Introduction
The woman–child question
A dialogue in the borderlands

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Do children and women inevitably have shared concerns and experiences of oppression that are best addressed together? Or are there fundamental conflicts between children's interests and women's interests?

As Erica Burman points out,[1] formulations of relations between women and children typically fall into one of two un-nuanced polarities: 'womenandchildren', to use Cynthia Enloe's evocative term,[2] or 'women versus children', the 'foes' to whom the title of this book refers. At the womenandchildren pole, we have ubiquitous portrayals of woman and child, which appear across geographical and historical periods: a child cradled in a woman's arms, an infant swaddled to her chest or back, or a woman and child walking hand in hand. Such representations reflect the durable binding of the lives and fates of women and of children in public imaginaries. This is also made apparent by considering another dyad – men and children – a couplet which is no less possible, but which tends to evoke very different imaginaries. While the lives of women and children are deeply entangled – because children are, to varying degrees, positioned as primarily dependent and women take the greatest responsibility for their care – the bundling of women and children has been comprehensively critiqued. Feminist and childhood academics and activists point out that the imposition of seemingly coherent and given categories of 'woman' and 'child' are grounded in, and ground, asymmetrical power relations. They have also questioned, for example, constructions of the family as a singular unit and 'private' institution, highlighting the ways this obscures gendered and generational inequities both within and beyond families.[3]

However, in challenging the womenandchildren elision, feminists and those concerned with challenging the oppression of children have often ended up in antagonistic oppositions. For instance, the growing importance attributed to the first 1,000 days of a child's life has increased the global focus on early education, which is viewed as fundamental to children's present and future well-being. However, feminists have pointed out that this provision often relies on voluntary or low-paid women's labour.[4] Efforts to achieve publicly funded childcare are likewise critiqued, but by those primarily concerned with children's struggles. They argue that these efforts largely reduce children to objects of care, with the provision of care assumed both empirically and normatively to be the purview of adults, and ignore the way in which children's concerns within and about childcare may conflict with women's.[5]

Despite the far-reaching social, political and intellectual consequences of the ways in which we conceptualise connections between women and children, they have received only scant attention in academic, activist and policy fields.[6] This is not simply a benign omission: it is a reflection of the difficult and, at times, fiercely territorial relationship between feminists and those concerned with children's struggles.[7] In some cases, such conflicts have manifested in the outright rejection of efforts to bring together concerns with women's lives and children's lives. Stepping into this difficult terrain, *Feminism and the Politics of Childhood: Friends or Foes?* aims to stimulate, and serve as a space of, dialogue and debate about perceived commonalities and conflicts between women and children and, more broadly, intersections and antagonisms between various forms of feminism and the politics of childhood. Bringing together 18 chapters from academics and activists, this edited collection offers unique responses to the following questions: How might a conversation between feminism(s) and the politics of childhood speak to the everyday and conceptual affinities and tensions between women and children? What are the consequences of theorising women and children together? How do we strive for social and economic justice for children and women, particularly in contexts where their interests may (appear to) be in conflict?

Staging a dialogue

Our aim in bringing this book together has been to stage a dialogue that might provide alternative approaches to the recurring dead ends of elision or antagonism, offering new responses and possibilities for action along the way. In doing so, we sought to foster three 'boundary crossings' which

we felt were most relevant and likely to produce new insights: between the fields of childhood and women's studies;[8] across academic scholarship and the 'publics', notably social/political movements; and across varying global contexts. The analogy of 'generous encounters' from Sara Ahmed,[9] which Virginia Caputo evokes in Chapter 14, encapsulates our vision. In generous encounter, Ahmed attempts to move beyond dialogue premised on finding similarities or equivalences in experience and position. She accepts that there may be fundamentally incommensurate perspectives, such as between some forms of feminism and the politics of childhood. But she does not dismiss the possibility of learning through their encounter, and even because of their contradictions. In this way, one perspective does not need to triumph over the other: instead such encounters can be understood as dialogues across varying perspectives. Below, we go through the three boundary crossings that, with 'generous encounters' in mind, we conceive of as dialogues in the borderlands.[10]

Childhood studies and women's studies

The first of these borderlands lies between childhood studies and women's studies, which through their synchronicities and at times fractious relations we felt could together provide a fruitful space of encounter. There are many parallels between the social position of children and women, who have been similarly constituted and subjected to treatment as vulnerable victims, or valorised as angelic innocents of home and hearth, and the subject through which hopes for national development flow. Erica Burman, however, cautions against reducing these to equivalences in the positioning of women and children.[11] She points out that while there are linkages, generation cannot simply be superimposed on gender, not least because this could conceal very real antagonisms and power relations between women and children. To do so would also negate advances in feminist scholarship which point to the intersectional character of identities and social relations where gender and generation, as well as class and 'race', operate simultaneously.

