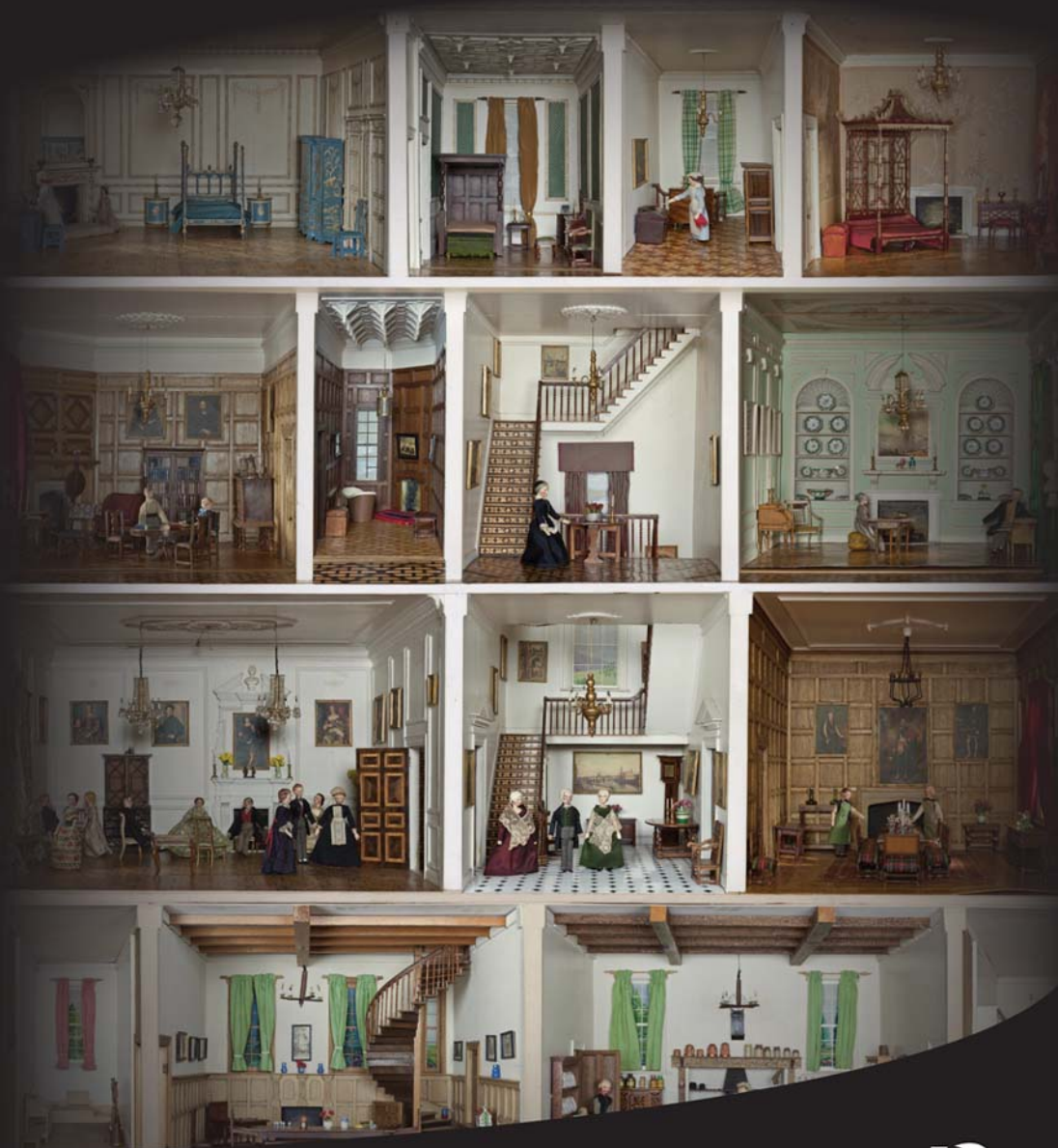


# CHILDREN, CHILDHOOD *and* CULTURAL HERITAGE



KEY ISSUES IN  
CULTURAL  
HERITAGE

edited by Kate Darian-Smith  
and Carla Pascoe

ROUTLEDGE

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# Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage

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*Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage* explores how the everyday experiences of children and their imaginative and creative worlds are collected, interpreted and displayed in museums and on monuments, and represented through objects and cultural lore. Young people constitute up to half the population of any given society, but their lives are inescapably influenced by the expectations and decisions of adults. As a result, children's distinct experiences are frequently subsumed within the broader histories and heritage of their families and communities. And while adults inevitably play a prominent role in children's lives, children are also active creators of their own cultures. As this volume so vividly demonstrates, the cultural heritage of children is rich and varied, and highly revealing of past and present attitudes to children and their work, play, creativity, and human rights.

The essays in this book span the experiences of children from classical Rome to the present moment, and examine the diverse social and historical contexts underlying the public representations of childhood in Britain, Europe, North America, Australia, North Africa and Japan. Case studies examine the heritage of schools and domestic spaces; the objects and games of play; the commemoration of child Holocaust survivors; memorials to Indigenous child-removal under colonial regimes; children as collectors of objects and as authors of juvenilia; curatorial practices at museums of childhood; and the role of children as visitors to historical sites.

