Chapter 26

Landscapes of Childhood and Youth

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Introduction

In March 2001 a poster campaign advertising Martin Amis's new autobiography *Experience* was banned by the London Underground. The poster displayed a photograph of Amis as a young boy scowling defiantly back at the camera, unlit cigarette balancing between his lips (see figure 26.1). The reason for withdrawing the campaign was said to be because it featured an illegal act – underage smoking – that might encourage other children to follow suit (*Guardian*, March 22, 2001: 1). The significance of this event, however, extends beyond these given reasons. Banning the advert was not an isolated incidence of moral or even legal judgment; rather, it has to be understood within what Gill Valentine (1996a: 581) calls the "moral landscape of childhood" – the evolving discourse through which the limits of childhood are established and negotiated. The photograph of young Amis was considered unacceptable because he was exhibited indulging in an adult act which challenges received notions of children as innocent, uncorrupted by adult vices, and marked by a lack of authority and agency. I suggest, therefore, that in addition to disapproving of the illegality of the action portrayed, the London Underground withdrew the advert because it breached the acceptable limits of childhood.

The nature of these limits – the discourses through which we know children – has become increasingly relevant in cultural geography; not simply because children as a social group have become a distinct focus of study but because there is an historical and cultural geography to discourses of childhood. The particular understanding of childhood innocence that mediated the debate between Amis's publisher and the London Underground is not constant; rather, in different contexts, the expectations, demands, and treatment of childhood are observably distinct. The initial assertion that childhood does not exist as a universal, timeless category was proposed by the historian Philippe Ariès (1962). In *Centuries of Childhood*, Ariès traces family life in Europe from the Middle Ages, arguing that childhood, as a conceptual category, emerged gradually from the sixteenth century. Prior to that, children, as we recognize them today, were simply considered to be miniature adults. At the age of 6 or 7 children were expected to assume adult responsibilities, but as

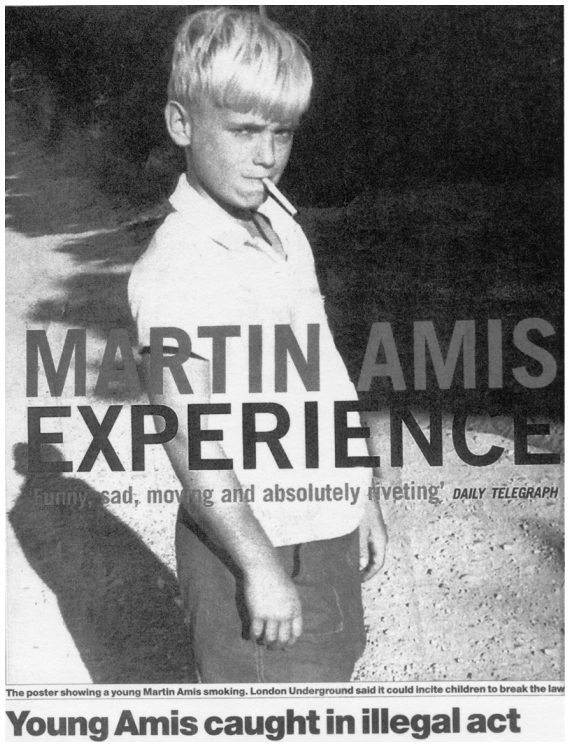

Figure 26.1 *Experience* by Martin Amis (reproduced by permission of The Random House Group Ltd and *The Guardian*)

young infants they were largely ignored. Aitken (2001a: 120) notes that this did not necessarily imply a lack of adult–child relations, but that "indifference rather than difference marked those relations." It was not until the Enlightenment philosophy of the eighteenth century, in particular the writings of Rousseau, that a modern conception of childhood becomes legible. Between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, childhood developed as a culturally resonant, generationally defined concept. Children were gradually removed from adult spaces and provided with environments catering specifically for 'children's' needs. As many have observed, Ariès's substantive contribution to child studies is his conclusion that childhood cannot be thought of as an absolute age-based phenomenon; it exists contextually and indeed, at points in time, has not existed at all (Jenks 1996; James, Jenks, & Prout 1998; Aitken 2001a; 2001b; and Valentine 1996a; Valentine et al. 2000).

