

Rethinking Children's Spaces and Places, New Childhoods Series

David Blundell. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic. 2016. 223 pp. £15 paperback, £60 hardback, £12 e-book ISBN: 9781472581495

It is heartening to see evidence that the now-established geographies of children and young people is gaining recognition in disciplines that share a concern about childhood and children's lives. The 'spatial turn' in education and youth studies continues through this book as part of the New Childhoods series. Blundell acts as an engaging, accessible and nuanced guide of, and interlocutor on, the difference that attending to space, place and spatiality can make to understanding children's lifeworlds.

Aimed at students, with activities, chapter summaries, reflections and guides to examples of research, the book is eminently usable. Indeed, it has the texture of writing tested and refined through engaged teaching. The critical summaries of key articles and the way the book returns to its key concepts and brings these into dialogue is excellent. Although I imagine that book will find its widest audience with undergraduates it should not be overlooked by others who are interested in having one route through this work proficiently narrated for them.

The book has three sections. The first introduces the reader to the key ideas about childhood and children's spaces and places that set a scene for some of the dominant Eurocentric ideas of 'modern childhood'. The second section leads the reader through a range of work on space, place and spatiality including spatial theorists and human geographers. It is here that the concern for usability is both a particular strength and weakness. Although Soja, Foucault and Giddens are mentioned and there is all too brief nod to Massey it is a book by Elizabeth Teather that is given most prominence here and returned to throughout. This choice seems to be due to the usability of the typology of space that she offers. This work is certainly instructive but appears as an unusual choice. However, this is not a book for human geographers *per se* or a recapitulation of ossified disciplinary narratives about space, place or spatiality. Although this choice would give me pause in recommending the book to human geography students I also recognise that they would likely have success in using and developing these particular ideas in their own writing or research. The third section plays out these concepts across a range of domains – from scholarization and the extensions of space of learning, playing out and children's spatial range, identity construction in learning institutions, to spaces of 'nature' and the globalization of childhood spaces.

A critique based on the eurocentrism of the book (and the work it draws on) might hold but would ignore the book's declared focus on 'modern childhood', which bears the burden of a distinctly European lineage. It would also ignore the deconstruction of these ideas in the final chapter on globalisation, questions of scale and nature-cultures. These provocations were, for me, particularly interesting and would warrant further exploration as the starting point of a book rather than its end. While the author claims to offer 'no new theories about children in any conventional sense' (p34) the dialogues that Blundell stages do take the reader beyond the extant literature and this is to be welcomed.

Matt Finn

Geography, College of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Exeter