Finding the Child: Exploration into Pedagogical Foundations in the Roman Catholic Church

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

FINDING THE CHILD:
EXPLORATION INTO PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN THEOLOGY

BY
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CHICAGO, IL
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For my children, Alice and Kyle, the Children of the World, and the Child in Us All.
The soul is healed through contact with children . . .

Fyodor Dostoevsky
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INTRODUCTION

In 2010, an auxiliary bishop, Rev. Francis Kane, in the Archdiocese of Chicago sat with a parish staff at St. Teresa of Avila Church to discuss how the parish was growing and serving the community in faith.1 Bishops generally meet with the staff of each parish in the Archdiocese. In 2010, this numbered roughly 350 parishes. At these meetings, each member of staff, as led by the pastor, takes a turn speaking about their part of parish growth. One of the areas of interest is always the children’s catechesis program. Children’s catechesis provides a foundation in faith for children who do not attend parochial or private Catholic schools. In affluent neighborhoods, the programs are usually tuition based. Tuitions can range in these neighborhoods from $100-$250 per child. Not every parish is required to charge the same rate throughout the Archdiocese, nor to charge tuition at all. The catechesis program for those parishes requiring tuition should ideally cover the cost of materials, salary, and training. At this particular meeting, the director of religious education described the parish’s program to the auxiliary bishop. For over five years, the parish had used the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program. The bishop’s reaction was not particularly positive. He questioned the validity of the program as a non-traditional catechesis method. What happens if they don’t memorize prayers? Why aren’t they learning from textbooks or workbooks? Why is the teacher not lecturing? His skepticism was not assuaged by the director

1 I was present at this meeting as the business manager of the parish, as well as a volunteer for the RCIA program. It was one of the first meetings where I was faced with the questions that I raise in this dissertation.
of religious education’s explanations of the Montessori based program. The bishop left the meeting dissatisfied and hoping that the Confirmandi would actually be prepared come Spring.

The skepticism that this parish met by using the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* program is met in other parishes and dioceses throughout the United States. Some dioceses have embraced the need for catechetical change more quickly than their peers. Other dioceses are more skeptical than the bishop in this anecdote. This meeting was an actual event. Similar events dot the landscape of various diocese throughout the United States. My work in this dissertation brings to light the issues surrounding the theology, the pastoral ministry, the pedagogy, the inter-relationship, and the law regarding how the Roman Catholic Church understands the person of the child. The focal ethical question is, “Does the Roman Catholic normative understanding of the child support the child’s dignity, subjectivity, and growth in their faith through catechetical programs?” In order to properly address this question, I will dig deeper into the history of Christianity, followed by an examination of child pedagogies and theologies through modernity. This will provide a basis for my ethical reflection in the last part of my dissertation.

While the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops sets guidelines, recommendations, and the mission for dioceses and each individual parish, it does not yet have a pedagogical framework or recommended catechesis program that all parishes could follow. My proposal here promotes such a framework as is needed. The landscape of the United States Roman Catholic Church does not lend itself to a universal catechesis program, it is in desperate need of new normative guidelines and resolutions to educate the dioceses, parishes, religious, and laity as to who the child is, how the child learns, and what we adults must do to ensure the child’s flourishing. *Sharing the Light of Faith: the National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the United States* provides information on the goals of catechesis without an explanation on
how to achieve those goals. Many parishes receive little to no guidance in children’s catechesis and development. In order to do what is best for children in the Church, the current landscape needs to change.

In chapter One I begin with the theological foundations that provide three basic typologies of the child that are carried forward in Roman Catholic Doctrine. Out of these three typologies of the anthropology of the child, only one – the child as a potential adult – emerges as the normative framework for the Roman Catholic Church. This normative framework that understands the child as subordinate in the child-adult relationship and waiting-to-become an adult becomes the bedrock of theological ethics of the child through modernity.

In chapter Two, I turn to pastoral theological teachings on the child. Beginning with the Irish Penitentials, moving into papal documents, and into the catechisms of the Roman Catholic Church, I examine how the pastoral documents have or have not upheld the dignity and subjectivity of the child. I also examine the precedent that these pastoral teachings have formed in parishes and lay groups. In this chapter, I demonstrate that according to the Roman Catholic doctrine the child should be subordinate to the authorities in their life. Based on the theological underpinnings from chapter One that become the foundation of this relationship as we see it in chapter Two, we see that the relationship is authoritarian.

In chapter Three, I investigate the Enlightenment’s understanding of the self, as it pertains to the child. During this time the understanding of the child as a person changes, and children become important, if not in and of themselves, then certainly for the good they bring to society. Due to their elevation in status and attention, the pedagogical methods needed to teach the child also develop rapidly. The thinkers John Locke, Emile Rousseau, and Mary Wollstonecraft. Each exemplify an area of progress in understanding and teaching the child.
Locke develops pedagogical methodology that puts the child at the center of her learning and recognizes the child’s importance to greater society. Rousseau establishes the value of the child independent of their social norms and context allowing for a new perspective of the child. Wollstonecraft critiques both Locke and Rousseau’s pedagogical methods, both of which she condemns as coercive and not based in an education of moral truth. Each of these writers give an important piece to the greater body of this work that upholds the child as a dignified acting subject.

Chapter Four turns to the theological and ethical studies on the child by Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher emphasizes the inherent dignity and intrinsic value of the child. For Schleiermacher, children are held in highest esteem by God based on his reading of the Gospel of Matthew, as they are, not what they become. Schleiermacher also demonstrates the importance of the child-adult relationship as mutual, not authoritarian. While the child is utterly dependent, the role of the adult is complementary to that of the child. The adult provides love, support, and wisdom to the child’s dependency, as the child brings the adult the joy and frivolity of childhood. In the early twentieth century, Maria Montessori and the Montessorian scholars pick up where Schleiermacher left off. Montessori identifies the child-adult relationship as the single most important factor for a child’s healthy development as a subject. For Montessori, the parents have obligations that they must take seriously for the good of the relationship. She forms the groundwork for Sofia Cavalletti and John Berryman to design catechetical programs based on mutuality in the child-adult relationship, appropriate space for the child to learn, and concepts of work and play as essential developmental to the child.

