GENERAL INTRODUCTION
The rise of Childhood Studies

Since the early 1990s, Childhood Studies can reasonably claim to be a distinct 'field of academic enquiry [which] offers the potential for interdisciplinary research that can contribute to an emergent paradigm wherein new ways of looking at children can be researched and theorized' (Kehily, 2009, p. 1). It comprises two distinct, but overlapping, strands. One of these involves the questioning and analysis of ideas about the nature of childhood: What is a child? Where does childhood begin and end? What roles and responsibilities do children have in contemporary societies and how do these differ from the past? What is the relationship between parents, children and the state and how does this change? These are all questions which have been raised by historians (Cunningham, 2006), sociologists (Mayall, 2013), lawyers (Freeman, 2012) and anthropologists (Montgomery, 2009), among others, sometimes in conjunction with children themselves but also through an analysis of literary and visual representations of childhood and talking to adults, whether parents, policy makers or practitioners. At the same time there has been a focus on understanding children's lives from the point of view of children themselves and trying, as far as possible, to gain insights into their own experiences and worldviews by asking them what it is like to be a child and how they experience being young. Again, scholars doing this work come from a variety of backgrounds but share a common vision of working with children rather than 'on' them.

Childhood Studies attempts to bring children back from the margins of academia to the centre. It has sometimes been argued that children, along with women and other 'minority' groups, were consistently sidelined in academic research for many decades and that the rise of Childhood Studies was a corrective to this marginalization (James, 2004). Children, it has been claimed, were routinely ignored and viewed only as the 'raw material, unfinished specimens of the social beings whose ideas and behaviour [were] the proper subject matter for social science' (La Fontaine, 1986, p. 10). Yet the idea that social scientists were dismissive of children, and even hostile to them, is not strictly accurate. Sally Shuttleworth (2010) has shown the intense interest in children in the nineteenth century and looked in detail at the birth

of the 'child study movement'. Sociologists too have a long-standing interest in aspects of children and young people's lives and there is a tradition of studying socialization, education and schooling within that discipline (see Hammersley, 1990). Ideas about sub-cultures (Cohen, 1973) and deviance (Franzese, 2009) were also central to sociology in the 1960s and 1970s, and while these often focused on youth rather than children (although of course the line between the two is very blurred and constantly contested), they nevertheless belie the myth that social sciences deliberately ignored children before the late twentieth century.

Within anthropology too, while there was little systematic study of children's lives or ideas about childhood (Chin, 2001), there were numerous ethnographic examples which implicitly recognized children's centrality to social organization, their role in legitimating marriage and as the inheritors of filial obligations that lie at the heart of kinship (Montgomery, 2009). Other studies which have analysed gestation, birth and very early childhood have shown that these are all precarious, transitional moments where personhood is ambiguous and must be symbolically and ritually conferred, and these have also contributed to discussions over the nature of childhood in particular cultures. Anthropologists in the USA have done extensive work on the socialization of children, patterns of child rearing, and the everyday practices of infant and child care, showing how these differ across societies and are optimally developed to ensure the continuation of certain behaviours and belief systems (LeVine and New, 2008).

Nevertheless, while the study of children has a long history, social scientists have often '*used* children as a population of "others" to facilitate the investigation of a range of topics, from developing racial typologies to investigat[ing] acculturation, but they have rarely been perceived as a legitimate topic of research in their own right' (Schwartzman, 2001, p. 15, emphasis in original). In the early 1970s, therefore, this use and marginalization of children started to be questioned by anthropologists and sociologists who began to re-conceptualize ideas about childhood and rethink ways of working with children. Spurred on by the rise of feminist theory in the late 1960s which argued that the private and domestic worlds of women and children had been systematically sidelined in the social sciences through the emphasis on formal institutions and the public, male worlds of politics or religion (Oakley, 1994), there were calls for a critical rethinking of children's lives and their role in society. In 1973 Charlotte Hardman made the radical claim, since taken as axiomatic, that 'children [are] *people* to be studied in their own right' (1973, p. 87, emphasis added). She proposed that children were the creators of a complete culture that they passed on to other children without adult intervention. They had their own ways of thinking, their own worldviews, and their own cultural understandings in the form of games and rhymes.