Until now, the cultural heritage of children and the representations of childhood have been largely absent from scholarly discussions of museology, heritage places and material culture. This volume rectifies that gap, bringing together international experts in children's histories and heritage. Aimed at a wide readership of students, academics, and museum and heritage professionals, *Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage* authoritatively defines the key issues in this exciting new field.

**Kate Darian-Smith** is Professor of Australian Studies and History at the University of Melbourne, and a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. She has published widely on Australian and imperial history; on memory studies, material culture and heritage; and the historical and contemporary dimensions of children's play. She has held advisory positions with many cultural institutions, and led major research projects in partnership with government, museums and heritage organisations.

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# Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage

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Edited by  
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Finally, we are grateful to all the contributors, strewn across the globe and across disparate disciplines, for their excellent contributions to this field-defining volume.

Some of the illustrations in this volume are photographs taken by chapter contributors. Others are produced courtesy of the World Heritage Program, UNESCO (Fig. 2.1), Vega Archipelago Foundation (Fig. 2.2), Røros Upper Secondary School (Fig. 2.3), Indonesia International Work Camp (Figures 2.4 and 2.5) the Croatian Ministry of Culture, by permission of UNESCO (Fig. 2.6), Museum Victoria (Fig. 3.1), the Damien Webb Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford (Fig. 4.2), the British Library (Figures 4.3 and 6.4), the Ransom Humanities Research Center (Fig. 6.1), the Brontë Parsonage Museum (Fig. 6.3), the University of Maryland (Fig. 8.1), City Gallery, Melbourne Town Hall (Fig. 8.3), German Archaeological Institute Rome (Figures 9.1 and 9.2), Samueli Library, Chapman University (Fig. 11.1), Heschel School,

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Kate Darian-Smith and Carla Pascoe  
Editors



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# Series general co-editors' foreword

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The interdisciplinary field of Heritage Studies is now well established in many parts of the world. It differs from earlier scholarly and professional activities that focused narrowly on the architectural or archaeological preservation of monuments and sites. Such activities remain important, especially as modernization and globalization lead to new developments that threaten natural environments, archaeological sites, traditional buildings and arts and crafts. But they are subsumed within the new field that sees 'heritage' as a social and political construct encompassing all those places, artefacts and cultural expressions inherited from the past which, because they are seen to reflect and validate our identity as nations, communities, families and even individuals, are worthy of some form of respect and protection.

Heritage results from a selection process, often government-initiated and supported by official regulation; it is not the same as history, although this, too, has its own elements of selectivity. Heritage can be used in positive ways to give a sense of community to disparate groups and individuals or to create jobs on the basis of cultural tourism. It can be actively used by governments and communities to foster respect for cultural and social diversity, and to challenge prejudice and misrecognition. But it can also be used by governments in less benign ways, to reshape public attitudes in line with undemocratic political agendas or even to rally people against their neighbours in civil and international wars, ethnic cleansing and genocide. In this way there is a real connection between heritage and human rights.

This is time for a new and unique series of books canvassing the key issues dealt with in the new Heritage Studies. The series seeks to address the deficiency facing the field identified by the Smithsonian in 2005 – that it is 'vastly under-theorized'. It is time to look again at the contestation that inevitably surrounds the identification and evaluation of heritage and to find new ways to elucidate the many layers of meaning that heritage places and intangible cultural expressions have acquired. Heritage conservation and safeguarding in such circumstances can only be understood as a form of cultural politics and this needs to be reflected in heritage practice, be that in educational institutions or in the field.

It is time, too, to recognize more fully that heritage protection does not depend alone on top-down interventions by governments or the expert actions of heritage industry professionals, but must involve local communities and communities of

interest. It is critical that the values and practices of communities, together with traditional management systems where such exist, are understood, respected and incorporated in heritage management plans and policy documents so that communities feel a sense of 'ownership' of their heritage and take a leading role in sustaining it into the future.

This series of books aims then to identify interdisciplinary debates within Heritage Studies and to explore how they impact not only on the practices of heritage management and conservation, but also the processes of production, consumption and engagement with heritage in its many and varied forms.

William S. Logan  
Laurajane Smith



# Children, childhood and cultural heritage

## Mapping the field

*Kate Darian-Smith and Carla Pascoe*

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When Lillian Boyd died, her son Bill journeyed to her small, humble home in an Australian country town to sort through her possessions. One room of the four-room dwelling was crammed to the ceiling with objects. Having lived through the austerity of the 1930s Depression and the Second World War, Lillian was unable to throw anything away (including rubber bands and plastic bags) in case it proved useful.

Lillian's hoarding proved to be a rare and valuable treasure trove. She had kept every single item that her son had owned, used or played with during his upbringing. The material culture of Bill's childhood included school exercise books and chewed pencils; clothing such as knitted baby jackets and booties; sporting equipment including a homemade cricket bat; manufactured toys such as tiny plastic spacemen and tin animals; and his own juvenile collections of hand-blown birds' eggs, 'swap' cards and matchboxes. Alongside the mass-produced playthings common to post-war Australian childhoods were several items that spoke poignantly of the straitened circumstances in which the Boyd family lived. Whilst museum collections of children's material culture have traditionally featured the toys of wealthy or elite children, the objects preserved from Bill's childhood include a scrapbook of his favourite pictures cut from birthday cards and magazines; a crudely fashioned balsa wood imitation knife emblazoned with the misspelt words 'Davy Croket'; and a 'Red Indian' dress-up costume made from hessian sacks and dyed chicken feathers.

