HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN CHILDHOOD

by

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ABSTRACT

Whenever adults speak about children or make plans for them, their actions are based largely on assumptions about what constitutes the nature of a child and what a child's place in society is. Often forgotten is the fact that these assumptions are shaped by both time and circumstance, and have gone through considerable change in the history of the western world. This thesis attempts to provide a broad background out of which teachers, curriculum developers, and those involved in 'child study' can reflect upon their assumptions about childhood.

While the approach is primarily historical, the work is not meant to be a chronological tracing so much as a highlighting of themes in history thought to have a bearing on current debates. In general, the themes include such matters as child sacrifice, infanticide, and aspects of child rearing practice prior to the Renaissance, as well as views of the child emerging from debates about human nature discussed through the intellectual formulations of Renaissance humanism, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the rise of Science.

In 'antiquity', infanticide, child sacrifice, and the exposure of infants were often related to concerns about property and an assumption that children and adults somehow shared different natures. The writings of the Church Fathers, particularly concerning baptism, witnessed a movement stressing the existential equality of old and young.
The humanist revival beginning in the late Middle Ages saw a powerful linking of ancient classical education with religious piety, such that the child became increasingly an object of pedagogical concern. For the humanists, education would mean an enriched awareness of providential design as well as a more civilized society. For the reformers the ultimate lesson for the child was to understand man's utter dependence on divine graciousness. As such, reformation views of the child often became overlaid with strong moral intent.

With the Enlightenment and the rise of Science came a gradual demystification and secularization of human endeavour such that discussions of man's nature and destiny were carried on without the former classical and theological referents, those being replaced with a concern for natural law, rationalism and the inevitability of human progress. Within this context, childhood was viewed as a time of construction (Locke) and/or a time of natural innocence (Rousseau). Beginning with Darwin, a definite 'scientific' value is assigned to childhood whereby as an isolable entity the child becomes an object fit for empirical study.

Within the modern context, studies of childhood suffer from narrowness of methodological vision. What is called for is a more holistic understanding of human life.
"...today we see life chiefly as a biological phenomenon, as a situation in society. Yet we say 'Such is life!' to express at once our resignation and our conviction that there is outside biology and sociology, something which has no name, but which stirs us, which we look for in the news items of the papers or about which we say: 'That's lifelike.'"*

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APPENDIX: A Bibliographic Profile of Studies of Western Childhood
Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Whenever teachers, curriculum developers, or those involved in child study are engaged in relations with children, they are often faced with situations which depend upon assumptions held concerning the nature of the child and his place in society. For example, stories that are read by students and teachers in the classroom often depict adult-child relations that are stylized in a very specific way. Similarly, Teachers' Guides may make statements about 'what a child is' from which teachers are encouraged to plan and construct their lessons. This thesis is an attempt to reveal how views about children have varied in the course of Western history, and to provide a background from which those involved with children can reflect upon their assumptions.

The method will be to highlight various themes in the history of childhood still of concern today, such as 'child abuse', children and education, and some foundations of child 'psychology.' The purpose has not been to write a definitive history, and the themes are not traced consistently from beginning to end. Rather, the interest has been to reveal current concerns in their more original contexts.

Within the body of the thesis some shifts in method will be evident. In Chapter Two, emphasis is placed on the practical issues
of child rearing habits, legal statutes, etc., rather than on broader philosophical and social issues. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, within the last several years much new research has been aimed at ferreting out this 'practical' sort of information and it seems appropriate to give it even more light of day. Secondly, there may be a sense in which the forces which have served most powerfully to shape the conceptual bases of modern views of childhood begin largely with the Renaissance. Hence intellectual history is left mainly until Chapters Three and Four. In the former, childhood is discussed from the context of the tension between the humanists' and reformers' understanding of human nature. In Chapter Five the roots of the Enlightenment and the New Science are traced, providing a background from which to understand some of the formulations of thinkers like Locke and Rousseau, and the rise of 'child psychology.'

The study essentially ends with the opening of the twentieth century, Chapter Six discussing only briefly some of the methodological or interpretive limitations with which modern studies of childhood have had to contend. Since the nineteenth century, the West (particularly North America) has seen a burgeoning of scholarly work in the field of child study, generated through all the major social science and humanities disciplines. It is outside the scope of this thesis to assess critically all of this literature. In the Appendix, a Bibliographic Profile of some of the material has been compiled for future use.
For a 'Bibliographic Profile' of some of the literature on the subject, see the Appendix to this thesis.
Chapter Two

ANTIQUITY AND MIDDLE AGES

Some of the earliest records referring to children come from the Near East, in the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Inscriptions from the fourth millenial period B.C. testify to practices of both infanticide, particularly the sacrifice of the first born, as well as to the legal right of parents to sell their children, either for sacrifice or to alleviate economic oppression.¹ It was in December, 1901, that M. J. de Morgan, Director-General of a government appointed French expedition, found in the area of Susa a bas-relief showing the sun-god, Shamash, presenting the Code of Laws to Hammurabi, the first king to consolidate the Semitic empire, with Babylon as capital. This code shows many similarities with much of the later Mosaic legislation, and is dated about 12250 B.C. The Code contains in a series called ana ittisu, laws pertaining to child and family relations:²

(i) If a son says to his father, 'Thou art not my father,' he may shave him, put the slave-mark on him and sell him.

(ii) If a son says to his mother, 'Thou art not my mother,' they shall shave half his head and lead him round the city and put him out of the house.

(iii) If a father says to his son, 'Thou art not my son,' he forfeits house and wall.

(iv) If a mother says to her son, 'Thou art not my son,' she forfeits house and furniture.

Some observations can be made from these statutes. Apart from the obvious absence of the female child as a concern for legislation, one clear feature is a general intolerance of youthful rebellion vis à vis parents.
The thrust of the statutes is to protect the stability of the adult world—an attitude reflected in the fifth commandment of the Sinaitic Code (see Exodus XX:13). No attempt is made to interpret youthful rebellion as a murmuring of some new ontological vision.

Another characteristic is the close association of the child with property. Not only does the child's right to property depend on the stability of the father-son relationship, but the very definition of the child's status as son depends on that stability. Indeed, if the child (son) disowns his father, he (the child) becomes himself property to be sold. Interestingly, the mother's power over the son is more limited: in fact if she disowns the son, she is the one who loses property.

The ease with which children could be disowned inevitably contributed to numerous homeless 'foundling' children and those 'exposed' to die. Later Roman law repeatedly attempted legislation aimed at giving men and women incentive to adopt and protect deserted infants.³

The study of infanticide expressed through practices of child sacrifice is an interesting one in itself, and several important works have dealt with it in some detail.⁴ Among different groups, various circumstances were regarded as sufficient reason for infanticide--deformity, the birth of twins, poor economic conditions, and a sense of human accountability to the dieties.

A discussion of child-sacrifice, particularly of the first-born, leads naturally to an examination of the beliefs and practices of a small Semitic group—the Israelites—whose importance to the heritage of the Western world needs little defense.
According to the writings of the *Hexateuch,* in the time of Abraham, the eponymic father of the Israelites, the sacrificing of the first-born of a living thing—including children—was still practiced. It is interesting to note that with Abraham the divine command to sacrifice his son, while painful, was apparently not surprising (see Genesis XXII). He went about the execution in a businesslike way only to find that when he was about to complete the action, the Lord was satisfied with his display of faithfulness and did not intend the command to be carried out. It has been argued that this was the first case of substitution, in which the writer testifies that not only was the substitution satisfactory to the deity but that human sacrifice was henceforth halted by divine decree. The efficacy of the substitutionary animal sacrifice was to be enhanced through human blood wrought from circumcision (Genesis, XVII:10). From this time on, however, the sacrifice of the child was no longer deemed necessary to insure the covenant between the people of Israel and the deity.

It is important to bear in mind the uniqueness of this stance in relation to surrounding nations and tribes. In Egypt, for example, the politically dominant nation, the practice of slaughtering the first-born was continued. At the same time, the fidelity of the Israelites to their own commitment was not always consistent (see for example Judges IX). The later prophets were continually reminding those in civil authority of their more 'humanitarian' calling.

*The first six books of the Old Testament dated approximately 800 B.C.*
The history of childhood in the Greek and Roman period has yet to be written in detail although glimpses can be gained from the works of the major legal, philosophical and artistic writers of the time. As far as the Greeks were concerned, whenever a colony flourished, a story existed of the infant exposure of some god or hero. Payne suggests that Greek mythology had, as one of its foundations, the right of the parent to reject its offspring. The Dorians of Crete, for example, pictured Jove as a victim of this practice, and as being suckled by a goat, then hidden in a deep cave in the densely wooded Aegean hills. Some evidence suggests that Plato not only regarded infanticide as inevitable but even unobjectionable. As he makes Socrates say in the *Thaetetus:*

> Then this child, however he may turn out, which you and I have with difficulty brought into the world. And now that he is born, we must run around the hearth with him, and see whether he is worth rearing, or is only a wind-egg and a sham. Is he to be reared in any case, and not exposed? Or will you bear to see him rejected, and not get into a passion if I take away your first-born?

In another segment of the same work, Socrates justifies child welfare, not in moral terms, but simply in terms of material possession and personal recognition:

> Are you not risking the greatest of your possessions? For children are your riches; and upon their turning out well or ill depends the whole order of their father's house.

In common with many civilizations, for the early Greeks the female child was of secondary importance. The son alone was regarded
as the perpetuator of the race; the girl an expense to endure till her marriage. Posidippus noted the rule of thumb adopted by many Athenians:

The son is brought up even if one is poor: the daughter is exposed, even if one is rich.  

The history of childhood in the era of Roman ascendency contains some interesting perceptual shifts. By today's standards, Roman treatment of children in the early centuries might be regarded as singularly lacking in humanity, although after the fourth century the official and formal expectations seem 'gentler' due, at least in some measure, to the influence of Christianity and the writings of the Church Fathers.  

The primary concern of the founders of the Republic was for a sense of national strength and identity developed through the good health and physical condition of the young male population. The need for a strong army resulted in a pledge recorded in the Institutes of Justinian for all males to be reared and nurtured except those who were lame or deformed from birth. The power of the Roman father over the lives of his children cannot be overemphasized. This was embodied in the legislation known as the patria potestes which remained throughout the era the central institution of law concerning parents and children. Schulz states that the patria potestes was regarded as a "palladium of Romanism," but that its sacrosanct nature contributed to an essential conservatism in child-adult relations and eventually
led to abuses later to outrage those leaders nurtured to a new humanitarian consciousness. Under the laws of the patria potestas, the father had the power to sell his children, mutilate them, and even kill them. It was a power that extended through the entire life of the child, even into adulthood, and even if the offspring had gained high honour in the state. The child could be released only by special act.

