

INTRODUCTION

The Children's Table

Childhood Studies and the Humanities

As anyone who has attended a Thanksgiving dinner can attest, the children's table is not usually an A-list destination. Denied the good china, seated at a wobbly folding table, placed out of earshot of the juicy adult gossip, the guests at the children's table know that they occupy a marginal space. In many ways, the children's table is an apt metaphor for the role childhood studies has played in the humanities and, more discomfortingly perhaps, for the role the humanities sometimes seem to play within the academy. Yet, as in many marginalized spaces, there can be an intense sense of freedom and creativity precisely because one's voice is out of earshot. This book provides an overview of the innovative work being done in childhood studies—a transcript, if you will, of what they've been saying at the children's table. But this volume is also an argument for rethinking the seating arrangement itself. The study of children, often seen as peripheral to the important work of understanding social, political, national, and ethnic structures, allows us to rethink the very foundations underlying these structures. The chapters in *The Children's Table* share a unifying premise: to include the child in any field of study is to realign the very structure of that field, changing the terms of inquiry and forcing a different set of questions.¹ Because defining childhood is a means of defining and distributing power and obligation, studying childhood requires a radically altered approach to the questions of what constitutes knowledge and what animates the work of power and resistance.

In short, we argue that engaging children as individuals worthy of study inevitably complicates how we process knowledge about the human subject.

For at least a generation, the humanities have been in a state of continual self-evaluation (some might say self-recrimination) about how to define the field and the value of what lies within those parameters. Charles Frankel, the first director of the National Humanities Center, characterizes the humanities as “that form of knowledge in which the knower is revealed.” For Frankel, all “knowledge becomes humanistic when we are asked to contemplate not only a proposition but the proposer, when we hear the human voice behind what is being said.”² Geoffrey Harpham takes another tack, focusing on methodology and motivation. “The humanities,” he argues, take “‘the text’ as their object, humanity as their subject, and self-understanding as their goal.”³ Perhaps the most pervasive—if largely unarticulated—definition stipulates that the humanities are what the sciences are not. In her article “Defining the Humanities” Anna Wierbicka writes that whereas the focus of science is things, the “subject-matter of ‘the humanities’ is ‘people,’ and people studied not in the way in which ‘things’ can be studied.”⁴ In sum, science purports to focus on objects, and thus to be objective, while the humanities are a messier enterprise. Echoing Frankel’s assertion, this argument suggests that the voice of the knower, replete with that knower’s political and aesthetic beliefs, can be heard in the humanities but is largely undetectable in scientific inquiry.

Within a model that defines the humanities and the sciences as antithetical, childhood studies can function as an important corrective. Willem Koops, a developmental psychologist, contends that children pose questions that science cannot answer. For Koops, the empirical approach favored by science cannot, by itself, provide the capacious approach necessary for fully understanding the experience of children. Further, empirical knowledge does not attempt to trace how the experiences of children shape our larger culture. “Normative issues,” writes Koops, “cannot be solved empirically.”⁵ *The Children’s Table* goes still further, arguing that ideas of normativity themselves often get in the way of accurate knowledge.⁶ The pull of the normative still needs to be questioned, and humanists are well positioned to do the asking.

A brief history of the evolution of childhood studies reveals that the field does not just function as a corrective to scientific essentialism but that it also reveals how profoundly interdependent scientific and humanistic knowl-

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edge are in the first place. As an endeavor that focuses on children with the intent of locating and studying their agency, childhood studies defies the easy divisions of biology and culture, body and book. More precisely, childhood studies demonstrates how the science we apply to children and, by extension, to human development has been shaped by cultural narratives about independence and autonomy—stories that were forged in opposition to an imagined child.

Although we can trace interest in childhood back to any number of historical moments, many practitioners locate the origins of contemporary childhood studies in the Enlightenment, as part of that era's interest in human nature. Within Enlightenment thought, the child was deployed to represent everything from the state of nature to the power of the environment to the benefit of perpetual progress. John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, philosophers whose work roamed freely between “scientific” pronouncements on diet and exercise, social scientific speculations about human psychology, and political meditations on parental obligations, took the child both as an object and as a metaphor for their ideas of governance. The romanticized notion of the child—perhaps best exemplified by Wordsworth's odes to childhood innocence—took hold in the early nineteenth century and would manifest itself in Victorian culture's fathomless fascination with the sentimental child whose beauty and fragility wrung hearts and evoked tears. In turn, this beautiful, if perpetually endangered, child of sentimental literature occupied the very heart of the social scientific child-saving movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As these medical and scientific movements developed, they evolved in cultural conversation with contemporary cultural and literary narratives that rendered childhood a battleground for racial supremacy.⁷ For instance, G. Stanley Hall argued that one could look to the growth of children to trace the development of racial types from the supposedly primitive races to the supposed pinnacle of evolution—the white race.⁸ We need look no further than the American “Better Baby” contests of the early twentieth century for evidence of how the biases manifested in literary and popular culture shaped the early days of genetic/hereditary science that focused so intensely on producing (racially and ethnically) “strong” children.⁹