Nonetheless, we contend that there are synergies between these two fields of studies indicating that a productive dialogue is possible. For instance, understandings of the position of children as a social group and efforts to address their subordination, which are central to childhood studies, owe a great deal to feminist political and intellectual efforts. Feminism has opened the 'private' sphere, reproductive labour and intimate relations to extended consideration and critique.[12] More recently, feminist perspectives have been mobilised in the study

of children and childhood, to highlight the limits of liberal individualism with its adherence to competence, independence and rationality, as well as the importance of intersectional perspectives for understanding the trope of the child and gendered subjectivities of girlhood and boyhood.[13] Insights into the processes whereby gender is 'made' and 'done' have inspired similar theorisations in childhood studies around the notion of generation.[14]

Arguably, less consideration has been given to the ways that feminists can learn from childhood studies. Despite astute critiques of essentialist treatments of sex and gender, which have made significant inroads in shifting academic scholarship and common-sense ideas, much feminist scholarship operates with a surprisingly unexamined view of children and childhood. 'The child' is often taken-for-granted, understood through externally ascribed attributes such as universalist notions of ages and stages as biological unfolding. Yet, childhood studies' relentless questioning of 'the child' demonstrates the very situated ways in which certain humans are made into children and others into adults. As a result, childhood theorists have commented that feminism is an 'adultist' enterprise, rendering children largely absent from the social world and sociological consideration except as objects of socialisation.[15] Combined with a growing body of empirical studies on children's lives in contexts where middle-class Euro-American, or 'Minority World', idealisations of childhood have not gained hegemonic status, childhood studies scholarship prompts reconsideration of work, care and political activism in the lives of children and adults, and the ways these intersect.

Despite our description of these two academic fields as two separate entities, they are not as bifurcated as the above description suggests. Many would consider themselves to be committed to both feminism and childism (to borrow from John Wall),[16] including those who have contributed to this book. What is notable, however, is that despite germinal texts which identified commonalities and conflicts between those positioned as women and children,[17] little attention has been given in either women's studies or childhood studies to the ways that these relations are understood, (re)produced and conceptualised.[18] This is an absence, and a challenge, taken up in this volume.

Academia and 'publics'

In the borderland encounter between academia and 'publics'[19] we have been inspired by Michael Burawoy's proposal for a 'public sociology'. Posing the questions of 'knowledge for whom' and 'knowledge for what',

Burawoy argues for the importance of scholarship that extends beyond the academy to 'strike up a dialogic relation between sociologist and public in which the agenda of each is brought to the table, in which each adjusts to the other'.[20] There is a 'double conversation' involved here, as 'the public' is not a monolithic entity but is internally divided, involved in intense debates across multiple groupings which shape understandings of social issues and responses, at the same time as being brought into conversation with academics.[21] Nor do most academics stay confined within the 'hallowed halls' of the ivory tower. We can learn from feminism about the inadequacy of such sharp dichotomies, and resist the decoupling of academic lives and 'private' lives where scholars live, love and engage in social and political struggles as members of 'the publics'.

Over the course of this project we have aimed to bring together various ways of knowing, including experiential, empirical and philosophical knowledge, as well as knowledge forged through political struggle. We have solicited contributions from those who identify with, and write from, varying academic and advocacy positions. Further, several contributors are explicit about their own engagement in remaking the borders between academics and publics. For instance, Debolina Dutta and Oishik Sircar, in analysing their participatory research and film production with Amra Padatik – a collective of children of sex workers in Kolkata – reflect on constraints surrounding such encounters in fields of extreme inequality. They stress the importance of 'unlearning to make way for learning anew' (Chapter 5). For them, working the borderlands between academia and publics included challenging the concentration of research outputs in expensive, English-language academic journals, with little benefit for research participants.

Some of the contributions to this book were first brought together via an international symposium involving thirty academics and activists held in November 2015.[22] The format of the symposium, where precirculated papers were discussed in one large circle of participants, was chosen to encourage dialogue and learning between and across authors and participants.[23] This ethic has continued in the process of creating the book, wherein all contributors were invited to read, comment and draw on other chapters as they developed their own. Our aim was to involve both academics and activists in a collaborative learning process, going beyond the standard process of formal review.[24]

Such co-construction as a way to challenge hierarchies of knowledge production is central to Burawoy's public sociology. He also wishes to reclaim approaches which do not just describe or 'conserve' the status quo, but which take as their primary purpose the generation of

world-changing knowledge.[25] His passionate calls have importance in the context of the questions animating this book, given their social and political consequences for the lives of marginalised social groups. The volume is organised so that the varied contributions are given analogous status, in a manner that lends credence to diverse forms of knowledge production. This leads to a complexity across the volume as authors mobilise different forms of evidence and rhetoric, some more compelling in their ethical or emotive polemic and others in their systematic and logical construction. We specifically invited contributors to experiment with the format of their contributions, to engage with the affective and multi-sensorial registers of embodied social being and to recognise 'the value of other ways of telling' beyond the traditional academic text.[26] We also asked authors to take into consideration a varied readership, aiming to maximise the accessibility of the book both through publishing with an open access press and by avoiding jargon-laden language. Contributors took up the challenge in fascinating ways, including through photo essays and conversations staged across academic disciplines and academic-publics. No doubt reflecting the conventions and pressures under which academics work, it was our activist contributors who were the more innovative, while some contributors writing from academic perspectives (including ourselves!) struggled to write in more accessible ways. Nonetheless, it is our hope that by bringing concepts and research data alive through multiple modes, the book will make visible the vitality of the questions we are asking, thereby provoking ongoing public scrutiny and critical reflection on woman–child relations.

