Situating Childhood: Editor's Preface

Paul Kingsbury
University of Kentucky

DOI: https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.10.01

Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License.

Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.10.01
Available at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure/vol10/iss1/1

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Theory at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory by an authorized editor of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.
childhood

disClosure:
a journal of social theory
issue no. 10

36" x 42" oil on canvas
Copyright retained by artist.
disClosure:
a journal of social theory
no. 10 childhood

Contents

Editor's Preface
Situating Childhood........................................7
Maria Luisa Arroyo
Why you Became Boy-Wolf..............................12
Leonora Ritter
The Many Inventions of Childhood:
A Tentative Taxonomy.....................................15
Faye Moskowitz
Squirrel Nutkin...........................................35
Heidi Steinke
Pubes.........................................................44
Renfro-Sargent and Saad
Capturing the Child: Gothic Subject
Categories and Erotic Tropes of Appeal:
disClosure interviews James Kincaid..................47
Carolyn Moran
Along a School Yard Fence..............................70
Spyros Spyrou
Being One and More than One: Greek
Cypriot Children and Ethnic Identity
in the Flow of Everyday Life............................73
Children of the High Street
Neighborhood Center
Artists Gallery.............................................96
Kleinfeld and Sutliff-Sanders
Childhood and Child Life:
disClosure interviews Jo Boyden.......................103
Jane Adan
Crook, Chinks in the Day..............................123
Heidi Steinke
Child Bride..................................................140
Angela Thomas
Cyber Children: Discursive and
Subjective Practices in the Palace.....................143
Carolyn Moran
Darknesses..................................................176
Book Reviews
Robbie Davis-Floyd and Joseph Dumit's
Cyborg Babies: From Techno-Sex To Techno-Tots....179
Catherine Mathelin's
Lacanian Psychotherapy with Children................183
Contributors

Jane Adan is completing her doctoral thesis at the University of California. Her subjects include resistance, estrangement, loss, and other trivialities in a child's relation with adults and the finite world. Her work has appeared in Angelaki, Feminist Studies, and the SUNY series Feminist Theory and Education.

Maria Luisa Arroyo was born in Manati, Puerto Rico and raised in Springfield, Massachusetts. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Germanic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. Many of her poems which are written in English, Spanish, and German have been published in journals such as The Americas Review, The Bilingual Review, Encodings: A Feminist Literary Journal, and TransLit.

Jo Boyden is a social anthropologist and has been working as a social development consultant for the past twenty years. Her current research focuses on the experiences and responses to armed conflict and forced migration among children and adolescents across the world.

Children of the High Street Neighborhood Center are aged between one and five years old and live in the environs of Lexington, Kentucky. They are offered educational experiences often unavailable for poor children.

James Kincaid is the Aerol Arnold Professor in the Department of English at the University of Southern California. A prolific writer in Victorian literature and theory his books include Child Loving and Erotic Innocence.

Paul Kingsbury is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky and the editor of disClosure #10: childhood.

Margo Kleinfeld is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky. Her dissertation research focuses on the creation of humanitarian space for children in Sri Lanka.

Carolyn Moran is an Assistant Professor of English at Tennessee State University. Her work has appeared in South Florida Poetry Review, Cotton Bolt/Atlanta Review, San Jose Studies, Xanadu, and Voices International.

Faye Moskowitz is the former Director of Creative Writing and current chair of the English Department at George Washington University. She is the author of A Leak in the Heart and is a former commen-
tator on N.P.R.'s "All Things Considered;" her poems, essays, and fiction have been widely published.

Matthew Renfro-Sargent is currently finishing his doctoral course work in the Department of Sociology at the University of Kentucky. He is putting together a dissertation that investigates school boards, legal activism, and the public sphere.

Leonora Ritter is a senior lecturer in history and politics, at the Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, New South Wales. She has articles published in Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies, Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, and Northwest Journal of Historical Studies. Current projects include a book on forces and ideologies that have shaped the modern world to be published in 2001.

Tobie Saad is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky. Her current inquiry focuses upon embodiment, identity, and community in a Japanese context.

Spyros Spyrou lives in Nicosia, Cyprus and works as an assistant professor of anthropology and sociology at Cyprus College. She is also the head of the Department of Arts and Sciences at Cyprus College. She has been published in The Cyprus Review and in an edited volume on Children and Anthropology.

