It’s Not A Small World After All: Children’s Literature and the Global Child

Dr. Emily Murphy will deliver a lecture, “It’s Not a Small World After All: Children’s Literature and the Global Child,” addressing the emerging category of the “global child” and its relation to future studies of children’s literature. Murphy’s talk provides an overview of early literary representations of the global child in Anglo-American children’s classics (Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and The Wonderful Wizard of Oz) and explains how these literary works provide a foundation for contemporary debates about childhood. These debates position children as symbols of a global future and have inspired many to attempt to raise children as “global citizens.” Murphy traces these efforts to shape the child with modern examples from popular Taiwanese-American novels (Gene Luen Yang’s American Born Chinese and Grace Lin’s Dumpling Days) and also considers the risks of global childhood with an examination of Chang Ta-Chun’s bestselling children’s novel, Wild Child. Her talk concludes with a few speculations about how we might rethink children’s literature in light of new associations with the child, especially once we place these associations into historical relief.

Emily Murphy received her PhD from the University of Florida, where she studied children’s literature and American studies. She has an article, “Life on the Wire: Post-9/11 Mourning in Mordicai Gerstein’s The Man Who Walked Between the Towers,” in The Lion and the Unicorn and a forthcoming article on children’s literature archives in Children’s Literature Association Quarterly. In addition, Murphy is contributing to a forthcoming book collection on prizing in children’s literature. Her current work on global approaches to children’s literature is related to her book manuscript, “Growing Up With America: Myth, Childhood, and National Identity from 1945-2011” and a new project on international children’s literature.