It is worth noting that despite these goals, stratified relations of knowledge production are evident in the generational status of contributors. Although 'children' are interlocutors in many of the chapters, we did not succeed in directly facilitating children's responses to the volume's questions. Even those children's movements which have contributed are represented here by adults. As much as we have tried to work from a perspective of generational solidarity in curating this volume, we nevertheless recognise this as a significant absence.

Global contexts

A final way in which this collection operates in the borderlands relates to discussion across diverse global contexts. As Gurminder Bhambra points out, much social theory is impoverished because it is premised on Eurocentric assumptions.[27] We have been mindful of her call for 'connected sociologies', a reconstitution of the very ground on which

conceptualisations of the social world are built. Such an approach allows for social theory to be opened up to new ways of thinking and understanding, through epistemic contributions that are cognisant of histories of dispossession, enslavement, appropriation and lives in neo/post-colonies. For instance, in Chapter 13, Tanya Pace-Crosschild highlights the impact of Canadian settler colonialism on Indigenous communities. She points to the need to decolonise approaches to childrearing, which include the violent and punitive imposition of patriarchal woman–child relations.

Contributions to this volume cover research, advocacy and movement-building in five world continents, although we would have liked to include more from contributors based in the 'Majority World'. This is a prescient reminder that even politically committed projects operate on a playing field constrained by neo-colonial relations of knowledge production. As Burman's probing questions – 'which children?' and 'which women?' – suggest, neither women nor children are homogenous groups,[28] and we must struggle against a flattening of in-group differences as we strive for more rigorous conceptualisations and potent political projects.

In this regard, we are inspired by Cindi Katz's notion of 'countertopography', which provides an approach to understanding the transnational connections which ground people's localised and everyday experiences. Katz argues that:

> Not all places affected by capital's global ambition are affected the same way, and not all issues matter equally everywhere. By constructing precise topographies at a range of scales from the local to the regional and beyond, we can analyze a particular issue – say deskilling – in and across place, mapping sites connected along this contour line.[29]

This is a 'noninnocent' topography which attends to the centrality of mapping and border-making. Such 'countertopographical' knowledge helps to illuminate the processes whereby certain practices, social positions or social relations come to be made, as well as the gaps in available conceptualisations. Such insights are made apparent in Valeria Llobet and Nara Milanich's treatment of Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) in Argentina (Chapter 12). By carefully attending to the situated ways in which CCTs are enacted and lived, they point out that there are more affinities between women and children than between variously positioned women in the Argentine barrio. This is in contradistinction to dominant feminist readings that

argue CCTs are fundamentally productive of antagonisms between women's rights and children's rights.

For this reason, as well as their potential for highlighting the fissures in seemingly intractable unequal social relations and the fragility of capital accumulation, countertopographies are not only epistemologically but also politically generative. As a number of the chapters in this collection make clear, without understandings of the political economy of (neo)colonialism, efforts at solidarity with women, children or women and children will likely involve the imposition of normative ideas or an imperialist politics of pity. For example, in her detailed examination of life in the Sahrawi refugee camp in Algeria, Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh shows how benefactors' idealisations of the empowered feminist refugee camp recipient, render solidarity highly conditional and produce serious contradictions on the ground between women and girls.

The process of collectively curating this book has also generated a countertopography of sorts. In reading across the contributions, we can see how the issue of 'woman–child' relations shift across space, place, political orientation and varying class, 'race' and gendered positions. To offer one such example, Sri Marpinjun, Nindyah Rengganis, Yudha Andri Riyanto and Fransisca Yuni Dhamayanti draw on their activism in Indonesia to make the case that, in a context of deeply embedded patriarchal norms, providing anti-sexist early childhood education has been a crucial feminist practice amongst their largely university-educated members. In contrast, in the Colombian context that Susana Borda Carulla describes, impoverished women's provision of childcare and early education, albeit not explicitly anti-sexist, is naturalised by the state through maternalist discourses and effectively produces the conditions whereby women's rights are violated. That is, it is not the practice itself (i.e. early childhood care and education) that is either the problem or the panacea, but the conditions of its emergence and operation, as well as how it relates to pre-existing inequities.