This observation has fueled a wealth of research on the progressive discourses through which childhood has been imagined, and forms a central component of new geographies of childhood, children, and youth.[1] Children have been a long-standing area of concern in geography since the 1970s and early 1980s. Early work by Jim Blaut and David Stea (Blaut & Stea 1971 and 1974) established a research agenda in children's geographical learning, including their capacity to learn mapping

skills and to cognate macrospatial concepts at an earlier age than was conventionally assumed by Piagetian models of development. From this work, a distinct program of research on child development and spatial cognition established space and place as fundamental aspects of children's knowledge acquisition (for example, Matthews 1984; Downs 1985; Downs & Liben 1991; and Golledge et al. 1985). While this work is no longer the dominant approach in children's geographies, and has been criticized for applying instrumental ways of knowing to a phantom universal child (Aitken 2001b), it continues to produce new research and lively debate (see for example Blaut 1997a; 1997b; and Liben & Downs 1997a, 1997b). A parallel strand of research also originating in the 1970s provides a more direct lineage to current work. William Bunge's 'expeditions' in Detroit and Toronto began a more ethnographic approach to the study of children (Bunge 1973; Bunge & Bordessa 1975). Their child-centered and politicized agenda can be linked to ensuing humanistic, ethnographic work such as Roger Hart's (1979) study of children's experience of space and place in a small New England town (Aitken 2001b).

This latter strand of research – sociological and ethnographic in nature – has been revived in the late 1990s to produce a flourishing area of research on children's geographies. Influenced by similar developments in sociology, social anthropology, and cultural studies (James, Jenks, & Prout 1998; Mayall 1994; Caputo 1995; Qvortrup et al. 1994), geographers have engaged in a critical reorientation of child studies. The determining feature of this work has been to urge researchers to "study children as social actors, as beings in their own right rather than as pre-adult becomings" (Holloway & Valentine 2000a: 5). This involves reimagining children as competent decision-makers, self-aware individuals, and creative participants in social life. The diverse and increasingly numerous contributions to this new field accept this reformulation to varying degrees (see McKendrick 2000 for an inventory of work to date). In this chapter, however, I focus primarily on that work which comes from a cultural geographic perspective.[2] This is due in part to the nature of this volume, but more importantly, because recent contributions to children's geographies are broadly sympathetic to cultural geographic themes. Before moving to the main themes that organize this chapter, I briefly map out these theoretical affinities.

In the early 1990s a debate in *Area* highlighted the need for geography to engage more directly with the geography of children (James 1990; Sibley 1991; Winchester 1991). With the exception of Sibley, however, the call demanded that children be studied because they have unique characteristics, a distinctive geography, and are demographically significant (James 1990). The following year, however, Philo (1992) submitted a more specific proposal that the complex geographies of children, as demonstrated by Colin Ward's work (1978; 1990), should galvanize specific attention from cultural geography. Philo identifies at least three themes in Ward's work that resonate with cultural geography. First, children's social exclusion accords with cultural geography's interest in "recovering the geographies of 'other' human groupings" (Philo 1992: 193). Second, Ward's observation that childhood is a social construction corresponds with cultural geography's focus on the instability of social categories and its heightened attention to the representational qualities of social life. And third, Ward's observance of both geographies of children and children's geographies echoes the tension between structure and agency that pervades much cultural geographic work.[3]

Over the last few years an increasing volume of work has theorized childhood and children's lives in ways that are compatible with the conceptual tools of cultural geography. The balance of this chapter presents a selection of current work on children's geographies that is loosely organized around the following themes: *Spaces of childhood* examines the changing nature of childhood and the various institutions and spaces through which childhood is negotiated; *Children's spaces* explores geographers' desire to understand the creative processes through which children live, including their appropriation and negotiation of adult spaces; *Methodological and ethical spaces* explores the dilemmas generated by researching children; and I conclude with a section on *Growing up?* in which I draw some brief conclusions about the future direction of children's geographies.