Sigmund Freud brought another level of attention to the child. The founder of psychology—a field that currently encompasses a blend of social and hard sciences such as neuroscience and psychotherapy—drew much of

his theoretical inspiration from classical art, literature, and folklore. “Not only did the serious study of children’s literature start with Freud,” Kenneth Kidd has argued, but “we may also say that psychoanalysis developed in part through its engagement with children’s literature.”¹⁰ Anthropology—a field that likewise spans the traditional humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences—has been one of the leading fields in furthering our understanding of the child as a position contingent on history, culture, and other environmental factors. Human rights advocates are among the many who have realized we must embrace a model that realizes the reciprocal relationship between what we have traditionally called the humanities and what we have traditionally called science. UN documents such as the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child express a carefully crafted vision that address children’s biological and cultural needs, drawing from medical, anthropological, and political perspectives.

To reiterate, the history of childhood studies demonstrates how cultural narratives about what children *should* be shape what experts—in both the humanities and the sciences—have found to be “true” about childhood. As cognitive scientists, forensic psychologists, and others continue to open up new ways of understanding children’s bodies and minds, this new knowledge will be disseminated through narratives that will, in turn, shape the directions that research takes in the larger culture. “The humanistic turn of mind,” Cathy Davidson has argued, “provides the historical perspective, interpretive skill, critical analysis, and narrative form required to articulate the significance of the scientific discoveries of an era” and “show how they change our sense of what it means to be human.”¹¹ In short, because the child has always been a deeply narrativized subject, any useful study of childhood and children must be willing to draw on the “humanistic turn of mind” and its ability to illuminate, critique, and ultimately transform the narratives that both influence and occlude the lives of actual young people.

Over the past twenty years, scholars have done much to reveal how these narratives have shaped our constructions of childhood and to trace how those constructions have affected our concepts of humanity.¹² A particularly rich vein of inquiry asks how ideas about childhood have influenced larger cultural attitudes toward dependence and has explored the political implications of those attitudes in illuminative studies about children’s roles in political, cultural and even military life.¹³ The political, sexual, and cultural work of children’s literature has become a major field within literary

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studies.¹⁴ It is precisely because of the recent publication of these powerful and well-received texts that we must now rigorously consider the child's wide-ranging impact beyond discrete studies of particular subjects. In short, childhood studies, a vibrant but largely self-contained niche within humanities scholarship, is ready to assume its place as an epistemological game changer.

The Children's Table takes on the ambitious task of charting how childhood studies transforms how we ask a number of questions about the relationship between science and story, biology and culture, data and narrative. The work of childhood studies, this volume argues, is not to simply correct the essentialist pull that undergirds scientific notions of the child. Rather we must rigorously engage science's biological parameters in relation to, rather than treat them as the ontological opponent of, other forms of knowledge. As the authors in this collection move back and forth between, in Frankel's words, the "knowledge and the knower," they offer a different perspective on this relationship between representations of childhood and young people's experiences as they live within those formulations.

For if scientific inquiry is shaped by embedded narratives about the child, rethinking childhood as a critical category within the humanities also promises to overturn some of the foundational structures of thought within the humanities itself. The figure we now recognize as a child was created in tandem with forms of modernity that the Enlightenment generated and that the humanities are working to collectively rethink. As I've been arguing, the child has long served as the model for progress—from savagery to civilization, from murky past to fully realized present—that provides a cornerstone of contemporary work within the humanities. John Locke's child figure, the irrational subject incapable of giving full consent, still looms large over the scholarship that seeks to recover the voices and experiences of those who have been infantilized. Passive, victimized, silent, and sheltered, the child is the placeholder for what full citizen-subjects need to define themselves against. Consider, for example, James Beattie's 1770 deployment of the well-worn analogy between children and savages in his argument that "one may as well say of an infant, that he can never become a man, as of a nation now barbarous, that it can never be civilized."¹⁵ On both sides of the comparison, the state of childhood is antithetical to full humanity—the child, like the barbarous nation, may have the potential for future rational autonomy, but both must undergo rigorous training to overcome their current state of

incompleteness. Thomas Jefferson follows a similar line of argument when he laments that freeing slaves would be analogous to “abandoning a child.”¹⁶ His argument is based on the unquestioned premise that a child is inherently dependent on others and therefore must forgo his or her rights in order to gain the supposedly benevolent protection of “adults.”