This extraordinary collection of some 700 artefacts highlights the tension between the particular and the general when preserving the heritage of children. To some extent, Bill's juvenile artefacts are typical of baby boomer childhoods: they depict the growing availability of cheap, manufactured toys; the rising influence of American popular culture; and the polarized gender roles of the 1950s. But other aspects of the collection speak of the unique circumstances of Bill's story, particularly the predominance of quiet, indoor games which reflect the debilitating kidney problems of his early years.<sup>1</sup>

The William Boyd Childhood Collection, now housed in Museum Victoria, is also unusual because it comprises an entire slice of one child's life. Whilst institutional and private collections have long cherished exquisite or nostalgic artefacts associated with childhood, such indiscriminate and comprehensive collecting is highly uncommon. In other respects, however, the William Boyd Childhood Collection is an excellent

entry point into this volume, as it encapsulates many of the recurring themes that characterize the heritage of children and childhood. Clearly on one level it is a collection of material culture of all descriptions. Bill has also related the intangible cultural heritage of his childhood through oral history interviews: the stories, songs and games that characterized his youth. In addition, both the interviews and the objects themselves reveal the prominence of particular places in Bill's early years, from the intimate domestic spaces of his home to the mullock heaps and waterways around which local children played.<sup>2</sup>

The cultural heritage of children and childhood is complex and varied, incorporating material objects such as toys, intangible heritage such as songs and games and the spatial heritage of the buildings, environments and landscapes that children inhabit. Yet despite an increasing scholarly and public interest in the past and present experiences of children in a variety of chronological and geographical locations, alongside pressing contemporary concerns about children's welfare and well-being (for instance, Fass 2003; James and James 2008; Wells 2009), the examination of the cultural heritage of children has been relatively limited. This may be because the circumstances of children are contained within the wider contexts of the adult world: children are, to put it simply, everywhere. Their universal presence in all human societies has often obscured, or even rendered invisible, the specificity of children's lives and cultures.

Children and teenagers can constitute up to, or even more than, 50 per cent of any given society, and the range of their experiences are as determined by the spectrum of social, economic, legal and environmental factors as those of adults. But it is rare for children to be accorded the same powers, privileges and responsibilities as 'grown-ups', and their lives are always influenced by the expectations of the adult world about how 'children' and the period of 'childhood' may be defined and understood.

There has been too little interrogation of the cultural heritage of children, and the representations of childhood, in discussions of museology, heritage sites and material culture. This volume thus constitutes the first scholarly attempt to map key issues in the complex and emerging field of the cultural heritage of children and childhood. Establishing a coherent body of knowledge about such cultural heritage requires bringing together a range of disciplinary approaches across the humanities and social sciences, and the contributors to this volume speak from a range of scholarly and professional perspectives. Through case studies drawn from across the globe, stretching from ancient times to the present day, we explore how children's cultural heritage may be recognized, represented and received in such forms as museum exhibitions and built heritage and landscapes, and through memorials and children's own creative production.

## **Cultural heritage**

But what do we mean when we speak of the cultural heritage of children and childhood?

David Lowenthal has famously claimed that from the late twentieth century, heritage has become a 'new religion'. He argues that people incorporate selective elements

of the past into their own sense of individual and collective identity, sometimes staking ownership over tangible traces of history to ward off other claimants (Lowenthal 2010). This may be true for certain cultural, national or ethnic groups, but the case of children is different. Children rarely agitate for the preservation of their own heritage. Instead, the conservation, display or study of the heritage of children and childhood is generally undertaken by adults – purportedly on behalf of children, but perhaps also on behalf of their own childhood selves.

Heritage is closely aligned to history, but there is an important distinction between the two. Historians increasingly recognize that the values and conditions of the past may be very different from our present times, whereas a key ideological underpinning of heritage is that the past is closely aligned to our own circumstances. In the formulation of Brian Graham and Peter Howard, heritage refers to ‘the ways in which very selective past material artefacts, natural landscapes, mythologies, memories and traditions become cultural, political and economic resources for the present’ (Graham and Howard 2008: 2). Indeed as R.S. Peckham points out, cultural heritage is always present-centred (2003). As a form of collective memory about historical events, the values and politics of heritage may be created to serve contemporary needs, and are thus subject to change if these priorities are revised. The social and cultural values ascribed to heritage sites, customs and objects are often conflicted as different groups or nations may contest the ownership or the meaning attached to particular elements of the past. The constructed political and cultural meanings of children’s heritage are firmly embedded in the heritage of the families, communities and nations where children are located. However, the ways that we acknowledge the heritage and cultures of children are constantly evolving in dialogue with the changing status of children in today’s society.

Children’s heritage, like that of adults, is protected by UNESCO conventions including the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* and the 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Bill Logan’s chapter in this volume explains the ways in which UNESCO is seeking to involve young people in identifying and managing their own heritage, in a field which has largely been governed by the views of adults. But whilst the heritage of children and childhood is to some extent protected by international frameworks, examples of such heritage need to be recognized as such before they can even begin to enjoy protection. Many manifestations of children’s heritage are not necessarily acknowledged if they do not fit easily with prevailing understandings of childhood.