Spaces of Childhood

Despite the emphasis on children's viability as creative social actors, there remains considerable interest in the discourses and institutions through which childhood is reproduced. While this work retains a sense of children's competency, it prioritizes the discursive processes and institutional containment that constitutes children's lives. Referring to the current insistence on documenting children's autonomy, Mary Thomas (2000: 577) argues that we must also "acknowledge that childhood *is* a time of socialization, a phase of life when young individuals' times and spaces are structured, and institutionalized, by adults" (emphasis in original). The body of work I discuss in this section suggests that childhood is an ideological construct and that the norms and boundaries within which childhood *ought* to operate require careful attention. These are not simply abstract ideas, however. Discourses of childhood are invariably located in particular spaces: the home, school, playground, street, countryside, city, nation (Holloway & Valentine 2000a). Furthermore, these spaces are not discrete and bounded entities but operate in and through one another. Here matters of scale inflect the operation of discourses, in that the spatiality of nationhood is mediated through smaller scale institutional environments such as the school and the playground. Likewise, many authors illustrate how gender, sexuality, race and class operate within and through these spaces to constitute them in different ways. Through this relationship between discourse and space – what Holloway and Valentine (2000a: 15) call 'spatial discourses' – a geography of childhood emerges that attempts to fix a proper place for children. I end this section by examining the anxieties produced by children who exceed these limits.

Feminist geographers and historians have observed that during the nineteenth century there was a discursive reallocation of women and family to the private sphere and men and work to the public (Davidoff & Hall 1987; Nicholson 1986; Bondi & Domosh 1998). Of significance here is the fact that, along with women, the home emerged as *the* proper place for children. As James, Jenks, and Prout (1998: 53) write, during this period, home was constituted as a "space of childhood through its binding of the concepts of 'family' and 'home' into 'the modern domestic ideal.'" The importance of this condition is apparent throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. In the morally charged discourse of parenting there remains pressure on working mothers to find child care facilities that "reproduce home-style environments for their children" (Holloway & Valentine 2000a: 16).

Similarly, the construction of the home as a site where women take care of children also impacts on the institution of fatherhood. Aitken (2000) finds this so pervasive that despite men's increased parenting responsibilities in the home, their role is still seen as 'helping out' rather than as the principal caregiver.

Since the early twentieth century, the allocation of children to the home has produced a tension between public youth culture and the private virtue of the family. Lisa Jacobson (1997) notes that the emergence of an autonomous youth culture in the United States in the early twentieth century alarmed the middle classes by threatening to reduce the moral influence of the family. An increasingly commercialized leisure industry available in the city, and in particular on the street, was seen as a morally inferior option to the safe play spaces of the home. In response, between 1920 and 1940, play rooms and nurseries were refashioned to combat the increasingly tempting commercial options. Moments like this provide precedence for late twentieth-century debates about the relative suitability of public versus private leisure: if home space is the 'proper' place for children, then public space – the street – is clearly 'improper.'

Gill Valentine (1996a, 1996b, 1997) has documented a particular rendition of this discourse that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. During this period, North America and Western Europe witnessed rising panic over children's vulnerability in public space. The anxiety was connected to fear of sexual assault, abduction, and murder, so-called 'stranger danger,' and has been heightened yet further by the media frenzy surrounding the abduction and murder of 8-year-old Sarah Payne. This phenomenon is clearly not new, but feeds off and into well established discourses. Not only does it add a new dimension to the idea of home as sanctuary and street as dangerous, but, Valentine (1996a) observes, there is a simultaneous reinvigoration of the classic opposition between the innocence and wickedness of childhood. Jenks (1996) describes these identities as Dionysian and Apollonian, the former originating in the pre-Enlightenment belief that children are born with original sin that requires correction, the latter referring to Rousseau's judgment that children are born innocent and it is experience of the world that corrupts. Valentine (1996a) illustrates how both versions of childhood exist simultaneously in discourses about public safety. On the one hand, parents' desire to protect their children from the street draws on assumptions about children's innocence and vulnerability. These same parents, however, simultaneously demonize other children – those who *do* occupy the street – as necessarily corrupt and evil. It is clear that in a variety of contexts, the interpretation of child identity is constituted by their placing in space. Throughout the twentieth century, from the invention of the 'juvenile delinquent' in the early 1900s to the 'youth gangs' in the latter quarter, abnormality has been defined by children's occupation of the wrong space (Ruddick 1996).