In chapter Five, I take up the study on children’s rights in Canon Law, by Mary McAleese, using it as a conversation partner for my ethical reflection. McAleese provides a
comprehensive study pulling together the references to the child in the Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law into one work. McAleese indicates that the canon law does not provide a consistent understanding of the child, nor does it hold up to the international standards of rights and dignity of the child. My reflection on three particular pillars in McAleese’s work provide a framework for understanding the changes that must be made in canon law and Roman Catholic doctrine. I turn to the child-adult relationship, the child’s dependency, and moral vulnerability as methods to insure the child’s dignity and subjectivity.

Finally, in my conclusion, I suggest five resolutions to address the shortcomings of Roman Catholic theology of the child, providing some resolutions on how to move forward. These resolutions are meant to be put into action by the Roman Catholic Church and Catholic laity, particularly in the United States. This work that I have labored over, that I have poured my love and time into, is so that we can unmask and address the inherent abuses in a system that has thus far been unwilling to change. These, the reforms I propose, are not optional, they are essential work. They are a work aimed at quieting our own voices so that we may hear our children speak.
CHAPTER ONE
THE CHILD IN PATRISTIC AND MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY

Nothing is without origin or foundation. The way the Roman Catholic Church, primarily in the United States, thinks about children in contemporary theology and pedagogy harkens back to Patristic and Medieval theologians. After the advent of Christianity, who were some of the prolific writers on the subject of children? What were their thoughts and beliefs? Most importantly, how were these teachings handed down theologically and pastorally to shape the Roman Catholic understanding of the child?

It is not the task of this research to mention all early texts concerning the child or children. It is my intention to discuss some the most important teachings, writings, and beliefs concerning the child. This chapter is largely a survey of three main theologians, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine of Hippo, and Thomas Aquinas. Each of these theologians uses a different methodology to develop their understanding of children, resulting in three typologies. The first we find in Clement of Alexandria. Clement turns toward Scripture as his main source of information. The interesting thing about Clement, however, is that he also uses his observations and experiences with children to inform his belief that children are the exemplar measure for entering God’s kingdom. Clement’s typology of the child is very useful to this research project as he holds a unique position in understanding the child’s significance. Augustine’s anthropological look of children is postlapsarian, they are inflicted with Original Sin from the fall of Adam. Augustine is consistent in using this lens providing a second typology. Aquinas...
focuses on a different perspective, looking at the child in an ontological way. Using Aristotle as a philosophical foundation, Aquinas is primarily concerned with the child’s being and becoming. These three theologians’ different perspectives each inform the Roman Catholic Church’s understanding of the child, though I argue that the Augustinian and Thomistic typologies are favored. My intent is to take each of them on their own terms, as they understand the child. I have three goals for this chapters. First, to develop an understanding of each theologian’s ideology. Second, to gain a dynamic view of the information on the child in the Patristic and Medieval eras. Third, to examine how each typology shaped the Roman Catholic understanding of the child throughout history.

**Clement of Alexandria**

In Clement of Alexandria’s work, *Paedagogus*, there are many instances where he uses the words “child” or “children.” For the purpose of this work, I will examine his writings on the child that elevate the child as favored in the eyes of God. *Paedagogus*, is the only work of Clement’s that most defines his teachings on children through the use of allegory, while his other writings mention children sparsely. Clement’s focus on the child becomes clear in *Paedagogus*. Clement weaves together a tapestry depicting the life of the human as an eternal child and student with Christ as the eternal teacher. Clement teaches the catechumenate what it means to be, and to become, a Christian. The *Paedagogus* text should be looked at for its contextual commentary on children in Hellenic and Roman society, and the ways in which it illuminates the child in Christian Scriptures. Each of these elements lends insight into one typology of the contemporary understanding of children. It is not, however, the view favored by the Roman Catholic Tradition.
Middle-Platonism

Before diving into the specifics of Paedagogus, I first want to describe Clement’s historical context. Several factors influence Clement’s theological thinking and leanings. According to some scholars, Clement’s writings on the will, its volition, and the soul draw from the works of Plato. Clement is specifically described as a middle Platonist.¹ The vast majority of scholars find that deep within Clement’s Christian writings there is always a thread of middle Platonist philosophy. However, there are a few who argue, and rightfully so, that Clement is not entirely a middle Platonist and that indeed he draws heavily from the works of Aristotle. Clement’s writing is based solely on the Greek masters that came before him, but is also motivated by his vehement position against Gnostic teachings and its teachers.

Middle Platonism, chronologically set as the period between Plato and Plotinus, is argued to have influenced Clement more than any other philosophical source.² Hägg argues that middle Platonists, like Philo of Alexandria and Clement, read the works of Plato in a distinctive way. They are loyal to the text by interpreting the Platonic text via another Platonic text, and, though it is debated, they see Aristotle and the Stoics as Platonists themselves.³ Hägg argues from this point that the middle Platonists replaced the Platonic vocabulary with Aristotelian terminology to modernize the vocabulary.⁴

¹ Lilla and Hägg. Lilla is one of the foremost scholars commenting on the connection between Clement and specifically middle Platonism. Hägg, a recent scholar, agrees with Lilla’s link to middle Platonism, but also feels that the connection may be stretched and out of context.
³ Ibid, 80.
⁴ Ibid, 81.
Hägg is certainly not alone in focusing on the Platonist trajectory in Clement, Salvatore Lilla, in one of the most respected works on Clement of Alexandria, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*, wrote in 1971 that the issue of Clement’s loyalty to Plato should not be the key area of focus. Lilla argues that Clement of Alexandria was put in a very unique position during the convergence of Hellenism and Gnosticism in Alexandria at that time; Clement’s position was one of dynamic complexity.\(^5\) Clement lives in the midst of a Hellenic world that also feels the vast influences of Roman and Judaic teachings. Clement, as Lilla explains, tries to reconcile the Christian faith to the other major rival religious and philosophical streams of thinking present in Alexandria.\(^6\) Certainly the allegorical style that Clement turns toward in *Paedagogus* is reminiscent of that from Plato, but Lilla is astute in claiming that Clement’s writings and ideas are founded on more than that of middle Platonism. Aristotle also had a profound impact on Clement’s own work. Even though Lilla nods to Aristotle as having been a part of Clement’s development, for Elizabeth Clark that is not enough. Clark argues shortly after Lilla’s work is published that Clement turns to Aristotle for more than is given credit.\(^7\) She pushes Lilla’s ideas on the complexity of Clement even further.

