

## Expanding Children's Horizons

**Karen Sands-O'Connor & Marietta A. Frank, eds. 2014. *Internationalism in Children's Series*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. 215 pp. ISBN 978-1-137-36030**

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Edited by Karen Sands-O'Connor and Marietta A. Frank, *Internationalism in Children's Series* is part of the *Critical Approaches to Children's Literature* series which aims to provide quality works of criticism written in a manner that is easily understandable to a range of readers, both academic and professional. The series brings contemporary perspectives to historical texts, while also addressing developing areas of children's literature research.

*Internationalism in Children's Series* examines the portrayal of cultural exchange and global interaction in series aimed at children. Different authors examine specific examples and their influence on internationalism, and vice versa. The book is divided into three parts (each further divided into several chapters) which cover children's book series and magazines more or less chronologically, beginning from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, publishing children's books became an important and distinct trade with a market of its own, books themselves became more accessible, and colonialism and imperialism were at their highpoint. The book under review explores the connections among these phenomena and their development.

Karen Sands-O'Connor's introductory chapter, entitled "Introduction: Stepping Out into the World: Series and Internationalism", explains the meaning of internationalism as the main concept and presents readers with the topics they will encounter throughout the book. Sands-O'Connor explains that the analysed book series show readers different ways of understanding themselves, their own and other nations, as well as global society, while promoting the idea that "in order to make sense of your place in the world, you have to have 'others' – whether real friends or fictional – to measure yourself against" (9).

The first part of the book, "Nineteenth-Century Series Go Abroad", encompasses two chapters, and examines the origins of international book series in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, taking into account American expansionism and European imperialism. The second chapter of the book is "Young Americans Abroad: Jacob Abbott's *Rollo on the Grand Tour* and Nineteenth-Century Travel Series Books" by Chris Nesmith. Abbott's *Rollo* series follows its main character, a white upper-middle-class boy, as he grows up. The culmination of his childhood is his travel abroad, where he gets to know other cultures and learns how to travel properly. The book was seen as a guide for young Americans in the culture of travelling, while maintaining the idea of their own culture and traditions.

Janis Dawson wrote the third chapter, entitled "Our Girls in the Family of Nations: Girls' Culture and Empire in Victorian Girls' Magazines", in which she leads the reader through the ways in which 19<sup>th</sup>-century magazines promoted internationalism and "girls' culture". She draws attention to the magazines' attempt to further the idea of international sisterhood via correspondence pages and various articles, while simultaneously promoting the idea of "plucky British girls" doing their duty for the Empire and promoting its well-being. They tap into the girls' desire to travel and experience new things while also promoting patriotism during wartime by writing articles about brave British girls.

Part two, entitled “Syndicates, Empires, and Politics”, covers chapters four to eight, which focus on how 20<sup>th</sup>-century authors used the 19<sup>th</sup>-century model of international travel book series to promote political ideas. Five authors analyse different book series in which this is evident. In chapter four, “The Stratemeyer Chums Have Fun in the Caribbean: America and Empire in Children’s Series”, Karen Sands-O’Connor studies the series produced by the Stratemeyer Syndicate, “one of the most prolific publishing enterprises of the twentieth century” (59). The author calls attention to the fact that child characters in the book series were involved in the shaping of America and its history, and even though they leave on adventures, they are always happy to return home.

Chapter five is “‘A Really Big Theme’: Americanization and World Peace – Internationalism and Nationalism in Lucy Fitch Perkins’ *Twins* Series” written by Jani L. Barker. The *Twins* books by Fitch Perkins are centred on a “happy group of international chums” (91). Barker touches upon the subject of supporting internationalism in favour of Americanisation in the books, but ultimately commends the series’ attempts in the specific cultural context of its time. “‘A Bit of Life Actually Lived in a Foreign Land’: Internationalism as World Friendship in Children’s Series” is the title of chapter six, written by Marietta A. Frank, in which she explores children’s book series about international friendship written before and after Perkins’ *Twins* series. These book series usually have one or two child characters and the story revolves around their daily lives and the customs of their country, thus helping readers find out what it is like to live in another country. More often than not, the goal of maintaining international friendship was not met, thus reinforcing stereotypes.