In the process of constituting the nature of childhood spaces and children's identities, spatial discourses have significant effects on the way space is experienced. Numerous media-generated panics, including a warning issued by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children urging parents not to let their children play unsupervised during the summer months (*Guardian*, Aug. 2, 1999), has produced an observable retreat of childhood back into the home. In 1999, statistics suggested only 2 in 10 mothers allowed their children to play unsupervised (BBC

Radio Four, July 22, 1999). Naturally, this retreat has effects on the dynamics of home space.[4] Sara McNamee (1998) finds that since boys traditionally enjoyed greater public freedom than girls, the effective curfew has resulted in boys recolonizing domestic space and eroding girls' sense of control within the home. On the other hand, children's increased use of domestic computers often subverts their supposed inferiority in the family hierarchy, since children are often more computer literate than their parents (Holloway & Valentine 2001).

Along with the home, the school is the single most important – in terms of time – institutional space in which childhood is experienced in Western societies. Much of the literature on childhood discusses the school in terms of discipline. The formal institutional space of the school is seen as a purposeful attempt to socialize children to conform to social norms, perform as individuals, accept authority, and interact sociably (Rivlin & Wolfe 1985). In other words, schools provide a space through which citizenly performances are reared. Aitken (2001b: 55) writes "[i]f the major purpose of school is to socialize children with regard to their roles in life and their places in society, then perhaps it also serves the larger stratified society by inculcating compliant citizens and productive workers who will be prepared to assume roles considered appropriate to the pretension of their race, class and gender identities." In illustrating precisely how school space is orchestrated around these intentions, many authors rely on Foucault's (1979) work on discipline (Walkerdine 1985; James, Jenks, & Prout 1998; Kirk 1998; Gagen 2000a). Such analyses examine school architecture, classroom seating, techniques of assessment, curriculum design, and physical exercise regimes as mechanisms and spaces through which disciplinary practices strive to ensure the correct development of children.

In doing so, however, authors observe that the school is not a bounded entity but is radically porous. Within the seemingly finite locations around the school – corridor, playground, or classroom – multiple discourses interpenetrate. While this applies to an infinite variety of networks, discourses of gender and sexuality have received particularly close scrutiny. For instance, Holloway, Valentine, and Bingham's (2000) work on the IT classroom in British secondary schools observes that through the use of computers, girls and boys police each others' gender and sexual identities, drawing from heterosexist understandings of normalcy. In particular, boys who are perceived as adept computer users are stigmatized as 'geeks' or 'nerds'; but crucially, this identity is further marginalized by being associated with femininity. Thus, they argue, computer competence is made legible through the operation of heterosexual norms of gender and sexuality. In addition, significant work has mapped the operation of gender and sexuality through girls' schooled bodies (Lesko 1988; Hyams 2000). In Melissa Hyams' (2000) work on adolescent Latinas in a Los Angeles high school she argues that girls' sexuality, understood through dress codes, bodily comportment, and expressive behavior, is regulated and self-regulated through its relationship to academic success. By allying success with propriety and failure with overt sexuality, the school encourages girls to dress and behave more conservatively. This confirms other authors' observation that since the advent of compulsory schooling in the late nineteenth century, education discourses have consistently rewarded boys for misbehavior, indeed it is taken as a marker of young masculinity, while girls are expected to be discreet and deferential (Walkerdine 1985; Brown 1990; Gagen 2001).