As Clark discusses in her text, Clement is reliant not only on the philosophy of Plato, but perhaps even more on Aristotle’s. Clark understands Clement may not be cognizant in his use of Aristotle rather than Plato. Actually, Clark states, that based on references in Clement’s work,

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\(^6\) Ibid, 9.

that it is more that Clement does not believe himself to be Aristotelian.\(^8\) She alludes that Clement may believe that he was more Platonic, even though her argument is that his use of philosophy is actually Aristotelian.\(^9\) Clement goes beyond a simple change to Aristotelian vocabulary; his writings indicate a deeper turn to Aristotelian epistemology and concepts of the good – *eudaimonia*, volition, and choice. Clement labels Aristotle a “naturalist” and denies certain aspects of Aristotle’s philosophy that depart from Stoicism.\(^{10}\)

And when He says, “Let my lambs stand on my right,” He alludes to the simple children, as if they were sheep and lambs in nature, not men; and the lambs He counts worthy of preference, from the superior regard He has to that tenderness and simplicity of disposition in men which constitutes innocence. Again, when he says, “as suckling calves,” He again alludes figuratively to us; and “as an innocent and gentle dove,” the reference is again to us.\(^{11}\)

Clement certainly turns to examples in his own work of the natural world. Clement returns time and again to pastoral themes within *Paedagogus*, likening children to lambs, calves, and chicks in chapter five. In chapter nine, Clement likens fear for salvation to a bitter root cleansing the soul. Clark critiques scholars for “making” Clement more Platonic and Gnostic than Aristotelian, without turning to Clement’s philosophical leanings.\(^{12}\) In looking at the *Paedagogus*, Clement does not transition to Aristotelian vocabulary, but turns to his philosophy

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\(^9\) Ibid, 2-3.

\(^{10}\) Ibid.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.

as well. Finally, a case can be made that Clement brings Christian belief into Greek philosophy and society. There is no better place than *Paedagogus* to see Clement’s handy work in weaving together Greek philosophy and Christian *pistis*.

*Paedagogus* reads like a manual for the catechumenate. Not unlike the modern Catechism, it is laden with biblical passages and references to earlier Christian works that help establish a moral and spiritual code for the new Christian. How ought one to act? Behave? Think? Within these questions, Clement pushes for an answer to the question, who is Christ and what is Christ’s role? Though many threads in Clement’s *Paedagogus* could be investigated concerning their Aristotelian elements, for our purposes I will focus mostly on Clement’s understanding of the morality of the Christian person, focusing mainly on children and infants.

Clement has an Aristotelian understanding of the person, including children. Clement understands the rational soul not only relates to the body, but indeed propels the body forward as a result of cognitive thought. Clement uses Aristotle as a corrective lens to, what he saw as, Christianity’s dependency on Gnosticism. Gnostic writings describe the person as being made of a good soul and an evil body. Clement seeks to teach the catechumenates that they are students aimed toward the ultimate good of God. In order to attain this goal, Clement must allow for free will rather than determinism. Within Clement’s discussion on becoming Christ-like, threads of Aristotelian thought are present. Aristotelian perception, the imprint that is left by the sensible form of things, is recycled in the writings of Clement on the instruction of the

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14 Ibid, 17.

15 Ibid, 45.
Catechumenate.\textsuperscript{16} Christ, \textit{Logos}, leaves an impression on His followers, allowing them to strive for goodness.

But our Educator being practical, first exhorts to the attainment of right dispositions and character, and then persuades us to the energetic practice of our duties, enjoining on us pure commandments, and exhibiting to such as come after representations of those who formerly wandered in error.\textsuperscript{17}

Clement understands this to be possible because of the functions of the soul. There are two types of movements within the soul.\textsuperscript{18} There is the involuntary and voluntary.\textsuperscript{19} It is important to note that the involuntary and voluntary do not indicate a difference between faculties in the mind.\textsuperscript{20} An active mind is the actualization of a what has already begun in the passive mind. When I discuss the child-adult relationship in chapters Four and Five, the concept of agency through passivity is a focal point. For Clement, an involuntary movement of the soul should not be taken as lesser than a voluntary movement. He considers the infant searching for the mother’s breast to be instinctive to an infant. The action, however, is not less important simply because it is not born out of choice through reason.

When it comes to the use of the voluntary soul and moral reasoning, Clark is correct in that Clement’s driving force behind the appropriation of the Aristotelian will was to combat


\textsuperscript{17} Clement of Alexandria, \textit{Paedagogus: The Instructor}. Eds. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Sir James, and Alexander Roberts. 1.1, location 147.

\textsuperscript{18} It is important to note here that Lear disagrees with Clark’s reading of Aristotle. Actually, Lear agrees with Diamond in that the soul is always one unified soul. See Lear’s treatment of the soul pages 140-143. For the purpose of this project, we will proceed with Clark’s suppositions.


Gnostic determinism. After all, Clement was an advocate in his writings, including *Paedagogus*, for taking responsibility for one’s own actions. The concept of the soul also differs from Platonism: there, the tripartite soul chooses either to reflect the goodness of the forms or to be dragged down by the afflicted part of the soul. The Aristotelian soul uses a moral determinism only in the broad sense of being rooted in the determinism of any organism, yet different in the human capacity to self-consciousness. It is much more complicated than arguing humans are determined to do right or wrong. Rather, there is always space for reflection and the grey area between excessive choices and the path of virtue. Clement even rejects, surprisingly, the Stoic idea that there are no degrees between vice and virtue, in favor of Aristotle’s gradations of improvement. Clark suggests that both praise and blame were essential to Clement to show growth. Interestingly enough, this is a hallmark of pedagogy; growth indicates learning. “For so is the truth, that perfection is with the Lord, who is always teaching, and infancy and childishness with us, who are always learning.” Recalling Clement’s goal of writing for catechumens, Clement is better able to teach those becoming Christian with the openness needed

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24 Ibid, 41.

in conversion.\textsuperscript{26} Clement believes that converts to Christianity in Alexandria will not be able to keep up with the lofty ideas of Stoic \textit{apatheia}; they need something more to learn by.\textsuperscript{27}

\textit{Paedagogus}

The purpose of Clement’s \textit{Paedagogus} is to examine the precepts that make Christ the supreme teacher for both men and women. Adult humans are the students of the Word and of God.\textsuperscript{28} While Clement does not make a judgment specifically on the state of the child in this work, he uses what he believes to be the “facts of children” and the principles of childhood and childishness to make his point.\textsuperscript{29} Important to this study are three main points that Clement brings to light regarding the concept of the child. First, the use of specific Greek terms for children, metaphorically. Their unique definitions lend depth to the conversation in that there are multiple words for “child” in Greek, each term having a connotation that would indicate a particular contextual usage. Clement not only changes his usage, while the English translation continues to use only one word, “child,” or in some cases “infant,” but he also discusses the varied use of the Greek words in the New Testament writings to describe different types of


\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, 30-33.

