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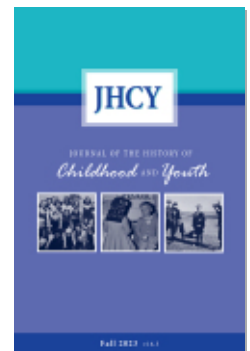
Education and Empire: Children, Race and Humanitarianism in the British Settler Colonies, 1833–1880 by Rebecca Swartz
(review)

Hugh Morrison

The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth, Volume 16,
Number 3, Fall 2023, pp. 501-503 (Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/hcy.2023.a909994>



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more than “narrative chaff” and could be at the heart of what medieval authors thought and wrote (2).

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Education and Empire: Children, Race and Humanitarianism in the British Settler Colonies, 1833–1880.

By Rebecca Swartz.

Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. xiii + 253 pp. Cloth €74.99, e-book €64.19.

Rebecca Swartz’s *Education and Empire* (the recipient of two international book prizes) is a welcome addition both to the Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies series and to a growing list of dual histories of childhood and education. As such, it builds on her previous comparative work on histories of childhood and education across a range of British world imperial and colonial settings (especially southern Africa and Western Australia). This book expands that geographical purview to include the British West Indies and New Zealand, while emphasizing important synergies between British metropole and colonial settings. The focus is on education for Indigenous people—children and adults.

This book adopts a deliberately “comparative and connected approach that highlights the connections and divergences between policy, practice and educational thinking, in different parts of the empire” (3) while using case studies drawn from a range of formative settings. It convincingly argues that to “focus on only one nation means losing sight of far broader ideas about race, labour, humanitarianism and settler colonialism that came to inform education provision in different parts of the empire.” Instead, it attempts to “widen the scope of analysis to situate local cases within their global context, showing how this elucidates the particularity of the local and the connections to the global” (13). The book thus highlights, among other things: the importance of education for historically understanding “attitudes about difference, whether of class, race, gender or age” (2); emergent ambiguities around humanitarianism and who might be considered humanitarian; aspirational conflicts between settlers and educational administrators or practitioners that then skewed educational

trajectories and profoundly impacted children; the role and influence of individuals across imperial settings, as vectors of policy and practice but also sometimes changed by local context or circumstances; and both formal and informal iterations of education. The educational focus effectively “highlights synergies between ideas about race, childhood and labour in metropole and colony” (10).

The book is arranged semi-chronologically (from the 1830s to the 1880s), moving along a broad trajectory from lesser to greater governmental responsibility for education and culminating in empire-wide legislation toward compulsory education. This was a historical period marked by profound changes in thinking about education, race, and childhood. Within this broad framework, individual chapters develop particular themes that highlight imperial or trans-colonial connections and the emergent local complexities or differences. The result is a complex history that requires more than one reading and that could be usefully integrated into teaching across a variety of historical topics. The comparative approach adopted brings together elements that, while not immediately obvious, act to invigorate our thinking while also contributing to a more complex reading of British settler and colonial contexts.

So, for example, chapters consider: connections between educational developments in Britain and slave emancipation in the West Indies (Chapter 2); relationships between land, labor, settler pressures and anxieties and education in Natal and Western Australia (Chapters 3 and 4); industrial education and individual colonial governorship in New Zealand, Cape Colony, and Natal (Chapter 5); educational research by, for example, Florence Nightingale that “show how schools could be both a source of knowledge about Indigenous people, and a place where knowledge could be imparted to Indigenous people” (25) in Chapter 6; and finally, in Chapter 7, how the move to compulsory education in Britain morphed, in the settler colonies, “into different policies for white and Indigenous children,” as part of now controversial and traumatic policies seeking to “‘manage’ Indigenous families” (26). The latter chapter’s discussion of mixed-race children from St. Helena, schooled in 1870s Natal (218–223), I found particularly prescient when read, for instance, alongside accounts of Anglo-Indian children’s similar experiences when repatriated to places like New Zealand in the 1920s and 1930s.

One of the major contributions of this book to an integrative approach to histories of education and childhood, perhaps, is its emphasis on “age as an important marker of experience” (11). Swartz expansively embraces both adults and children in her analysis—particularly with respect to industrial education and related issues of colonial labor supply. Both Indigenous and settler children were certainly viewed as the key life stage on which depended the “reproduction of society” and so their education was important. Yet as she asks early on,

in these schemes, “who counted as a child and who as an adult?,” especially when “[a]dult Indigenous people were often understood as perpetual children” (12). Thus “age and educability” in colonial settings “were related to shifting ideas about race” (12) through the middle decades of the nineteenth century. In turn, this had implications for Indigenous adults and children, especially when we consider the decisive application of child removal policies or the more deliberate cultural assimilationist view of Indigenous education adopted in many colonial settings by the late nineteenth century.

Astute readers will also pick up on the book’s potential to speak to such themes as race- and class-based definitions of childhood, macro- and micro-geographies of childhood and adolescence, childhood as a concept deployed within colonialism for adult agendas, and educational spaces as sites of definitional negotiation or of Indigenous child or parental resistances. This is not, by Swartz’s admission, a comprehensive history—and Canada emerges as the obvious point of comparison for further development of key ideas in this book. There could be further nuancing, too, of particular colonial spaces. New Zealand, for example, in the mid-nineteenth century was more a pastiche of provinces than a cohesive colonial entity, with different outcomes for children across both Indigenous and settler populations. Overall, however, this is an important book for anyone working across such topics and spaces within histories of nineteenth-century British world childhood or education. Furthermore, I think, this book makes a strong case for both education and childhood to be taken seriously as powerful and integrative categories of analysis for ongoing imperial histories.

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Dangerous Amusements: Leisure, the Young Working Class and Urban Space in Britain, c. 1870–1939.

By Laura Harrison.

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022. xiv + 256 pp. Cloth \$120.00.

*D*angerous Amusements: Leisure, the Young Working Class and Urban Space in Britain, c. 1870–1939 offers an engaging and valuable addition to thriving scholarship on modern youth cultures. Laura Harrison has a dual focus: “the way the young working class were represented and their behaviour in the streets and public spaces defined, along with young people’s own experiences