Gender and sexuality are just two dimensions through which children experience school space. As an open network of relationships, operating on a variety of spatial and temporal scales, the school represents a complex nerve center of social identities. Temporally, the school imagines itself as a preparatory ground for future identities. Similarly, the school connects a variety of other spaces laterally, from those that orbit its immediate surrounds, like the playground, playing field, or remote field site, to those that are more indirectly tethered, like the home, nation and empire. National spaces, for instance, are increasingly connected via the internet and email – often accessed from the classroom – and along with other global technologies, mediate the way children imagine other national identities (Hague 2001; Holloway & Valentine 2000b). Earlier in the century, nationhood played a more explicit role in the peripheral spaces of the school. In the United States, amidst fears that the nation was under siege from immigration and urban transformation, reformers instituted a regime of playground activities that sought to actively construct national consciousness through games and sport (Gagen 2000b). Similarly, Ploszajska (1998) uses the example of geography field trips to illustrate how the school symbolically recreated spaces of empire in order to instill colonial ideology in the fledgling nation. In these examples, the school literally and metaphorically reaches out to other spaces, drawing from, reconstituting and being reconstituted by a range of other, local, national, and global spaces.

Much of this section has been preoccupied with the spaces designated for childhood, examining, along the way, the enactment of discourses that mediate experience of these spaces. I want to end this section by turning briefly to examples of what happens when there is a mismatch: when children do not comply with the expected norms of childhood. If we cast back for a moment to the image at the opening of this chapter of the young Martin Amis flaunting his cigarette like a trophy of defiance, it doesn't stretch the imagination far to understand this as an 'unchildlike' act (Aitken 2001b). By this term, Aitken (2001b: 147) refers to those acts which "seem to ascribe to young people an independence, autonomy and self-interest that is irreconcilable with the nature of childhood as prescribed through most of the nineteenth and twentieth century." Child labor in the developing world is constructed along just such lines (Roberts 1998). The image of the child worker fails to conform to Western understandings of childhood which prescribe education, play, care, and protection rather than labor, responsibility, and hardship. The notion of unchildlike acts can also be usefully spatialized to recall Tim Cresswell's (1996) theory of transgression. For Cresswell, transgression does not simply imply improper acts, but rather, their performance in the wrong place. Throughout the work on spaces of childhood it is clear that there are proper and improper places for children to live, work, and play, as well as appropriate intervals in the lifecycle in which to assume those roles.

Children's Spaces

The child still scrawls and daubs on his [*sic*] schoolbooks; even if he is punished for this crime, he has made a space for himself and signs his existence as an author on it. (de Certeau 1984: 31)

The impulse to reinvent children as independent social actors has produced a body of work that explores children's spatial independence. Here, children are theorized as creative individuals, shaping and subverting the social world around them. Much of this work references – in spirit if not by citation – the early work of Roger Hart (1979) and Colin Ward (1978, 1990) whose research with children strove to document the different ways children make sense of the world through play, exploration and everyday being. "All children have an urge to explore the landscape around them, to learn about it, to give order to it, and to invest it with meaning – both shared and private" (Hart 1979: 3). While more recent contributions modify the universalizing tendency to speak of *all* children, they retain many of the methods and assumptions first established here.

Like those original pieces by Hart and Ward, recent work acknowledges the bequeathed nature of the social world in which children create spaces. Despite emphasizing the creative qualities of children's lives this work still regards children's actions as operating within or in response to an adult or 'adultist' structure of space (Valentine 1996b). There is an echo here of Michel de Certeau's (1984) notion of spatial practice. In everyday life, de Certeau identifies a set of practices which graft themselves onto the existing structures of life. He names these the *tactics* of the weak, in opposition to the *strategies* set in place by the powerful. De Certeau is more concerned with tactics than with strategies. He is interested in what he calls the poetry of everyday life: styles of action, modalities of operation that can only make use of "prefabricated space" (ibid.: 34). Similarly, the literature on children's geographies theorizes their actions as creative and cunning, but their worlds always exist within an 'official' space that is adult, permanent and more powerful.

