

DIASPORA(S), EXILE, NOMADS AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
Department of Primary Education, School of Education
May 29-31, 2026
University of Crete, Rethymnon

We are pleased to announce the **20th Child and the Book Conference**, which seeks to address the intersections of diasporic, exilic and nomadic identities, and children's literature. This conference aims to bring together scholars, writers, artists, and students to foster a critical dialogue on how transnational mobility and the diasporic, exilic and nomadic communities it generates are (re)presented, (de)constructed, and (re)experienced within children's and young adult literature across diverse cultural contexts.

This conference is especially timely as we witness an increasingly globalized world where old and new diasporas merge, and émigrés and nomads—both the marginalized communities shaped by colonial histories and the highly extolled modern digital nomads—constantly move across borders and cultures. Edward Said encapsulates this reality when he argues that the “modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees” (2001, 173). Children’s literature often echoes Said’s axiomatic statement. In the works of writers and artists such as Alikì, Judith Kerr, Anita Lobel, Joe Rita, David Robertson, Salman Rushdie, Allen Say, Peter Sís, Uri Shulevitz, Vassilev Svetlin, Eugenius Trivizas, Yoshiko Uchida, Lawrence Yep and Eugene Yelchin, to name but a few, the diasporic, exilic and nomadic subject, much like a modern Janus, experiences (both internal and external) transition across space and cultures with its gaze turned towards the past but also towards the future, towards the homeland but also towards the hostland. Caught betwixt and between borders, identities and cultures, these subjects constantly negotiate their subjectivity and positionality in a liminal zone of influences, affects and intensities, stemming from the homeland and the hostland (Brinson & Hammel 2016), at times turning them into memorable art (Panaou 2024).

Stuart Hall, a diaspora figure himself, argues that “the diaspora experience [...] is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly *producing and reproducing themselves anew* (our emphasis), through transformation and difference” (1990, 235). Hall, thus, envisions diaspora not as a stable connection to the ancestral land and past but rather as a dynamic intersectional process of “becoming”. Identity is also seen as “becoming in motion” in relation to the nomadic subject in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari who define the nomad identity as one in which the default spatial mode is constant travelling (in Patton 2018). For them, nomad can be defined by notions such as mobility, flux and becoming; a nomad is an archetype that does not settle in space but instead exists in what they call “deterritorialization” (ibid), both literally and figuratively.

Joining the host of children’s literature scholars who have previously addressed similar themes such as Yael Darr (2009), Philip Nel (2018), Anastasia Ulanowicz (2018) and more recently Mateusz Świetlicki (2020; 2023), we want to expand the scope of investigation to address questions of identity, home, marginalization, liminality, exceptionalism, ethnicity, cosmopolitanism, (neo)colonialism, memory, multiculturalism, and nostalgia.

We invite submissions to the 20th Child and the Book Conference either in the form of **individual papers**, or **roundtables** (those will be limited in number), or **panels** that look into literary works across cultures, historical periods, and genres, exploring how children’s and young adult literature serve as a site for imagining, contesting, and reconfiguring

diasporic, exilic and nomadic identities. We particularly encourage graduate students and early-career scholars to apply. As the conference can accommodate around 100 papers (max.), we strongly welcome joint papers. The conference will be held **in person**.

Possible themes for the conference include but are not limited to:

- Émigré, diaspora, nomad authors and artists of children's literature
- Stereotypes, trauma and resistance, and the diasporic, exilic and nomadic subjectivity
- Representations of homeland and hostland
- Representations of diaspora communities (Black, Caribbean, Chicano, Chinese, Latinx, Jewish, etc.) in children's and young adult literature
- Diaspora aesthetics and poetics
- Genre and diaspora, exile and nomad children's literature (life-writing, autobiography, diary, children's magazines, myth, folklore, etc.)
- Culture in diaspora, exile and nomad communities: language, customs, food, traditions, ceremonies
- Memory, nostalgia and diaspora
- In search of home, roots and identity
- Digital spaces, social media and online communities as "hostlands" or "homelands," and the (re)negotiation of child and young adult diasporic, exilic, or nomadic identities
- Transnational adoption/mobility
- Childhood portrayals in films about diasporic communities
- The role of diasporic, exilic and nomadic narratives in children's literature pedagogies

REFERENCES

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- Darr, Y. (2009). Negating Diaspora Negation: Children's Literature in Jewish Palestine During the Holocaust Years. *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 42(1), 17–30.
- Hall, S. (1990). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (pp. 222-237). Lawrence & Wishart.
- Nel, P. (2018). Introduction: Migration, Refugees and Diaspora in Children's Literature [Special Issue]. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 43(4), 357–362. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/chq.2018.0043>.
- Panaou, P. (2024). The Nostoi of Two Acclaimed Immigrant Picturebook Creators. *Libri et Liberi*, 13(2), 181–196. <https://doi.org/10.21066/carcl.libri.13.2.3>
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- Said, E. (2002). *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays (Convergences: Inventories of the Present)*. Harvard University Press.
- Świetlicki, M. (2020)). "You Will Bear Witness for Us": Suppressed Memory and Counterhistory in Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch's *Hope's War* (2001). *Anglica Wratislaviensia* 58, 85–97.