Building on these insights, others began to examine what childhood meant in contemporary societies and called for the critical re-examination of

categories such as 'the child', 'childhood' or 'children' (James, 2004). Under the umbrella heading of the 'New Social Studies of Childhood', academics began to deconstruct ideas about childhood and children's role in society. One of the key ideas of this new theorization was the idea that 'childhood is a social construction'. (Indeed this phrase has now been repeated so often that it has almost become a cliché and, as Lena Alanen (2015) has asked, 'Are we are all constructionists now?') Although a complex and contested term throughout the social sciences, Allison James and Adrian James (2008) define social construction as 'a theoretical perspective that explores the ways in which "reality" is negotiated in everyday life through people's interactions and through sets of discourses' (p. 122). In terms of understanding childhood, at a basic level, it means that childhoods are different depending on where and when they happen, and that children's lives are affected by wider political, social, cultural and economic factors. A social constructionist view of childhood looks at how particular categories such as 'boys', 'girls', 'children' or 'youth' are seen and understood in any given society, and how bodies of knowledge are built up or constructed.

In the UK, sociologists Frances Waksler (1991), Berry Mayall (1994), Chris Jenks (1996), Allison James and Alan Prout (1997) all argued that childhood must be understood as a socially constructed phenomenon which changes over time and place, and that it should not necessarily be seen as a time of universal dependence and powerlessness, although this is often how children experience it. They examined how childhood came to be understood in contemporary Western society as a time of separation from the adult world, where children were sent to school rather than staying with their families, where they were characterized as weak, dependent and vulnerable and viewed as beings who must be protected rather than empowered. In Europe this work was complemented by scholars such as Jens Qvortrup (2001) who drew attention to the economic role of children in society, arguing that, in the West, where children's employment outside the home has a negligible impact on household economies, schooling is the real work of childhood. He claimed that if teaching is acknowledged as economically productive work then the same logic must apply to learning and that children's education and socialization must also be conceptualized as economically productive work.

Children also became more central to social anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s and these decades saw a small number of ethnographic studies which focused on children's perspectives and their daily lives, and paved the way for the more extensive theorization of childhood in the following decade. Pioneers in the field included Myra Bluebond-Langner (1978) and Enid Schildkrout (1978) who showed how a shift of focus and an emphasis on children's thoughts, actions and experiences could transform understandings of social processes. Bluebond-Langner demonstrated how terminally ill children in the USA understood and interpreted their parents' attitudes towards their illnesses and how knowledge about their treatment and prognosis was

often arrived at through an unspoken negotiation between adults and children. Schildkrout analysed the social roles of children in Hausa communities in Nigeria and looked at how those intersected with, and supported, women's roles, pointing out that adults and children were complementary participants in the social system. She argued that children were of crucial importance in social and structural terms and that their labour, while contributing little directly to their family's subsistence, allowed their mothers to work in the home and therefore facilitated the performance of adult social roles (Schildkrout, 1978). She emphasized that children were economic, as well as social, actors and that they made significant economic contributions.

Bluebond-Langner and Schildkrout were followed by a number of groundbreaking anthropological works in the 1980s and 1990s which focused in depth on children's own perspectives of their lives and what they experienced. Rather than looking forward to a time when children became adults, these focused on children in the present and on their everyday lives in schools (James, 1993), at home (Solberg, 1997) or as workers in the global South (Ennew and Milne, 1989). Such work was complemented by a more politicized theorization of the cultural politics of childhood, which analysed how childhood had become a conflicted and contested idea, and which laid bare the multiple structures and processes of power which often had negative impacts on children's experiences of childhood (Stephens, 1995; Scheper-Hughes and Sargent, 1998).

From within sociology, anthropology and also social history, this understanding of children led to the development of new ideas about children's economic value and their relationship to the marketplace. This relationship is a complex one but, as historian Viviana Zelizer (1985) has argued, there has been a distinct shift in the value of children since the middle of the nineteenth century, and children, who were once an economic asset, have been transformed into an emotional one, economically 'worthless' but emotionally 'priceless'. This insight has been developed by Dan Cook (2008), Gary Cross (2010) and David Buckingham (2011), among others, who have examined children's changing role in the capitalist market where they have become important consumers of goods and services, as well as active participants in the world of media technologies – a participation which can lead to clashes with adult authority and fears about the influence and dangers of these technologies. Such fears may, of course, run counter to children's own ideas, and studies of children's own cultural practices often reveal a knowingness and self-awareness at odds with adults' beliefs.