In sum, then, by engaging in generous encounters in these borderlands, this collection provides a rich account of multiple and dynamic relations between women and children. This dialogue calls up taken-for-granted assumptions, foci and absences for scrutiny and provides explanations for these by bringing varying conceptual formulations and empirical realities into conversation. Together, the texts highlight alternatives to the womenandchildren and women versus children quagmire, and offer insights into the conditions necessary for realising social and economic justice for children *and* women. The 18 chapters from

academics and activists have been collated under three headings that signpost the main topics the authors deal with in responding to our questions. In the first section, 'Tense Encounters: Gender and Generation', authors address the often simultaneously fraught and reciprocal relations between and across women and children. These authors tackle most explicitly the question posed in our subtitle 'Friends or foes?', discussing how, when and why animosities or complicities are created and enacted. In the second section, 'Life's Work', authors consider the kinds of labouring that take place between and by women and children, unpacking how conceptions of these labour relations can extend and/or rupture the binding of women and children's interests. In the final section, 'Political projects and movement building', authors focus on assessing the challenges and suggesting alternative paths to advance equality for women *and* children. Together, the generous encounters between these contributors bring deep insights into the questions which began this book, and it is to these cross-cutting themes that we now turn.

Beyond 'friends or foes?'

The provocative subtitle of our volume, which asks whether feminism and the politics of childhood are 'friends or foes', generated discomfort for contributors, given its binary formulation. In their contributions, most authors push back against the idea that either 'friends' or 'foes' accurately describes the complex relationship between the two, while recognising the way it 'topicalises'[30] the tensions. Posing the question in this way did, however, stimulate debate and various proposals for other ways to think with feminism(s) *and* the politics of childhood when considering the everyday and conceptual affinities and tensions between women and children. Here we highlight three key themes that emerge across the volume: the necessity of a relational lens; shifting vantage points for rethinking woman–child relations; and the need for new concept-metaphors to support such efforts.

A relational lens

A common theme across contributions was the rejection of (neo)liberal individualism and the autonomous, independent subject as ways for thinking about either women or children. Many of the authors issue calls

for 'relationality' as an alternative. Broadly speaking, relationality can be understood as calling attention to the profoundly interactive and transactional character of human life. Relationality is not mobilised in the chapters as an evaluative term – as in good relationships or bad, or relations as a solution to antagonisms. Instead, it is present in the chapters as a way to grapple with the book's problematic by dismantling artificially imposed boundaries between women and children, and to engage in the complexity of social relationships and relations which can be simultaneously ones of love, reciprocity, oppression, struggle and exploitation.

As Sasha Roseneil and Kaisa Ketokivi point out, an emphasis on relationality has 'found widespread favour' as part of the 'relational turn' within the social sciences.[31] However, it is under-theorised and is mobilised in varying ways which can lead to confusion. As such, it is worth dwelling on some of the distinctive ways relationality has been taken up by the contributors. In some chapters, there is a relatively 'weak usage' of the concept, where it references the relationships people have with each other.[32] For instance, Selma James speaks about the caring relationships between women and children, stressing the potential of these relationships for mutuality and shared concern, and arguing that caring relationships can serve as the basis for anti-capitalist ways of being which subvert market-based logics of profit. Invoking relationality in this sense draws attention to the everyday processes and associations whereby people make lives together through their interactions with each other. This offers an important corrective to the autonomous liberal self, acting and responsible alone for his or her own life trajectory.

A 'stronger' formulation of relationality is taken up by several other contributors to make sense of the processes whereby the self is produced and interpellated, and the way that inequitable social relations are reproduced, challenged, resisted and transformed. These contributions point to the ways in which the positions of 'woman' and 'child' are often dialectically constituted, where one cannot exist without the other. Ascribed characteristics often shape their linkage and differentiation. For instance, vulnerability and victimhood are often treated as foundational and all-encompassing characteristics for both women and children in relation to men. Nevertheless, as a number of chapters point out, 'the child' is increasingly viewed as the ultimate vulnerable and dependent subject, deserving of every care and attention, often to the detriment of women to whom responsibility often falls. The status of victim is problematic; this reduces the complexity of any human being as well as individualises social problems, including the political production of vulnerability, by rooting them in essentialist notions of the self. While the contributions

to this volume maintain such a critique, we can also witness a return to these concepts in an effort to recognise the existential needs and vulnerability of being human and the political precarity produced in contexts of injustice. There is an effort to attend to the relationally produced and unequal distribution of need and vulnerability as part of political projects for social justice.

The emphasis in these stronger approaches to relationality is on the socio-political (Burman), patriarchal (Zehavi), neo-colonial (Fiddian-Quasmiyeh) and capitalist (Rosen and Newberry) practices and interactions which ground the social positions of 'woman' and 'child', as well as the relations between them. Emboldened by the overarching countertopographical dialogue of the book, this move away from substantialism draws attention to the historically and geographically shifting processes which make women, children and woman–child relations. As many of the contributors point out, this requires attention to diversities amongst women, and amongst children; to men, the state and the political economy. These texts call on us to attend to the dynamism at the heart of woman–child relations, rather than starting out with what we think we already know.

The risk here is that such an emphasis can turn into a form of unrelenting presentism, missing the historicity of such relations, not to mention the reasons for their 'grinding stability and exploitative continuity',[33] a challenge which the chapters herein address with various degrees of success. Erica Burman, for example, draws on psychoanalytic theory to address such questions, giving affect significant explanatory power (Chapter 1). Rachel Rosen and Jan Newberry stress the globally and sectorally differentiated ways that capital attempts to reduce its labour costs, and how this rewrites relations of care, concern and provisioning, grafting on to existing inequalities and thereby often increasing stratifications (Chapter 8).