To narrate children's worlds in this way relies on a fundamental assumption: that is, the belief that children are profoundly different from adults. This also has implications for children's methodologies, and I will return to this later in the chapter, but it is important here as it structures the way geographers understand children's spaces. Owain Jones (2000: 29), for instance, describes childhood as radically other: "The otherness of childhood is profound, as many of the symbolic orders which routinely but deeply structure adult life, such as time, money, property, sex, mortality and Euclidean space melt away." Thought of like this, children's spatial worlds become alien too. Children's blindness to adult mappings of space, their necessary ignorance of property boundaries, symbolic divisions, street patterns and pavements, and public/private allocations, results in an entirely different set of possibilities for spatial behavior. Children are more likely to contrive short cuts, to redefine spatial boundaries, or ignore them altogether, to rename places according to their own creative imaginaries, or reverse commonplace assumptions about fear and safety. For Jones (2000) these opportunities are magnified in a rural setting. Here, fears about children's safety are tempered by narratives of the rural idyll as parents appear more willing to permit their children the freedom to explore (although see Smith & Barker 2001, for evidence that rural childhoods are becoming more restrictive, and Tucker & Matthew 2001, for evidence that rural childhoods are becoming particularly restrictive for girls).

Similarly, Chris Philo (2000) explores the uniqueness of children's worlds, but does so using an adult's recollections of their own 'intimate geographies' of

childhood. Philo's recounting of Hunter Diack's memories, reconstructed in the form of a novel, offers an experience of child space based on a remembered world. While this method is not unprecedented, either in its use of adult memories of childhood (see Sibley 1995b; and the coda to Hart 1979) or in its use of fiction to understand geographies of childhood (for example Phillips 1997), others question the ease with which these memories can readily access childhood. With such an insistence on the insurmountable gulf between the adult and child worlds, Jones (2001) suggests that adult memories are a problematic source of children's spatial experience. "Once childhood is superseded by adult stocks of knowledge, those filters can never be removed to get back to earlier states. Adult constructions and memories of what it is/was to be a child are invariably processed through *adultness*" (Jones 2001: 177).

Much of the literature on this theme concerns children's imaginative space making. An additional strand of work examines the practical rather than an imaginative reappropriation of space. This work is carried out in the context of debates about the increasing exclusion of young people from public space (as discussed earlier), and considers, instead, how young people make use of public space for their own needs. Despite the frequently observed retreat of children from public space, Matthews, Limb, and Taylor (2000: 64) argue that "[f]or a substantial residual of young people, the street remains an important part of their everyday lives, a place where they retain some autonomy over space." This is particularly notable in the case of girls, who are traditionally thought to have been excluded from street culture (Griffin 1985). Recent research finds, instead, that girls are able to use the street as a positive space, to chat, hang around, and exploit to their advantage (Skelton 2000). This work tends to look at young people's presence on the street as a marker of social relations rather than simply as a meaningful phenomenon in its own right.

A considerable volume of work on children's spaces focuses on play and leisure outside or on the street, perhaps because this is where the most creative opportunities lie. But with the expanding literature on children's geographies, many authors have explored children's spatial agency in other settings: in the classroom (Holloway, Valentine, & Bingham 2000), in cyberspace (Valentine, Holloway, & Bingham 2000), in the developing world (Punch 2000; Katz 1993, 1994), in nightclubs (Malbon 1998). Like other work, this focuses on the different ways children and young people experience, transform, and manipulate the everyday spaces of their lives.

Methodological and Ethical Spaces

Until quite recently, children's geographies had devoted limited space to ethical questions. While methodological issues have traditionally been more apparent, these too are now receiving more attention. There are a variety of reasons for this new awareness – legal, intellectual, and political – but almost invariably, researchers operate with two assumptions. The first, mentioned above, presupposes that child and adult identities are fractured by differences, which require unique methodologies to yield understanding. The second, following from the first, is that adult–child difference is characterized by an imbalance of power that places the onus on adults to negotiate research safely and ethically. The issues are both practical and philosophical: those that are preoccupied with techniques and strategies; and those that are con-

cerned with underlying assumptions and problematics that inflect research with children. Of course, these can rarely be neatly separated.