The status of the child in the family was actually similar to that of a slave, and the father was to be revered by his children almost as a god. Shakespeare, following Cicero's statement in Pro Plancio, has Theseus say in Midsummer Night's Dream:

What say you Hermia? be advised, fair maid,  
To you, your father should be as a god;  
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one  
To whom you are but as a form of wax  
By him imprinted, and within his will  
To leave the figure or disfigure it.

The loyalty of child to parent, then, was based on the belief that the child was utterly dependent on his progenitor, not only for property and inheritance purposes, but for his very nature. This sense of control was not unique to Roman society, with traces to be found in Hellenic, Gallic and Germanic law. What is surprising, however, is that it was preserved (with slight revision) in the classical era in spite of growing humanistic movements. As Schulz argues, the basic conservatism of the Romans is not a sufficient explanation for the phenomenon. Rather, it was the true Roman feeling for authority and discipline within the home which inspired the lawyers.

...the Roman home seemed to them to be the high school of Roman disciplina and the patria potestas an indispensable requirement. Moreover, the Roman respect for individual freedom rendered them loath to interfere with the internal management of the Roman home. At all events Roman private law ended at the threshold of the Roman house...
Another significant development in Roman law began with the first emperor, Octavius, or Augustus as he was later called. He proposed a series of laws known as the *lex Julia et Papia*, which had had great effect on Roman society. The decadence and general moral deterioration of the empire had resulted in a disintegration of family relationships and a proliferation of homeless children—either because of an abuse of the *potestes* whereby children could be disowned and sold at will, or from the fact that soldiers (comprising a large proportion of the male population) were forbidden to marry, with the result that any children they fathered were illegitimate. By the *lex Papia* it was decreed that through his children a person gained status in the community. Persons who were not married and had no children were unable to inherit. The unmarried person was not able to take any part of what had been left to him, and the married person without children was only able to take one half. Payne argues that by giving the people, or the common treasury, the benefit of the clause forfeiting inheritance on account of sterility, the law was recognizing the *populus* as the common father, a development perhaps foreshadowing the evolution of the modern welfare state.

Among the provisions of the *lex Julia* were those entitling privileges of preference to that candidate for office who had the greatest number of children. Other examples of privileges for fecundity included seniority in the consulate, and relief from all personal taxes and burdens for citizens who had three or more children.

Apart from discussions in legal documents concerning the Roman child, the writings of poets also can give some illumination. Lucretius hints that children are something of a bother:
...Kids wet the bed
Soaking not only sheets, but also spreads,
Magnificent Babylonian counterpanes,
Because it seemed that in their dreams they stood
Before a urinal or chamber pot
With lifted nightgowns.21

Expressed too in the poetry of Lucretius are the qualities
of resignation and fatalism which, fairly common in the Mediterranean
world of antiquity, are applied to children as well:

When nature, after struggle, tears the child
Out of its mother's womb to the shores of light,
He lies there naked, lacking everything,
Like a sailor driven wave-battered to some coast,
And the poor little thing fills all the air
With lamentation--but that's only right
In view of all the griefs that lie ahead
Along his way through life. 22

What is interesting in these fragments, apart from the rather morose
view of human destiny, is the underlying sense of empathy the writer
shares with the child. Contrary to the earlier legal views of the
child's identity, expressed in debate over property rights etc.; in
Lucretius we see a more human identification of an older person with
the plight of a younger one. Adult and child are seen as sharing human
life together.

This theme was elaborated further by Quintilian in the first
century A.D., who argued that infants should be regarded from birth as
having full capacity for growth:

For there is absolutely no foundation for the
complaint that but few men have the power to take
in the knowledge that is imparted to them... .
Those who are dull and unteachable are as abnormal
as prodigious births and monstrosities and are but
few in number. A proof of what I say is to be
found in the fact that boys commonly show promise
of many accomplishments, and when such promise dies
away as they grow up, this is plainly due not to
the failure of natural gifts but to lack of requisite
attention... . 23
This growing sense of the child as a human being having "natural gifts" of his own, that is, an identity not wholly dependent on the father, was becoming more and more common in the early centuries of our era. A child's failings came to be seen not so much as due to inherent weakness, but due to external circumstances. By the fourth century the Theodosian Code contained a law to be "posted throughout all the municipalities of Italy" to "restrain the hands of parents from infanticide and turn their hopes to the better...."  

It would be naive to think that the growth of the Christian Church in this period wrought immediately a transformed view of the child; however, it can be said with some certainty that through the writings of the Church Fathers a new sense of the child's nature and destiny began to be expressed, and as the influence of the Church grew, so did these new ideas about childhood grow into a broadening acceptance. The sacrament of adult baptism, used as a sign of the Christian's new birth into the life of the Church, brought the adult to a new sense of the meaning of his own birth. This was clearly expressed by Tertullian (a lawyer turned theologian) in the third century:

Surely Christ loved man, the man that is hardened in the midst of uncleanness and comes forth through the parts of shame, the man who must grow up through all the indignity of being a baby... In loving man He loved his flesh and his process of being born... He remakes our birth by a new heavenly birth....

Here we see the view that the baby who suffers "indignity" is also the "man that is hardened in a woman." Adult and child share the same
nature. The pain and uncleanness of one's earthly "process of being born" is remade by a new "heavenly birth," that of Christ.

These understandings represented a radical shift from those discussed in the earlier Roman period where, under the patria potestas, the father was psychologically distanced from his offspring by virtue of his separate power, and also by the demand placed on children to revere the father as being almost divine. Within the Patristic interpretation of baptism as reflected by Tertullian, we see a new unification of adult and child worlds under God. Through baptism, the adult's birth is remade and transformed by the birth of God in Christ. But so too has the child's birth been transformed into a new "process of being born... ."

This view had profound ramifications not only for an understanding of human destiny but also for child rearing practices. Adults whose lives were remade by baptism felt a new sense of responsibility for the moral upbringing of their children. If children are born with the capacity for growth, then an urgent question is how that growth will be directed. This view was reflected in an address given by John Chrysostom in Antioch in 388 A.D.

If good precepts are impressed on the soul while it is yet tender, no man will be able to destroy them when they have set firm, even as does a waxen seal. The child is still trembling and fearful and afraid in look and speech and in all else. Make use of the beginning of his life as thou shouldst. ...Even so God rules the world with the fear of Hell and the promise of His kingdom. So must we too rule our children.26

In conclusion to this section on the Roman period, some mention must be made of Augustine of Hippo whose writing has had deep effect
on the evolution of Western thought. His Confessions and other voluminous works provide insight into his ideas concerning adult-child relations. Despite his strong ties to his mother, Augustine stressed that one's true family was not the natural one. Rather, one's true family dwelt in the life-to-come. This is an important key to understanding his view of Christian family relations. If one's ultimate loyalty is to that family which will "help one be born again," then the fostering of relations in one's natural family begins to fade in importance.

We should have no connections as are contingent upon birth and death... Our real selves are not bodies."28

This is not to say that he regarded the natural family as unimportant--only that it should not demand man's ultimate loyalty. His concern for children (and adults) was not lessened, because all creatures--including babies--have a place in God's plan:

In view of the encompassing network of the universe and the whole creation--a network that is perfectly ordered in time and place, where not even one leaf of a tree is superfluous--it is not possible to create a superfluous man.29

The baptism of infants unaware of the significance of the act was justified as improving the faith of the parents, a faith that would help the infants live again even if they should die young. The suffering of infants should not be questioned, for, it was thought, God works good from apparently evil events. Adults who suffer by watching their children in affliction may be goaded thereby to live sounder Christian lives. Further, we should not assume that children are truly innocent at birth: they are self-centred and grasping and merely have not had
as much opportunity to sin. 30

If it can be said that Augustine crystallized a new attitude toward children, it would be that adult and child shared a new equality under God:

Some tired with age, others in the vigour of youth, some of them boys, others grown men, others women—God is equally present to all.31

Lyman argues that it remains to be seen what effect the Patristic theoretical modifications had on widespread social practice. It is difficult, although tempting, to establish clear lines of influence. Nevertheless, the Imperial legislation from the fourth century onward suggests that at least, for example, the worst abuses of children were increasingly coming under the purview of government officials. The recurrence of legislation indicates how generally ingrained were the practices of infanticide, child sale and abandonment. That these practices had continued even after the era of Constantine (fourth century A.D.) is testified to both by the necessity for continuous additional legislation and also by the repeated condemnation of infanticide by church figures such as Tertullian and Lactantius.32

"In medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist."33 Aries' statement of the 1960's has proven a most fruitful one, given the energy of research since generated to refute the claim. The Middle Ages as an historical period has long been a subject of interest to Western scholars, and many characteristics of the epoch are part of the modern inheritance. For example, legal and organizational
innovations of the late Roman era (such as municipal government) have found their way into contemporary urban planning. The debate over the relationship between Church and State is still alive today. The ascendancy of Islam, the growth of the Papacy, the evolution of towns through trade and commerce, the development of university education, the decline of the Church and the advance of secular culture through Scholasticism, Science and the New Humanism, all find their beginnings in the Middle Ages.  

Many of the themes concerning childhood which we have delineated already continued into this era. Indeed, the multiplicity of writings and documents from the period forces us to remember that attitudes to children almost always exist as a plurality. While certain ideas and practices may gain prominence at any one time, generally others can also be found. In a tenth century manuscript, for example, the Codex Egberti, the artist portrays a scene from the Massacre of the Innocents, a popular subject in stories relating to Christ's infancy.
Several features stand out in the picture. On the one hand, the slaughtered children are shown as somewhat over-fed and over-sized 'little adults' being harpooned dispassionately by soldiers on command. In contrast to the soldiers' coolness, yet equally stressed, is the frenzied anguish of the bereaved mothers, who turn their faces away in grief and pull their hair. Some scholars argue that this kind of ambivalence is typical of the Middle Ages. A growing sympathetic appreciation of childhood was no guarantee of protection for children, any more than, say, an appreciation of womanhood today necessarily protects women from mistreatment. Nor is contemporary legislation against child abuse necessarily a guarantee of the end of the practice.