Without outright rejecting this stronger usage of relationality, Ohad Zehavi provokes interesting questions in Chapter 17. He points out that once we accept the impossibility of an independent self, the notion of separate or separable beings (e.g. woman *and* child) is also open to contestation. Linking to Rachel Thompson and Lisa Baraitser's discussion of 'fleshy continuities' (Chapter 4) of mother and feotus/infant, he argues that conceptualisations which move away from a model of the atomised liberal self could help to invoke other, more subtle manifestations of the 'undifferentiated, shared entit[ies]' in which we participate (Chapter 4). This takes us down a different path than relationality, to the extent that it asks us to consider the conditions under which separate subjects, which are required in relational understandings, become possible or desirable.

Similarly, the notion of entanglements which we invoke at various points in this chapter is part of our effort of refusing any simple binaries, separations or antagonisms as founding woman–child relations.

Shifting vantage points

The preceding discussion of relationality already hints at some of the distinctive approaches taken when pushing against the friends-or-foes binary. Here we outline five vantage points which contributors take to rethink woman–child relations: looking in; looking out; looking back; widening the frame; and breaking away. No single chapter takes only one vantage point, even if we highlight particular exemplars here. These vantage points bring varying questions, conceptualisations and possible responses to the fore.

One approach involves *looking in* to the woman–child relation, considering the ways in which these dyads are made, sustained and broken. For instance, Gina Crivello and Patricia Espinoza Revollo argue for a revisiting of concepts of care relations between women and children, taking into account 'temporal vulnerabilities', and therefore varying care relations between them over the life course. In arguing that vulnerability is central to human experience, including agency,[34] they suggest that there is a necessity to caring relations between women and children. But by problematising the boundaries between childhood and adulthood, and questioning the feminisation of care, they make the case that all human relations involve both giving and receiving care. Over all, *looking in* offers deep insights into conflicts, tensions and reciprocities as they are lived and enacted by women and children.

A second vantage point involves *looking out*. Here the focus is on the politically, economically and spatially specific ways in which relations between different women and different children, and their antagonisms, emerge and are sustained. *Looking out* is premised on the notion that while antagonisms and elisions may be experienced in everyday life as being between women and children, to explain their persistence and dynamism we must look elsewhere. Erica Burman, for instance, uses intersectional, disability and psychoanalytic theories to interrogate the 'sociopolitical, structurally elaborated positions that constitute and constrain relations between women and children' (Chapter 1). In their chapter, Rosen and Newberry also engage in a practice of *looking out*, but their focus is on understanding why particular socio-political norms and positions persist. They point out that in the context of late capitalism and austerity, the ways in which communities provide for their needs is

increasingly refamilised, at the same time as compulsory schooling and early years education are increasingly mandated on a global scale. This often positions women and children at odds in relation to social reproductive labour, which they may have previously carried out together.

Closely related is *looking back,*[35] a focus on the history of the present. Caputo, for instance, in her chapter on 'Too Young to Wed', a photo exhibit on early and forced child marriage, considers the historical precedence for the depiction of girls as vulnerable victims, noting the marked similarities to images of women in the past (and present). By tracing the historical roots, deeply embedded in colonial relations, that situate the exhibit as it moves around the globe, she is able to 'contemplate the resemblances between the lives of children and women without hierarchy' (Chapter 14) to develop what she calls a feminist childhood studies lens. In sum, *looking out* and *looking back* provide ways to avoid individualising antagonisms, encouraging rich contextualisation of the woman–child question within a wider sphere of social relations, as well as historical, political-economic and structural explanations.

A fourth approach offers a different vantage point by *widening the frame*. This offers the promise of prising open the singular womanandchild entity, bringing in other social actors including men and other women and children. For example, Sevasti-Melissa Nolas, Erin Sanders-McDonagh and Lucy Neville highlight the ways in which essentialist ideas about domestic violence position men as violent perpetrators, women as vulnerable victims and children as witnesses and occasional victims. They point out that this can place women and children in competition for support and that it obscures the complexities of maternal care, particularly in contexts of violence. By bringing into the frame men, the practices of women's refuges and the state, they work to complicate and enhance approaches to domestic violence. In her chapter on the Sahrawi refugee camps, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh brings members of solidarity movements into the frame, demonstrating that conflicts between women and girls in the camp resulted from the limits of liberal forms of solidarity, which paid little attention to local norms or understandings of emancipation, care and responsibility to the other.