Another discipline which has recently contributed much to the study of childhood is geography, and scholars in this discipline, like their counterparts and collaborators in sociology and anthropology, have started to examine children's everyday lives and the important role that space and place play in them. This new work has looked at the physical spaces of childhood, where children play and what places are important to them (Gutman, 2012). Children's geographies have also contributed important work on children's migration and

movement (Ansell and Van Blerk, 2004; Beazley, 2015), as well as on urban design, architecture and the often overlooked differences between places that are designated by adults as 'places for children' and 'children's places' where children actually choose to spend time. Chris Philo (2000) has suggested three distinct areas where geographers could usefully contribute to a study of children's lives – by analysing their engagement with the indoor, more private geographies of home – 'homely geographies' (p. 247); the wider geographies of the community in which children live, such as roads, playgrounds, wastelands, playing fields, woods or playgrounds – 'streetwise geographies' (p. 249); and the 'institutional geographies' (p. 251) of school or religious institutions.

Scholars interested in the sociological, anthropological or geographical study of children share, in general, a similar understanding of childhood and how best to research children's lives. All share an interest in understanding childhood as a social construction, as a valuable stage of life in its own right, and (as I will go on to argue) acknowledge children as active agents, useful informants and equal participants in research. Furthermore they have all been heavily influenced by the idea of children's rights. These shared positions have sometimes led to a somewhat problematic relationship with developmental psychology which, despite a very long history of studying children, and the crucial role it has played in developing insights into children's physical, mental, emotional and social development, has often sat uneasily within an inter-disciplinary and social constructionist Childhood Studies. For many years psychology could claim a pre-eminence in the study of children, and theorists such as Jean Piaget (1926, 1928), who understood childhood as a series of different developmental stages which were universal and could be empirically observed and tested, have been enormously influential, having great impacts on policy and practice outside academia. Similarly theorists such as John Bowlby (1953), who examined mother/infant attachment and the lifelong consequences of the child's relationships in the early years, and G. Stanley Hall (1904), who first identified and listed the characteristics of adolescence as a specific life stage, have been influential well outside their disciplinary boundaries and indeed beyond academia. Key ideas such as peer pressure, attachment, and self-esteem are all common in everyday speech and come directly from developmental psychology.

However there are aspects of developmental psychology which do not easily fit within the Childhood Studies paradigm of children as active, capable agents, embedded in social relationships, and there has been a tension between Childhood Studies, with its emphasis on the social, cultural and historical influences on children, and developmental psychology, which stresses the distinct stages of development within individual children. As Martin Woodhead (1999) has argued, psychologists have, too often, constructed an image of the 'normal' child, with particular, universal, unchanging needs, and have rarely questioned the idea of this normality. In doing so they have promoted an idealized view of certain childhoods and constructed those that do not

conform to this norm as different, deficient and potentially damaging. Piaget, for example, has been criticized for the implication that in order to become a successful adult, children have to attain specific targets at certain stages of life. Such a view of a 'universal' child does not take account of diverse childhoods or look at children's competences, but only their 'deficiencies'. Virginia Morrow has argued that psychology has 'been utilized to explore (individual) children's problems, develop interventions and bring children back to "normality" (whatever that may be)' (2011, p. 12). It has also been largely based on children in Western countries, using their developmental patterns as the norm and downplaying the different capacities and competences of poorer and less privileged children in other parts of the world.

This is a complex and contested argument which I have inevitably oversimplified here. There are many psychologists who are sympathetic to a more sociological approach to studying children and who do take into account the cultural and social contexts of children's lives, and differing understandings of ideas such as intelligence or social competence (see the contributors to Serpell and Marfo, 2015), just as there are anthropologists who draw heavily on psychology to inform their understandings of children's lives in a cross-cultural context (LeVine and New, 2008). Increasingly, too, psychologists from Africa and Asia are beginning to question the use of the Western child as the developmental norm (Serpell and Marfo, 2015). Historically, however, there have been significant differences between the two subjects and they have proved difficult to mesh together in one interdisciplinary project.