The portrayal of the children in the picture may in part reflect an Aristotlian division of human life into three stages: the voluptuous (or pleasure-oriented), the civil or political, and the contemplative or speculative. In 1309 the Montpellier physician and professor, Bernard de Gordon, adopted Aristotle's categories and elaborated on them for a book on child care called *Regimen sanitatis*. In it he described the "voluptuous life" as "the age of childhood which extends to about the fourteenth year."* Characterizing this first stage, he wrote:

> In the first there is no happiness, but those who live it, live according to desire and pursue sensual delights, just like cattle, hence they live below themselves [i.e., below their human nature].

---

*The civil or political life is that of adolescence or youth which extends to thirty-five years of age (!). The third age is that in which people lead an angelic or divine life, i.e., old age to the end of life.*
In the legal tracts of the Visigothic Kingdom* we gain some interesting glimpses of the legal status of early medieval youth. The "age of majority" was fourteen, at which time a child became free to testify in the courts and to make valid wills and contracts. A male child over the age of fourteen could not be betrothed against his will. It was also the age at which the child had the right to decide whether it should remain in, or be placed under tutelage. Generally, male and female children were treated in distinct fashions, the first gaining freedom from tutelage at fourteen and the second remaining under control until the upper age limit of twenty.39

The Visigothic kings took seriously their duty as Christian monarchs to care for the interests of children. This was particularly true regarding parental distribution and disposal of property. Baptism became the sole juridically significant criterion of a child's right to inherit, whereupon parental freedom to dispose of property was limited entirely to their children.40 A posthumous child enjoyed the same rights of inheritance to the paternal estate as did his brothers and sisters. These rights of children against their parents were maintained in the persons of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The children first in line of succession inherited equally: there was no distinction of sex.41

Legislation also dealt with the matter of parental authority over children of a marriage.42 Parents still retained the right to arrange a child's marriage before the age of majority, and could oblige

*The Visigothic Kingdom occupied the area of Western Europe now Spain. It was overrun by Islamic invasion at the beginning of the eighth century, A.D.
him to enter the religious life at an early age. But the emphasis of
the laws was upon duties rather than powers, and they offered children
extensive protection from parental 'improprieties.' For example, the
prenatal rights of the child were safeguarded. Abortion was punished
by the execution or blinding of the offending woman, together with her
husband if he had ordered her to commit the crime, or consented to it.
Infanticide was forbidden, as was the sale, donation or pledging of
children, although children were frequently given by their parents
for upbringing by others, with yearly payment until the child was ten,
at which time it was deemed able to earn the expenses of its keep. 43

The degree to which these laws attempted to protect the
rights of the young should temper those modern historians who portray
the lot of 'ancient' children almost always in terms of gross abuse. 44
Indeed, what is most notable about these legal compilations (issued by
King Ervig in 681 A.D.) is their modernity. Their attempt to give
responsibility and dignity to children at an early age can be seen as
forerunning much of the debate over children's rights today.

By the thirteenth century, broad movements were underway
to consolidate advances made earlier in different disciplines. As a
result, for example, several attempts were made to develop encyclo-
apaedic compilations drawn from the authoritative sources in natural
science, theology, and liberal arts, for the use of both preachers and
the general, educated lay public. Many of these works contained ac-
counts of the different stages of human development from birth to
death, descriptions of bodily functions, and guidance for those involved in child-rearing. One of the most widely disseminated of these encyclopedias was the *De proprietatibus rerum* (ca. 1230) by the Franciscan Bartholomaeus Angelicus. In the course of the next three hundred years the work was translated into French, English, Dutch, Provencal, Italian and Spanish. It is of particular interest to us not only for its wide circulation but for those sections which deal with explicit definitions of children and advice concerning their care. With heavy borrowings from Aristotle and Arabic sources, the book was regarded as a 'scientific' work, yet its intent was also moral, with many Biblical and Patristic glosses.

Bartholomew distinguished between the infant and the child. The life of the former began *in utero* and was born "out of seeds which possess contrary qualities." Further, "Life is produced when the soul steals in and when it has been enveloped by skin." The infant becomes a child when it is weaned. Quoting the seventh century etymologist, Isadore of Seville, Bartholomew notes the word child (*puer*) comes from the word for purity (*puritas*). The child is so named from "the purity of his natural innocence."

Other interesting pictures have been preserved by G. G. Coulton in his volume on men and manners in the Middle Ages. One is an original fourteenth century biographical poem describing the Knight Bertrand de Guesclin. Seemingly incorrigible as a youth, Bertrand eventually became renowned as a strong and chivalrous knight. The writer describes Bertrand within his family.
The Knight Renaud de Geusclin was Bertrand's father and his mother a most gentle lady and most comely; but for the boy of whom I tell you, methinks there was none so hideous from Rennes to Dinant. Flat-nosed he was and dark of skin, heavy and froward; wherefore his parents hated him so sore that often in their hearts they wished him dead, or drowned in some swift stream; Rascal, Fool, or Clown they were wont to call him; so despised was he, as an ill-conditioned child, that squires and servants made light of him, but we have oftimes seen, in this world of vain shadows, that the most despised have been the greatest...

In this account we can sense the difficulty of the parents in acknowledging as their own a child of so unfortunate appearance. As we have seen, in earlier days such a condition would have been grounds for exposure. These parents, however, keep their wishes "in their hearts," although their ridiculing names unconsciously betray their unresolved disappointment and frustration. Within the account there is no attempt or psychological ability to understand Bertrand's later childhood anti-social behavior in terms of the abuses to which he has been subjected, but his subsequent success as a vigorous and chivalrous knight is used as an illustration of the principle that "...in this world of vain shadows, ...the most despised have been the greatest." In other words, if this is but a world of shadows, one's judgment of a child's (person's) destiny by physical appearance must be suspended.

An interesting comment on Bertrand's early waywardness is made by his uncle who reprimands those who would try to reform the youth:

...it is meet and right that youth should have his way; for all that we may say, it must slough its first skin.
We might interpret such a statement as foreshadowing modern organismic theories of developmental psychology.

How people of the Middle Ages explained the appearance at birth of deformed, retarded or still-born infants is an interesting study in itself. The physician Bartholomaeus Metlinger introduced into the vernacular the term Wechselkind, or changeling, which was applied to a deformed or mentally retarded child believed to have been substituted by the devil for the authentic newborn child. In the picture below, the devil (with horns) is shown handing the newborn infant to his fellow-kidnapper in the tree after he has put a changeling (suggested by the vague outline of a shapeless head) at the side of the blissfully unaware mother. It is interesting to note that explanations of abnormality attempted in some measure to protect the innocence of the parents.

The idea of the "changeling" often led to practices aimed at reversing the exchange, as well as to exposure or slaying.
Multiple births, especially the birth of twins, were often regarded with fear, suspicion, or at least ambivalence, because of the common belief that the mother's adultery was responsible; hence the practice of permitting the 'legitimate' child to live and exposing or abandoning the other.  

Brief mention can be made of the practice of swaddling infants, a subject dealt with in some detail by medical practitioners. The general concern was to ease the newborn's traumatic transition from the womb, but it was also linked in scholastic writings with the medieval theory of 'humours' and with the explanation of natural life as a gradual drying-out or consumption of the "radical moisture" (humidum radicale), a process which began with the seminal fluidity of conception and ended in the skeletal dryness of death.

Some medical theorists took pains to describe the moral nature of the child, believing that a person's mores affect the balance of his complexion or physical constitution. According to Bernard de Gordon, the age of seven was the crucial moment to begin the child's moral and intellectual training. At that age he should be entrusted to a master. An interesting caveat of Gordon is that the child should be taught very gradually, "lest he be hurt by a sudden transition to what he was not used to."

In stating the principles of their educational theories, the physicians were not in total agreement. Some followed Galen's view that

The normal child is good in every way, and requires no correction of manners; what is rather needed is prevention of corrupting influences...from bad habits, in eating and drinking, in exercise, in shows, and in what they hear...
Most, however, believed with Aristotle that the child's mind at birth was neither good nor bad but merely, (foreshadowing Locke), a blank slate or tabula rasa.  

Education generally could be described as "learning the art of living from everyday contact." Certainly it would be a mistake to describe medieval education in terms of the school, particularly the Latin school, which was intended solely for clerics. The general rule for most people was apprenticeship. Even the clerics who were sent to school were often lodged, like other apprentices, with a cleric, a priest, or sometimes a prelate, whose servants they became.

The apprenticeship model was linked to another common practice—that of sending one's children away to the home of another in order to learn, as one Italian observer of the English put it, "better manners." Both girls and boys were tenured out for a period of seven to nine years between the ages of seven and eighteen. The principal duty of children entrusted in such a way was service. Aries argues that in this period the relationship between domestic service and apprenticeship was confused. Nevertheless, central to both was the belief that the child learnt best by practice, and that learning was indeed essentially practical. The result of this view was that adult and child shared basically the same social realities. A child might leave his family for his education, but not the family world. Wherever people worked, or amused themselves, even in taverns of ill repute, children were mingled with adults. Transmission from one generation to the next was ensured by this day-to-day participation of children in adult life—whether in workshop or home.


6. Ibid., p. 91.

7. Ibid., p. 95.


10. Ibid., p. 91.


15. See Schulz, pp. 143-161 for an excellent discussion of the intricacies of the patria potestas.


18 Ibid., p. 113.

19 Payne, op. cit., 228.

20 Ibid.


22 Ibid., pp. 220-231.

23 Ibid., pp. 281-288.

24 Ibid., p. 483.


27 Lyman, op. cit., p. 88.

28 Quoted, ibid., pp. 84-85.

29 Ibid., p. 86.


32 Lyman, op. cit., p. 90.


34 Carl Stephenson, Medieval History, New York, Harper and Bros., 1943, pp. vii-x.


36 Ibid., p. 34.


39. Ibid., pp. 224-5.

40. Ibid., pp. 246-8.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., p. 238.

43. Ibid., p. 239.


46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., p. 77.

48. Ibid., p. 78.


50. Ibid., p. 102.


53. Mary Martin McLaughlin, "Survivors and Surrogates: Children and Parents from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries," in De Mause, op. cit., p. 156.