Contributors working from the four preceding vantage points seem to accept Caputo's assertion of the impossibility of moving 'beyond' the woman–child binary. The tensions exist, at least at the present conjuncture, and they explore the possibilities of moving 'across, through and around' (Chapter 14) this complex terrain. A final vantage point makes a different case. This anti-categorical position, which we have called *breaking away*, suggests instead the possibility of becoming otherwise in ways

which dismantle not only the binary but subject positions and power relations altogether. This position is exemplified in Ohad Zehavi's chapter. He argues that the production of distinctions based on gender and generation serves as the basis of 'oppressive social regimes'(Chapter 17). As a result, he argues there is a need to jettison both femininity and childhood as well as their dualisms: masculinity and adulthood. He seeks to accomplish this move via Deleuze and Guattari's minoritarian politics of becoming, to do away with historically sedimented categories and their differential privileges. 'Becoming-girl' features centrally for Zehavi, given that 'the girl' sits as the founding location of both patriarchal and adultist repression. Becoming in this sense is the job of those positioned as privileged (e.g. men, adults), for whom there is a 'relinquish[ing]' of 'fabricated authority' and a rejecting of a priori positions (Chapter 17). Contributors who offer a vantage point of *breaking away* provide us with a reminder that relations of inequality are always also micro-political in nature and offer a sense of hope that things can be otherwise.

New concept-metaphors

The third cross-cutting theme we wish to highlight is that of 'concept-metaphors', which contributors developed in their response to the book's questions. A 'concept-metaphor' is a phrase which encapsulates a conceptualisation and its relation to the world in an imaginative and productively ambiguous way. Concept-metaphors occupy a space somewhere between universal abstractions and unique, situated experiences. By evoking imagery which can stimulate new bases for dialogue, concept-metaphors 'open up spaces for future thinking' and 'practical action'.[36]

Many of the authors, in attempting to walk a careful line – on the one side recognising the affective, material, practical and ideological connections between women and children in their lived experiences; on the other challenging the problematic elisions and antagonisms that emerge as a result – highlight the need for new concept-metaphors to support such efforts. The metaphors of 'conceptual autonomy' and 'strategic essentialism', as well as liberal versions of solidarity and competing or complementary rights, which have animated much preceding feminist and childhood thought, are treated with some suspicion by contributors to this volume. They are found wanting in the effort to understand diverse processes, interconnections and spatial-temporal contexts. In their place, new concept-metaphors to deal with relationality and the shifting vantage points discussed above are offered. These include

'struggle-in-relation' (Burman), 'weaning' (Thomson and Baraitser), 'temporal lag' (Rosen and Newberry), and 'becoming-girl' (Zehavi).

The chapter by Thomson and Baraitser, for example, focuses on the interconnections between mothers and their children. They seek to read exemplars by bracketing mothers and children in a way that does not collapse them into one. As an answer to the impasse created by notions of 'conceptual autonomy', they proffer the concept of 'weaning', to 're-conceptualize the push and pull between mothers' and children's needs, and between motherhood and childhood studies' (Chapter 4). Weaning, as they describe it, brings forth an image of temporal and gradual separation, without ever cutting off the relational link. The temporal aspect of relationality can also be witnessed in Rosen and Newberry's chapter, in which they propose the concept-metaphor of 'temporal lag'. This points to temporal differentiations in the appropriation of surplus value to illuminate how women and children, and the relations between them, are constituted through their uneven and situated profitability for capital, in ways that ground their subordinated status. The development of new concept-metaphors in this book is an indication of the challenging and original work which these borderland dialogues have provoked.

Achieving justice for women *and* children

As the chapters in this volume make clear, the connections and complications between women and children are not simply about difference or affinity but are deeply tied to political questions of power and injustice. Contributors point to the varying ways in which women and children are oppressed and exploited given their intersectional positions and 'minority' social status.[37] These relations of subordination pervade any effort to consider woman–child relations, particularly as they often shape the nature of the connection. For instance, children are used rhetorically to control the sexuality and reproductive capacities of impoverished women, as Kristen E. Cheney makes clear in her chapter on surrogacy, or to ensure the voluntary labour of women in various forms of childcare. Women use ascriptions of vulnerability and dependence to control the mobility and participation of children, or they (inadvertently) objectify children in their efforts to achieve status and recognition for their maternal competence or to engage in community-based organising.

As a result, understanding woman–child relations is central to any project concerned with challenging the injustices faced by either group. How we might do this, and whether this necessarily involves taking up

Shulamith Firestone's powerful invocation that 'we must include the oppression of children in any program for feminist revolution',[38] are open questions which lie at the heart of this collection. Here we wish to highlight three themes in contributors' responses to these unabashedly political questions.

First, despite efforts in most chapters to think with both feminism and childism, and an acknowledgement of the productivity of doing so, these are generally depicted as being very separate political projects, with contradictory attributions of the relative 'success' of each. For instance, Zehavi argues that – unlike for feminism – the time for childism is still to come. Here he is comparing feminism as a revolutionary political project with a '"childism" [that] is still awaiting its *first* wave' (Chapter 17). In contrast, Thomson and Baraitser argue that childhood studies has been far more successful than women's studies in terms of 'field building', with a wide variety of journals, graduate and post-graduate programmes of study and impact on policy and practice. They point to the 'dissolution' of many women's studies departments and programmes as the field shifted towards gender studies (Chapter 4). Whether this does indeed represent a dissolution rather than a positive development is the subject of another paper.[39]