Much of the most exciting work in the humanities today seeks to recover the voices of those who, like Jefferson’s rhetorical slave, have been infantilized because of their gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. This work often makes the case for removing the excluded group from the childish realm to which it had been consigned and for including it within the parameters of our imagined ideal citizen—an autonomous private agent. Yet this expansion of the class of the citizen-subject often stops short of engaging the child figure against which the citizen-subject continues to be measured. To take one example, feminist scholars have made us realize that strategies of derogatory feminization only work if there is an implicit understanding that to be female is to be inherently weak, emotional, and insufficient.¹⁷ We know that a feminizing comparison is not simply unjust to the subject being feminized; it also functions through an inherently oppressive—and illusory—conception of the feminine itself. When it comes to infantilizing images, however, many scholars have focused only one part of the equation: they decry the unjust analogy without engaging the very figure on which metaphors of infantilization rely.¹⁸ African American studies, queer studies, and disability studies have all argued persuasively that infantilizing metaphors are unjust and disempowering when deployed against members of their community. Yet, childhood studies insists, without rethinking the structures of thought that render childhood an implicitly shameful position in the first place, we are at an intellectual impasse. If scholars are to do the work of engaging people whose experiences necessitate allowing for authentic interdependence, rather than an illusory independence, whose literature speaks with mediated voices rather than through romanticized authorship, we can no longer stand on the crumbling theoretical ground that assigns partial, dependent, mediated subjectivity *only* to childhood, that defines childhood as a state that needs to be outgrown.

As Annette Appell, John Wall, Sarah Chinn, and other contributors argue persuasively, the work of gender and queer studies have done much to problematize the naturalized biological differences between bodies that have been used to justify discrimination and coercion. Foucault’s now-classic

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assertion that subjects are created through power acting on and through them and Judith Butler's argument that identity—particularly gendered identity—is created through performance are just two of the revolutions in thought that reveal the extent to which we are all humans-in-the-making, perpetually in flux, continually responding to authoritative forces beyond our own minds and bodies.¹⁹ There's arguably no better way to understand this form of subjectivity than through the child, a term often used uncritically as a placeholder for the dependence and malleability we still seek to partition off from adult autonomy. Rather than denying the child's fragility, we insist that bringing a critical eye to childhood will teach us to better conceive of a realistic human subject.

Joan W. Scott has argued that an "interest in class, race, and gender signal[s] first, a scholar's commitment to a history that included stories of the oppressed and an analysis of the meaning and nature of their oppression, and second, scholarly understanding that inequalities of power are organized along at least three axes."²⁰ *The Children's Table* not only makes the case that age needs to be added to the categories of race, gender, and class but also that adding conceptions of childhood to this critical trinity requires rethinking what qualifies as oppression and identity in the first place. Childhood, after all, both cuts across and encompasses all three categories in this analytic triptych. Disqualifying those on the "wrong" side of race, gender, and class is often accomplished by comparing them to children. Yet actual children occupy positions on both the privileged and disadvantaged sides of these three coins. Rather than arguing for moving children over to the empowered side of the equation, this collection contends that childhood studies offers new ways of engaging interdependence as a social reality and offers new frameworks for thinking about how to negotiate the obligations incurred across the very real gaps of power that do, and will, exist. Very young children are not autonomous, nor should they be. For scholars dedicated to charting and celebrating resistance to authority, childhood studies pushes us to reconsider when, if at all, it is just for the dominant to impose their will on the less powerful. In short, actual children raise uncomfortable questions that complicate the stance that authority is inherently oppressive and that subversion and resistance are unqualified positives. It is precisely because childhood skews this critical equation that it is essential that we engage with it, along with our own possible discomfort with the implications that follow. By engaging the liminality of childhood, we are pushed to

a more nuanced understanding of and engagement with dependence and the way such dependence can generate unequal distributions of power.²¹

If, as I have been arguing, certain stylized and largely unquestioned assumptions about childhood undergird many pursuits in the humanities, then when we allow the insights of childhood studies to work through the theory and practice of particular disciplines, many possibilities emerge. The chapters in this volume explore some of those possibilities. Individually, these chapters exist as discrete instruments in a theoretical toolbox: by applying the insights of childhood studies to their particular field of study (such as queer theory, historical inquiry, or philosophical ethics) the authors provide new ways of thinking about both fields. Taken as a whole, the chapters collected here emerge as a cumulative thesis, arguing that, at this key moment in the state of the humanities, rethinking the child is both necessary and revolutionary.