\textsuperscript{28} Clement was already familiar working with and coming to understand the catechumenate. His teacher, Pantaenus, was the head of a catechumenal school in Alexandria. Brown, Peter, Brown, Peter Robert Lamont, and American Council of Learned Societies. \textit{The Body and Society : Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity}. Lectures on the History of Religions ; New Ser., No. 13. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, 123.

\textsuperscript{29} The phrase, "facts of children," simply alludes to the solid information on who the child was, how the child functioned in society, and how the child functioned in and of themselves. The intent of this discussion is, in part, to unravel Clement's packed thoughts in \textit{Pedagogue} concerning the child to be able to better see their origins. The reason that I state he does not “make judgment” is because the work as a whole is really about the catechumenate, not about Clement’s thoughts on children, though those certainly do come to light via his explanation.
“child” or “states of childhood.”  The English language lacks precision in using a more purposefully defined word for “child” that would denote a very narrow and specific type of the more common definition.

Second, Clement uses the child as the reference point and example by which he explains the relationship between adults who are learning their faith and Christ who is teaching it to them. Clement does not tackle in depth the topic of children in a direct manner in terms of who they are, what they are, and how they are purposeful beings in and of themselves. However, he gives glimpses into his thoughts by using the ‘child’ as a part of his allegory, looking to Greek, Roman, and Jewish society for contextualization. This is not an easy task in itself. The plurality of familial structures in Clement’s Alexandria alone was vast. I will explain later in this chapter some of the social structures as Clement understands them from these cultures. He uses their respective household structures as the foundation of his allegory, which likens the role of the child to that of a catechumen. In his allegory, the child is fashioned in the likeness of children in Clement's contemporary culture. It is worth noting that whether the child forms the household around them or the household forms the child is up for debate amongst scholars.

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30 Clement focuses on the traditions of Matthew, John, and Paul though he does not turn to these exclusively. Also see Buell’s treatment on 110, which indicates two passages in particular from Paul that distinguish differences of infancy.


32 Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 108. Buell argues that Clement’s exhortation is not merely to the catechumen, but open to any newly baptized member of Christianity. Brown counters this thought by stating that Clement’s first exposure in his own pedagogical formation was from his teacher who was responsible for the catechumenate schools.
Third, Clement gives us a commentary on the New Testament explaining how the terms “child” and “children” were meant to be read and understood by the Christian community. Clement then comes to represent one way of reading the child in the New Testament text. The positive aspect that Clement brings to this project is his use of the New Testament in order to explain the position of the child as one of privilege in the eyes of God. When we turn, in chapter four, to the contemporary usage and understanding of the New Testament’s teaching on children, Clement will become a useful ally in affirming the turn that some religious education programs for children take in terms of their view on the child; that the child is privileged as the closest to God.

**Language and Etymology in the *Paedagogus***

Language and the choice to use specific words and terms versus alternate words are important for Clement. Specifically, he discusses why the word, *paidarion* is used rather than other terms. Clement explains that the term in Greek is general for children regardless of gender.33 This is notable because he does not wish to delineate so strictly between male and female Christians. He references the use of the term “man” that is common to both men and women. Similarly, he feels that *paidarion* be applicable to all children. “Common therefore, too, to men and women, is the name of man. For this reason, I think the Attics called, not boys only, but girls, *paidarion*, using it as a word of common gender…”34 The claim that Clement makes in

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34 Ibid, 1.4, location 278.
Paedagogus is that once one is born into Christ, whether they are woman or man, slave or free, no longer bears weight upon them. The importance, rather, is that they are children of God.\textsuperscript{35}

In addition, the term paidon is specific to the kind of child that Clement wishes to serve as his model; it is a child learning morality, intellect, and physical training in the Greco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{36} Clement weaves this particular model of the child throughout his work. He focuses on a pais as being a human that is constantly in a state of development and innocence; a being that is newly alive in awe and wonder. Clement also uses the term nepios for infant and distinguishes that further from paidarion. Nepios, an early infant, is used to show development of the child from its beginnings through the time of learning.\textsuperscript{37} “For so is the truth, that perfection is with the Lord, who is always teaching, and infancy and childishness with us, who are always learning.”\textsuperscript{38} Clement distinguishes not only between children and adults, but even between the different stages of childhood in themselves. For instance, a new catechumen would be likened, in Clement’s ideology, to an infant. The term nepios indicates one who had limited faculty in terms of understanding the context of the world around them. A child, in contrast, would be in an


\textsuperscript{36} Denise Kimber Buell, \textit{Making Christians : Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy} (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 119. Buell tends to lump together both the Greek and Roman treatments of the child, while Brown gives specific differences between the Greek and Roman traditions in terms of home, family, children, marrying, etc. The differences between the Greek and Roman treatment of children, however, is important to note.

\textsuperscript{37} Greek-English Lexicon, 9\textsuperscript{th} ed (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), s.v. “nepios.”

\textsuperscript{38} Clement of Alexandria. \textit{Paedagogus: The Instructor}, Eds. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Sir James, and Alexander Roberts, 1.5, location 386.
active phase of learning and understanding. Both, however, are used allegorically to show relationship with Christ as teacher.  

We, then, who are infants, no longer roll on the ground, nor creep on the earth like serpents as before, crawling with the whole body about senseless lusts; but, stretching upwards in soul, loosed from the world and our sins, touching the earth on tiptoe so as to appear to be in the world, we pursue holy wisdom, although this seems folly to those whose wits are whetted for wickedness. Rightly, then, are those called children who know Him who is God alone as their Father, who are simple, and infants, and guileless, who are lovers of the horns of unicorns.

These terms indicate a thoughtful reflection upon the child as a being that not only experiences a variety of stages, in which the importance of the person is placed on the completion or fulfillment of those stages, but also a being whose personhood is important in their current stage: an important young person who is symbolic of the ideal Christian. Christian formation should be modeled after the formation and stages of human development.