Children and rights

Another central idea shared by scholars in Childhood Studies is the idea that children have rights, based on the inalienable fact of their humanity. As far back as 1924, the special status of children was noted and marked out for protection in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, a declaration that was modified in 1959 and which later metamorphosed into the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which came into force in 1989 (Van Bueren, 1995). In fifty-four Articles the CRC spells out children's rights to provision (for basic needs such as food and housing), protection (from abuse, from degrading punishment or arrest without a proper judicial process) and participation (to express their views on all matters that affect them and have those views taken seriously). The CRC is not simply a list of children's needs or an expression of what adults think is best for children; it also promotes an ideology of childhood based on respect for children's dignity. Children's rights advocate Michael Freeman has argued that the CRC shifted the emphasis when intervening in children's lives, 'from protection to autonomy, from nurturance to self-determination, from welfare to justice' (1992, p. 3).

It is perhaps not surprising that the new interest in childhood within the social sciences was contemporaneous with the CRC and the new focus

on children as rights-bearing citizens in the international arena. While the beginning of the New Social Studies of Childhood pre-dated the opening for signature of the CRC (and the CRC was, of course, the culmination of six decades of work for children's rights), the drafting of the convention by international lawyers and children's rights advocates, and the emphasis on children's experiences and worldviews within academia, were both part of a critical re-examination of the particular needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of children. The CRC reaffirmed the idea that children's rights are human rights and that while children need special protection because of their age and emotional development these rights spring from the inalienable fact of their humanity (Alston, 1994; Van Bueren, 1995). Such ideals fitted easily with new theorizations coming out of academia that argued that children were people, that society could not be properly understood without understanding the role and experiences of every member, including children, and that children's own perspectives and daily realities were valid and worthy areas of research. By valuing children in their own right they were seen by both academics and those drafting and implementing the CRC as individuals with rights and the potential for independent action and agency, rather than as appendages to their family or the passive recipients of socialization.

The CRC is of course an idealized and aspirational vision, rather than a blueprint of practical policy. Whatever criticisms have been levelled at it, it remains central to the development of Childhood Studies and certain aspects of it, such as the idea of children as social agents with a right to participation, have inspired seminal work in the field (see Hart, 2008 or Shier et al., 2014). The CRC undoubtedly gave many academics a kick-start and a new legitimacy for studying childhood, and yet, in other ways, it has proved problematic, and scholars in Childhood Studies have responded to it somewhat ambivalently (Montgomery, 2016a; Morrow and Pells, 2016). While generally supporting the notion that children can be useful and revealing informants, they have also been critical of the ways in which the CRC has conceptualized the child and promoted a particular type of childhood (Boyden, 1997; Burr, 2004). Anthropologists have argued that the setting of a universal definition of childhood based on age is problematic, and have regularly pointed out the differences between the realities of children's lives and the rigidity of the CRC which defines a child as any person under the age of 18. They have argued that this simply does not hold true in many societies where children marry, bear their own children, work, and are initiated as adults before the age of 18, and where personhood is thought about very differently and adulthood acknowledged at different times and in different ways (Montgomery, 2009). Although the preamble of the Convention mentions the importance of taking into account the 'traditions and cultural values of each people', there have been trenchant criticisms that the CRC is profoundly ethnocentric and based on 'images of childhood favoured in the industrial North [which] have been exported to the South' (Boyden, 1997, p. 203). It has been argued

that the vision of childhood enshrined in the CRC is one in which childhood is conceptually and physically separated from adulthood, where education is privileged over work, family over street life, consumerism over productivity. It is based on the premise that children are equal to adults and should be seen as rights-bearing citizens rather than immature beings – even though this view of adult/child relations does not always translate easily into other societies where children are not always seen as individuals in their own right or as full members of society.