55. Ibid., p. 480.

56. Ibid., p. 481.

57. Ibid.

58. Aries, op. cit., p. 368.

59. Ibid., p. 367.

60. Ibid., p. 365.

61. Ibid., p. 366.
Chapter Three

RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

The social and intellectual changes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had profound impact on the eventual status and role of children. Indeed, it could be argued that this period marks the time in history when many of our modern taken-for-granted assumptions about childhood found their shape and direction. This is not to say that the ideas of the period were necessarily new or unique, but only that they became more widely accepted and part of a broader social fabric. Such features as the printing press, the rise of the middle classes, discoveries in the new and old worlds, and the emergence of humanism, the 'new learning' and schools all served to begin a radical re-definition not only of what it meant to be a 'man in the world' but also, a child within it. While the extension of schooling to girls would not become common until the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, by the seventeenth century a fairly dense network of schools for boys had been established in most countries of Europe. The school had ceased to be confined to clerics and had become a strong instrument of social initiation, of progress from childhood to manhood.¹

Any discussion of Renaissance thought must come to terms with its intellectual basis as centred in the growth of humanism. Kristeller claims to be unable to discover in the humanist literature any common philosophical doctrine, "except a belief in the value of man and the humanities and in the revival of ancient learning,"² but we must be careful to distinguish modern conceptions of humanism (typically understood
as a concern for 'human' values) and the Renaissance understanding, which was not as such a philosophical tendency or system, but rather a cultural and educational program which emphasized and developed an important but limited area of studies.  

Cicero discussed its meaning in his On the Orator, stating that boys who some day would assume leadership in state and society should prepare themselves by studying literature, philosophy, rhetoric, history and law. A man so trained was said to be humanus or human. Wrote Cicero:

We are all called men, but only those of us are human (humani) who have been civilized by the studies proper to culture.  

This kind of culture, preserved in the ancient Roman or Greek heritage, was called humanitas, a Latin word more or less equivalent to our humanism.  

Its appeal rested in the vacuum created by strong social and economic changes which by their very existence demanded a reformation of medieval views of the world, rooted as those were in a close association of man with nature, a strong apocalyptic sense, and a perpetuation of lay ignorance due to the power of the Church over learning. This sense of frustration and latent energy is well expressed in two prints of the Renaissance engraver Albrecht Durer done in 1514 (seen on the next page).  

In the first, melancholy is personified as a heavy, despondent female figure. She sits surrounded by a collection of instruments, including various geometrical figures, hourglass, magic square, balance, compass and rule, all strewn about in confusion. On a grindstone a child scrawls on a slate, scribbling away without direction or result. Panofsky interprets this as an analysis of the frustration of the
creative impulse, and it implies a contrast with those conditions in which productive activity can be realized. This contrast is presented by the engraving of St. Jerome in his study. In the study, every object is in its ordered place and the saint is engaged in happy contemplative and creative work. Even the animals are sleeping together with expressions of content. In a sense, then, in Melancholia, impotence and gloom are the result of human will and energy lacking a theoretical basis for action. The second print represents a vision of reconciliation between theory and action, and a new order of being.

The origins of Renaissance humanism can be traced to the formulation in the late Middle Ages of Thomistic Scholasticism. This system of thought, refined by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1275), had become almost
universally accepted in Western Europe by the end of the fourteenth century, and indeed, even today, Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* forms the basis of priestly training in the Roman Catholic Church.

The outstanding feature of scholasticism was its perfected structure which offered a place for all things human as well as divine. Although Platonic thought had survived into the Middle Ages through the writings, among others, of Plotinus and Augustine, the decisive factor in the building of scholastic philosophy was the recovery, at least in transcribed form, of the texts of Aristotle. Aquinas attempted a synthesis of the revived philosophical doctrines of Aristotle and the theological convictions of the Middle Ages. At the base of his system lay the Aristotlian classification of knowledge. Here the different sciences dealing with man's environment found their appropriate place in a hierarchical arrangement at the summit of which were the doctrines of the Church and the theological formulations entrusted to her. Thus the entire realm of human learning, sacred or profane, was brought into one harmonious system.

Similarly, following Aristotle, Thomas erected a logical structure upon an analysis of "being." Seeing that the mind is confronted by a multitude of existing things, which are constantly in motion or changing, Thomas taught that they are in "potency" toward the full realization of their "being." So, for example, an acorn is an oak in potency. Psychology became an important branch in scholastic study; its purpose being metaphysical in attempting to understand the "whole man." It was concerned with what today would be called 'learning theory'—how the "potentially intelligible" is rendered "actually intelligible."
Ultimately scholasticism was an all-embracing system of deduction, centering upon God, which assumed that philosophy could extend religious knowledge.¹¹ The humanists in turn accepted the natural world as the locus of man's knowledge and by extension his knowledge of God.¹² Whereas for Plato, man discovered his world by intuition and, for Augustine, illumination was a consequence of divine revelation, for the humanists, the initiative for 'knowing' both God and the world rested with man himself. By cultivation of his reason and intellect, he could 'know' his world more deeply and his God more profoundly. It is in this way that education and religious piety became powerfully mixed. By the cultivation of reason, order, and virtue, not only did man's lot become more pleasant, but also his appreciation of God became more rich.

All of these assumptions found concrete expression in the theories of education of the Christian humanists, notably Erasmus. The nature of man, fundamentally good, although corrupted by original sin, was capable of improvement by an intellectual discipline. In a strange sense, the corruption of man's nature was related to his ignorance. The most corrupt man was in turn the most ignorant--an association often made today in reference to, for example, students and minorities. Weak students are often labelled lazy or 'good-for-nothing'. Hope for oppressed minorities is often defined in terms of massive expenditure on educational programs. So too in Renaissance humanism, learning, whether sacred or profane, would increase piety. In the minds of many of the humanists, a new program of education was not only necessary; it was all that was necessary. Hence the multiplicity of treatises developed during this period on the education of children (e.g., Erasmus' treatise
On The Education of Children), and the flowering of schools emphasizing a classical curriculum.*

This was perhaps the first significant appearance of a hope which has recurred again and again in western thought and has remained one of the outstanding characteristics of the evolution of European civilization—namely that through the systematic, formal education of one's children, social peace, harmony and order could be achieved. Human corruption is due fundamentally to ignorance. The civilized man is the learned man. It might be noted in passing that the position of the Christian humanists failed to account for the New Testament view that ignorance is the most forgiveable of human frailties, and provides the basis for both humility and compassion. See, for example, Luke 23:34.

We must be careful in interpreting the rise of humanism as marking a shift in understanding of the place and role of children in European society generally for, to begin with at least, the new movement contributed to the evolution of an elitist class of intellectual aristocracy. To be sure, many of the child-rearing patterns of the Middle Ages persisted on a widespread basis, but in conjunction with other profound social changes taking place in the Renaissance, it may be argued with some safety that this era signals the point at which the child and the school become significantly linked.

M. J. Tucker has made an interesting detailed study of education in sixteenth century England.14

*Erasmus, in a letter to the young Adolph of Veere, justified the study of even the most profane of classical authors, and in his edition of the works of St. Jerome, discounted the story of the saint's dream about being beaten before the gates of Heaven for being a Ciceronian and not a Christian.13
The central characteristics of the English system included the following:

(a) Though education had a religious basis and was Christ-centred, it ceased to be the exclusive preserve of the clergy.

(b) It was also becoming more important—especially as parents saw it as an avenue of upward social mobility. Grammar schools were frequently being created, the most famous being St. Paul's Cathedral school, started by the humanist, John Colet, a friend of Erasmus.

(c) A preoccupation with Roman and Greek writers ensured classical scholarship a central place in the curriculum. By imitating antiquity it was thought the child could learn all that was necessary to control oneself and to advance in the world of affairs.

(d) Education was deemed necessary to develop a person into a gentleman or gentlewoman. Most aristocratic children were sent to grammar school at six or seven years of age. Princes or princesses often began at three or four years. Increasingly, girls were given opportunity for formal education.

In conclusion to this section, brief mention should be made of one outcome of Renaissance thought which, while subtle, was to become more important in later centuries. This was the increasing sense of specialization within human activity. Professional knowledge and
areas of scholarly and creative activity were becoming more and more compartmentalized. Where there was less cohesion in the social order and in the intellectual world as a whole, it became more satisfying and, indeed, necessary to seek for that more limited but more intensive unity which could be obtained by isolating and defining a given subject matter. Hence, Machiavelli in political theory, Leonardo and Durer in the theory of the arts, and Erasmus in classical scholarship, found autonomous areas in which they could pursue their investigations and draw their conclusions without reference to revealed truth or inherited knowledge about the universe as a whole. It may be possible to say, at the risk of oversimplification, that at this point, too, the child begins to become isolated as a social entity unto himself—to be nurtured and cultivated into a new kind of man. As Aries has argued, the modern philosophy of science is predicated on the assumption that for anything to be studied it has to be isolated, and that

We cannot exert any influence on an element of Nature unless we are agreed it can be adequately isolated.

So, too, the child, to become a student, had to be removed from the larger social fabric. It must be borne in mind, however, that for the Renaissance man, this very specialization—understood as a differentiation of subject matter rather than as a personal specialization in the modern sense—was still predicated on a conviction of the unity of all knowledge. This is an assumption often forgotten in modern specialized studies. In the case of studies of children, for example, the dangerous consequences of ignoring the total framework of the child's world are becoming more and more evident.
Many historical surveys of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries examine Renaissance and Reformation in one continuous sweep, not because the two are the same, but because in a certain sense the latter found its seed in the former. The new confidence of man in his world provided a basis upon which the individual's relationship to authority and institutional structures could come under question. It is often difficult for the twentieth century secular mind to understand the power that Christianity and the Church had, prior to the sixteenth century, not only over intellectual endeavour, but also over the lives of the common people. The Catholic Church occupied a position in most European countries which no religious organization holds today. As Hayes points out, each state undertook to enforce obedience to the church on the part of its subjects; a person attacking the authority of the Church was liable to punishment by the state. The Church was official and public, not private and voluntary. Every professed Christian was expected to conform, at least outwardly, to the doctrine and observances of the Church. What is more, every child of Christian parents was born into the Church almost as literally as he is now born into a state. The belief was set firm that the Catholic Church was of divine origin and to question its authority was to question the authority of God himself and, hence, invoke His judgment. It was by means of the Church that man was to know how best to order his life in this world and how to prepare his soul for happiness in the world to come.

With the humanist revival, however, a decisive shift began. Medieval culture glorified God and Heaven, while, through humanism and
the Renaissance, man and his world became the focus of attention. This is not to say that the relationship between man and God was still not an overriding concern, but only that the relationship between man and man, man and his surroundings, became increasingly worthy of consideration. In Renaissance art, for example, man became the measure of all things created by man. In contrast to the medieval gothic cathedrals where the sheer enormity of the nave spoke of God's greatness and man's smallness, Renaissance architecture was made to comply with the size of man himself and in this way proclaimed his autonomous dignity. Renaissance man was not anti-Christian, as the philosopher Petrarch was moved to say when defending his reverence for the classical world: "I certainly am not a Ciceronian, or a Platonist, but a Christian." But the fact that he could make his defense in those terms—choosing a Christian frame of reference from two possible alternatives—was an indication of a belief that simply by exercising his powers of discretion a man could make his existential choices, and define the realms of his own meaning.