Clement does not regard childhood, infancy, or their respective stages as being less than that of their fully-grown counterparts. When he refers to children he turns to the qualities in them that he sees as being angelic, closer to God. Innocence, simplicity, eagerness, and gentility are all qualities that he elevates. In contrast, the qualities of being low, stupid, earthen, and crude might be attributes of being childish, but not necessarily a child or of childhood.

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43 Ibid.
Contextualizing the World of Clement

Clement is influenced by the society and cultures around him when forming his thoughts concerning infants and children in *Paedagogus*. The question concerning Clement’s social and cultural context is, “What does Clement use or refute from these structures?” Exhaustive studies have been done on Greco-Roman-Judaic families at different places in the empire, Egypt included. There have also been studies on the differences between the Christian and non-Christian families of the Mediterranean and Near East. The true “greekness” or “romanness” of a particular family structure is also difficult to pinpoint. None of these cultures existed in a vacuum and so each had a certain amount of fluidity. In later chapters when we reference Clement in our own contemporary context, the defining points of “family” will have to be revisited and explained further as they do not necessarily match the western contemporary culture’s ideals. Most important in Clement’s writing is to understand these terms in his own era, second century A.D., which hopefully lends insight not only into Clement’s opinion of his Greco-Roman-Judaic society, but also explain the possible sources of his normative stance on children.

Clement’s terms, as discussed above, for child and infant are purposeful. Pseudo-Plutarch, traditionally, refers to *paidaion* as free-born males. While references to children being

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44 See Brown and Buell for additional resources.


46 Ibid, 3. It is important to note that there are varying conclusions on the models for the Greek and Roman households. This paper will express some of those conclusions. For an exhaustive study see Rawson’s edition, particularly articles by Hopkins, Goldstein, and Osiek.

educated usually do refer to male children, historians such as Maier argue that a traditional Roman household would not have had a hierarchy between young children. The Pater is the head of the household and ruled over his children with potestas, which incidentally is the same power with which he ruled over slaves. Similarly, the relationship in Rome between the state and the citizen is mimicked in the power within the familias, “If the state was a familias, the emperor was its paterfamilias.” In chapter Five I note a similar asymmetrical relationship structure between the child and the adult, as well as the adult and the Magisterium of the Church. In relationships, children are always subject to this hierarchy of power. There is a difference, however, between the family and the household, each having a specific connotation. While the treatment of slaves and children may be similar, they are not identical; children are part of the inner family structure, specifically a biological one.

Clement’s use of the term paidion links the structure of the familias where slaves and free children both had relationships with the father, who in Christianity, is Christ. This may be, however, where the similarities between Clement’s idea of the child and the Greco-Roman idea

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49 Ibid.

50 Ibid, 18.


of the child come to an end, at least with respect to wealthy families.\textsuperscript{53} Clement’s development of *paideia*, in the Christian sense, differ strikingly from society’s notion of *paideia*. He holds the Christian image of a child up to a higher standard.\textsuperscript{54}

What are the specific traits and attributes of the stages of development, or children, or infants in general? Greek, Roman and Jewish cultures all have their own beliefs about infants and children. Clement writes, “…with respect to the appellation of infant (*nepios*), that to *nepion* is not predicated of the silly: for the silly man is called *neputios*: and *nepios* is *neepios* “since he that is tender-hearted is called *epios*), as being one that has newly become gentle and meek in conduct.”\textsuperscript{55}

Dasen notes that much revolved around infant mortality rates.\textsuperscript{56} She identifies that the “infancy” stage would have ended around two or three years old.\textsuperscript{57} Much is dependent upon the practical milestones of children, not so different from our own western twenty-first century social context.\textsuperscript{58} But this is all very much discussed in terms of a common social knowledge.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{53} In the literature there is noted a stark difference between the wealthy and the impoverished/slave families. The latter often supporting and taking unwanted children. See Dasen.


\textsuperscript{55} Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus: The Instructor*, Eds. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Sir James, and Alexander Roberts, 1.5, location 399.


\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58} Teething, walking, talking, and playing were all signs of a viable and living child. See Dasen.

\textsuperscript{59} By this I mean that while the stages seem, even to Dasen, as a cultural commonality to many, how we talk, reference, and discuss these stages differs from community to community. Even amongst the Greeks and Romans the language was different and so what happened to what stage of child could differ even just based upon language.
Language, even in turning to context, is particular thing. Clement might agree on the stages of development with those of Greece and Rome, or perhaps not since the language he uses would undeniably be different. Clement’s “*nepios*” and the Roman “*infans*” or “*bimus*” may not reflect the same defining characteristics. The terms are not interchangeable from author to author or culture to culture.

Speaking specifically to the traits or portrayal of infants and children, there are some stark differences between Clement’s understanding and prevalent beliefs about infants and children such as those based in Aristotelianism. Aristotelianism is important to this project in how it is understood by writers, such as Augustine. Aristotle’s description of infants can be found in *Generation of Animals*. Both Clement and Aristotle turn to nature for knowledge on humans. They do not agree, however, on the concepts of what it means to be an infant and child. While Aristotle finds infants weak, both in their physical and mental states, Clement does not see a weakness in the same light. “For we are not termed children and infants with reference to the childish and contemptible character of our education, as those who are inflated on account of knowledge have calumniously alleged.”

Due to their weak and globule state, Aristotle aligns infants with lower creatures, like animals. This idea is not reflected in Clement’s thought, quite the opposite. Clement understands the infant to have an instinctive ability to relate to other humans. Infants also have to progress enough through stages and rituals in both Greece and

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60 Dasen notes on 293 some of Aristotle’s passages in contrast to her work on Greece and Rome. *Generation of Animals* 686b8-11


62 Dasen also identifies those with physical deformities, the drunk, the disabled, women, and the emotional as “lower” beings for Aristotle. These he comes to identify as on par with infants.
Rome to even be considered viable as they are in a liminal state at birth. Once the infant begins to receive the care of the family, they are accepted as viable. Before that time, the mid-wife or wet nurse is their sole contact. In some accounts, this could be seven to ten days after the birth of the child. The entire ritual bears striking resemblance to the sacrament of infant baptism, which will be discussed later in the chapter. According to Dasen and Gourevitch, it is not until six months of age that the child would even be allowed funerary rights. This also indicates another area where infant baptism, infant mortality, and the personhood of the infant intersect. Clement, however, at least in the Paedagogus, does not indicate that he is in agreement with these cultural norms. He turns instead to biblical accounts and descriptions of infants and children to discuss their importance through his allegory of the instructor and the faithful.

