

OLSEN, Stephanie, ed. – *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 264.

The history of children and childhood and the history of emotion are both well-established fields that continue to produce exciting and innovative scholarship. Scholars working in these fields have begun to explore the intersections of the histories of children and emotions, and in doing so have illuminated fresh perspectives on children's histories. *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives* is an edited collection which resulted from a 2012 conference organized by editor Stephanie Olsen at the Centre for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, and is a significant and much-needed addition to this growing field of research.

One of the challenges of working on the histories of children and emotion has been a lack of theoretical explorations of the intersections of childhood and emotion. Olsen acknowledges this in her introduction, noting that there is a need “within the history of childhood, for a new analytical toolbox to open up the question of emotions in a global context” (p. 4), and to explore emotion as a point of connection between diverse histories of childhoods. This collection aims to meet that need by demonstrating “how to *do* a history of childhood and emotions” (p. 1). The contributors, according to Olsen, have found “new, common questions and novel approaches, which suggest innovative theoretical and methodological ways forward for the history of childhood, through the history of emotions” (p. 1).

The collection is comprised of twelve chapters, which aim to address the intersections of childhood and emotions in a global context. The United States, Colombia, England, Germany, Uganda, New Zealand, India, and China are all represented with England being somewhat overrepresented in three chapters. The contributors cover a wide range of topics, including child leprosy, Bengali fathers and children, child marriage in colonial India, citizenship, Protestant missions in New Zealand, and anti-vaccination crusades in England. These disparate topics, however, are united by common themes of emotional education, nation building, religion, and the colonial state. Moreover, as Olsen notes, “informing and undergirding all the contributions presented here is the conviction that notions of childhood and children's emotional formation are mutable” (p. 10).

The second chapter in the book is a theoretical exploration of “Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood” by Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander, and Stephanie Olsen. The purpose of the chapter is to serve as a lens through which to read the rest of the book, or as “an organizing principle for the whole” (p. 5). Olsen contends that this essay will provide “a new theoretical approach for the combined fields of the history of global childhood and the history of emotions” and a framework that will “set the agenda for future research in the global politics of childhood and in the history of emotions relating to childhood in particular” (p. 5). This is a high bar to set, but the chapter is indeed a much-needed exploration of ways for scholars to negotiate the overlapping subjects of global history, children and childhoods, and emotions.

Vallgård, Alexander, and Olsen propose the concept of emotional formation, which they argue refers “simultaneously to a pattern and a process” that allows for both the recognition of coherence in people’s ‘emotional comportment’ in given situations, as well as diversity within the individual experience of emotion and the mutability of emotional structures (pp. 20-21). When two emotional formations meet at what the authors refer to as an “emotional frontier,” there is the potential to reconfigure “relationships of power” (p. 28). As the chapters in the book demonstrate, children’s emotional education was a particularly fraught emotional frontier in colonial sites or as ways of constructing citizenship and the nation. The theoretical model outlined in chapter 2 provides a way for scholars to conceptualize “larger transnational trends concerning childhood and the emotions” in global history, while still leaving room to explore the local and the individual (p. 26).

Another purpose of the collection to show how “emotions allow us to access children’s voices and children’s agency in a new way” (p. 3). The focus in many of the chapters, however, is predominantly on adult expectations of children in relation to the state or colonialism. There is more to be done to access children’s voices and perspectives through emotion. M. Collette Plum’s exploration of Chinese orphans (ch. 11) and Swapna M. Banerjee’s assessment of the relationships between Bengali fathers and their children (ch. 12), however, are notable for their incorporation of children’s voices and perspectives. The collection is more successful in evaluating children’s responses to the “emotional frontiers” that are explored by the contributors. In particular, the contributors offer nuanced explorations how children embraced and resisted the messages that they were supposed to be receiving in public school dormitories (Hamlett, ch. 7), English hospitals and playgrounds (Kozlovsky, ch. 6), and schools in Colombia and New Zealand (Caruso, ch. 8; Morrison, ch. 5).

The introductory and theoretical frameworks for the collection that are outlined in the introduction and chapter 2 successfully draw together chapters that cover a variety of geographical areas and time periods. The case studies that are rooted in nation or colony together demonstrate that these national narratives have “embedded within them, multinational or transnational exchanges” (p. 10) that speak to the necessity of approaching the history of childhood from a global perspective. The conversations between authors that take place in the chapters and the aspects of children’s experiences and childhood that are illuminated through the lens of emotion demonstrate the fruitfulness of situating historical research at the intersections of childhood, emotion, and global history. This is a collection that historians of both children/childhood and emotion will want on their bookshelves.

Erin Millions  
*St. John’s College, University of Manitoba*