Situating Childhood: Editor's Preface

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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 Ball/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 commentator 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- and
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 mate-
rials 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 provision 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 tax-
onomy” that unfolds the shifting terrain of competing and compound-
ing discourses that give form(s) to the child. From the “organic dis-
course” 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 illus-
trates how understandings of the child as simply ‘not adult’ are un-
tenable 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 sexu-
ality and agency. Kincaid describes how this romantic maneuver can 
hysterically produce a child in dire need of protection and surveil-
ance. Kincaid’s notion of a “Gothic narrative” evokes the contempo-
rary cultural obsession for depicting people involved with child abuse 
and molestation as demonic monsters. For Kincaid, this gothic fervour 
returns an erotis association with childhood repressed by tropes of in-
ocence 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 ac-
claimed 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 de-
scribes how two discourses of “Hellenocentrism” and 
“Cypriotocentrism” having emerged from a historically turbulent rela-
tionship between Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey ideologically inform 
Cyprus’s educational system, teaching practices, and children’s class-
room 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 pol-
itical 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 effec-
tively by the term “child life.” Boyden discusses children’s experi-
bences 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 li-
abilities of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, military con-
licts, 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 prolifera-
tion of various new technologies. In our final article, Angela Thomas 
provides an extensive analysis of how contemporary childhood is con-
figured by and experienced through cyberspace. In recent years, the 
Internet has become the site par excellence for adults to police, moni-
tor, and establish protection regimes for (their) children. Rather than 
simply pursue a (repressive) hypothesis whereby the web and child-
hood 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 construct-
ing a graphical online chat environment for children called a “Palace,” 
Thomas offers in-depth textual and visual analyses of children’s so-
cial interaction through the Internet medium.

In situating childhood artistically, this issue of disclosure in-
cludes 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 con-
tinuing 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.

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Lexington, Kentucky
April, 2001

Works Cited
