

Liz Magic Laser, *Kiss and Cry*, 2015

Script for single-channel video, 13:30 min

With figure skaters Anna MacKenzie and Axel MacKenzie and coach Marie Jonsson MacKenzie

BOY: I think I will permit you to forget your dreams for a little while.
In reality you place too much importance on them.¹

BOY: You look at these little people around you and think you know what we are. But what we are is actually what you have come to think about us.²

GIRL: This image of the “innocent child” is everywhere in our lives as adult freedoms face constant threat of legal curtailment out of deference to imaginary Children. We value the freedom of this imaginary Child more than actual freedom itself.³

BOY: Do you even remember being a child? ...You might just as well have never been a child for all you can remember about it. You think of it as a gentle time, when actually childhood can be violent, coarse and cruel.⁴

GIRL: Children did not always exist; they were invented. Before the sixteenth century there was no concept of childhood. There wasn't even a word for “child” in most languages. It was only later that we began to see children as innocent and in need of protection.⁵

BOY: One of the worst things about your limited view of us is that you stunt our capacity for genius. The prodigies are no longer among us. They began to disappear in the eighteenth century.⁶

BOY: Unconsciously, you carry out the will of a society, which holds a limited and demeaned view of children.⁷

GIRL: Child training is impossible, illusory, demeaning and dehumanizing both parent and child.⁸

GIRL: We are the most helpless of all the oppressed. Misled by worn-out myths and stereotyped visions.⁹

GIRL: Do you think that we'll have a better life than you?¹⁰

BOY: You have to be mature enough to recognize that we will have no future.¹¹

GIRL: No other people seems ever to have been so worried about children, so nervous about them, or so unsure of how to deal with them.¹²

GIRL: This world is not a good place for children. Everyone discriminates against us. We're invisible, ignored, impotent.¹³

¹ John Ashbery, "The Skaters," *Penn Sound*, <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Ashbery.php>.

² Richard Evan Farson, *Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

³ Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) 19.

⁴ Farson, *Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children*.

⁵ Phillipe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: a social history of family life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 20.

⁶ Dr. Emil G. Hirsch. "The Evil of Child Labour," *Cleveland Journal* 3.6 (1905).

⁷ Farson, *Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children*.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Chris Christie, "Wednesday's GOP debate transcript, annotated," *The Washington Post*, September 16, 2015.

¹¹ Ben Carson, "Wednesday's GOP debate transcript, annotated," *The Washington Post*, September 16, 2015.

¹² Farson, *Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children*.

¹³ Ibid.

BOY: The legal weakening of the family has only proved that the idea of family did not follow the same curve as the institution. Is not this disparity between living ideas and legal structures one of the defining characteristics of our civilization?¹⁴

GIRL: But how can we deny the appeal of fantasy? How can we refuse the promise of the future that mends each tear in reality's dress.¹⁵

BOY: For you to say that this is everybody's revolution because you were all once children is a fallacy. You are not children. You are our enemy.¹⁶

GIRL: Children cannot be liberated one by one we must be liberated as a class.¹⁷

BOY: Pretend you're in a circle, step out... don't swing your leg, you'll be fine, you'll be fine.¹⁸

GIRL: It's going to be alright, it's going to be alright, you're going to be fine.¹⁹
You can do it, you can do it, you can do it.

BOY: All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games²⁰
Leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star²¹

GIRL: I want to tell children around the world to stand up for their rights. Don't wait for someone else to speak for you. This award is for all those children who are voiceless, whose voices need to be heard. I speak for them and I stand up with them.²²

BOY: This award is not just for me. It is for those forgotten children who want education. It's for those frightened children who want peace. It's for those voiceless children who want change. I am here to stand up for their rights.²³

BOY: Fuck the Child in whose name we're all terrorized... fuck the future that serves as its prop. The Child as emblem of the future must die. The future is mere repetition and just as lethal as the past.²⁴

Credits

Commissioned and produced by Mercer Union. Producer: Georgina Jackson; Video Editors: Liz Magic Laser and Naomi Spiro. Director of Photography: Nikolay Michaylov; Second Camera: Daniel Froidevaux; Camera Assistant: Dan White; Audio Engineer: Dallas Boyes; Sound Designer: Jakob Thiesen; Production Assistants: Nick Torok and Andrew Hoekstra. Research Assistant: Eliza Doyle. Costume Adviser: Felicia Garcia-Rivera. Voice Overs: Boston Flannery and Jenna Iacono.

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¹⁴ Phillipe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: a social history of family life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 10.

¹⁵ Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, 35.

¹⁶ Farson, *Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Liz Magic Laser, "Axel and Anna MacKenzie," Personal Interview, October 6, 2015.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ William Wordsworth, "The Prelude: Book 1: Childhood and School-time (1805)," in *The Prelude: or, Growth of a Poet's Mind*, ed. Ernest De Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1933).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Malala Yousafza, "Nobel Lecture," Nobel Peace Prize Awards Ceremony at City Hall in Oslo, Norway on December 10, 2014.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, 35.