "Women, Children, and Senators Celebrating Pax Romana on the Ara Pacis"
- Sundermann, Elisabeth. University of California, Davis. "Identity Lessons: Nationalism and the Education of Schoolchildren in Postwar London"
- Tinsley, Alexis. Brandeis University. "Liberty's Children: The Changing National Identity of Children in New England, 1700-1827"
- Villarreal, Rachel. University of Arizona. "Gladiolas for the Children of Sanchez: Revolutionary Rhetoric and Urban Renewal in Mexico City, 1946-68"
- Wash, Charles. Howard University. "Childhood in Brazil: Free and Enslaved Children in Salvador da Bahia, 1822-88"
- Webb, Daryl A. Marquette University. "Milwaukee Children in the Great Depression"

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*Editors and Contributors to the SHCY "Newsletter," Issue #7*

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**Helen Martin** taught part-time in children's literature at the University of South Australia, Magill Campus while completing my PhD on Australian preschool picture books and television programs as tools for teaching literacy to young children. Since earning her degree mid-2005 she has been reviewing children's books, and she is now on the committee of the Children's Book Council (SA) Branch. This year she has been selected to be the SA judge for the CBCA Awards for 2005/6.

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**Nancy Zey**, is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation explores the interrelationship of charity schools, orphan asylums, and pauper apprenticeship in the early American republic using Natchez, Mississippi as a case study. She presented a paper on the evolution of female charitable societies into modern child welfare agencies at the SHCY Biennial Meeting in 2003. Nancy co-edits with David Pomfret the "News from the Field" column. Email: [nancyzey@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:nancyzey@mail.utexas.edu)

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