## Contemporary representations of children

Given that heritage serves the purposes of the present, contemporary definitions of childhood have a profound influence on our understandings of that heritage. In the early twenty-first-century Western world, children are commonly represented as innocent and vulnerable. The figure of the child becomes the container for a number of adult anxieties and concerns. Popular media, for example, worries that children enjoy less spontaneous play than they once did; are more pressured by parents and

teachers to perform; experience less unmediated contact with natural environments; are subject to a greater number of physical dangers including violent crimes; and are more overtly sexualized and commercialized. Whether such claims are objectively accurate is not our concern here. Rather, the point is that the notion of the vulnerable child, coupled with adult attempts to protect that child from risk, dominate contemporary representations of children (see, for example, Stearns 2009).

Current sociological thinking draws upon self-reflexive definitions of children and childhood, demonstrating that the views of childhood are both socially constructed and temporally specific. Central to this 'sociology of childhood' is the rejection of definitions of the child based purely on biology, with a 'natural' set of behaviours and attitudes that are distinctively childish (James and James 2004, 2008; James *et al.* 1998; James and Prout 1997; Jenks 2005; Prout 2000). Such insights have been invaluable in demonstrating that definitions of childhood must be understood as constructed within particular historical and cultural contexts. John R. Morss takes the argument a step further: he raises the question of whether children should be treated simply as 'humans'.

The proposal to treat children as humans might not be as banal as it may seem; it seems to imply that there are no children's rights as such and therefore raises challenging questions concerning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, not to mention enormously problematic questions about sexuality. (Morss 2002: 52)

In support of his case, Morss cites Berry Mayall's suggestion that perhaps children are not different from adults except by virtue of the different ways they are treated (Mayall 1994). The issue of whether there is a substantive ontological difference between children and adults is beyond the scope of this discussion, but it is important to note that if definitions of childhood are recognized as historically and culturally contingent, then many of our taken-for-granted assumptions about the young and the rights of children are also subject to question. There is a vast diversity of experiences of childhood, and while children may be subjected to adult directives, they are also active agents in their own lives. As Nick Lee points out, researchers need 'to see children as human beings, active in social life, rather than as human becomings, passive recipients of socialisation' (Lee 2001: 47).

This view that children can be both independent agents and also influenced by adult expectations and behaviour has consequences for our analysis in this volume. An important distinction can be made between examples of cultural heritage constructed by children and those constructed by adults. For example, the chapter by Carla Pascoe distinguishes between objects made by children and by adults, discussing the ramifications of this distinction for museum collecting and exhibiting.

Children are not just producers of cultural heritage but also the audience for heritage displays. A significant body of work has been generated analysing children as visitors to museums or other heritage sites. Indeed, this is how children are most commonly discussed in the museological and heritage literature: as an important

segment of the market for heritage in its institutional and educational forms. Research into museum audiences has argued that exhibitions appear to be spaces where children have considerable autonomy within family groups, choosing where to go, what to pay attention to and how much time to spend in different areas (Beaumont and Sterry 2005). Indeed, it appears that children may retain memories of visits to museums and other heritage sites for many years (Hicks 2005). Other research argues that the most effective strategy to ensure that children enjoy visiting museums and engage with their content is to intimately involve them in exhibition development and design (McRainey and Russick 2010).

In this volume Laurajane Smith analyses the experiences and perspectives of children visiting heritage sites, finding that they do not necessarily conform to the expectations of heritage professionals. Rhian Harris details the ways in which the V&A Museum of Childhood has tried to deepen its engagement with juvenile audiences, through strategies such as adapting interpretation panels so they are more child friendly, lowering display cases to improve accessibility for child viewers and introducing a range of interactive displays and activities especially intended for younger children who learn through play. Such methods are increasingly employed by museums around the world in an attempt to heighten their appeal for younger audiences.

## Historiography of children and childhood

Part of the recent increase in museum exhibitions and heritage sites relating to children has stemmed from the growing body of scholarship on the histories of children and childhood over the past decades. This emergent interest in children amongst historians can be understood as a consequence of the redress of prior scholarly neglect, the strength of social and personal nostalgia about the state of childhood, and increasingly urgent contemporary concerns about children's welfare and development. Following scholarly interest in previously marginalized histories of women, the working classes or ethnic minorities, children were one of the last neglected groups to come under the scrutiny of historians. Partially this was due to a lack of sources authored by the subjects themselves, but it was also a consequence of the lack of scholarly and social importance attached to the experiences and pasts of children. Nostalgia has undeniably contributed to this recent surge of historical attention – we were all children once – and has permeated some of the historical research.

Many scholars in this field fail to differentiate histories of *children*, which concern the actual experiences and practices of young people in the past, and histories of *childhood*, which denote the ideological concepts that adults have held of children. Due to the enormously problematic nature of uncovering source material authored by children themselves, many early works were much more about adults and their views than about children themselves (see, for example, Shorter (1975) and Stone (1979)). In trying to write the history of the child, historians are forced in large measure to rely upon what adults have said about children or what adults remember of their own pasts (Hiner and Hawes 1985; Kociumbas 1997).



Since publication of the 1962 English translation of Philippe Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood*, historians have concurred that understandings of childhood are not a biological given but a sociohistorical construct (Ariès 1962; first published 1960). But the early historiography of childhood was largely mired in debates about whether childhood had become better or worse. Lloyd deMause's 'psychogenic' approach claimed that widespread child abuse existed in the past, but had diminished with the improvement of parent–child relations. Arguing that the human psychic structure pre-determines all other cultural developments, deMause viewed the parent–child relationship as the fundamental cause of historical change (deMause 1974). This contradicts Ariès, who claimed children were happier before the social concept of childhood was invented in the Western world during the seventeenth century, leading to the tightened regulation of children through the institutions of the family and the school.