This was precisely the point of view that the reformers and the Reformation could not accept. The issue centered around the very definition of man. Was man to understand himself simply on the basis of his own ability to make sense of his world, with God as the ultimate step in the progress of illumination, as Aristotle and later Aquinas had suggested? Or was there somehow a void between things human and divine with the latter having a potency and certain independence of action which demanded that man live by faith and hope rather than simply by reason. This was the dilemma faced by Martin Luther, the young German Augustinian friar, for whom the New Testament text of
Romans, "the just shall live by faith," became the battle cry to shake European civilization to its roots.

It is not the place here to discuss the intricacies of the Reformation debates, except to say that for all the reformers, the omnipotence of God and man's dependence on Him was the central concern of human existence. Indeed, man was not man until he had answered affirmatively the question of the nature of his ultimate belief. Belief and faith could inform reason, but reason alone could not lead to belief. Full healthy living (i.e., salvation, connoted from the Latin salve, health) depended on man's complete faith in the mercy and justice of God. Without such faith man was less than man, if not depraved. What is more, the prime initiative for belief rested with God himself. Man's purpose was to be understood more in terms of response. Thus there is a sense that while in the humanist view of faith both man and God are principal actors in the human drama, for the reformers, God alone assumed that position. Man's role was to be characterized in terms of obedience and responsiveness.

Of course, the reformers varied considerably in the manner in which the doctrines were worked out. Luther, for example, was primarily interested in theological systemizing and Biblical interpretation. His theological formulations emphasized the divine-human relationship, and dealt only lightly with meaning and place of the Church visible on earth. Calvin, on the other hand, having a legal background, concentrated on the problem of how the Church visible on earth was to reflect in flesh, blood, and day-to-day activity, the condition
of divine graciousness. While a minister in Geneva, he worked out in
precise detail the way the entire city should be organized politically
and ethically to reflect the redeemed condition.\(^{23}\) This may be one
reason, perhaps, why Calvinist theology exercised, either explicitly
or implicitly, such incredible durability amongst the Puritans in
America. It left little doubt as to the shape, tenor and texture of
the "community of the elect."\(^{24}\) As Wishy observed of the state of
that republic, "by 1800 Calvinist views of the child and of human des-
tiny demonstrated remarkable staying power."\(^{25}\) The practicality of
Calvinism was well suited to a people concerned with the establishment
of a community where "Eden was waiting."\(^{26}\)

Because the influence of Calvinism in America through the
Puritan tradition has been so profound, some discussion of its basic
tenets seems justified, particularly as they relate to views of child-
hood and childrearing practices. The spirits of the European Enlighten-
ment in the eighteenth century, and of Darwinism in the second half of
the nineteenth century, contrived to clear the way, challenge, and
even replace the Puritan ethos associated with the child, but certainly
until the latter part of the nineteenth century, commonplace notions
about childhood were deeply grounded in Calvinist theology.\(^{27}\)

Within Puritan theology itself, it is difficult to find
statements specifically dealing with the nature of the child as unique
and different from that of adults. Contrary to Luther, who viewed
children as essentially innocent,* the Puritans, following Calvin,

\*Luther is reported to have said to one of his own children: "You are our
Lord's little fool. Grace and remission of sins are yours and you fear
nothing from the law. Whatever you do is uncorrupted; you are in a
state of grace and you have remission of sins, whatever happens."\(^{28}\)
believed that the human race as a whole—adult and child alike—was in a fallen, depraved condition in need of God's grace. This conviction had two consequences for adult-child relations. On the one hand, believing adults had a responsibility to "protect their children from profanity," thereby ameliorating the child's fallen condition. On the other hand, adults and parents were constantly warned not to lapse into a sentimental view of a child's innocence. The renowned New England preacher, Jonathan Edwards, wrote:

As innocent as children seem to us, yet if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers, and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons.

The child, then, like the adult, was in need of redemption by God's grace, and the social machinery necessary to assist, ensure or reflect such a condition was put into careful operation.

Besides having constantly to protect the child, those who thought of him in purely moral terms had to accept other related implications. Parents were expected to raise an obedient and reverent child, and children were expected to respond accordingly. Should a parent be found negligent in these duties, he was called upon by a court of law to correct the matter. In extreme cases, where the parent was deemed

*These verbs are carefully chosen, but the plurality reflects the difficulty in Calvinistic theology of articulating the tension between the doctrine of predestinarian election and man's ability to respond to the divine invitation.
incapable of correcting the problem, the child was sent to another home. If children, because of parental neglect, were disobedient or irreverent toward parents, they, of course, were not found responsible, but given over to the care of another Puritan home, usually designated a foster home. Should a child be found disobedient or irreverent without reason, he or she could expect to be severely punished irrespective of age. Any child over sixteen could be put to death for cursing or striking his natural parents unless it could be proved they had been

Unchristianly negligent in the Education of such Children, or so provoked them by extreme and cruel correction, that they have been forced thereunto to preserve themselves from Death or maiming.

Pedagogy almost always had a definite moral intent, reminding the child early in life of the nature and destiny of man. The following excerpt from a New England Primer illustrates how even while perhaps learning his alphabet on Mother's knee, an attempt was made to give the Puritan child more than simple instruction in letters. What is particularly interesting about the illustrations in this alphabet is that while many letters carry a fairly heavy (to modern minds) moral message, or perhaps ontological message is a better term, there is a definite humour pervading some of the drawings (e.g., D, E, L, M) and some sense of appreciation of the wonders of nature (e.g., N). These features remind us that the Puritan mind was not incapable of levity and aesthetic sensitivity. It should be remembered that the Calvinist notion of human depravity was still indeed part of a doctrine of salvation, and while the former could easily lead to morbid practices, rightly
In Adam's Fall
We Sinned all.

Thy Life to Mend
This Book Attend.

The Cat doth play
And after slay.

A Dog will bite
A Thief at night.

An Eagle's flight
Is out of sight.

The Idle Fool
Is whipt at School.

Nightingales sing
In Time of Spring.

The Royal Oak
It was the Tree
That fav'd His
Royal Majesty.

Peter denies
His Lord and cries

Queen Esther comes
in Royal State
To Save the JEWS
from dismal Fate

Rachel doth mourn,
For her first born.

Samuel anoints
Whom God appoints.

As runs the Class
Mans life doth pass.

My Book and Heart
Shall never part.

Job feels the Rod
Yet blesses GOD.

Our KING the good
No man of blood.

The Lion bold
The Lamb doth hold.

The Moon gives light
In time of night.

Time cuts down all
Both great and small.

Uriah's beauteous Wife
Made David seek his Life.

Whales in the Sea
God's Voice obey.

Xerxes the great did die,
And so must you & I.

Youth forward slips
Death soonest nips.

Zachaeus he
Did climb the Tree
His Lord to see,
understood it was intended to reflect a message of good news.

Thus, for example, while Puritan parents regarded discipline as essential for a child's moral development, the use of the rod was advised only as a last resort. Kindness, wisdom, moderation, and affection were considered vastly superior as ways of getting children back on their proper course. The principles of Cotton Mather with his own children are a case in point: 34

The First Chastisement, which I inflict for an ordinary fault, is to lett the child see and hear me in an astonishment, and hardly able to believe that the child could do so base a thing, but believing they will never do it again.

I would never come, to give a child a Blow; except in case of Obstinacy; or some gross Enormity. To be chased for a while out of my Presence, I would make to be look'd upon, as the sorest Punishment in the family... .

The slavish way of Education, carried on with raving and kicking and scourging (in Schools as well as Families) tis abominable; and a dreadful judgement of God upon the world.

In conclusion to this chapter these points can be made. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed social and intellectual changes that were to profoundly affect accepted definitions of what it meant to be a human being. In turn, views of the child became re-focused. The humanists understood classical knowledge and culture as indispensible ingredients for both enriched piety and contemporary civilization. By acting in and upon the world, man and child fulfilled their nature and destiny. By formally educating children they
would become not only more cultivated, but almost by definition, more pious also. Hence schools became increasingly important as the necessary tool whereby children could enter into this vision.

The reformers, however, insisted that man, rather than an actor or initiator, was principally a dependent being whose duty was to respond to the divine initiative in faith. This was the ultimate lesson for the child also. Children were to be viewed as sharing with adults their essential ontological dependence. Hence, moral training, particularly with respect to man's destiny, became pre-eminently important in adult-child relations. The conviction was profound that the child needed to respond affirmatively to the divine call; and steps were taken to ensure that the child would become aware of his need.
FOOTNOTES


3 Ibid., p. 10.


5 Ibid., p. 209.


8 Kristeller, op. cit., p. 25.

9 Lucas, op. cit., p. 176.

10 Ibid., p. 178.


13 Ibid.


15 Gilmore, op. cit., p. 265.

16 Aries, op. cit., p. 20.

17 Gilmore, loc. cit.


31 Naherny and Rosario, *op. cit.*, p. 22.


34 Quoted in Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
Chapter Four

RATIONALISM, ROMANTICISM AND SCIENCE

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we begin to confront in seminal form many of the theoretical bases underlying much of what is known as 'child study' today, to say nothing of contemporary views of human nature generally. Thus on a fundamental level it is important to try to understand what those intellectual currents were. At the same time we need to bear in mind that what began as theoretical formulation in that period remained largely theoretical, without widespread practical implementation in terms of policy and institution. This is particularly so for the lives of the masses of 'common' people. Their lot was to suffer from the social turmoil caused by the fermentation of new ideas and inventions.

Furthermore, the rapid pace with which new discoveries were being made, new ideas were being hatched, and new social networks evolving, makes historical study more difficult, particularly of the sort attempting to paint broad strokes. The complexities accompanying such a condition often cause historians the feeling Rothman describes as

that middle-of-the-night panic when contemplating how thin a line sometimes separates their work from fiction.¹

With the complexity granted, however, an attempt at discerning meaningful patterns can be helpful. In general, with the Enlightenment were
associated four noteworthy concepts:

(1) **Naturalism.** The substitution of the natural for the supernatural, of science for theology, and the assumption that the whole universe of matter and mind is guided and controlled by natural law;

(2) **Rationalism.** The exalting and almost deifying of human reason, which could and, according to the rational moral sense, should be utilized by the individual to discover the laws of nature and to enable him to conform his life to them;

(3) **Optimistic Progress.** A hopeful belief in the steady betterment and ultimate perfecting of mankind, through increasing use of reason and broadening knowledge of natural law;

(4) **Humanitarianism.** A sensitive regard for the natural rights of the individual and a predilection for the social blessings which "enlightenment" would bestow.