Rather than providing a broad overview of all the work being done in this capacious and growing field, this volume has carefully chosen case studies from across disciplines to provide a sense of the questions childhood studies asks of scholars working in the humanities. To begin, although childhood studies is undoubtedly an international field, this volume has chosen to focus largely on the United States in order to provide a carefully contextualized account of how the insights of this field can function in response to the particular pressures wrought on the humanities in light of U.S. political culture's increasingly tight grip on the fantasy of independence and its rejection of communal forms of obligation.²² Thus this book orbits around key foci of current humanities thought and scholarship as they emerge in imagined subject positions of particular, though certainly not exclusive, weight in the United States: the autonomous agent-actor, the object of the disciplinary gaze, the subject of moral and sexual panic, the negotiating (and negotiated) member of the community. As the chapters constellate around these centers of epistemological gravity, they necessarily cross back and forth over contradictory representations of childhood—over questions of dependence and independence, of agency and submission, of citizenship and disenfranchisement. Because we've envisioned this collection as a series of conversations revolving around a different but interrelated set of questions in the humanities, each section is headed by a brief introduction that situates the arguments of the individual chapters in relation to one another. This general introduction thus sketches the organizational schema in broad strokes; the section headings provide more detailed analysis.

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Our first group of chapters takes on the sine qua non of modern liberal thought—the independent, consenting subject. When John Locke wrote that children are “not born in [a] full state of equality, though they are born to it,” he simultaneously changed the terms of government and created a means of excluding some from it.²³ As Holly Brewer has argued, Locke’s emphasis on consent rendered children—and, I would add, those who could be likened to children—incapable of participating in the contractual obligations that would come to occupy center stage in liberal democratic thought.²⁴ The social contract effectively excludes those who do not come to it as fully consenting, independent subjects.²⁵ These chapters bring the perspective of childhood studies to the Enlightenment triad of reason, consent, and autonomy to make the case that none of these terms are as stable as their place in legal, social, and scholarly discourses would imply. As Annette Appell asks in her contribution, what does consent mean for an eight-year-old in a court system designed to give everyone an adult set of rights? Lucia Hodgson takes on another set of Enlightenment presumptions as they emerge in problematic analyses about how race and childhood intersect in moral development. Her argument, like Appell’s, reveals the deep injustice done to actual children when we impose fictional frameworks on their experiences and then punish them for not conforming to those fictions. James Marten examines another venue, that of war, in which the Lockean model of the fully consenting rational subject does a disservice to our understanding of the effects of conflict on both adults and children. In the final piece in this section, John Wall suggests that we need to engage in a “childist” ethics, one that avoids the neat binaries of adult and child, of the reasoning and unreasoning subject. Childist ethics rejects the idea of a straight line leading from child to adult (or put another way, from them to us) and instead decenters the Lockean subject and replaces it with an elliptical perspective. In this ethics neither observer nor observed holds a place of privilege; rather each learns from orbiting the other, always rethinking their own assumptions. As these authors indicate, when we put a realistic approach to childhood at the center of these inquiries, we are led into new territory in the analysis of both citizenship and subjectivity.

While the first group of chapters revolves around the antipode of the child-figure—the independent, consenting liberal subject, the second and third sections analyze the disciplined subject—a character often aligned with childhood—and the problems the child figure raises for identity studies. The child, after all, is the quintessential subject of discipline, the site

where even the most conservative commentator celebrates the powerful work of social construction. These chapters build on the rich cadre of theories by Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Kathryn Bond Stockton, and others to demonstrate how childhood studies can add to our understanding of how social forces shape individual interiors. As a whole, the chapters argue that we cannot fully understand how communal pressures construct identity without examining the structures explicitly designed to discipline emerging personalities—the very institutions designed to accommodate childhood.