Heidi Steinke currently resides in Chicago, Illinois. She is a Master of Fine Arts at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Her solo exhibitions have included the Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame; the Fugitive Art Center, Nashville Tennessee; and 840 Gallery, University of Cincinnati.

Joe Sutliff-Sanders is beginning his dissertation on the child in literature for the English Department at the University of Kentucky. His other publications and professional affiliations center around gender theory and speculative fiction.

Angela Thomas has recently been appointed as a lecturer in language and literacy at the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Prior to that she spent two years working at the Centre for Critical Psychology at the University of Western Sydney as a research officer on a project entitled "Children and Cyberspace" and as a tutor and lecturer at the University of Sydney in the area of functional linguistics and visual literacy.
On every formal visit a child ought to be of the party, by way of provision for discourse. Austen (27-28)

In the end, lest what is most important remain unsaid: from such abysses, from such severe sickness of severe suspicion, one returns newborn, having shed one’s skin, more ticklish and malicious, with a more delicate taste for joy, with a tenderer tongue for all good things, with merrier senses, with a second dangerous innocence in joy, more childlike and yet a hundred times subtler than one has ever been before. Nietzsche (37)

A child is ten years old. In its first year it was already Rethinking Contemporary Mythologies, and the following year it spoke its first words about the Buying and Selling of Culture. At three years old, the child declared the Fin-de-Siècle Democracy, and in its fourth year it started Making Boundaries. The child progressed through its fifth year by Reason INCorporated, and at six years old it was reVisioning Justice. On its seventh birthday the child began coloring. At the grand age of eight it crossed into perigiNations, and last year, aged nine, this child discovered manholes.

These italicized moments, as some faithful readers may have guessed, are past disclosure titles. Such an eventful life is cause for remembrance, celebration, and renewal (see subscriptions page). It is with immense joy, on behalf of the editorial collective, that I welcome you to the tenth anniversary edition of Disclosure entitled childhood. As a journal that espouses multi-
Editor's Preface

interdisciplinary theoretical encounters with social life, this issue of *disClosure* seeks with *childhood* to splay out the multi-dimensional and intermingling encounters with the event that is childhood. In this sense, one is not born a child, one becomes one, but the child is never one. Always becoming situated, childhood is an intensity often cast between a ticklishness of apparent innocence and a maliciousness that always seems to threaten it, betwixt the spaces of the 'non-child,' other children, and surrounding worlds. Interestingly, negotiating this precarious constellation of innocence and threat presented the editorial collective with challenging decisions concerning the choice of materials for publication. In this issue, we read of how childhood becomes situated amongst historical, discursive, national, ethnic, institutional, and technological forces. Echoing Jane Austen's remark, *disClosure* not only presents childhood as a proviso for scholarly discourse but also as a reflexive space for acknowledging the discourses of children 'themselves.'

We begin with Leonora Ritter's proposal of a "tentative taxonomy" that unfolds the shifting terrain of competing and compounding discourses that give form(s) to the child. From the "organic discourse" of the Yequana Indians in Venezuela to the "optional-extra" discourse of the suburban Dual Income no Kids familial model, Ritter traces the ways in which the child as a category is operationalized through and immanent to various discourses. In so doing, Ritter illustrates how understandings of the child as simply 'not adult' are untenable and overlook the politics at stake and fought for in the name of the child.

The theme of discursive power continues in our first interview with James Kincaid who discusses how the child was scripted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a category evacuated of sexuality and agency. Kincaid describes how this romantic maneuver can hysterically produce a child in dire need of protection and surveillance. Kincaid's notion of a "Gothic narrative" evokes the contemporary cultural obsession for depicting people involved with child abuse and molestation as demonic monsters. For Kincaid, this gothic fervour returns an erotic association with childhood repressed by tropes of innocence and vulnerability. Alongside this delicate economy of desire between eroticism and children, Kincaid discusses the politics of sex education, childcare, and the writing and reception of his critically acclaimed books *Child Loving* and *Erotic Innocence*.