In the 1970s most historians accepted the teleological view that the experience of being a child had improved over time, but by the late 1980s the emphasis was on historical continuity (Cunningham 2005; see also Cox 1996). Linda Pollock challenged the concept that the treatment of the child had changed dramatically over time. She argued that a concept of childhood had existed before the seventeenth century, but that parent and child relations were formal and children were often cruelly exploited (Pollock 1983). More recent historical work has explored the histories of children in particular nations, including Catriona Kelly's detailed account of growing up in Soviet Russia (Kelly 2007) to numerous works on childhood and children in the US (Fass and Mason 2000; Illick 2002; Mintz 2004; Chudacoff 2007) and elsewhere around the world. Such national perspectives argue that the legal, social and policy attitudes of the state towards its children offer key insights into a country's politics and priorities, as well as a unique view on public and private life. Nor are national experiences isolated from the global flows of ideas about children and childhood and the forces of globalization (Wells 2009).

This expanding historical interest in children and their social and political role at different times and places has certainly enriched how children's cultural heritage is perceived and represented through museum exhibitions, the interpretation of heritage sites and the appreciation of material culture. Several chapters in this book add to our understandings of both the history and the cultural heritage of children across a range of contexts, including the lives of free and slave children in classical Rome (Mary Harlow); the educational ideal in twentieth-century Japan (Mark A. Jones); children and domestic life in fin-de-siècle Russia (Rebecca Friedman); child survivors of the Holocaust in post-war America (Beth B. Cohen); and the experiences of Indigenous children and European child migrants in the British Empire (Kate Darian-Smith). Such accounts recognize how historical knowledge shapes our understandings of the cultural heritage of children, forging a dynamic link between the two. Mary Harlow, for example, argues that we lack the cultural and historical framework to fully interpret classical Roman practices and attitudes concerning children, including those who were slaves. Heritage tends to reflect popular understandings of history, including the implicit conviction that human society is always progressing, whether that be in terms of medical advances, technological enablers or cultural sophistication. However,

historical research may both confirm and complicate this assumption, pointing to a difficult past for children – and one deserving of acknowledgement and public commemoration – if not always providing assurance that the present circumstances of children, in the developed and developing world, have dramatically improved.

## Material culture of children

Given the limited documentary traces of children's lives in the past, material culture analysis offers an alternative entry point to the cultural heritage of children and childhood. But as Carla Pascoe's chapter in this volume explains, material artefacts illuminating the history of children and childhood are characterized by similar issues to those which plague documentary sources. Many objects associated with children were in fact made by adults and are much more representative of adult views of childhood than they are of children's own experiences.

The objects associated with children include all manner of items – such as nappies, cribs, canes, slates, and bottles – but analysis of the material culture of children has tended to focus upon toys as the archetypal symbols of childhood. From simple hand-made objects made from clay or natural materials, discussed by Jean-Pierre Rossie in his chapter on the material culture of North African children, through to today's sophisticated electronic devices, both toys, and the play that they encourage, mimic and subvert the social and gender roles of the adult world. Spreading industrialization in the nineteenth century enabled the mass production of toys and a growing culture of consumption directed at children and parents. Rebecca Friedman's chapter discusses how modern consumer behaviours and expectations about the management of children and the home were evident in new forms of material goods for children, such as clothes and furnishing, in early twentieth-century Russia.

Historian Thomas Schlereth has asserted that 'most manufactured toys are objects made by adults to appeal and to sell to other adults, ostensibly, of course, for children' (Schlereth 1990: 91). However, histories of the production, advertising, consumption and use of everyday toys are as revealing of the broader racial, class and gender ideologies of societies at particular historical moments as they are about the play choices of children (Seiter 1993). For instance, as the American doll industry expanded from the mid-nineteenth century, the types of dolls produced differed from those of European manufacturers. There were further distinctions in the dolls produced by male and female entrepreneurs, with male dollmakers emphasizing realism and mechanical features while women favoured durable dolls likely to meet the sensory needs of children (Formanek-Brunell 1993). 'Playing house' also reflects contemporary values and attitudes, especially in relation to gender; in the twentieth century girls were encouraged to 'learn' methods of scientific home and child management through playing with dolls. More recently, the influence of more sexualized dolls, such as the internationally popular Barbie, on children's understandings of gender roles and personal appearance have attracted scholarly and public attention.

Some toys such as dolls and teddy-bears have had a particular appeal for adults, and have long been collected by institutions and individuals. So too have model villages,

electric train models and automobile sets, all illustrative of how technological and social changes in the wider world are evident in children's material and play cultures. There is also a fascination, seemingly by adults and children alike, in the miniaturization of the everyday (see Stewart 1984). Elaborate dolls' houses, such as that made by Faith Bradford and now displayed at the National Museum of American History, illustrate this captivation. The Bradford Dollhouse, occupied by Mr and Mrs Doll and their 10 children, has 23 rooms and incorporated 1,354 items in its construction.<sup>3</sup> Pendle Hall, which graces the cover image of this book, incorporates 612 components which were painstakingly created by Felicity Clemons.<sup>4</sup> Such intricate collections of objects carefully crafted by adults over many years speak to the continuing emotive connection with toys long after the official years of childhood are over. In contrast, fewer objects made or used according to children's own desires have been formally collected. Indeed, as Schlereth notes, 'the physical evidence of past childhood, flawed as it is by the fecklessness in collection, romanticism in exhibition, and gender and age bias in generation, offers material culture researchers a special methodological challenge' (Schlereth 1990: 106).