The categorical dividing of history into epochs and ages tends to detract from the evolutionary and organic realities of historical emergence. It is generally agreed that the spirit of Enlightenment grew out of the Renaissance and Reformation, although which of the latter two was more important is a subject of strong debate. In general, it is perhaps most helpful to regard the seventeenth century as an age which saw a transition from one intellectual climate to another.

The cultural horizon of most educated men in Western Europe in the early seventeenth century was dominated by two almost unchallenged sources of authority: scripture and the classics. Each in its own way
perpetuated the idea that civilization had degenerated from a former Golden Age. Ideals had to be traced backwards. For the humanists (most of them Christian) the civilized man should look back for inspiration and example to Greek and Latin learning. For the reformers the truly virtuous man looked to the Bible and the life of the early Church as revealed in new vernacular translations.

This sense of the deep entrenchment of the backward gaze posed particular problems for the thinker who sought, by exercising his powers of imagination and reason to go beyond what was known. Not only would he need courage to question the accepted ancient masters, but he would also face the academic 'establishment' which, in turn, might bring him under suspicion of heresy, for Church authorities still regarded the answers to all problems—practical and theoretical—to be found in the Bible. Even Descartes, one of the great intellectual revolutionaries of the century, concluded in his Principes de la philosophie

Above all, we will observe as an infallible rule that what God has revealed is incomparably more certain than all the rest.4

The view of life was generally pessimistic, held buoyant by the theological promises of eternal things to come. In the words of the Englishman, Sir Thomas Browne

Certainly there is no happiness within this circle of flesh, nor is it in the optics of these eyes to behold felicity. Were there not another life that I hoped for, all the vanities of this world should not entreat a moments breath from me.5

The universe was thoroughly circumscribed with earth locked at its centre. Superstition and fear were common. The sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were the great age of witchcraft trials.
During the seventeenth century this pessimism was gradually eroded by new knowledge and new ways of looking at experience. These first brought doubt and then, gradually, unprecedented optimism concerning the nature of man and his ability to shape his material and social environment to his own convenience. The new heliocentric theory of the solar system, expounded by Copernicus in 1543 and developed by Galileo almost a century later, had far-reaching implications. The question was not merely who revolved around whom: the astronomical argument concerned the relationship between man and nature. If the earth was in fact the centre, then man was lord in the universe, as the Greeks had assumed, and the Old Testament justified. If the earth was just one planet among many, and not even the central one, then man needed to review his place. If he was not at the centre, then where indeed was he? The question alone was pregnant with the energy of authentic curiosity.

In implication, disturbing discoveries were being made also in geology. Evidence of the rise and fall of the earth's surface was difficult to fit into the 6,000-year span that Genesis allowed. Similarly, there was the increasing expansion of common consciousness through voyages of discovery, which posed questions about the Church's views of original sin. To what degree could the peoples of the far East be labelled sinners if (a) they had never heard of the notion of human depravity, and (b) by European standards their culture and morality seemed superior?

It was these new experiences which caused men to profoundly question their old faiths or at least the garb with which their faiths were kept warm. The mystic Pascal was forced to conclude in 1652 that
Locke, in 1690, began his *Essay on Human Understanding* by denying the existence of innate ideas, and Descartes, a devout Christian, in his revolutionary *Discourse* announced his intention of beginning by accepting nothing as true unless he himself had a clear and distinct perception of its veracity.

It must be borne in mind that in these early years many of the creative thinkers still regarded themselves as orthodox churchmen. It was just that their new systems of thought were no longer dependent on the supporting arm of theology, but were logically viable without it. Hence it might be argued that with the dawn of the Enlightenment emerged a new divorce between Faith and Reason. While for the Humanists faith provided the reason for reason, and for the Reformers faith could illuminate and inform reason, the heritage of the Enlightenment is an irreconcilable distinction between the two. Faith is Faith: Reason is Reason. The implications of this view are far beyond the scope of this study, but it might be suggested that such features as the secularization of knowledge in schools, the demise of mystery and wonder in pedagogical handbooks, and the statements of contemporary students that their school studies are meaningless are reflective of this type of dichotomy.

The one thing the new questioners had in common was their rejection of traditional assumptions and attitudes. Yet in the seventeenth century, what was needed was a new criterion for truth, a system by which the reliability of evidence could be checked and a new model of the universe gradually assembled from elements which had passed new
tests of credibility. For the findings and pronouncements of the new rationalists were constantly being debated and hotly disputed.⁸

We cannot possibly in this context trace all the movements which mark the evolution of rationalism and the new science, but those ideas which somehow pertain to theories of learning, education, and hence childhood, bear some attention. We might note in passing that the term "science" was not coined until the nineteenth century and the modern distinctions between 'science' and 'philosophy' were not drawn⁹—a point that educators and students of childhood of the empiricist persuasion might remember: they are pre-eminently philosophers, or at least acting from a philosophical position.

Kessen has argued that beginning with the Enlightenment there can be found an increasing devotion to the proposition that childhood is a time of construction. Just as for the rationalists man constructs his own world, so also does the child. His notions of society, or morality, of the nature of time and of man are not brought out of their instinct hiding-place by the wise affectionate teacher. Rather, knowledge is constructed by the child from his experience of men and things. The child is what he is made, and the Man is what the child was.¹⁰

While his work is not without ambiguities, perhaps the dominant philosopher of the eighteenth century, through whom these ideas were worked out, was John Locke (1623-1704). For Locke the origin of all human knowledge was firmly placed in the world of empirical fact: all ideas came through the senses. The so-called 'innate ideas' of Descartes were not innate at all, but rather the lessons of early experience. Furthermore, in recognition of Newton's arguments for the existence of natural laws, Locke believed that natural law, while God-given, was simple
and discoverable. This was true for the adult as well as the child. As he put it, natural law "teaches all men who will but consult it."\textsuperscript{11} Here we have a sense of Piaget's theory of genetic epistemology, whereby the child discovers and constructs his world by acting upon it.\textsuperscript{12}

For Locke, too, human differences were not due to hereditary distinctions of 'blood', but to differences of environment. Human irrationality was the product of erroneous associations made between different elements and ideas that had become fixed in childhood.\textsuperscript{13} Just as Newton with his gravitational studies had seemed to substitute a rational law of nature for unpredictable and often malevolent forces, Locke appeared to have disclosed the scientific laws of the human mind, which would allow men to reconstruct society on happier and more rational lines.\textsuperscript{14}

Locke's chief philosophical work was called \textit{Essay Concerning Human Understanding}, followed by a homelier book, \textit{Some Thoughts Concerning Education}. His ideas on the subject of human nature are not always uniform: on the one hand denying the existence of innate ideas, while on the other speaking of 'native propensities.' On the first page of \textit{Some Thoughts}, he writes:

\begin{quote}
I confess, there are some men's Constitutions of Body and Mind so vigourous and well framed by Nature, that they need not much Assistance from others, but by the strength of their natural Genius, they are from their cradles carried toward what is Excellent... .\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

In other cases, education is determinate.

\begin{quote}
The little, and almost insensible Impressions on our tender Infancies, have very important and lasting consequences...and by [a] little direction given them at first in the source, they receive different Tendencies.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}
His section on Rewards and Punishment presages Watson and the Behaviorists by two hundred years. The child makes choices, argued Locke, on the basis of pleasure rather than pain, therefore to train a child to obedience, it is necessary to reward (i.e., associate with pleasure) those behaviors deemed desirable and punish (associate with pain) those not so. As he put it:

**Reward and Punishment** are the only motives to a rational Creature; these are the Spur and Reins, whereby all mankind is set on work guided, and therefore they are to be made use of to children too. For I advise their Parents and Governors always to carry this in their minds, that children are to be treated as rational Creatures. 17

The object of such training is for the child to be able to control his needs for immediate gratification, thereafter to live in a "quiet and orderly" way. 18

His notes on "Curiosity in Children" are interesting for their modernity:

Curiosity in Children...is but an appetite after knowledge; and therefore ought to be encouraged in them [by] these following

1. Not to check or discountenance any Enquiries he shall make...; but to answer all his Questions and explain Matters...

2. Add some peculiar ways of Commendation... . Let their vanity be flattered with Things, that will do them good...

3. ...great care is to be taken, that they never receive Deceitful and Eluding Answers. And though their Questions seem sometimes not very material, yet they should be seriously answer'd: For however they may appear to us...Enquiries not worth making; they are of moment to those, who are wholly ignorant.
It is interesting that Locke, a life-long bachelor, wrote *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* to assist those people who claimed to be at a loss as to how to raise their children—"the early corruption of Youth is now become so general a complaint."20

The implications of Locke's overall philosophy of human nature were to dominate much eighteenth century thought. Indeed, many of his ideas are foundationally embedded in the modern subconscious, with the influence on beliefs about children and education not oblique. The basic contribution might be summarized as follows: (1) Toleration (since beliefs were largely a product of environment); (2) acceptance of the potential equality of man, except as regards natural intelligence (since human differences were not due to hereditary distinctions of 'blood', but to differences of environment); (3) the assumption that society, by the regulation of material conditions, could promote the moral improvement of its members; (4) a new psychology and a new attitude to education, based on the belief that human irrationality was the product of erroneous associations of ideas, that had become fixed in childhood.21

It might be mentioned in passing that for the rationalists, as opposed to the Renaissance humanists, 'Reason' was not so much a body of knowledge as a method: the faculty of discovering the right answer by induction from the collected facts. And underlying this attitude was the assumption that there was a right answer to every question, that all problems from bridge-building to law-making could be answered with the same certainty as could a mathematical problem. By implication, a certain confidence also existed that the intricacies of human nature could also be thus understood. These two threads of
empiricism and mathematical neatness run throughout the thought of the Enlightenment and account for much of its complexity and apparent contradiction.  

