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Book review by Rudrani Dasgupta and Priscilla Alderson

Invernizzi, Antonella., Liebel, Manfred., Milne, Brian. and Budde, Rebecca. (eds)

"Children Out of Place" and Human Rights: In Memory of Judith Ennew, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. 2017. ISBN 9783319332505. Hardback. 267 pp. £66.99.

Colleagues of the late Dr Judith Ennew have presented 14 chapters that celebrate her life and work in this *liber amicorum* (book from friends). For decades, Judith combined research and advocacy for and with children and young people around the world in what the book generally terms the Eurocentric Global North and also the Global South. She constantly showed how greatly we can all learn from the different perspectives, and we therefore publish two reviews of the book, the first from India and the second from the UK.

"Why did you people rescue me, I did not want to be rescued!" was what a child sex worker said after she was extracted from her place of work. While working with an international anti-trafficking organisation in India that faithfully followed the 'rescue' modus operandi towards children in labour, such instances were common. While one cannot deny that many of the young people were certainly living in a condition of near-slavery, others were shouldering economic responsibilities for their large families; "I left school against my parents' wishes because the family needed an earning member", yet another thirteen-year old goldsmith informed me. Not surprisingly, these raid and rescue efforts often led to no discernible change in the lives of the children and their communities; the children often went back to work after their release or in worst case scenarios were re-trafficked.

Later in life, when I did encounter Judith Ennew's views on working children and their agency, my views and experiences felt somewhat vindicated. This review takes a look at the various ways in which Ennew and her colleagues have, in a sense 'written back' to the systemic hegemonies embedded within the theory and praxis of children's rights. It focuses on the lives of 'out of place' children with 'ambiguous childhoods' that do not fit into Eurocentric and normative forms of childhood, like the lives of street children and working children, for example.

Through her work with children in the global South, Ennew sought to challenge the Eurocentric perception of the global South as a site of the 'pathological childhood'. As a researcher and child rights advocate from India, I find it starkly evident that the dominant global perception of southern childhoods is that of a stage "fraught with difficulties" (Mieltieg and Ennew, p.28). Data on 'normal' children and childhoods is

very scarce. Chapter 3 on the right of children to be properly researched by Miljeteig and Ennew explores this epistemic violence within child rights discourse. They criticise the gaps in available disaggregated data on children and how scientific data is still unavailable in spite of technological advances.

In a similar vein, some of Ennew's colleagues further attempt to 'depathologise' childhoods in the South in this book. Drawing on her criticism of liberal international development efforts, Nandana Reddy takes a look at working children's movements and how they were systematically dismantled when the dominant narrative of the child as 'victim' began to be globally challenged by the children and their supporters. Liebel and Budde take it further in their chapter on the Eurocentrism prevalent in discussions on children and children's rights; they stress the need to analyse the term 'out of place', taking it further to understand out of place children as those who do not need mere reintegration into the existing machinery (like that of compulsory schooling) but a different social structure that understands and respects their ambiguity.

Alejandro Cussianovitch's chapter takes on the issue of power relations and how it is instrumentalised through hegemonic legal thought emanating from dominant power centres. Using the example of applying the Eurocentric model of compulsory schooling as a policy remedy for "out of place" children in Southern countries, it talks of an insidious erasure of indigenous experiences and perspectives. He applies Ennew's concept of unwritten rights to the rights of indigenous people and how these are gradually being 'depoliticised' by Eurocentric hegemonic legal thought manifesting itself through legislation that does not grasp the nuances of lived realities of communities.

Ennew was very critical of development reform carried out by the state and international development organisations. She called fundraising campaigns a "pornography of misery" (Liebel and Invernizzi, p.2). Both Nandana Reddy and Liebel in their respective chapters support this critique. Liebel discusses how the language of rights is used to further the agenda of philanthropic donors and relief organisations. These agendas are often removed from the indigenous realities and the nuances all get lost in the race for funding and achieving targets in order to receive more funding. Similarly, Reddy talks about how current efforts to 'abolish' child labour often ignore the fundamental reasons behind why children work, the condition of their families and the communities. Drawing on Cussianovitch's remark on legislation being either a remedy or a poison, these abolitionist policies often expose out of place children to further dangers.

One of Ennew's greatest contributions to the discourse on children's rights was their right to be properly researched. She was highly critical about the ways in which data on children are both produced and interpreted. One of her main points of contention was that decades after near universal ratification of the CRC, scientifically rigorous

data on the lives of children was still unavailable, in spite of the CRC Committee constantly requesting state parties for better data.

This book is a befitting tribute to the life and work of Judith Ennew, a woman who was not afraid of questioning norms and hegemonies. Her colleagues too, have not shied away from exploring rather sensitive yet much needed debates on Eurocentrism, power, colonisation and challenging such normative ideas embedded within the field of children's rights. At the same time, given that Judith Ennew believed in children being at the centre of their discussion, this book would have greatly benefitted by the presence of child voices, especially the much spoken about out of place children. Further, given the current political climate the book was written in, there could have been a focus on other groups of out of place children like child soldiers and refugee children.

Indeed, there is much left to do as Ennew's legacy needs to be carried forward. As the juggernaut of neo-liberal development policies marches on unabated in the global South, it is time for researchers and activists on both sides to step back and take stock. There is still a chasm between research and frontline activities that needs to be bridged. Lack of scientific information on children's lives stemming from inefficient data production methods leads to the development and implementation of blunt policy instruments that are often counter-productive towards children and their communities. The voices of young people on their realities and experiences need to be heard beyond tokenism. The out of place children do not have to be 'put in place'; rather, newer elastic spaces have to be created in order to support their lives and perspectives.