As the objects that pervade a child's life are often made, purchased or gifted by adults, they offer insight into such adult aspirations for children. The everyday things used in child-raising may highlight the social values attached to childhood and parenting considered too obvious to be explicitly recorded (Calvert 1992). Yet children have also created their own meanings through idiosyncratic use or manufacture of objects, which may contradict adult intentions. Analysis of material culture can therefore offer insights into the perspectives of both adults and children. Archaeologist Jane Eva Baxter explains that by looking at toys:

archaeologists may be able to ascertain the types of lessons and behaviour adults are trying to encourage in their children, and the types of messages they are trying to convey through their children to the broader community. At the same time, archaeologists may be able to infer how children are perceiving, accepting, and altering these adult ideas through their own manipulation and use of material culture.

(Baxter 2005)

Whilst studying artefacts offers this potential, researchers need to be self-reflexive in order to separate contemporary cultural constructs from those of the past. Joanna Sofaer Derevenski points out that children are sentimentalized as dependent, asexual and cheerful in modern Western culture. Scholars approaching the materiality of children must suspend these preconceived notions in order to 'use the relationship between children and material culture to construct interpretations' (Sofaer Derevenski 2000).

If the material culture of children often reveals as much about adults as it does children, the study of children's own collections offers rare insights into the minds of children in the past. Christine Alexander's chapter in this volume engages with the writings of children as a window into the dreams, desires and aspirations of historical

children. Her chapter examines a range of literary juvenilia across various historical periods, arguing that juvenile writing is more than solely material culture: it is also a means of understanding the creative imagination of children.

In a similar vein, Karen Sánchez-Eppler has examined juvenilia as an example of children's cultural heritage. Her study of two generations of children from the same wealthy Boston family explored their production of lending libraries of hand-made books. Through their play, these children imitated and re-invented adult literary traditions. Sánchez-Eppler explains that 'the Hale children's extraordinary literary engagement and productivity help us to recognize children not simply as passive consumers of culture . . . but also as cultural actors – interpreting, redefining, and making meaning and institutions' (Sánchez-Eppler 2008: 194–5). With a similar focus on children as cultural producers, Sánchez-Eppler's chapter in this volume studies the private museum created by Leland Stanford, Jr in order to better understand the personal perspectives and cultural milieu of one juvenile collector.

Museums like that of Leland Stanford, Jr that have been shaped by a child's priorities are extremely rare. Unsurprisingly, museums are generally established and staffed by adults, resulting in collections and displays largely representative of adult views of childhood. However, cultural institutions are increasingly seeking to engage with the child as visitor. In some respects this can be understood as a softening of the boundaries between museums of childhood and children's museums. Both types of institution take the child as their focus. But whereas museums of childhood privilege the history of children and childhood, children's museums focus on the way the child learns (Lewin 1989; Hodges 1978).

The emergence of children's museums can be understood as linked to the growth of a broader cultural interest in children and their needs across the Western world from the late nineteenth century. Children's museums developed initially in the US, and from the 1970s their popularity has exploded worldwide. The main aim of a children's museum is the creation of a stimulating, enjoyable learning environment for children (Lewin 1989: 55). By contrast, for museums of childhood, it is children who are the subject rather than the primary audience. (Rhian Harris's chapter in this volume, however, explains the imperatives which often lead museums of childhood to aim to appeal to children as part of their audience.) Museums of childhood are often rather nostalgic in their depiction of children's lives in the past, largely due to their origins in sentimental private collections (Brookshaw 2009; Burton 1997; Roberts 2006). In contrast, children's museums generally focus on technological development and demonstrations of scientific phenomena, encouraging children to actively discover their social and natural environments.

## **Intangible cultural heritage and children's folklore**

If material culture constitutes an important part of the heritage of children and childhood, intangible heritage offers another way into understanding children's lives in the past. Heritage practitioners and scholars often portray their field as a relatively new discipline, particularly intangible cultural heritage (see Smith and Akagawa 2009). But

the concern to preserve elements of children's intangible heritage – the transmission by children of their own culture – is at least two centuries old, as discussed in the chapter by Gwenda Davey *et al.* in this volume. The study of folklore emerged in the nineteenth century, driven by an antiquarian fascination for traditional cultural customs considered to be disappearing (Davey 1982). Most folklorists would agree with Mary and Herbert Knapp that folklore is orally transmitted and anonymously authored, with verbal folklore using memorable phrases repetitively to aid oral transmission. Folklore is strongly connected with group identity, and 'connects us to the past and to each other, because it requires face-to-face contact' (Knapp and Knapp 1976).