Brown is quick to note in The Body and Society that the treatment of Roman versus Greek children who are coming upon puberty would have been very different. Although this conclusion is contested. In Brown’s writing, while the pater of the Roman household would marry a girl that has just come upon puberty and is of child-bearing capability, the proposed head of a Greek household might marry a women in her late teens and he himself be of a similar age.

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64 Ibid, 303.

65 Ibid, 305. Dasen disagrees with the link to infant baptism based on the fact that if an infant died before these rituals happened their soul or afterlife was not said to be at risk in the same way that Christianity and later Catholicism would affirm. I would argue that though the after effect might be different, certainly some of the ritual, right, and purpose from these Greco-Roman rituals infused the Christian idea of infant baptism and mortality.

66 Peter Brown, The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 12. The world of the post-pubescent child in Rome differed from Greece in important ways such as marital relationships, family, and power.

The Roman husband would retain a title of "pater," father, to his wife, as their relationship is one likened to a relationship between a parent and a child. Wives and children, differently than those who were slaves, ensure the husband’s power over his family. The age difference between Roman couples, which is more than in the classical Hellenistic social structure, have supported the husband in this role. Not only does this change the structure of the household entirely based on society and region, but it most likely had an impact on Clement’s writing as he discusses the notion of what is proper for children. The matter may be more complicated than the way in which Brown portrays it. Dasen finds archaeological support of a more interwoven structural similarity between Greek and Roman family, each culture marrying off girls as young as twelve years. In addition, under the Roman Empire, a woman always belonged to her father’s household and retained the wealth and benefit of that house. The argument could then change to support a claim that Clement did not necessarily turn to one culture over another, such as having a higher influence of Greek over Roman. Clement made the Christian family his normative reference for familial life. The Christian family represented relationships as God intended them.

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68 This is not a universally accepted conclusion amongst scholars, however, some of whom focus more on the relationship between women and their fathers, who legally still had responsibility for them. It was the father’s wealth and earnings that would get passed to his daughter. The role of the husband, while it seems resembled that of a father, particularly for young brides, was an enacted role, not a legal ownership.


How and why is Clement’s work important to the Christian understanding of children moving forward in time, and what did Christianity keep, if anything, from his writings and ideas? Clement, I argue, is important to this research topic because of the way that he understood the personhood of the child and their relationships to society, family, and God. He uses allegories of Christ and Christ’s followers as the model by which humans understand their relationship to Christ. He believes that the innocence and humility in a child was the key to accepting the goodness of Christ and Christ’s salvation.72

But the childhood which is in Christ is maturity, as compared with the law. Having reached this point, we must defend our childhood. And we have still to explain what is said by the apostle: ‘I have fed you milk (as children in Christ), not with meat; for ye were not able, neither yet are ye now able.’73

Clement’s notion of the nursing infant at the breast of its mother is likened to the way in which Christ nourishes His children and elevates his love of children’s innocence, gentleness, and purity.74 “And He alone, as is befitting, supplies us children with the milk of love, and those only are truly blessed who suck this breast.”75 The focus and meaning of childhood for Clement is one of goodness. There are disputes between scholars as to whether or not the Pauline and Johaninne literature that refer to children literally meant children. Clement, however, understands children in those passages in a very literal way. By using children as the perfect allegory for Christ and


75 Clement of Alexandria. *Paedagogus: The Instructor*. Eds. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Sir James, and Alexander Roberts. 1.6, location 730.
Christ’s followers, he completes his story. Without a doubt, children have a place of prominence in the biblical literature according to Clement. Clement builds upon the mainly the Hellenistic understanding of the child, forming one idea within Christian theology.

**Clement on Children in a Biblical Context**

In *The Body and Society*, Peter Brown claims that Clement did not readily give himself over to a mainstream reading of New Testament writings. It seems, rather, that when Clement turned to Matthew, or John, or Paul, he had a specific reading in mind. The foundation and support for Clement’s *Paedagogus* lies within the unraveling and understanding of particular New Testament passages that make reference to children and infants. He turns to 1 Corinthians 3:2 in discussing the perfection of infants, who are following in the path of the most perfect infant, Christ. Clement uses the infant as symbolic for the rebirth into the Christian faith. Maturity, for Clement, does not necessarily indicate perfection, but rather perfection can be found at stages that one could consider infantile. Other accounts of the Christian household at this time are also important, particularly because of their references to women and children. Though the power, certainly the political power, is with the men of the household, women and

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78 Ibid, 133. There seems to be argument over Clement’s use of the word *teleosis*, which can be used to indicate perfection as well as maturity. Within Clement’s writing, however, I believe that he makes it clear that the maturity level of an adult is not indicative of their level of perfection as a Christian. Similarly, one could argue that an infant could hold a model of perfection that may not be found in an adult or older child. See Clement *Paedagogus 1.27.2-3*.

children create a positive place in Christianity for those coming to the table. The state of the household, even in Christian families, is one of complexity. As stated earlier, “Christian” households are also Greco-Roman-Judaic households in their given culture. It is inaccurate to imagine that they exist in a vacuum where their Christian identity stood at the forefront. The reality is that even within these households there is a tension between the “paterfamilias” structure of the Roman household and the Christian family who believe in a more holistic structure where women and children make decisions as well as the head. Osiek claims that part of the structure of the Christian family takes its cue from Pauline Hellenism. Descriptions of the household and each individual’s role is emphasized, as is the role of the church as that of “pater.” Outside of the New Testament references, however, and reference within writings such as Paedagogus, children are not discussed much at all. This is supported by Osiek who claims that she has found references to children only in sparse biblical references such as Matthew 18:3. This Mattheian reference, however, is foundational for Friedrich

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80 I am hesitant to use the term “power” with regard to women and children because while I believe that Clement sees them as a positive part of the Christian family, they lacked power in the way that men had power. They certainly brought goodness, beauty, imagination, and Christian qualities that Clement picks up on.


82 Kate Cooper, “The Household as a Venue for Religious Conversion: The Case of Christianity,” in A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 184. Cooper also states that this struggle may be true through the early fourth century when Constantine’s Edict of Milan helped move Christianity from households into the mainstream.


84 Ibid.

85 Ibid, 204.
Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century as he continues the work Clement began.

Schleiermacher, as I will discuss in chapter Four, critiques the inherent authoritarian structure between the child and the adult as he takes seriously the call for adults to become like little children.