Michael G. Cornelius is the author of the seventh chapter entitled “Lost Cities: Generic Conventions, Hidden Places, and Primitivism in Juvenile Series Mysteries”. Cornelius discusses the book series in which white characters discover “exotic” places and the ways in which these new, different spaces can change the ways people behave and view social conventions. Chapter eight, “‘But Why Are You So Foreign?’: Blyton and Blighty” was written by David Rudd. The author mentions that the books he analysed show a more complex notion of the foreigner than just foreign space (in comparison to those tackled in the previous chapter), but also mentions the negativity and racism that taint Blyton’s books. Even though her characters leave the British Empire, they never actually leave their culture and therefore fail to experience other cultures.

Part three encompasses chapters nine to twelve and examines the changes in internationalism in book series in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. In chapter nine, “‘Universal Republic of Children?’: Other Cultures in *Doğan Kardeş* Children’s Periodical”, Denis Arzuk analyses a Turkish children’s periodical, aimed at Turkish middle and upper classes. The views on “otherness”, or foreign people and cultures, changed with the political situation. Despite post-war hostilities, the periodical tried to emphasise the similarities in children, which appealed to readers. Chapter ten is written by Hilary Brewster and is entitled “Wizard in Translation: Linguistic and Cultural Concerns in *Harry Potter*”. This chapter views the *Harry Potter* series with the help of translation studies, emphasising that many things get lost in translation because of cultural differences between source and target contexts. Despite these challenges, the series had a great international impact and therefore presents a great example of internationalism in itself.

In the final two chapters of the book, the reader gains insight into Irish transnationalism from two different perspectives. Through an interdisciplinary approach, Charlotte Beyer writes about individual child migrant characters from Ireland in chapter eleven, “‘Hungry Ghosts’: Kirsty Murray’s Irish-Australian Children of the Wind Series”. Patricia Kennon writes about the early 21<sup>st</sup>-century migration boom into Ireland in chapter twelve, “Building Bridges to Intercultural Understanding: The Other in Contemporary Irish Children’s Literature”. One can see how migrants are received from the perspective of migrants themselves and of those “receiving” and perceiving the migrants.

*Internationalism in Children’s Series* provides a good overview of how the view on “otherness” and differences between people has changed through time, and that it is still in the process of change. The book provides its reader with an understanding of the concept of internationalism with the help of several authors and their analyses of book series for children. It also shows that authors of the mentioned book series, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, have often attempted to encourage kinship between the intended reader and the “others”, different cultures and peoples, which often had the opposite effect of creating a gap because it intensified the “otherness”. In the introductory chapter, Karen Sands-O’Connor points out that the authors and publishers of the analysed series agree that one of the keys to get children interested in the world is letting them know there are others like them. One must not forget, though, that it might also be important to sensitise children to accept differences, not only similarities.

The vocabulary of *Internationalism in Children’s Series* is not strictly technical and although there are instances in which one encounters theoretical concepts, the book could quite easily be understandable and interesting to students and the general public. The topic itself is quite appealing and is presented through the eyes of many different authors, providing the reader with plenty of food for thought, perhaps also with a spark of encouragement to explore the topic further.

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## Growing Up

**Roberta Seelinger Trites. 2014. *Literary Conceptualizations of Growth: Metaphors and Cognition in Adolescent Literature*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 164 pp. ISBN 978-90-272-0156-0**

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The concept of growth has always been an important part of children’s and young adult literature. It is mentioned in many ways – some of them are subtle but some are direct. Growth is emphasised, especially in literary works aimed at adolescents. The author claims that by reading novels and watching films that are particularly goal-oriented, the young could just skip enjoying their youth and start focusing on growing up and becoming more mature, thus losing an important part of their lives. Surrounded also by different metaphors of growth, they may later continue to promote adulthood as a goal, which creates a never ending loop. The main question that therefore arises is why this is so. Is growth an idea that must prevail in adolescent literature?