The notion that everything could be observed, discussed, or induced led to the attempt on the part of a group of Frenchmen (led by Denis Diderot, 1713-84) to classify knowledge alphabetically. This in turn initiated the development of the encyclopaedia movement. The aim of the Encyclopaedists was, by describing and analysing the world, to support the fundamental hypothesis upon which their empiricism rested, viz. the uniformity of nature. Yet they found that the more facts they collected and classified, the more complex and uncoordinated the picture seemed to become.

The limitations of the experimental method were, of course, freely admitted by contemporary 'Scientists'. Newton, for example, had stressed that he was seeking to describe how the force of gravity operated, not to explain what gravity was. The so-called skepticism of David Hume (1711-76) lay in his demonstrating those limitations already admitted by physicists and elucidated in their philosophical presentations. In *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1738) Hume's aim was to lay out the principles of a science of man, yet he soon found himself realizing how little certainty could be achieved by the experimental method. The law of cause and effect, he pointed out, was based on the experience of finding two objects in constant conjunction, and arguing from this experience to the assumption that the two objects would occur in conjunction in the future. Yet it was impossible in the first place to prove by empirical means that constant conjunction implied cause and effect. The connection of cause and effect, then, was not
implicit in the facts; it could only be arrived at by intuition.

Secondly, there was no logical justification for arguing from past experience to future prediction, unless we assumed the uniformity of nature. In other words, the empirical method depended on an *a priori* assumption about the nature of those very things it was attempting to examine, so that in a strange sense, the answers of the empirical investigator were already implicit in his questions. Hume was not denying the existence of cause and effect, he was merely arguing that reason alone could not explain it, and that our belief in causation must therefore stem from some other source. His thesis was, as he put it,

that all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but custom; and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive than the cogitative part of our natures.

Understanding through feeling rather than through thinking: this is the point at which Hume challenges rationalism and seems to join hands with the Romantics led by Rousseau. Even in terms of morality, argued Hume, "Reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any office than to serve and obey them." Similarly men distinguish virtue from vice, not by intuition, nor by logic, but by sensation, by the feeling of pleasure or pain that is derived from the contemplation of a situation, character, or action.

Hume's arguments therefore can be seen to have struck at two basic premises of the Enlightenment thought: the uniformity of nature and the rationality of man.

Hume was a contemporary and sometime friend of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) whose book *Emile* was directly concerned with
formulating ideas of childhood and childrearing consistent with the new emphasis on the senses. One radical consequence of this shift was to put emphasis on the individual rather than the collective group, for only each man alone could be the judge of his feelings. In his political essay *The Social Contract*, Rousseau argued "L'etat c'est moi." Similarly in *Emile* he stated

> We must choose between making a man or making a citizen. We cannot make both.\(^{31}\)

Given that *Emile* is an account by Rousseau of how to 'make' a man from a child, some examination of its central thesis is warranted. Again, we should bear in mind that, as with Locke, inconsistencies in his thinking are not absent, but what is important are the fundamental thrusts. Perhaps the most seminal is that, for Rousseau, a boy's education must proceed at a pace dictated by his own needs rather than his tutor's knowledge. He must not be taught the three R's until he has himself seen their value; his vocabulary must be curtailed since it is a disadvantage for children "to have more words than ideas and be able to say more than they think."\(^{32}\) Until the age of twelve, the tutor's aim should be "not to save time but to waste it" so that the mind can "remain inactive until it has all its faculties."\(^{33}\) Early education should in fact be negative: "It consists not in teaching virtue and truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and the mind from error."\(^{34}\)

Some interesting comments are made pertaining to curriculum for students: elementary science and geography might be introduced between the ages of twelve and fifteen, but they must be learned from nature, not taught from books; *Emile* 's first book was to be *Robinson*
Crusoe. The study of history must be deferred until the age of eighteen, since there can be no "real knowledge of events without a knowledge of their causes and effects," and even then, Rousseau would have preferred biography to history.  

Kessen has argued that the beginnings of child study as a discipline of knowledge can be traced to Rousseau. In 1912 on the bicentennial of Rousseau's birth, the Frenchman Claparède defended the proposition that *Emile* contained, explicitly or by clear implication, all that was good and current in child psychology. He assigned to Rousseau the invention or critical development of the following principles of child behavior:

1. **The Law of Genetic Succession:** The child develops naturally by passing through a number of stages that succeed one another in constant order... .

2. **The Law of Genetico-Functional Exercise:** This law really implies two, which can be stated in the following way. (a) The exercise of a function is necessary to its development... . (b) The exercise of a function is necessary to the appearance of certain other functions... .

3. **The Law of Functional Adaptation:** That action will be elicited which serves to satisfy the need or the interest of the moment... .

4. **The Law of Functional Autonomy:** The child is not considered in himself an imperfect being; he is being adapted to circumstances which are appropriate for him; his mental activity is appropriate to his needs, and his mental life is integrated... .

5. **The Law of Individuality:** Every person differs more or less, in physical and psychological characteristics, from other people.

Related to these characteristics highlighted from *Emile* by Claparède, is the most profound shift to take place in the history of our subject, namely, that with Rousseau we see a definition of
childhood and an isolation of the child as a social entity discrete unto itself. For Rousseau maintained that childhood is natural, of nature. Childhood is not a time set aside for adults to finish or refine God's work, to bring the child steadily into closer match with adult behavior. It is a time important in itself, when the behavior of the child is appropriate to the demands of his needs and his world. Whenever one looks at a child, new born, in school, adolescent, one sees a whole human being, properly put together for his particular time. Rousseau insisted that the teacher and parent acknowledge the integrity of the child.

Contrary to the Calvinists, for example, who emphasized the 'fallen' state of the child's human nature, Rousseau suggested that no great harm to the child or to society will result if the child grows with little adult supervision or direction, for he will become increasingly fit to live in the world not by virtue of his overseers, but because Nature has endowed him with an order of development that ensures his healthy growth. More than that, the typical intervention of parents and teachers mar and distort the natural succession of the changes of childhood; the child that Man raises is almost certain to be inferior to the child that Nature raises. For Rousseau the child may be morally neutral, although morally sound, for he has within himself an inevitability of development. Finally, not only is childhood a time of nature and the child pregnant with inevitable development; the relation of the child to the world was an active one. (Rousseau echoes Locke somewhat on this point.) The child engages his environment, using it to suit his interests. Knowledge is not an
invention of adults poured into willing or unwilling vessels; it is an engagement between the child in nature and the natural world.  

Beginning (at least) with Rousseau, then, we see a divergence in views of the child and his nature. The picture of the active searching child, setting his own problems, discovering and making sense of his own world, stands in contrast to the picture of the child essentially passive, being acted upon by overseers, and subject to the stamp of society at large. Yet with Rousseau a strange dilemma is established. On the one hand the isolation and recognition of the child as having an integrity of its own gave a freedom and autonomy to the child. At the same time, and in a subtle way perhaps only now being acknowledged, this freedom and autonomy can make childhood itself a trap, a problem John Holt has attempted to delineate recently in *Escape from Childhood*. If childhood has its own autonomy and integrity, at what point does the child assume the integrity and responsibility of adulthood? It is noteworthy that Rousseau himself had difficulty with the responsibilities of adult living, remaining somewhat debauched in private relations all his life.  

Finally, the point can be made that although Rousseau, through his emphasis on the individual and the importance of Nature, is linked with the movement known as Romanticism, he remained within the realm of the Enlightenment philosophes by his continuing assumption of the rationality of man, although he may be said, in Andrews' words, "to have substituted the idea of 'original innocence' for that of 'original ignorance'." As Cassirer remarks, Rousseau did not overthrow the world of Enlightenment, he only transferred its centre of gravity to another position.
This discussion of Rousseau would not be complete without brief mention of the theories of childhood developed by one of his ardent followers, Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827), whose importance to American educators through Froebel, Montessori, and Dewey cannot be overestimated. Pestalozzi did not hesitate to utilize the views of other thinkers, but his greatest debt was to Rousseau. An agriculturist before an educator, Pestalozzi nevertheless adopted many 'rustic' metaphors in his descriptions of children. His most notable contribution, perhaps, is his concept of organic development, whereby he described the child as a plant. The most fundamental resemblance was, he claimed, that just as in plants growth of one part--root, trunk, branch or leaves--takes place in harmony with the growth of all parts, so also growth of the child's many aspects--physical, intellectual, and moral--should be an harmonious mutual development. Similarly, just as a plant makes immediate use of nourishment from soil and sun, so with the child, the acquisition of knowledge should be conditional to its immediate meaningfulness and use.

Another resemblance between the child and the plant is in the manner of growth. Just as with the plant, the child's development should be from within. As in plant life growth occurs not in sudden leaps but in slow unfolding, so also the growing process of the child should be in stages befitting his nature and needs. Even more strongly, Pestalozzi was committed to the relevance of education 'at the knee'; for him, the mother is not only the first but also the most important educator of the child.
The origin of Pestalozzi's involvement with children is interesting and provides a fitting subject with which to touch briefly on some social contexts of ideas discussed in this chapter. Pestalozzi had tried his hand at a number of occupations before engaging in educational practice—including the ministry and law. For thirty years he threw his life and fortune into an experimental farm but his endeavours ended in failure and destitution. After his marriage he turned his house into an orphanage, contending that "being a man who lived like a beggar, he learned to make beggars live like men."48

These references to orphans and beggars remind us of an oft-forgotten fact, that the excitement generated by the intellectual Enlightenment was lost on the large masses of European society who, through increases in urban population and industrial development, were reduced, by and large, to lives of poverty and subservience.49 The children of these masses were also reduced to lives of poverty, often subsisting only on begging and petty felony. These conditions led to such developments as the rise in most European countries of Charity Schools, and widespread employment of poor children in factories.50 It could be mentioned, too, that the ancient practices of infanticide and child abandonment were still not uncommon, although the former was regarded as an offence punishable by death.51

A point made by Ariès is worthy of some elaboration, for its character is one that has emerged very powerfully in the modern social drama. In the eighteenth century, with the rise of the new middle classes, radical changes in family life began to occur, particularly with the increasing ownership of private property and housing. More and more the
family began to hold society at a distance, to push back beyond a steadily extending zone of private life. The organization of the house itself altered in conformity with this new desire to keep the world at bay. It became, in Ariès' term, the "modern type of house" with rooms which were independent of each other. This in turn had an effect on patterns of family communication. While family members still communicated with each other, people were no longer obliged, as in earlier days of one-room dwellings, to speak to one another or make the same personal adjustments required in the more communal style (see picture on following page).* In France and Italy, the word chambre began to be used in opposition to the word salle, whereas hitherto they had been more or less synonymous. In England the word 'room' was kept as a general term, but a prefix was added to give precision: the dining room, the bedroom, etc.).