Świetlicki, M. (2023). *Next-Generation Memory and Ukrainian Canadian Children's Historical Fiction: The Seeds of Memory*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003367918>.

Ulanowicz, A. (2018). Reassembling Sacred Relics: Translation, Diaspora, and Andriy Chaikovsky's *Za Sestroyu*. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 43(4), 412–433.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/chq.2018.0047>.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Individual papers

Individual paper proposals should include the following information:

- Presenter's name, affiliation, email address
- Brief biography (max. 100 words)
- Paper title
- Abstract (max. 300 words)
- 5 relevant keywords
- 5 academic references

Panels

Panel proposals should comprise **three papers** which will address the main theme of the conference. The panel organiser should invite participants, preferably from different countries, and evaluate each paper in the panel. However, the panel as a whole and its constituent papers will be blindly reviewed by external evaluators.

Completed panel proposals should be submitted by the panel chair and include:

- Chair's name, affiliation, email address, and a brief biography
- Panel title
- An abstract, including individual co-speakers' contributions as necessary (max. 300-500 words)
- Co-panelists' names, email addresses, affiliations, and brief biographies (max. 100 words)
- 5 relevant keywords
- 5 academic references

Roundtables

A roundtable should accommodate up to 5-6 participants who will be allowed 10 min. (max.) each to respond to previously circulated set questions relevant to the theme of the conference. Complete roundtable proposals should be submitted by the roundtable moderator and should include:

- Moderator's name, affiliation, email address, and a brief biography
- Roundtable title
- An abstract, including individual discussants' contributions as necessary (max. 300-500 words)
- Discussants' names, affiliations, email addresses, and brief biographies (max. 100 words)
- 5 relevant keywords
- 5 academic references

NOTE: The conference can accommodate up to **three roundtables**.

KEY INFORMATION

Conference Chair and Local Host

Vassiliki Vassiloudi (University of Crete)

Organising Committee

Vassiliki Vassiloudi (University of Crete)

Tzina Kalogirou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

Chryso Charalambous, Illustrator, Cyprus

Petros Panaou, Professor of Children's Literature, University of Georgia, USA

Mateusz Świetlicki, Associate Professor, University of Wrocław's Institute of English Studies, Poland

Scientific Committee

- Maria Alcantud (University of Valencia)
- Triantafyllia-Rosy Angelaki (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)
- Denia Athanasopoulou-Kypriou (University of Crete)
- Marnie Campagnaro (University of Padova)
- Maria Dimaki-Zora (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Virginie Douglas (University of Le Havre)
- Vassiliki Economopoulou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Clio Fanouraki (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Giuliana Fenech (University of Malta)
- Macarena García González (Pompeu Fabra University)
- Nina Goga (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences)
- Dimitris Goulis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)
- Aspasia Hatzidaki (University of Crete)
- Michael Heyman (Berklee College of Music)
- Antonis Hourdakos (University of Crete)
- Svetlana Kalezić Radonjić (University of Montenegro)
- Pella Kalogiannaki (University of Crete)
- Tzina Kalogirou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Maria Karaïskou (University of Crete)
- Katerina Karatasou (Frederick University)
- Eleni Katsarou (University of Crete)
- Anna Kérchy (University of Szeged)

- Triantafyllos Kotopoulos (University of Western Macedonia)
- Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (University of Tübingen)
- Vassiliki Lalagianni (University of the Peloponnese)
- Konstantinos Malafantis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Jörg Meibauer (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
- Dorota Michutka (University of Wrocław)
- Xavier Minguez Lopez (University of Valencia)
- Marianna Missiou (University of the Aegean)
- Smiljana Narančić Kovač (University of Zagreb)
- Åse Marie Ommundsen (Oslo Met)
- Dimitris Politis (University of Patras)
- Ana Margarida Ramos (University of Aveiro)
- Marina Rodosthenous Balafa (University of Nicosia)
- Farriba Schulz (Humboldt University of Berlin)
- Giannis Spantidakis (University of Crete)
- Paraskevi Thomou (University of Crete)
- Vasia Tsami (University of Crete)
- Vassiliki Vassiloudi (University of Crete)
- Soledad Véliz (Pontifical Catholic University of Chile)
- Angela Yannikopoulou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

Please send an abstract in English along with (a) short bio(s) as two separate attached Word documents to: cbc2026@uoc.gr before [December 15, 2025](#). Please apply accordingly one of these subject lines: 2026 CBC_PAPER, or CBC_ROUNDTABLE, or 2026 CBC_PANEL.

Important Dates

- Abstract submission deadline: December 15, 2025
- Notification of acceptance: February 1, 2026
- Early bird Registration: before April 1, 2026
- Regular Registration: after April 1, 2026
- Conference dates: May 29-31, 2026

Registration Fees

Early bird registration: 130 euros

Late bird registration: 150 euros

PhD students: 100 euros

Conference Venue

University of Crete, Gallos Campus, Rethymnon, Greece (please refer to the map below)



For more information, please contact us at cbc2026@uoc.gr.

We look forward to receiving your contributions and welcoming you warmly to Gallos Campus, University of Crete, Rethymnon. The website is coming soon! You will be notified promptly. Please stay tuned for more information.