Moving from situating the discursivity of childhood towards the situation of discourses, Spyros Spyrou investigates children's lives in two Greek Cypriot elementary schools where children negotiate eth-

nic and national identities in the "flow of everyday life." Spyrou describes how two discourses of "Hellenocentrism" and "Cypriotocentrism" having emerged from a historically turbulent relationship between Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey ideologically inform Cyprus's educational system, teaching practices, and children's classroom experiences. Using ethnographic methods, Spyrou explains how a "diglossia," or, two linguistic varieties of Greek language enable Greek Cypriot children to articulate and make sense of complex political boundaries where children are "one but also more than one."

In our second interview, Jo Boyden begins by stating that the immediate everyday experiences of children can be conveyed effectively by the term "child life." Boyden discusses children's experiences based on twenty years of working and researching children in 'non-western' countries around the world. Boyden believes that the poignancy of doing research with children and offering them a rare chance to speak about their lives can prove to be both methodologically challenging and enlightening. Boyden provides insights into a 'geopolitics' of childhood through the international impacts and liabilities of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, military conflicts, and the controversies of child's labor.

An attempt to offer a social theoretical survey about childhood should engage with the relations between children and the proliferation of various new technologies. In our final article, Angela Thomas provides an extensive analysis of how contemporary childhood is configured by and experienced through cyberspace. In recent years, the Internet has become the site *par excellence* for adults to police, monitor, and establish protection regimes for (their) children. Rather than simply pursue a (repressive) hypothesis whereby the web and childhood are cast in terms of control, Thomas seeks to understand how children "actually" engage through cyber practices and productions of subjectivity where children also discipline each other. By constructing a graphical online chat environment for children called a "Palace," Thomas offers in-depth textual and visual analyses of children's social interaction through the Internet medium.

In situating childhood artistically, this issue of *disClosure* includes two short stories by Faye Moskowitz and Jane Adan that evoke the magic and trials of childhood. There are also poems by María Luisa Arroyo and Carolyn Moran, the artwork of Heidi Steinke (who's piece *King Pin* graces the cover), and drawings by the children at the Neighborhood Center, Lexington, Kentucky.

Now, I urge you to celebrate this tenth anniversary issue by continuing to read *childhood* and *disClosure* issues yet to come.
Acknowledgments

This issue is an assemblage of people's patience, dedication, and sheer hard work. I would like to acknowledge the editorial collective for excelling in all of these qualities and providing a wonderful milieu that befits the spirit and aspirations of disclosure. On behalf of the editorial collective for issue 10, the following people deserve heartfelt thanks and recognition for offering their time and energy to make childhood possible.

Dana Nelson for her invaluable support throughout the collective meetings, advisors Virginia Blum, Wolfgang Natter, John Paul Jones III, and Ted Schatzki for their steadfast encouragement. We appreciate the financial support of the University of Kentucky's Student Government Association and the Committee on Social Theory, as well as the production assistance of Jamison Barton and Eric Crowden at the University of Kentucky's Publishing Services.

Faculty members of the Committee on Social Theory played a crucial role in the review process and for their guidance and insights we thank John Pickles, Suzanne Pucci, and Sue Roberts. Ex-disclosure editors Carl Dahlman for his generous expertise, all too expert technical assistance with the cover and Christine Metzo for her ongoing support in the editorial and production processes. We thank the Departments of Geography and Philosophy for continuing to provide disclosure with precious space, technology resources, and production materials. Tobie Saad for providing technical and aesthetic guidance in the laboratory. Lynn Hiler and Christine Wolcott for their secretarial services for the Committee on Social Theory.

For their excellent submissions and permission to produce their images, we thank Heidi Steinke, the parents and children of the High Street Neighborhood Center, Rita Lawson the executive director and the staff at the Neighborhood Center who made this project possible and thoroughly enjoyable. For allowing us to hold interviews James Kincaid and Jo Boyden. For the excellent submissions and cooperation in the editorial process, all of the contributors. In addition to the collective's proof reading, Mary Curran and Melinda Spencer offered their time and energy to edit manuscripts. Finally, and once again, I would like to call-out the graduate members of the disclosure editorial collective who made this issue, this childhood such an exquisite one: Margo Kleinfeld, Elgin Manion, Jeff Osborne, Matthew Renfro-Sargent, and Tobie Saad.

Lexington, Kentucky
April, 2001

Works Cited