Here, we point out that in some ways, the differing responses reflect the uneasy relationship between academia and activism as well as the basis upon which 'success' is measured (e.g. number of programmes of study, shifts in public imaginaries, etc.). It is worth noting the different histories of women's and childhood studies. As Ann Oakley notes, women's studies emerged out of the women's movement, a prolonged struggle to challenge the autonomous Man that lay unremarked in much traditional theory. Women, understood as both its subjects and agents, were central to the project. Childhood studies is populated by many who seek to challenge the minoritised social status of children, but not typically children themselves. Children's political movements certainly exist but their membership has not made the same inroads into the academy, nor has an understanding of children's activism been mainstreamed in the same way as women's activism and feminism.[40]

Contradictory readings of the relative success of childism and feminism across chapters highlight the difficulty in thinking relationally about achievements in a context where the two have been increasingly depicted, and experienced, in oppositional terms. For instance, the dialogue between Alejandro Cussianovich Villaran and Jessica Taft highlights the limited explicit linkages between the Peruvian Working Children's Movement and feminist groups who either reflect elite interests or struggle to reconcile themselves to the type of childhood espoused

by the movement. Cussianovich poses some intriguing questions about how explicit consideration of synergies might transform both movements. His reflections again point us towards relational thinking about feminist movements and children's struggles, as does Merryn Edwards's reflexive photo essay about community-based organising with Grassroots Women in Canada. She argues that the organisation missed opportunities to better understand the exploitation and oppression of women through interrogation of the experiences of others – including children – with whom they live their lives. Relational thinking about political projects reinforces the point that political gains are not 'wins' if they are achieved on the backs of marginalised Others. The only way to eliminate one injustice is to eliminate all forms of oppression: this call to action, issued by Firestone, is strengthened through recent intersectional theorising.

Second, contributors discuss, to differing degrees, whether and how an emphasis on women and children might be problematic. We have been preoccupied with this problem since we began this project, concerned that our focus, while ostensibly aiming to challenge their elision, might simply end up reproducing the womanandchild bundle. Our use of terminology – e.g. 'positioned as a woman or child' – was aimed directly at these concerns, as was our inclusion of questions about the role of the state, capital and men.

We continue to worry away at this problem and it is similarly evident in a number of the chapters. Kristen E. Cheney, for example, is at pains to describe and explain the ways that discussions and practices around international surrogacy can be said to both denaturalise and reinforce the mother–child dyad, and the potential consequences of this. In contrast, a number of the chapters coming more explicitly from activist contributors signal the problems of reification primarily by noting the problematics of everyday entanglements of women and children, but turn their attention to other concerns. For instance, in talking about the Unofficial Women and Children's Centre in the Calais refugee camp, Liz Clegg comments on the unfair burden of care responsibility placed on women, and – by extension – the exclusion of women and children from broader efforts to run and organise in the camp. However, her primary emphasis is on the challenges of providing space and support for women and children in the context of politically precarious migration journeys, rather than challenging the conflation of women and children.

In taking up Clegg's points, we could read our worries over reification as examples of academic concerns over precise conceptualisations problematically trumping the pressing injustices and grinding

realities of daily life. But we suggest a more charitable interpretation: the academic–publics dialogue offers a process of de-centring. It helps to illuminate which topics become the foci for differently positioned actors and why, allowing consideration of what is lost or gained with different approaches. In relation to the question of reification, the dialogue makes clear that this can neither become the sole focus nor be swept aside, in any effort towards social and economic justice.

Finally, the chapters do not offer explicit or unequivocal suggestions as to whether childism should be a central tenet of feminism and vice versa. Overall, they suggest that the everyday entanglements of women and children necessarily connect such struggles and that both could add to the other's understandings of the dynamic processes whereby inequities are made, replicated and challenged. As Cheney puts it, feminism and childism can offer new lenses to see through the 'dead ends' of each other's internal debates. In tackling this question, we indicate the necessity of disaggregating the people and social groups who are the subjects, nay agents, of such movements from their intellectual foundations and political analysis. In the case of the former, we contend that organisations do not necessarily need to be cross-sectoral in constitution. Given the problematic conflations of women and children to which this volume speaks and which it seeks to redress or address differently, this would likely mean that women in particular are held responsible for the emancipation of children. To the extent that children are viewed as political actors, the reverse would be true for them. In the case of the latter, we would suggest that the cause of feminism and the cause of childism should be foundational tenets of all critical intellectual endeavours and political movements, regardless of the constitution of their membership or the causes that they pursue.

NOTES

1 Erica Burman, 'Beyond "Women Vs. Children" or "Womenandchildren": Engendering Childhood and Reformulating Motherhood,' *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 16, no. 2 (2008).
2 Cynthia Enloe, 'Womenandchildren: Propaganda Tools of Patriarchy,' in *Mobilizing Democracy: Changing the U.S. Role in the Middle East*, ed. Greg Bates (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1991).
3 Jane Ribbens McCarthy, Carol-Ann Hooper and Val Gillies, eds., *Family Troubles: Exploring Changes and Challenges in the Family Lives of Children and Young People* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2013).
4 Maxine Molyneux, 'Mothers at the Service of the New Poverty Agenda: Progresa/Oportunidades Mexico's Conditional Transfer Programme,' *Social Policy & Administration* 40, no. 4 (2006).
5 Berry Mayall, *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children's Lives* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002).