More specifically, section 2 illuminates the work of the schoolroom to illustrate how social discipline pivots on an imagined child who lives on two temporal planes simultaneously. The schoolchild is the student of the present moment, who needs particular materials, such as the pedagogical tracts Lesley Ginsberg discusses and the physical schoolrooms Roy Kozlovsky analyzes. This child is also at the same time the future citizen, whose role as a state subject is created and projected in the lessons he or she learns, lessons that adhere to certain beliefs about race, gender, and class. As Ginsberg and Sophie Bell illustrate, educational practice was always in productive tension with the legal and cultural structures that insisted some children (such as girls and African Americans) would never be able to move through the lessons of the schoolroom to the contracts of adulthood. Kozlovsky focuses on physical structures designed for education in order to trace how the horrors of World War II helped to create new means of imagining and educating children through architectural practices.

The third section continues its exploration of the disciplined subject by exploring how affect can be enhanced and repressed through social, familial, and educational structures. Both Sarah Chinn's and Susan Honeyman's contributions think through what happens when childhood studies and queer/gender theory are put in conversation. Chinn suggests that the work of childhood studies would benefit from the theoretical daring of queer theory's speculations about love, sex, and reproduction—all topics essential to how we formulate childhood but often subjects that are overlooked in historical attention to children's agency. Susan Honeyman makes the case that an emphasis on children's reading practices can open up new possibilities in gender theory. She explores how the transgendering apparent in much of children's literature and the transreading enjoyed by many children offers a fertile place to theorize gender without reifying the stubborn binaries of male and female. Carol Singley's chapter welds adoption studies, childhood studies, and literary analysis together to suggest new ways of thinking

through how Americans position childhood subjects within affective kinship relations.

Moving from theory to the archives to the classroom, the final triad of chapters demonstrates how changing ideas about childhood can fundamentally alter how we think, work, and teach in the humanities. In particular, this section cumulatively argues that rethinking childhood involves rethinking our relationship to the past, especially the individual, historical, and institutional memories of disciplinary divides and specialties. Karen Sánchez-Eppler traces how our scholarly attraction to both the archive and the child intersect and argues that our desire for origins, hidden secrets, and unclaimed treasures drives much of our attention to both subjects. Robin Bernstein draws from performance theory to provide an answer to a question that animates much debate within the field of childhood studies: How do we attend to both the physical and imaginary child? Lynne Vallone, a professor and administrator in a PhD-granting program in childhood studies, explores the concrete challenges of taking childhood studies into the next generation. In the process, these scholars work creatively to construct a child-centered vision of humanities scholarship that can move ably between theory and practice, the past and the future.

Yet like the child who is the subject of this volume, the chapters themselves resist easy classification. Rather, they enact the vibrancy of sitting at the children's table, in which conversations occur between two adjacent diners but also break out enthusiastically across the table and around the corner, as themes are picked up, realigned, and debated among an energetic group. Some of these exchanges could just as easily create their own conversational cluster. For instance, James Marten, Karen Sánchez-Eppler, and Roy Kozlovsky, placed in separate sections in this particular line-up, all speak eloquently about the work of interpreting material remnants of childhood—both what we create to accommodate real and imagined children (as with the schools and playgrounds in Kozlovsky's chapter) and what children themselves create as they find their own way in their community and culture (as with the handmade nineteenth-century card featured in Sánchez-Eppler's piece). Another equally compelling conversation occurs between Lucia Hodgson, Annette Appell, Lesley Ginsberg, and John Wall as their chapters collectively explore how legal structures organize children's realities and how those structures might be reformed to better accommodate children's particular needs. Still another exchange taking place across the classificatory boundaries of this volume emerges between Robin Bernstein, Sarah Chinn,

Susan Honeyman, and Sophia Bell, whose chapters work through—in divergent but often complementary ways—how children might navigate performative and literary expectations to first forge and then reimagine their own identities. We invite readers to move within and beyond the categories we’ve provided as they find their own niche in this conversation.

The object of this volume is to not simply to make the argument that invoking the child requires different questions, different methodologies, and different ways of thinking but to provide concrete examples of how those questions, methodologies, and ways of thinking function across a range of fields. In the process, these chapters reveal how we must critically assess our own scholarly and intellectual attachments to the privileges allotted to adulthood, a position propped up by the preservation of an imagined child who is “naturally” unable to access the realms of consent, resistance, and agency. Our purpose is not to replace this imagined child with a more suitable figure but to insist on the ways in which both childhood and adulthood are continually reconstructed in a host of contexts—academic, political, economic—and, in the process, to shift our scholarly analysis in ways that radically rethink these social and intellectual relationships as they affect adults, children, and all of us who occupy the spaces in between.

Notes

1. I am particularly indebted to Lucia Hodgson for providing the title of this volume and for being a part of much of the early thinking and planning that moved this book toward publication.