Scholars of children's folklore have studied the games, songs, rhymes and rituals that circulate amongst children. Folklore studies are different from other domains of research in being genuinely concerned with children's own culture, rather than adult perspectives (Davey and Factor 1980). Strikingly, much of children's folklore, also known as playlore, appears to be universal in scope, though with important regional, ethnic and class variations. June Factor explains that children's folklore exists within children's traditional play as 'part of a continuum of folklore, sometimes shared with adults, more often learnt from other children in the long, anonymous chain of oral tradition, subject to the processes of decay, preservation, adaptation and innovation' (Factor 1988).

Early collections of children's folklore from the late nineteenth century focused on documenting children's traditional and street games before they disappeared, emphasizing the continuity of folkloric traditions (Gomme 1984, first published 1894–8; Douglas 1931, first published 1916). But as children's folklore survived into the twentieth century, folklorists began to perceive that alongside longevity and conservatism in children's games and rhymes there exists considerable innovation (Turner 1969). Moreover, the transmission of children's folklore is not insulated from the influence of adults (Lowenstein 1988; see also Factor 1988). Chapters by Andrew Burns and by Davey *et al.* in this volume explore the different ways in which the intangible cultural heritage of children, whilst drawing on traditional games for inspiration, continues to adapt to suit the needs of twenty-first-century children – including through active and creative engagement with media technologies and popular culture.

## **Sites of childhood**

Whilst aspects of children's cultural heritage take immaterial form, other aspects are very much grounded in the physical environment. Alongside material culture and intangible culture, sites and spaces are important to the history and heritage of children. These include the domestic space of the home, as well as the street, village or neighbourhood, and other modern institutional sites such as the school. Since the 1970s geographers have been identifying and analysing the types of spaces that are important in children's lives (Ward 1978; Hart 1979; Holloway and Valentine 2000; Christensen and O'Brien 2003). More recently, historians have begun to extend such spatial research along temporal axes (Pascoe 2011; Gutman and Coninck-Smith 2008). But as Kim Rasmussen contends, a crucial differentiation can be made between 'places of children', which are designated by adults, and 'children's places' which are

chosen by children themselves. Sometimes overlap between these categories occurs, but often children's places – which may be imbued with symbolic meanings by children – appear disordered, dangerous or dirty to adults (Rasmussen 2004).

In other words, the research undertaken on the geographies of children reveals that the spaces created for children by adults might not be those which children value most. For example, the thrill of playing in derelict or wild sites often cannot be replicated in the safe spaces of a designated suburban playground. As Claire Cooper Marcus's research into childhood environmental memories has revealed, generally the places valued by children are makeshift and ephemeral, such as a cubby house in the forest or a sandcastle at the beach (Cooper Marcus 1992). How and why would such spaces be preserved as representative of children's heritage? Who would agitate for their preservation?

Childhood is the period of the life cycle closely associated with the acquisition of knowledge, either informally or formally, so the child is equipped to enter the adult world. With the gradual introduction of universal education throughout the world, such education has been spent in the schoolroom. The culture of children is thus shaped by the ideologies, regulations and experiences of the school. Mark A. Jones's chapter in this volume looks at the importance of ideas about education and mothering in the creation of the 'superior student' in modern Japan. The cultural heritage of children is also evident in the spatial and built environment of the school, and how this environment may influence their play, social interactions and learning (see chapters by Davey *et al.* and Burn in this volume). In an examination of the architectural heritage of post-Second World War English schools, Elaine Harwood outlines the innovation evident in the design of 'child-centred' school buildings, including the interiors of the classroom. Yet it is the 'everyday' or 'ordinary' nature of these buildings that has raised questions about whether they are of social or design significance, and hence worthy of preservation.

The architectural heritage of children and childhood is encompassing, for children are present in all aspects of adult life and locales. Apart from schools, there are particular institutional sites associated with the adult management of children, including orphanages, reformatories or children's hospitals. Rhian Harris and Simon Sleight discuss the Foundling Hospital in their chapters in this volume as an example of a particular site, now a museum, associated with the fortunes of children. It is clearly far easier to preserve the institutional heritage sites associated with children or to ensure children are included in the historical interpretation at heritage sites which carry multiple significations (such as house museums), than it is to commemorate the more ephemeral play spaces children create. As with other aspects of heritage, it will always be a challenging undertaking to decipher the ways in which historical children engaged with the landscapes and buildings they inhabited.

## **Human rights and romanticism in children's cultural heritage**

As Hilary Charlesworth has argued, 'A human rights approach to cultural heritage argues that human rights themselves should be understood as heritage' (Charlesworth

2010: 28). This view has particular relevance to the cultural heritage of children, for the lives of children, both in the past and today, are often harsh and traumatic. Many chapters in this volume attest to the realities of childhoods that are dominated by work, inadequate food and clothing, and cruelty. Simon Sleight points to the past and present experiences of children as workers, including exploitative arrangements, and how these experiences are represented in museum displays and heritage sites. Kate Darian-Smith documents the commemorations, through such forms as memorials and government apologies, for the suffering of Indigenous children separated from their families as a result of colonial policies in Australia and elsewhere.

In another key example, the experiences of children are central to the public memories and commemorations of the Holocaust. Those Jewish children who perished are represented in museums and memorial sites by such objects as shoes. The experiences of Anne Frank have become universally associated with the suffering of children in the Holocaust, with the Anne Frank House Museum in Amsterdam now receiving a million visitors annually, many of them young people. However, as Beth B. Cohen points out in this volume, the Jewish children who survived the Holocaust have been frequently overlooked in the representation of its history, despite being viewed at the time as the physical and symbolic embodiment of the future of Jewish culture and heritage.