6 Katherine Twamley, Rachel Rosen and Berry Mayall, 'The (Im)Possibilities of Dialogue across Feminism and Childhood Scholarship and Activism,' *Children's Geographies* 15, no. 2 (2017).
7 Thanks to Virginia Caputo for challenging our reticence to address these tensions head-on.
8 We use the term 'women's studies' here in reference to coherent programmes of study and scholarship which take an explicitly feminist position, but recognise that in many higher education institutions 'gender studies' may be more commonly used and feminist studies/scholarship is likely to be found across many disciplines.
9 Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000).
10 Our use of borderlands to indicate the transformative potentials of encounters of emancipatory and non-hegemonic knowledges within liminal spaces takes inspiration from an important history of post-colonial feminist scholarship, notably Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Franscisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).
11 Burman, 'Beyond "Women vs. Children"'.
12 Jane Helleiner, 'Toward a Feminist Anthropology of Childhood,' *Atlantis* 24, no. 1 (1999).
13 See special issues of the *Australian Feminist Studies*, edited by Baird (2008), and *Feminist Theory* edited by Erica Burman and Jackie Stacey (2010).
14 Leena Alanen, 'Generational Order,' in *The Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies*, ed. J. Qvortrup, William Corsaro and Michael-Sebastian Honig (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).
15 Mayall, *Towards a Sociology for Childhood*.
16 Wall uses this term as a parallel to other social movements for 'minorities', which aim to radically transform normative values, power relations and historical modes of social ordering. John Wall, 'Childism: The Challenge of Childhood to Ethics and the Humanities,' in *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the New Humanities*, ed. Anna Mae Duane (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013).
17 Leena Alanen, 'Gender and Generation: Feminism and the "Child Question",' in *Childhood Matters*, ed. Jens Qvortrup et al. (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994). Ann Oakley, 'Women and Children First and Last: Parallels and Differences between Children's and Women's Studies,' in *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced*, ed. Berry Mayall (London: Falmer Press, 1994).
18 Although see Burman, 'Beyond "Women vs. Children"'.
19 There is significant debate about what or who constitutes 'the publics'; here this term refers broadly to those outside of academia.
20 Michael Burawoy, 'For Public Sociology,' *American Sociological Review* 70 (2005): 9.
21 Ibid., 7.
22 We are grateful to our colleagues Kristin Liabo, Berry Mayall and Ann Varley, who were involved with us in coordinating earlier aspects of this project, and to UCL Grand Challenges for financial support.
23 Identification of both omissions and emerging themes in symposium papers guided our call for book chapters and our commissioning of others. We specifically solicited contributions from activists in recognition that it was primarily academics who were responding to our early calls, a reflection of the project's framing within academic debates, conventions and outputs. See Twamley, Rosen and Mayall, 'The (Im)possibilities of Dialogue'.
24 The realities of community organising and social movement-building meant that those without academic posts had less time for this part of the process and perhaps less motivation, given other pressing concerns.
25 Burawoy, 'For Public Sociology,' 5.
26 Nirmal Puwar and Sanjay Sharma, 'Curating Sociology,' *The Sociological Review* 60, no. 1 suppl (2012): 44.
27 Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Connected Sociologies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
28 Burman, 'Beyond "Women vs. Children"'.
29 Cindi Katz, 'On the Grounds of Globalization: A Topography for Feminist Political Engagement,' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26, no. 4 (2001): 1229–30.
30 See Burman, this volume.
31 Sasha Roseneil and Kaisa Ketokivi, 'Relational Persons and Relational Processes: Developing the Notion of Relationality for the Sociology of Personal Life,' *Sociology* 50, no. 1 (2016): 143–4.
32 Roseneil and Ketokivi, 'Relational Persons and Relational Processes,' 145. Their use of 'weak' and 'strong' in a descriptive sense is somewhat unfortunate given the evaluative connotations of these terms.

33 Lisa Blackman et al., 'Creating Subjectivities,' *Subjectivity* 22, no. 1 (2008): 19.
34 See also Phillip Mizen and Yaw Ofosu-Kusi, 'Agency as Vulnerability: Accounting for Children's Movement to the Streets of Accra,' *The Sociological Review* 61, no. 2 (2013).
35 Thanks to Virginia Caputo for suggesting this helpful elaboration of our vantage point metaphor.
36 Henrietta L. Moore, 'Global Anxieties: Concept-Metaphors and Pre-Theoretical Commitments in Anthropology,' *Anthropological Theory* 4, no. 1 (2004): 74.
37 See Mayall, *Towards a Sociology for Childhood*; Wall, 'Childism'.
38 Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), 118.
39 We note critiques of the reified 'woman' at the heart of women's studies and the impact of mainstreaming on women's studies' more radical impulses.
40 Kirsi Pauliina Kallio and Jouni Häkli, 'Are There Politics in Childhood?,' *Space and Polity* 15, no. 1 (2011).