2. Commission on the Humanities in American Life, *The Humanities in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 2.

3. Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *The Humanities and the Dream of America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 6.

4. Anna Wierbicka, “Defining the Humanities,” *Culture and Psychology* 17.1 (2011): 34.

5. Willem Koops, “Imaging Childhood,” in *Beyond the Century of the Child: Developmental Psychology and Cultural History*, ed. Michael Zuckerman and Willem Koops (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 1.

6. My thinking on this issue has been greatly influenced by the persuasive arguments put forth in disability studies, particularly by Rosemarie Garland Thomson in *Extraordinary Bodies: Disability in American Literature and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) and by Lennard Davis in *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London: Verso, 1995).

7. For an insightful analysis of how childhood became a repository for a nostalgic

racism, see Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011). For a useful analysis of the work of G. Stanley Hall, see Sarah Chinn, *Inventing Modern Adolescence: The Children of Immigrants in Turn-of-the-Century America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008). For an analysis of the reciprocal relationship between childhood suffering and racial distinction, see Anna Mae Duane, *Suffering Childhood in Early America: Violence, Race, and the Making of the Child Victim* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

8. G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*, 2 vols. (New York: Appleton, 1904).

9. Steven Selden, "Transforming Better Babies into Fitter Families: Archival Resources and the History of the American Eugenics Movement, 1908–1930," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 149.2 (2005): 199–225.

10. Kenneth Kidd, *Freud in Oz: The Intersections of Psychoanalysis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), viii.

11. Cathy Davidson, "Humanities 2.0: Promise, Perils, Predictions," *PMLA* 123.3 (2008): 707.

12. The list of venues dedicated to childhood studies continues to grow. The journal *Childhood: A Journal of Global Child Research* has been in place since 1993. In 2007, the online journal *Childhoods Today* was launched by the Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth and the University of Sheffield. In 2008, Johns Hopkins launched the *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*. New York University Press and Rutgers University Press have series dedicated to childhood studies. *PMLA* has recently showcased a forum on the theories and methodologies of children's literature and childhood studies. Groundbreaking work about children's literature, itself a vibrant and growing field, continues to be produced in mainstream venues and in journals including the *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, and many others.

13. Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Patricia Crain, *The Story of A: The Alphabetization of America from "The New England Primer" to "The Scarlet Letter"* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); Gillian Brown, *The Consent of the Governed: The Lockean Legacy in Early American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); David Rosen, *Armies of the Young: Child Soldiers in War and Terrorism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005); Margaret Higonnet, "War Toys: Breaking and Remaking in Great War Narratives," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 31.2 (2007): 116–31; James Marten, *The Children's Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

14. Julia Mickenberg, *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Katherine Capshaw Smith, *Children's Literature of the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Kenneth Kidd *Making American*

Boys: Boyology and the Feral Tale (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

15. James Beattie, *An Essay on Truth on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Skepticism*, 6th ed. (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1778), 508. I am indebted to Lucia Hodgson for directing me to this quote.

16. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 vols., ed. Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, DC: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903–4), 19:41.

17. Many thanks to Sarah Chinn for helping me to clarify this point.

18. Courtney Wickle-Mills makes a strong case for early American scholarship's reliance on an infantilizing structure to articulate arguments about private and public citizenship ("‘Learn to Love Your Book’: The Child Reader and Affectionate Citizenship," *Early American Literature* 43.1 [2008]: 35–61).

19. Two of the foundational works in this vein are Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975). For an analysis bringing together queer studies, performance studies, and race theory, see José Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

20. Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91.5 (1996): 1054.

21. For a wonderfully nuanced exploration of how childhood articulates dependence in American culture, see Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States*. For an analysis of how we might rethink the demands of dependence, see Martha Fineman, "The Vulnerable Subject and the Responsive State," *Emory Law Journal* 60.2 (2010): 130.

22. As American studies scholars are well aware, any study of the United States needs to acknowledge the multiple ways that influence crosses national borders. For instance, in his chapter in this volume, Roy Kozlovsky reaches across the Atlantic in his consideration of postwar British architecture, which, he points out, influenced American ideals about the structures children needed to play and learn.

23. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 322.

24. Holly Brewer, *By Birth or By Consent: Children, Law and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill: published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

25. For two different perspectives on how to realign our vision of rights and the social contract they are implicitly based on see Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), and Martha Fineman, "The Vulnerable Subject: Anchoring Equality in the Human Condition," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 20.1 (2008–9): 1–23.