Conclusion and Critique

Clement is certainly promising in terms of being a good source and foil against later thinkers, such as Augustine. In terms of how he views the anthropology of the child, there are problems with his work as well. Clement continuously turns to the natural world as the source for conclusive information on human beings, both children and adults.\(^{86}\) Clement uses animals as a source to discuss relationships between the family, as well as diminutive terminology of young girls.\(^{87}\) This is indicative of an early natural law argumentation though this seems to hold true more when Clement discusses relationships rather than individual being. For instance, the idea that children and infants are important because of their particular stage in life, as well as the purpose of each stage, indicates that Clement looks beyond the natural law to understand the child. While Clement focuses on relational terminology using animals he does not insinuate that children are likened to animals in ability or lack there-of.\(^{88}\) Perfection in adult life is also not completely absent in Clement. He does note that a person is in a continuous stage of learning,


but perfection lies with finding finality in God.\textsuperscript{89} While this could seem oriented toward looking out at the future rather than the importance of the immediate stage, Clement quotes Matthew in pointing not only to the importance of today, but also the importance of finding a pure love of God in the way an infant would.\textsuperscript{90}

\textbf{Augustine}

\textbf{Context}

Delving into Clement of Alexandria’s \textit{Paedagogus} to investigate how he understands children in terms of personhood is quite a different path than that of Augustine. Augustine of Hippo, one of the most prolific theologians of early Christianity, has more influence on doctrine and tradition than Clement. This point becomes more obvious as this discussion continues into the latter chapters. Much of the sacramental theology of the Church, in foundation, comes from Augustine. So too does the Church’s understanding of children; so much so that the Church has difficulty putting Augustine into perspective.\textsuperscript{91} The goal of discussing Augustine in this project is to parse out the use of Augustine’s theology and anthropology affecting and regarding children, both positive and negative, as seen against the theologies of other major theologians. Clement obviously wrote earlier than Augustine, while Aquinas follows.

\textsuperscript{89} Clement of Alexandria. \textit{Paedagogus: The Instructor}. Eds. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Sir James, and Alexander Roberts. 1.5, location 386.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, 1.5, location 370.

\textsuperscript{91} Martha Ellen Stortz, “‘Where or When Was Your Servant Innocent?’: Augustine on Childhood” in \textit{The Child in Christian Thought}, Ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 79. Also see Traina and Babcock. Where I disagree with Stortz is the weight that the Church gives to the Augustinian understanding of the child over the Thomistic. While in terms of sacrament the Church turns to Augustine, they understand the child-adult relationship, as well as the person of the child in a Thomistic way.
Two of Augustine’s works are extremely important to this study. The first is a glimpse into Augustine’s thoughts on anthropology including the human condition and personhood. *The Confessions* explains not only the fallen state of humanity, but describes in detail birth, infancy, and childhood. While Clement is an admirer of the child, Augustine takes an alternate stance. The second typology of the child is the child as a small adult, but equal in moral culpability whether or not they are considered moral agents. The other work in question, *Merit and the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Baptism of Infants*, situates baptism in the Church and impresses on Christians that infant baptism is a necessity. While Augustine’s body of work is immense and comprehensive of Christian theology, these two particular works represent his writings on children. It also allows modern Christian theologians to better understand the position of the Church today on the place of children, their personhood, and their sacramental lives.

*The Confessions*

Book one of *The Confessions* is the focus of this discussion on Augustine’s understanding of children, though small amounts of text from later books are examined as well. It is important to note that Augustine’s Book one is written through year fifteen of his life, while book two picks up on his sixteenth year. In Augustine’s mind and in forming his confessional autobiography, he delineates ages. Augustine describes six stages of aging in total: infancy (language acquisition,) childhood (rationale acquisition,) adolescence (puberty,) young adulthood, middle age, and old age.92 Several questions arise based on his understanding of those stages. Augustine makes a stark comparison between childhood and age sixteen. Most likely this was because of the onset of puberty in boys. Was Augustine purposeful in indicating that fifteen

was still childhood, but sixteen was not? Was his intention to delineate strictly between childhood and puberty? At which point does the child become a reasoning person? These are a few of the questions that should be considered when looking more closely at the ending of book one.  

Unfortunately, as I explain in chapter Five, many of the answers regarding the threshold of reason still remain unaddressed and unanswered in the Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law.

Augustine writes about infants, children, and young adults as part of his autobiographical material in *The Confessions*. Book one begins as Augustine describes how he understands newborns and then infants and children. The information that Augustine garners concerning, particularly, newborns and infants comes to him in two ways, first his own observation of the babies that he has been in contact with, and second what those who knew him as a child had told him about his own disposition at that time. Augustine, unlike Aristotle, is not the son of a doctor or a doctor himself. His observations on infants are that of using his senses and then coming to conclusions based on those senses, they were epistemological. He forms an anthropology dependent upon these assumptions.

He describes elements of infancy that most parents or caretakers of children would be familiar with; infants laughing in their sleep, crying for needs, frustration with lack of language. It is clear that in Augustine’s mind there is a

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93 See Cristina Traina, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Christine Gudorf, William Babcock, and Martha Ellen Stortz for research regarding the cross-section between Augustine and children, primarily in *The Confessions*, and dealing with issues of moral agency and autonomy.

94 “Newborn” is my own understanding of the age group that Augustine speaks of. Straight from the womb, but before the infant is making sound or much in the way of movement. We will see that he denotes these differences throughout Book One.


marked difference in stage between a child being a newborn and the infancy stage. What marks these stages for Augustine? At the close of section eight, after describing what a baby is like after birth, Augustine states, “Then little by little I perceived where I was, and I wished to make my wants known to those who could satisfy them. Yet I could not do so, because the wants were within me, while those outside, could by no sensible means penetrate the soul.” 98 This “little by little,” as Augustine puts it is that short phase from birth moving into the stage of infancy. It also shows how Augustine understands the progression of senses, communication, and perhaps as we read further into this book, the reason formation in the child. Augustine states that his infancy was indeed not long-lived and even as an adult happened a short time ago. The natural progression of an infant is to continue to learn, “For even then I had being and lived, and already at the close of my infancy I looked for signs by which I could make known my meanings to others.” 99 It is also clear from Augustine’s writings that he feels the infant is a living human. While this may seem to be a common sense statement in our contemporary world, for Augustine this is an important statement. The infant is given the status of a living human, not an animal, not a plant, not a decaying thing. Augustine writes, “…you have given to the infant life and a body, which, as we see, you have thus furnished with senses, equipped with limbs, beautified with a shapely form, and, for its complete good and protection, have endowed with all the powers of a living being.” 100