The experiences of children as victims of war, genocide and natural disasters has led to attempts to explicitly enshrine their rights. The formation of the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) after the Second World War indicated that at the global level there was increasing recognition of the rights of children as a special group requiring protection. In 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child which enshrined the rights of children to health care, education, food and shelter. In 1989, these rights were expanded when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which quickly became the most widely accepted international human rights treaty in history. The Convention takes a 'whole child' approach to the heritage of children, recognizing the full range of social, economic, civic, social, political and cultural human rights regardless of gender, race, religion and ethnicity. Its core principles include the right to life, survival and development and respect for the views of children. In a broader framework, human rights issues associated with tangible and intangible heritage and cultural diversity are emerging as a key challenge for heritage professionals (Langfield *et al.* 2010). The rights of children have a distinct place within this heritage environment, especially as they are a particularly powerless group who, by nature of their status as children, have little access to a social or political voice.

However, despite the special status of children's human rights in international law, the view of children as particularly vulnerable and in need of adult protection has continued to have strong resonance. Whilst the cultural heritage of children and childhood takes different forms – from material to intangible to spatial – each of these categories demonstrates the emotive impact of the figure of the child. In contemporary Western culture, the child is the symbol of vulnerability, which is why debates

about children can slip easily into moralizing, whether they concern child labour or children's play. As Peter Kraftl has cogently argued, childhood and utopia are often connected in public discourse. Images of children are represented as images of hope and of the future, connected with an implicit biological essentialism underlining the view of children as naturally innocent and playful. Kraftl writes that

whether deliberate or not, my reading is that such tendencies . . . leave to varying degrees untouched an association between four ideas(l)s: the romanticisation of childhood as a biological and social time-space of innocence; nostalgias for childhoods past, whether in the city or the country; the free play, creativity and imagination demonstration by (some) children themselves; and, the utopian possibilities of (child-like) free play, creativity and imagination.

(Kraftl 2009: 72)

Imagery of childhood has a deep emotional influence not only because of collective aspirations for a utopian society, but also because on an individual level there are implications for personal self-identity. Paula Fass explains that the Enlightenment bequeathed the notion that the self is made of collected memories, particularly early recollections, so that childhood becomes the foundation of the self. Across the twentieth century, this view that childhood memory is crucial to adult personality has only deepened. Because of such cultural associations, Fass argues that the study of children's history – and implicitly children's heritage – has far-reaching implications. This is because 'we are not only questioning a grand integrated adult-based narrative, we are making possible the unravelling of the coherent individual and asserting that this individual has engaged in a number of separately investigable lives . . . that could change over time' (Fass 2010: 161).

## Conclusion

Given that the child carries profound individual and social associations in contemporary Western culture, the heritage of children and childhood cannot but be affected by such strong cultural views. Chapters in this volume reflect and acknowledge this cultural framework, but simultaneously strive to be self-reflexive about the implicit assumptions of the author(s). We have endeavoured throughout to emphasize the agency of children in determining their own experiences, cultures and creativity. In particular, we have attempted to maintain a distinction between the heritage of children and the heritage of childhood. In other words, to analyse the difference between folklore, toys or places created by children and those created by adults *for* children.

This, really, is the critical question for the heritage of children and childhood: what types of sites, objects or folklore do we choose to preserve in representing the histories of children in the past? Ultimately, such decisions reflect the types of narratives we wish to emphasize about children, as well as the extent to which we wish to involve children in the preservation and interpretation of their own experiences and material and immaterial heritage.



To be truly representative of children's experiences, cultural heritage needs to encompass more than solely sentimental or nostalgic visions of children's history that privileges wealthy or fortunate childhoods. As the chapters in this volume attest, some examples of the heritage of children and childhood are attempting just that. But more radically, some scholars and heritage professionals call for a move beyond adult visions of children's heritage to allow children to decide what to preserve and how it should be displayed. Some precedents already exist, as Bill Logan's chapter herein discusses in relation to UNESCO programmes. Similar work has been done through the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities initiative, which encourages children to influence the kinds of urban spaces they wish to inhabit.<sup>5</sup>

As has been argued in relation to juvenile involvement in designing museum displays 'it is both difficult and unnecessary for adults to try to imagine and/or predict what children will think. Rather, children should be involved in the planning and evaluation of exhibits and simply be asked for their input and opinions' (McRaney and Russick 2010). Whether or not we accord children an active role in selecting and exhibiting heritage, the primary challenge for this emerging field of heritage practice is to consistently interrogate and complicate definitions of children and childhood that are represented as self-evident. With rapidly growing interest in both childhood studies and heritage studies around the globe, it is certain that the cultural heritage of children and childhood will continue to expand in exciting new directions in the future.

## Notes

- 1 The William Boyd Childhood Collection is preserved at Museum Victoria. For more information see <http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/themes/1622/william-boyd-childhood-collection>
- 2 Interview with Bill Boyd in Perth by Carla Pascoe, 28 September 2006.
- 3 See [http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/small\\_exhibition.cfm?key=1267&exkey=376](http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/small_exhibition.cfm?key=1267&exkey=376)
- 4 See <http://museumvictoria.com.au/about/mv-blog/mar-2011/introducing-pendle-hall/>
- 5 See <http://childfriendlycities.org/>

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