Other critics, such as social psychologist Erica Burman (1996), have claimed that the child envisaged in the Convention is an individual, autonomous being, an inheritor of the liberal, humanist ideals of the Enlightenment. She has argued that the CRC is based on the notion that each human is an individual who has the right to liberty, to shelter and to freedom of expression, yet in many places children are not seen as autonomous individuals but as parents' dependants and sometimes even their property. In many countries children are viewed as being embedded in a web of relationships, which come with duties, obligations, and sometimes the expectation of sacrifice on behalf of the family. Rachel Burr has argued that, in Vietnam (and other Asian societies), 'children are most likely to be valued as part of the family collective and not as autonomous individuals holding independent positions in society' (2004, p. 152). In his work on how the CRC was understood and introduced in Japan, Roger Goodman has argued that:

> [W]hen the concept of 'rights' was introduced into Japan . . . a whole new vocabulary had to be developed to explain it, as did the idea of the individual who could be endowed with such rights. Even today, individualism has strongly negative connections in Japan and is frequently associated with western concepts of selfishness.
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> (Goodman, 1996, p. 131)

Others have gone further and argued that, not only is the CRC ethnocentric and fails to deal with the lived realities of children's experiences in the global South, it may also act as a new kind of colonialism which facilitates Western intervention in those countries which do not support or properly enforce children's rights. The CRC has been seen as part of the power struggle between the West and 'the rest' in which the values of the former are foisted onto the latter in a new form of colonialism. Underneath the rhetoric of empowerment, and an ostensible move from child saving to children's rights, governments and international NGOs – it has been claimed – have imposed an alien and politically damaging set of standards on children which have little to do with their own needs and expectations and everything to do with neo-imperialism and the imposition of a new world order (Pupavac, 2001; see also Wells, 2014). Western countries stand accused of interfering in the private relationships of families in the global South and, through the CRC, imposing on them

definitions of childhood that are very different from locally understood concepts (Twum-Danso, 2009). Yet despite all these criticisms, children's rights cannot be ignored and whatever conceptual or practical problems they pose for scholars interested in childhood, they have provided an important starting point and useful framework for discussion. Childhood Studies may have an ambivalent relationship with children's rights, but the two areas are deeply and irrevocably entwined.

Working 'on' and working 'with' children

The CRC emphasized that children not only had rights to protection (against exploitation and abuse), and provision (for example their rights to food, housing or education), but they also had rights to participation – to be consulted about decisions made about them and to have their opinions listened to and taken into account. However participation rights have been contested because they represent a profound shift in relationships between adults and children, and challenge conceptualizations of children as unknowing, passive and needing adults to act in their best interests. Within Childhood Studies, many academics have looked critically at how children can genuinely participate in research and what this means in practice. This has meant an emphasis on, and analysis of, children's agency, which has become an important methodological and epistemological component of Childhood Studies. As many of the authors in these volumes suggest, agency is a complex and sometimes slippery term, but at its heart, acknowledging children's agency means recognizing and analysing their ability to understand, make choices and act upon their worlds, and to be competent and interactive members of society from birth (see Alderson et al., 2005 for an account of the agency of neo-natal children). The idea of agency has been a highly contested concept and there have been criticisms that privileging children's agency above other aspects of their lives can downplay their sociality and the web of relationships to which they contribute, as well as failing to take into account the wider social, economic and structural forces which limit and constrain them (Oswell, 2012). Nevertheless, a focus on agency has proved useful in understanding how children themselves think about and understand their lives (Reynolds et al., 2006; Hanson and Nieuwenhuys, 2012). Understanding agency has also produced some excellent ethnographic work: see Harriot Beazley (2015) on independent child migration, Sharon Bessell (2009) on children's views of work, and Manfred Liebel (2012) on the adult/child relationships in children's social movement. There has also been some sophisticated theorization by, for example, David Oswell (2012), who has analysed the strengths and drawbacks of using ideas about agency as a theoretical framework, and Antonella Invernizzi (2008), who has examined the relationship between agency and citizenship. It has enabled children's resistance, resilience and capacity for survival in even the most difficult of circumstances to be demonstrated. All such work has shown that children

make choices and set their own priorities, which may or may not coincide with those thought to be in their 'best interests'. A child soldier who joins a militia seeking retribution for the death of his family (Rosen, 2007), for example, or a child turning to sex work to fulfil their perceived obligations (Montgomery, 2011), or a child leaving home to live on the streets in order to relieve the pressure from an already over-stretched home (Hecht, 1998), have all made choices for themselves which they may vigorously defend even though they are difficult to see as being 'good' choices when the children are living in situations that seriously constrict their agency. The various and nuanced way these authors have discussed ways of understanding agency have contributed a rich theoretical and empirical seam to the field of Childhood Studies, suggesting its continual evolution and dynamism.