Rudrani Dasgupta
Action Aid, India

In 1996 I had an inspiring meeting with Judith Ennew at a conference. My 4-year-old granddaughter had been ill for months and had just been diagnosed, that day, with Type I diabetes. I was thinking how terribly limited her whole future life would be, when Judith told me that she too had diabetes and had never let it limit her life. Since Judith was about the most adventurous person I knew, she convinced me to be far more hopeful. She also gave me a glimpse of how she has inspired countless children and adults around the world with her hard-won knowledge, courage and confidence.

This review considers a few of the key themes that Judith pioneered with colleagues and how they inform and transform our thinking in the Global North about childhood and rights: "children out of place"; attention both to political and economic structures and also to children's own mature agency; how ideas from the Eurocentric Enlightenment, such as Christianity, Marxism and human rights, can inform and strengthen postcolonial work; and children's versus human rights.

By identifying “children out of place”, Judith challenged those who blame children for living and working on the streets, for being exploited and abused, for doing sex work and other stigmatised means of earning a meagre living. These children have not wilfully moved out of a secure place of protected childhood, as idealised in the Global North, but have rather been forced into finding their own ways to survive. Besides celebrating children’s courage and agency, Judith shifted attention to the economic and political systems that deprive so many of them of adults’ care and protection, and force them into a precarious struggle to survive. Judith moved on from working to eliminate child labour into respecting and supporting child workers and their campaigns to improve their working conditions and rights.

Among the vital lessons for Northern researchers, policy makers, NGOs and philanthropists, Judith’s work shows how futile and even harmful our efforts can be to “rescue” children in the Global South and try to place them inside some imagined safe childhood place. This can violate their rights and leave them in worse conditions, when systems to support the supposed rescue do not exist. To be at all useful, our research, policy and practice have to begin by listening respectfully to the children’s own expert views of their experiences, needs and hopes, and to examine critically with them how social structures are opening or closing their routes into an easier life, and what happens to them after we have intervened.

Compelling examples from the Global South, reported by Judith and colleagues, can also deepen our insights into “children out of place” in the Global North, such as the thousands who are sexually abused, who are mentally ill and/or in prison, so that we can apply the same social justice standards of research and policy for them too, by attending critically to political and economic structures as Judith advocated. We can also learn so much about children’s own mature agency and capacities, when they grapple in the Global South with almost overwhelming problems. If sheltered children in the Global North, who have little opportunity to show their actual abilities, are misread as inevitably weak and helpless, they are taken to prove their own need for powerful adult control, as well as their folly if they resist. Yet this is like assuming that animals confined and protected in zoos reveal their true nature. Reports by Judith and colleagues, however, show that when children live fully in the “mainstream, adult world”, they demonstrate their courage, competencies, imaginative resourcefulness and the generous solidarity of many, when these are tested to the limit by adversities outside the protections we take to be “normal childhood”.

Colleagues around the world who explain and celebrate Judith’s work on social justice in this book, besides the four editors, include Per Miljeteig, Michael Bourdillon, Nandana Reddy, Alejandro Cussianovich, Anne Trine Kjørholt, Henk van Beers, Jasmin Lim and Roxana Waterson, Sharon Bessell and Harioxt Beazley. The chapter by Glen Miles and Paul Stephens is perhaps the best and most original in its long section by Judith herself “Against their will” (pp. 202-210). She reviewed the

neglected subject of all children's rights in relation to their spirituality. Her scholarly critique, of the much misinterpreted biblical text "make disciples of all nations", refutes efforts to convert children and adults into an enforced Christianity, which causes so much violence and misery. Judith did not advocate Christianity as a literal creed, but rather as an active living faith of loving respect, springing from spirituality that has social and political dimensions and can be inspired by any of the great religions or by none. Judith's Christian faith was enriched by Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic colleagues and, like Jesus, she saw true spirituality in childlike qualities.

This fine chapter is part of Judith's great contribution to postcolonial research. Some postcolonial researchers dismiss all Enlightenment ideas as oppressively colonial. However, this denies to colonised people the ideas, methods and systems that most powerfully oppose colonialism: international human rights that partly grew out of religious faiths. As the United Nations agreed in 1948 and 1989, "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". Paradoxically, respect for each individual is the only way to ensure respect for everyone, and that respect can include honouring relationships, families and communities. Ironically, the false claim that the human rights of equal, mutual respect for all merely involves selfish individualism, reduces a primary means of opposing neo-liberalism, rights, into the very qualities that drive neoliberalism and colonialism. The work by Judith and colleagues is grounded in human rights, and Manfred Liebel's chapter "Against the postcolonial capture of childhood in the Global South" gives an excellent review of postcolonialism and the crucial role of human rights in overcoming colonialism and its continuing effects.

Judith also valued another much misunderstood and maligned originally European resource, Marx's work and his lasting influence through Rosa Luxemburg, Paulo Freire and others, to inform and strengthen postcolonial emancipatory work with children and adults.

One more example, among the great array of fresh thinking, is Judith's disbelief in children's rights. She saw children as bearers of human rights like all other people, and she looked forward to the time when we no longer need to specify certain forms of rights for particular groups but have shared standards for everyone, so that the UNCRC might no longer be needed.

This is a richly rewarding book, which vividly records Judith's living legacy of her challenging new ideas and approaches in research, advocacy, publishing, activism, teaching and nurturing the younger generation of researchers and workers for children's rights as well as children themselves. One or two chapters by children and young people on their work with Judith would have been a welcome addition. The final chapter "unfinished with so much left to do" works as a strong agenda for future childhood research and advocacy in the Global North and South.

Priscilla Alderson
University College London