The most obvious change in the way researchers approach children's geographies is in the terminology used to describe the relationship between researcher and researched. Whereas previously it was common to refer to research 'on' children, most now describe working 'with' children. This linguistic shift responds to the broader effort to see children as complete individuals to be engaged with rather than seen simply as inert objects to be studied. Consequently, many researchers consider qualitative, and specifically ethnographic, methods more appropriate for research 'with' children as it allows sustained interaction which treats children as individuals.

Throughout the research process, methodologies encourage children's full participation. As Valentine (1999: 142) reasons, "valid accounts of children's lives can only be obtained by engaging directly with children and treating them as independent actors." To begin with, children need to *consent*, rather than merely *assent*, to the research (Valentine 1999). As minors, their legal status as independent decision makers is ambiguous. But rather than rely on consent by proxy from parents or guardians, researchers should supplement that with permission from children themselves (Valentine 1999). Other strategies can also maximize children's control over their involvement in research. Valentine (1999) suggests allowing children to opt in rather than opt out of participation, while others advocate children's involvement in the actual design of the research, arguing that if children are responsible for the terms of their participation the research will elicit the most valuable responses (Skelton 2001). Alternatively, some methodologies inherently prioritize children's involvement such as autophotography, whereby children are given disposable cameras to document their individual visual experience of places (Aitken & Wingate 1993). These strategies are all designed to empower children throughout the research and minimize the power imbalance that structures adult–child relations (Matthews 2001).

An issue researchers have found particularly thorny relates to the geography of the research process itself; specifically, the selection of an appropriate location to conduct interviews. Since most research with young people involves school-age children, and access is often obtained via the school, it is an obvious location for interviews. Schools can offer safe environments, there are always plenty of people around, and it is a familiar space to children. Conversely, schools pose a number of problems. First, it is often extremely hard to guarantee privacy and therefore confidentiality (Valentine 1999; McDowell 2001), a particularly acute problem for research with vulnerable groups such as self-identified lesbian and gay young people (Valentine, Butler, & Skelton 2001). Equally, the home can be problematic for the same reasons. While a young person's bedroom can offer private sanctuary and therefore provide a safe interview space (Valentine 1999), McDowell questions the ethics of this choice. Citing guidelines drawn up by the Social Research Association, she suggests that researchers should "take scrupulous care to avoid situations that are open to the possibilities of abusive behaviour" (McDowell 2001: 92). This is doubly crucial for male researchers in the increasingly paranoiac climate surrounding pedophilia (Horton 2001). Both McDowell (2001) and Valentine, Butler, and Skelton (2001) agree that public or community spaces (youth centers, shopping malls) offer the safety and privacy to conduct sensitive conversations and provide a neutral space in which the hierarchies of educational institutions are temporarily set aside.

The issue of confidentiality raises important questions about intervention during the research. Interviews can often reveal compromising facts about children, and while most agree that information regarding young people's legal transgressions ought to be protected, if an individual is in danger, intervention is more justifiable (Valentine 1999). In other situations, particularly during participant-observation work, a researcher might witness abusive or oppressive behavior between children and have to contemplate intervening in the situation (Morris-Roberts 2001). Aitken (2001c: 125) argues that these kinds of questions arise in the 'immediacy of fieldwork' and cannot be resolved by "theoretical and philosophical pretensions." Rather, they need to be dealt with and judged in the urgency of that moment.

Like all social and cultural research, children's geographies has been obliged to reflect on the politics of representation. Again, the perceived gulf generated by adult–child difference is seen to produce an obstacle to understanding that requires negotiation. For Owain Jones (2001) this difference has to be transcended ethically to engage with children's lives. He writes, "[f]rom adult perspectives children's geographies may well appear bizarre and irrational, and the challenge is to translate these into the rational language of academic research and writing without, in the process, losing those very characteristics which may be at the center of understanding children's geographies" (Jones 2001: 177). For Jones this means giving up any aspiration to represent childhood completely. And while he applauds the various standards being established to make research with children more ethically responsible, he worries that this is "closing in on the otherness of childhood" (Jones 2001: 177–8). Rather than attempt to produce more accurate accounts of children's lives, representations of children should always acknowledge the ultimate unknowability of childhood.