Ideas about children's agency have also had an important impact on ideas of how to work with children and how best to research their lives. There is a large body of literature on different methods of working with children within Childhood Studies (see, for example, Clark et al., 2014), and there is not enough space to summarise it here, but one thing that unites much of this work is the insistence on learning about children's lives, as far as possible, from an insider perspective. This approach raises particular challenges and there are important practical and ethical issues that have to be overcome when researching children (Morrow and Richards, 1996; Alderson and Morrow, 2011). These include language competency (it is difficult to use very young children who cannot speak as informants, even though, as Alison Clark, 2005 and Priscilla Alderson et al., 2005 suggest, there are other ways to understand their experiences), concentration span, and the social norms of politeness and deference to adults which constrain many children. Thus social scientists have developed techniques which involve play, games, painting or drawing, which not only mirror children's everyday activities but also allow younger children to participate in research. Puppets and dolls have been used by some researchers to encourage children to talk and to make interviews less intimidating (Iantaffi et al., 2002). Other researchers have given children cameras and asked them to photograph people and places that are important to them, and some, like Tobias Hecht (1998), who worked among street children in Brazil, gave children tape recorders and asked them to interview each other as if they were journalists. In my own research with young prostitutes who lived in a slum in Thailand, I would draw outlines of their bodies – 'body maps' – in the dust surrounding their houses and use these to ask questions about whether they were hurt or ill or if some parts of their bodies did not feel right to them. However my best interviews with the girls were done not by sitting down with a notebook and interviewing them, or even by observing them in their daily lives, but by becoming a part of everyday activities, well away from their work. I would let them play with my hair, or paint my fingernails, and discuss my love life with them while listening to them tell me stories about theirs. It was important to share and

reciprocate and I found this an essential component of working with these children (Montgomery, 2016b).

Many of those interested in studying children have tried to find ways of reducing the distance between themselves as adults and the children they wish to research (Rafferty, 2015). Several have written explicitly about this dilemma, including Nancy Mandell (1991), who tried to overcome this distance by taking on a 'least-adult role', never correcting or directing the children's actions and trying to downplay her adult status and her own verbal and cognitive competences. Others, such as Anna Laerke (1998), have argued that dismantling the hierarchies of age and power is an important prerequisite for effective research. In her work with British primary school children, she tried as hard as possible to blend in with them, playing in the sand-pit alongside them, dressing like them, sitting on the same small chairs, allying herself with the children against the teacher and sometimes even siding with one child against another. William Corsaro (1985) has also worked extensively with young children in schools in Italy and America, and while he concedes that he will never be seen as one of them, he argues that it is possible to be assigned a special role by the children: in his case as 'Big Bill' – a non-adult-like adult.

Although all research with human participants creates particular and ethical dilemmas and there are no easy or definitive answers, the problems become particularly acute when dealing with children (or other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups such as disabled people, see Tisdall, 2012). It is difficult to anticipate how children and young people will respond to a researcher. Some children might accept a non-adult adult in their midst and relate to a 'Big Bill' figure, but others will not. Children may want to be friends and collaborators but it can be difficult for children to differentiate a friend from a researcher they know and like and they may enter into a relationship with an adult researcher which they do not have the full knowledge to understand. The question of how to 'leave' the field is rarely addressed and yet can have negative impacts on the children who have built up a relationship with the researcher – especially if they believed they were friends. Alternatively children may be embarrassed, confused or even intimidated by an adult sitting in the sand-pit with them or sitting next to them at school. Young people in particular may well be mortified by an adult 'hanging out' with them, trying to be like them and wanting to find out things that they would rather share only with their peers.