This specialization of rooms, in the middle class and nobility to begin with, was certainly one of the greatest changes in everyday life. In a sense, while it satisfied a new desire for privacy, it also reflected a new sense of isolation. Families became reduced to parents and children, a family from which servants, clients and friends were excluded. The increasingly widespread use of nicknames corresponded to a greater familiarity and also to a desire to address one another differently from strangers, and thus to emphasize by a sort of hermetic language the solidarity of parents and children and the distance separating them from other people.

*A fine example of the inside of a late seventeenth century home is provided by Greuse's painting Accordée de Village, showing three generations of family gathered in the one central lower level room. It is interesting to note the depiction of children. In no way do they occupy any central position, but are more like passive witnesses to the adult drama.
The isolation of the nuclear family, in conjunction with a number of other factors, had more important effects. On the one hand it brought parents into a closer relationship with their children than had perhaps been the case heretofore. As we saw, in the Middle Ages the custom was for children to be sent to the homes of strangers for the learning of 'manners.' But the return of the child to the home gave the seventeenth and eighteenth century family a new principal characteristic. The child became an indispensable element of everyday life, and parents began to worry with increasing concern about his education, career and future.\textsuperscript{56} He was not by any means the pivot of the whole family system, but he had become a much more important character.\textsuperscript{57} Aries suggests that from the eighteenth century onwards, the health and education of their children would become the chief preoccupations of all parents.

Aries contrasts the family of the Enlightenment era with the modern family, in some ways cut off from the world, and a haven from its demands. Furthermore, not only is the family isolated, but by strange irony the child himself has become isolated again by virtue of the energy invested in helping children rise in the world, individually and without any collective ambition.\textsuperscript{58} But that is another subject.

Finally, this chapter can draw to a close with a brief discussion of the influence of Charles Darwin on the evolution of modern child study. The empiricist philosophy of Locke made the child interesting as an object of epistemological study, just as the educational innovations of Rousseau and Pestalozzi made him interesting as an object
of pedagogical study. But the theories of these men and their proponents were to be somewhat diffuse until the child became a fit object for 'scientific' study. The necessary transformation—the transformation of the problem of human development from speculation to empirical analysis—was to come with Darwin (1809-1892). 59

There are several ways in which Darwin's speculation had profound influence not only on natural science but also social science. 60 In the first place, the notion of species evolution gave a mechanism in full 'scientific' dress for the notions of perfectibility developed during the Enlightenment. Darwin provided a rationale for a man's boundless hopes and expectations. Just as animal life had grown in a natural way from protozoan to rational being, so society had grown from savagery to sophistication, and would so continue. In the hands of the practical social Darwinians, this doctrine did not necessarily lead to greater interest in the child, but it did become an article of faith through much of the West that evolution, developing and developed by science and industry, would bring society to its natural fulfillment. 61

On a basic level, too, Darwinism was an indirect invitation to look for the signs of man in animal life, an innovation that assured Darwin the enmity of many prominent theologians and influenced so strongly the formation of, for example, empirical psychology. As Kessen states it:

Darwin put psychology into the animal and made the comparative study of mind a wholesome and permitted occupation... 62

The result was, however, that the study of animal behavior shifted until, in mid-twentieth century, the questions about mind that intrigued Darwin
were abandoned, but the systematic study of the animal was kept. Arthur Koestler has described modern experimental psychology as "Ratomorphism," a reference to that discipline's contemporary obsession with rats. 63

It is beginning with Darwin, then, that we see for the first time a 'scientific' value assigned to childhood. From the publication of the Origin of the Species to the end of the nineteenth century, there was a proliferation of works drawing parallels between animal and child, between primitive man and child, between early human history and child. 64

Again, as Kessen puts it

The developing human being was seen as a natural museum of human phylogeny and history; by careful observation of the infant and child, one could see the descent of man. 65

In summary to this chapter we may say that the history of the child from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries is linkable with the social and intellectual revolution associated with the rise of science. This includes as well as the emergence of belief in rationalism and natural law, the reactions against such developments as reflected in the thought of men like Hume and Rousseau. For both groups, however, a fundamental by-product of Enlightenment thought was the gradual demystification or secularization of man's perception of his nature and place in the world. This is not to say that theology, for example, became unimportant in its own right, but only that men no longer saw it as a necessary concern for their present everyday pursuits.
On a fundamental level the dynamics brought into play during this period involve the tension between reason and intuition, rationality and faith, intellect and emotion, as these definitions impinged upon man's descriptions of himself in relation to his world. This tension provided the context in which children too were discussed. It is a tension not resolved even today as the debates in the literature of child study still reflect uncertainty as to such questions as the child's basic nature (innocent, autonomous, responsible?) or the adult's role in the upbringing of the young. Further, in this period we witness a clearer isolation of the child and childhood as subjects fit for study in their own right, so that by the dawn of the twentieth century we see for the first time the child given a 'scientific' value. The long range consequences of this development are yet to be known.
FOOTNOTES


5 Ibid., p. 21.

6 Ibid., p. 27.


8 Hampson, op. cit., p. 35.


13 Hampson, op. cit., p. 39.

14 Andrews, op. cit., p. 66.


16 Ibid., p. 81.

17 Ibid., p. 96.

18 Ibid., p. 97.


21. Hampson, loc.cit.


26. Ibid., pp. 94-5.

27. Ibid., p. 95.


30. Ibid.


32. Ibid., p. 28.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., p. 41.

35. Ibid., pp. 107 ff.


38. Kessen, ibid., p. 73.

39. Ibid., p. 75.

40. Ibid., p. 73.

47. Kessen, *loc. cit.*
50. Ibid., pp. 287, 308.
51. Ibid., p. 302.
55. Ibid., p. 400.
56. Ibid., p. 403.
57. *Loc. cit.*
58. Ibid., p. 404.
Arthur Koestler, "Rationalism and Ratomorphism," Dunning Trust Lectures, Queen's University, Kingston, 1968.


Kessen, op. cit., p. 115.
Chapter Five

THE MODERN CONTEXT

This discussion of foundations of western childhood must end with Darwin and the opening of the twentieth century. In this era child study has proliferated to a degree heretofore unknown. Coupled with the increasing specialization and flourishing of modern academic disciplines, within almost all of them can be found studies focusing particularly on children. Any attempt to understand contemporary childhood through this material would be a major undertaking in itself. It is for this reason that a "Bibliographic Profile" has been compiled in an appendix in order not only to give a representative reflection of the work carried on in this field in recent years, but also to aid future study.

One of the disturbing features about much recent research on childhood is the narrowness of its fundamental vision. It is almost as if there is a child of the historian, a child of the psychologist, a child of the sociologist, anthropologist, or medical researcher. Reigel has noted this tendency. He has argued, for example, that the failing of child psychology as a field of research has been the assumption that the child grows up in a "socio-cultural vacuum." This has been offset to some degree by the psycho-historical school led by De Mause, Hunt, and others who, advancing from Erikson, have attempted to link psychological paradigms with historical study. Yet this approach has difficulties, too, leading to a sort of reductionism whereby
historical movements are interpreted as 'nothing but' re-enactments of the basic themes of Freud's *Totem and Taboo* or Erikson's "Crises," and that the urges of mankind, both in terms of belief and action, inevitably assume a neurotic form. Certainly this is De Mauve's weakness. His tracing of the evolution of childhood is determined by the belief that the history of the child is a history of abuse, so that while on the one hand his work serves usefully to contextualize and temper current discussions about child abuse, he feeds their fire at the same time.

It is notable that most works about childhood proceeding from a psychological framework—even the psychohistorical studies—have neglected Jung's reminder that psychology began as meta-physics. The philosophical roots of the science should prevent us from regarding psychological formulations as dogma for at best they are interpretive theories which attempt to illuminate human experiences rather than contain them. It is not-so-ironic that a child psychologist (Kessen) has been a leader in putting beliefs about childhood into the context of the history of philosophy—a trend developed further by Skolnick, a research psychologist. This emphasis on history is crucial, for even philosophy finds its full meaning only in reference to a time and a place. As Jean Bodin put it in the seventeenth century

...philosophy dies of inanition in the midst of its precepts when it is not verified by history.

It is for these reasons that the attempt in this thesis has been to paint broad strokes, or at least provide a background setting for examining the contemporary scene. It is an orientation inspired by Ariès, himself the 'prime mover' of current interest in the subject,
who called for a broad vision:

...today...we see life chiefly as a biological phenomenon, as a situation in society. Yet we say 'such is Life' to express at once our resignation and our conviction that there is, outside biology and sociology, something which has no name, but which stirs us, which we look for in the news items of the papers or about which we say: 'That's lifelike.' Life in this case is a drama..."
FOOTNOTES


6 Kessen, op. cit.

7 Skolnick, op. cit.


Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

This thesis has been an attempt to reveal how views about children have varied in the course of Western history, and to provide a background from which those involved with children can reflect upon their assumptions. As we have seen, adult beliefs about children are usually tied significantly to adult beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life generally, so that the child is perceived within a fairly broad ontological context. For example, in the period of Roman ascendency, children were often associated with adult concerns for property and paternal recognition and practices of infanticide, exposure and the selling of children were related to a need to ensure the ability of adults to fulfil their destinies. Some Patristic writers, however, insisted that the world was not man's ultimate home, that all humans shared equality under God, and that therefore children's rights vis-à-vis adults should be safeguarded.

For the Renaissance humanists, human nature was to be fulfilled both culturally and religiously through becoming steeped in the writings of classical Greece and Rome. Hence, as far as children were concerned, it became increasingly important for them to be educated in the classical mould, for thereby would their appreciation of both God and the world be enriched. For the Reformers, however, human nature was to be understood most profoundly in terms of man's complete
and utter dependence upon divine graciousness. Hence concern for children became expressed in terms of that ultimate definition.

With the Enlightenment and the rise of science emerged a secularization of adult endeavor and a belief in rationalism, natural law and optimism regarding human progress. Within this context concerns for children were expressed in terms of childhood being a time of construction (e.g., Locke) and/or natural fulfillment (e.g., Rousseau). By the twentieth century childhood had been assigned a definite scientific value and became a fit domain for empirical study. In recent years, the entrenchment of this last view in the modern consciousness has become increasingly suspect as severely limiting the vision of those involved in child study.
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APPENDIX

A BIBLIOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF STUDIES OF WESTERN CHILDHOOD


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