The issue of representation is central to historical geographies of childhood; however, the imperatives described above are only relevant within current social contexts. Children's history provides no opportunities to seek consent, design participatory research, and intervene directly in children's lives. The dilemmas rest instead on the relationship between the historical text, the context, and the researcher. While representing experience is always a more problematic enterprise than many children's geographies of the present acknowledge, historical research is perhaps even more challenged. Here, the practice of writing child-centered histories has to rely on representations of children, produced by adults, for a particular purpose. Children's 'experience,' as such, is irreducible to a knowable account since their lives are always contained by the narrative of the archive. While this establishes a set of limits to the representation of childhood, it does not signal an interpretive impasse. Rather, it is often the case that archives record children's actions, and those actions, rather than some intangible notion of experience, reveal their participation in the world (Gagen 2001).

Conclusions: Growing Up?

In this chapter I have focused on those aspects of children's geographies that have thematic synergies with cultural geography. I began by looking at the construction of childhood in relation to particular spaces. This not only highlights the way children's identities are co-constituted spatially, but also illustrates the unease generated

by unchildlike acts, particularly when those are defined by a breach of the spatial limits of childhood. The next section examined the various ways children creatively manipulate adult constructions of space to create their own imaginative geographies, or simply the ways they subvert commonplace uses of space, particularly public space. The final section on ethics and methodologies suggests some of the ways children's geographers have endeavored to ensure a safe and just research process that takes into account children's rights and independence.

The chapter is far from an exhaustive account of children's geographies to date, but outlines some of the principal themes that are allied with cultural geography. These are not, however, the only intradisciplinary connections; there are links to other geographical subfields – economic, environmental, behavioral, development – to name a few. As children's geographies reaches a critical mass, many of its advocates caution against partitioning the work in a discrete subfield, urging instead that it continues to reach across human geography's diverse interests. That said, there are other concerns, integral to the work itself, that need to be addressed. So far, children's geographies has been preoccupied with adult–child relations. This division forms the bedrock of analysis across the spectrum of research. While Valentine and Holloway (2001) argue that this is a necessary strategy to do justice to children as coherent social group, it is perhaps time to interrogate the many and varied lines of power *between* children that disrupt this coherence. Power saturates child–child relations too, and until the field engages with these, we risk neglecting the many ways children inflict harm and hurt on each other, and indeed on adults.

NOTES

1. Aitken (2001b) observes that there is a politics to the terminology employed in writing about children. He notes that it is significant to speak "of childhood and adolescence rather than simply children and young people. The former are placeless and abstract . . . They suggest a certain formal and sophisticated understanding of what and when it is to be a child or teenager, one that abstracts from the particularities of day-to-day lived experiences" (p. 21). I argue that it is vital to attend to both permutations of what it means to be a child, as neither, alone, can account for the meaning and experience of childhood. I should also clarify a point about age distinctions here. There is some ambiguity about the boundaries of 'childhood' and 'youth.' Adolescence is a notoriously 'fuzzy' zone which falls between adult and child worlds (Sibley 1995b). Much of the literature approaches each case individually, using the term youth, adolescence, children, childhood or simply young people as befits the context of the work. My review mirrors this ambiguity, drawing from literature on the very young to late teens.
2. Other work on children within geography drawing from environmental psychology, design and planning, transportation, policy, and development studies, is not covered here, but comprehensive statements and bibliographies can be found elsewhere (Matthews 1992; McKendrick 2000).
3. Matthew and Limb (1999) make similar demands for children to be studied by cultural geographers.
4. Other effects of parental fear over children's safety are the rise of commercial play-spaces and out of school clubs that aim to provide a safe alternative to unsupervised outdoor play (Smith & Barker 1999, 2001; McKendrick, Fielder, & Bradford 1999, 2000).

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