A brief note on the choice of articles in these volumes

The eclecticism and breadth of Childhood Studies, while being great strengths of the subject, also present challenges when compiling a 'mini-library' such as this. The study of childhood is evolving and it is important to see the collection in this light. Children's lives, and the study of them, inevitably change and the convention of using the ethnographic present, when academics appear to

be describing children and the societies they live in as they currently are, not as they were at the moment they were observed, can be disconcerting and has the effect of suggesting that childhoods (and studies of them) are static and ahistorical. This is far from the truth and many of the authors are careful to locate their studies in particular times and places and show that there will be further changes in the future. This collection is in no way definitive, therefore, but it does give an excellent overview of how childhood and children's lives have been studied up to now and suggests emerging trends that will become important in the coming years. However choosing 'only' eighty-four papers to suggest the scope and the diversity of Childhood Studies was not easy and different colleagues would, undoubtedly, have chosen very different articles. In trying to select these eighty-four, I have chosen those which have been particularly influential, which add insight into specific aspects of children's lives in very different parts of the world, and which cover key ideas of Childhood Studies. In doing so, however, there are vast areas of work which I have deliberately excluded but which would be necessary for a truly holistic study of childhood. Paediatrics, for example, has made obvious and important contributions to understanding children's lives, and yet, because there has been little dialogue between social and physical scientists, there is no work from medicine in these volumes. I have also used little work from social work, or social policy, as I was wary of it becoming dated very quickly or being too specific to one national jurisdiction or particular government. I have also tended to steer clear of articles that focus solely on methods or ethics – there are many of these, some very influential, but for me the excitement and vibrancy of Childhood Studies lie in the way it explores children's lives and attempts to give a rounded picture of their worldviews and cultures. I have given preference therefore to ethnographic work, and that based on primary data, which reveals new aspects and insights into children's lives. In doing so I have often chosen articles from scholars who would not dream of calling themselves experts in childhood and who remain firmly attached to their disciplinary base as historians, sociologists, educationalists or anthropologists, but who, I believe, have made an important contribution to the field of Childhood Studies. The work of Philippe Ariès (1962) is a prime example of this.

One criticism sometimes levelled at Childhood Studies is that the term 'childhood' is so broad that it is in danger of becoming meaningless. While a newborn baby and a 17-year-old are both children in a legal sense, quite obviously their needs and capacities are totally different, and they have little in common other than the fact that they are both under the age of 18. Not surprisingly, therefore, there are now different specialisms within Childhood Studies which focus on different ages and stages of life, such as Early Years or Youth Studies. Despite the excellent work they have done in pushing forward understandings of the lives of the youngest and oldest children in the age range of childhood, I have excluded much of this work from these volumes because they are established and dynamic fields in their own right and I felt

that it would not do them justice to include merely one or two token articles. I have only included that work which, while based on the early years, for example, raises important questions about how to understand and study all children (see the contributions from Dahlberg et al., 1999 and Clark, 2005). Similarly the academic study of children's literature is another area which tells us a great deal about children, their dreams and imaginations, and what reading matter adults believe contributes to a good childhood. One again, however, this is a large enough subject in its own right that I could not do it justice here. Instead I would refer any interested reader to comprehensive annotated bibliographies written on 'Early Childhood' by Glenda MacNaughton (2015), 'Adolescence and Youth' by Helene Helve (2015), and 'Children's Literature' by Peter Hunt (2012).

For similar reasons, as well as those discussed in this introduction, I have included little work from developmental psychology, even though there might be an argument for including key texts which have provoked debate and controversy, such as those from John Bowlby or Jean Piaget. While acknowledging the importance of developmental psychology, the few selections I have chosen have come from those psychologists, such as Martin Woodhead or Erica Burman, who have made a significant contribution to a more sociologically oriented Childhood Studies. However, as also discussed above, developmental psychology is changing and if I or anyone else were to compile a similar four volumes in five or ten years' time it is likely that child psychology would be much more heavily represented and many of the criticisms raised here laid to rest. Doing so might also change Childhood Studies from an inter-disciplinary to a multi-disciplinary project, characterized by different ways of looking at and understanding children which, while they differed in epistemological and methodological background, nevertheless both contributed to a more holistic study of childhood.

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