



EPILOGUE

“You go girl!” That’s the writing on the wall depicted on the front cover of this book, a part of the cityscape that signposts (and claims) the relevance of place and space for girls and girlhood studies. Symbolically, this image counters the sense that there is no place for girls and young women; for them, many public and private spaces remain dangerous. It is clear that while much territory has been covered by the chapters in this book, there is still more to be explored, and theorized, in relation to the spaces and places in which girls live and learn, and as far as building better knowledge about how girls create more secure and safer lives is concerned. In October 2012, sixteen-year-old Malala Yousafzai was shot by the Taliban in Pakistan. Amanda Todd, a Canadian teenager, committed suicide after months of being sexually harassed online and cyberbullied. Early in 2014, more than two hundred Nigerian girls disappeared and, indeed, at the time of writing, are still missing. It took a group of young women students in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, to mount a campus campaign to raise awareness about these missing girls. They said, “We’re looking for them. What are you doing?”

Such cases call for more critical inquiry into the ways in which territory and place, sovereignty and rights struggles, are intertwined, both in movements for justice for girls and young women, and in the bodies of knowledge in which so many of us participate and to which we contribute. Here in Canada, from where we write, Indigenous feminist and young women of color activists mobilize against the failure of the justice system in relation to the more than one thousand missing and murdered Indigenous girls and women. Alongside a mass movement for Indigenous sovereignty, *Idle No More*, headed by Chief Therese Spence, women and girls, men and boys are working cross-generationally to claim space for their communities based on their rights to territory. Such struggles are, and ought to be, central to girlhood studies and the ways in which we conceive of girls as change makers within larger movements and struggles for physical and social space.

What would it take to reimagine space and place within girlhood studies in light of these structural forms of violence, and the modes of gendered resistance that have arisen in response? Based in these partic-

ular realities, we end this book with a call for a renewal of research inquiry that asks how, and through what means, girls create and mobilize place-based consciousness toward more just communities, and worlds. First of all, how might place and space be made more prominent and explicit in our conceptualizations of girlhood within the contexts of social change and their related social imaginaries? As the chapters in this book illustrate, contemporary girlhood studies imagines place as physical and geographic, but also as virtual, in ways that reveal the interconnections of online and offline practice, and experience. Girls find themselves and others online, where they imagine other ways of being, and in some cases, do politics and make changes that translate into their lives at school, in the street, in their homes, and in other places.

We also ask what other theories and analyses of place and space need to infiltrate, as it were, this work, to push it in new directions from a position of what we think of as aggressive commitment. From generative notions of rurality, for example, to recognition of the contested place of land itself as fundamental to violence perpetrated against Indigenous girls and young women, girlhood studies needs to acknowledge not just the idea of gendered spaces but also the ways in which these spaces are also colonized, and colonizing. Indeed, recognizing the interrelatedness of such social constructs as race, culture, (dis)ability, gender, and age we might ask if intersectionality studies still has a number of blind spots when it comes to the significance of space and place for girls.

The contributors to this volume have not adopted a problem-oriented approach to studying girls' lives; they have sought to deepen an understanding of the situation in which girls and young women live, study, work, and struggle to represent themselves and others, across their differences and different locations as part of the very construction of who and what constitutes girlhood, and what identifies the girls with whom we work. By reimagining place and space, we might reconceptualize the ways in which the issues girls face are posed by institutions, policy makers, and media industries in terms that could better account for the place claiming of girls within and around these sites. More than anything, this reimagining might allow us to reflect forward to the creation of new spaces and places for social change.