The primary quantitative approach generates new and interesting information, like the average length of the construction process – 4.5 years – the change of the financing from cash and pay in kind to bank loans – and the role of the local industries in equipping the schools with everything from furnaces to beams and bricks. The majority of the new schools were designed by local capacities – ranging from a pastor, a peasant to master builders; architects were mostly hired in cities. All these people were part of a long list of "new heroes", which also included local industrialists and the national school inspectors.

Westberg also includes references and comparison to development in Russia, France, the US, Britain and even Italy – but not from the other Nordic countries, which seems surprising. Where Westberg is very careful to document his empirical conclusions, the choice of these countries is not discussed at all.

Why Westberg have left out the other Nordic countries with their cultural and social closeness to Sweden, therefore remains to be explained. Similar studies – with the same understanding of the rise of the elementary school system as a result of many entangled local processes – can be found at least from my own country Denmark. References to the studies of the educational historian Erik Nørr of the role of the pastors within the administration of the Danish school system seem highly relevant. So even though Westberg repeatedly claims he is the first to challenge modernist or revisionist and Marxist understandings, a broader literature survey would definitely prove him wrong. Like Nørr, Westberg rightly stresses the effectivity of the organisations at parish level – and he also reminds of the fact, that construction of school building did not necessary have anything to do with children. It could so to say have its own logic rooted in a mixture of traditions, local interests, demography and finances.

Despite my critique, his work pays respect and can be read both by experts in the history of the Sundsvall region but also for its methodological reflections. It's not an easy read, too many figures and un-pedagogical tables clouds the interesting conclusions. But as the author states in the introduction: complex, entagled and multiple explanations demands patience from the historian – and I would add also from the reader. But it is definitely worth it in the end.

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Karen Vallgårda
Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission: Education and Emotions in South India and Denmark

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The development of a new, simultaneously scientific and sentimentalised conception of the universal child in the decades around 1900 is a well-known and often visited theme in educational history. *Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission* is a study of how imperial relations between South India and Denmark both influenced and were affected by that understanding of childhood.

At the centre of Vallgårda's study stands the Danish Missionary Society (DMS), an organisation that between the mid-1860s until the end of WWI sent some 100 missionaries to South India. The men and women of the DMS started and ran schools and orphanages in which Indian children were enrolled – sometimes with, but often without, their parents' consent. Through close analysis of published missionary material, magazines, pamphlets, books and songbooks intended for a Danish audience, Vallgårda sets out to examine the emotions and ideas about childhood, belonging, malleability and race at play in the Danish mission.

Taking the cue from newer historiography on European empires, Vallgårda places Indians and Danes within one and the same analytic framework in order to shed light on the mutual influences between the metropoles and colonies. With this perspective she intends to demonstrate the influence of these types of imperial relations on the emerging scientific and allegedly universal category of childhood, arguing that that category played an important role in the formation of Danish and even European identity.

Vallgårda's examination of how the modernist sentimentalisation of childhood functioned in a colonial setting offers a fine

example of how historical contextualisation can illuminate what work an idea is doing in a particular context. One major example is how a sentimentalised and universalised idea of childhood legitimised dubious enrolment strategies to some of the missionary institutions. The local populations' parenting practices, often constrained by harsh economic conditions, served as a contrasting other to the new, scientific idea of the child. This in turn licensed what was in effect confiscation of Indian children.

Vallgårda's study is well crafted, written with nuance and in close dialogue with a number of other scholars in the field. She makes productive use of her ambition to read historical texts both "with" and "against the grain" (33), to take the ideas expressed in them seriously and to understand them as expressions of the intricate power relations from which they sprang. In addition, Vallgårda writes well. She starts every chapter with an anecdote that introduces the theme, a "microhistorical entry", and this anecdote continually structures the narrative as the author returns to it again and again, each time bringing forth new aspects of it in light of the analysis conducted in the chapter.

The disposition of the book makes it possible for Vallgårda to make both synchronic arguments, about the function of certain ideas, and diachronic ones, such as her claim that the relations between the missionaries and the local population changed over time as a consequence of emerging ideas about childhood. She offers the reader an opportunity to get close to the persons involved and experience glimpses of the extraordinarily complex web of emotional and racialised power that imbued their relationships. It is hard not to be simultaneously moved and disturbed by the story about the Indian child telling his adoptive Danish parents that if it were true that in heaven he is going to be white, he would rather die right away.

As is demonstrated in the book, old, allegedly universal categories, such as *Christian* or *convert*, as well as emerging ones like *the universal child*, were combined with and thus undermined by, particularist and racialised ideas as soon as they were used to guide a concrete practice. The oxymoronic term "heathen Christians" was frequently used in the missionary literature and is a case in point.

Vallgårda's discussion of how different types of categorisations blended in missionary literature and practice are to my mind the book's most interesting contribution. Yet, it also exposes one of the weaknesses of the study. Polemic is naturally not an end in itself, but Vallgårda's study appears to confirm the conclusions and arguments of earlier studies to such a degree that it occasionally seems to have merely illustrational character. Bluntly put, is the DSM case just more of the same? This tendency unnecessarily plays down the study's relevance for fields of research broader than that of imperial childhoods. Studies of imperial history more generally, not least of the French empire such as the works of Emmanuelle Saada and J.P. Daughton (both available in English), would have made useful discussion partners for the study. For example, Vallgårda argues that the Danish missionary activity played a part in the formation of Danish identity. This is an argument that has been made by scholars of French and British imperial history before, but contrary to these the Danish state did not make any territorial claims overseas at the time. Whether that made any difference on the ground would have been an interesting question to pose, and the Danish example could thus have provided qualifications to a more general imperial historical discussion.

All in all, Vallgårda's book is nevertheless a nuanced and well-written study that hopefully will find its way to readers also beyond its own immediate field. It offers important nuance to the history of an emerging new conception of childhood at the turn of the century. It shows that "saving brown babies from brown women" in Denmark's South Indian missions was not only a highly emotional matter, but also a project that helped define what it meant to be Danish, European and Christian. Finally, Vallgårda's view that emotional, bodily and intimate relations are part of the capitalist and global production of inequality still rings true in the 21st century, where an emerging industry of Indian surrogacy opens a new chapter in the history of imperial childhoods.

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