100 Ibid, 50.
It is important to note that Augustine does not use the terms “person” or “personhood” for the infant. He always refers to the infant as a living being. He does not, other than in the quote above, refer to the infant in a positive way. He explains that the infant has been “beautified with a shapely form,” but other than that Augustine only posits facts about how the infant functions. Further to this point, Augustine writes at the end of section twelve that these statements concerning the infant, his infancy even, do not matter. The child is, according to Augustine, to be regarded in the same fashion as an adult. Childhood is not an important stage or group of stages that hold much meaning outside of ordinary child development and physical growth. Infancy is a time that humans are not able to remember though those around them may. Since it is not a time of remembrance for him, he writes infancy off as not important, “But, see, I now set aside that period. What matters that now to me of which I recall no trace?”

From this point Augustine transitions in section thirteen to an infant who is beginning to learn to communicate, learning motor skills, and striving that the infant’s “will would be obeyed.” Augustine suggests that the infant’s will and need to begin communication and speech is driven by their desire. This is not so different from the desire that Aristotle suggested drove people to choose and propel them forward. Augustine goes so far to state,


104 Ibid.
I pondered over this in memory: when they named a certain things and, at that name, made a gesture towards the object, I observed that object and inferred that it was called by the name they uttered when they wished to show it to me. That they meant this was apparent by their bodily gestures, as it were by words natural to all men, which are made by change of countenance, nods, movements of the eyes and other bodily members, and sounds of the voice, which indicate the affections of the mind in seeking, possessing, rejecting, or avoiding things.\footnote{Augustine, \textit{The Confessions}, Trns: John K. Ryan (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 1.7.12 pg 51.}

In order for the infant to pick up on these adult cues they must have the ability to reason through the actions as they happen. Augustine suggests that the infant has a mind that works with the same instinctual capacity that other adult human beings have as well. Cristina Traina, so aptly wrote that this non-distinction between the moral agency of the adult and the moral agency of the child poses a problem.\footnote{Cristina L. H. Traina, “Children and Moral Agency,” \textit{Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics} 29, no. 2 (2009): 31.} The infant crying for milk is a sin of desire no different from an adult’s desire.\footnote{Ibid.} Children, even newborns and infants, are labeled as agents affected by their sinful choices and behaviors. Augustine does not mean that children have the capacity to reason morally the same as an adult. Children act based on innate desire. The desire they feel, however, is not innocent.\footnote{Martha Ellen Stortz, “‘Where or When Was Your Servant Innocent?’: Augustine on Childhood” in \textit{The Child in Christian Thought}, Ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 82.} The child’s desire is indicative of a corrupt nature. While Augustine does not find that children are intentionally depraved, their wills are continuously afflicted by their Original Sin.\footnote{Ibid.} This point will be important later in this work when we discuss the implications.
of Augustine’s work on the contemporary Roman Catholic Church’s doctrine. As Augustine moves from his writings on infancy and into his discussion of school-aged children, it is clear that the progression of newborn to infant continues from infant into child. The child is able to reason, now has a deep understanding of language, and has the ability to understand social norms.110

*On Baptism, Against the Donatists*

The second document from Augustine that is important to the discussion on infant baptism is *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*. When looking for a clear argument as to why something should or should not be done, it is always helpful to look at a defense of a case. Essentially, *On Baptism* is Augustine’s defense of Christian baptism to the heretical Donatists.111 Within this work, Augustine methodically confronts the misconceptions that the Donatists believe concerning baptism. He explains why they should accept the “orthodox” Christian way. While there are many issues that arise in Augustine’s commentary from licit baptisms to the baptisms of criminals, infant baptism is also included in the discussion. Of baptism Augustine states that a person does not ever lose their baptism and need not seek re-baptism.112 Though Augustine also argues that baptism is merely a salve to the wound of Original Sin. The baptized

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110 Traina argues that Augustine lacks an understanding of a dependent agency. The dependent agency would indicate that the infant has agency, but is fully dependent upon its parents. It is no different to a teenager who has agency, but also turns toward their parents dependent in a different way. Dependent agency, according to Traina, is the norm for human agents in general. 32 Thatcher also argues for an agency of dependency. For Thatcher, however, that agency is contingent upon self-love that becomes interdependent between children and parents for personhood. 196.

111 Augustine’s Anti-Pelagian writings, as well as his writings against Bishop Julian of Eclanum, also describe his pro-infant baptism stance.

need to be in a state of grace to repent for Original Sin throughout their lifetime.\textsuperscript{113} When an infant is baptized, this should be their one and only baptism, as it would be for an older child or adult. Augustine alludes to the “firm tradition of the universal Church” for explanation as to why infants can and should be baptized.\textsuperscript{114} Regardless of an infant’s inability to consent, to believe, or to “make confession unto salvation,” the baptism is licit as long as a Christian adult is speaking on their behalf.\textsuperscript{115} The act of baptizing, the remission and cleansing of Original Sin, is the prime purpose of the baptism; it does not, or so it seems, require the attention of the newborn.\textsuperscript{116} Furthermore, Augustine describes the baptism of the infant along the same logical lines as to why an infant should be circumcised; the presentation of righteousness upon the infant, put to the infant, bestowed upon the infant is an important seal of faith.\textsuperscript{117} Children, regardless of whether or not they have moral agency, whether or not they knowingly choose to sin, are condemned for their sinfulness in the same way that an adult would be condemned.\textsuperscript{118} The necessity of baptism is because of this indelible mark of sin.\textsuperscript{119} Without baptism, even newborns are damned to hell.

\textsuperscript{113} Martha Ellen Stortz, “‘Where or When Was Your Servant Innocent?’: Augustine on Childhood” in The Child in Christian Thought, Ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 95.

\textsuperscript{114} Augustine, On Baptism Against the Donatist, ed. By Philip Schaff, (1886), location 2541.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{116} I write this only because it will become of utmost importance in later chapters when I begin to discuss the role of children in their own spirituality.


\textsuperscript{118} Martha Ellen Stortz, “‘Where or When Was Your Servant Innocent?’: Augustine on Childhood” in The Child in Christian Thought, Ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 79.

\textsuperscript{119} See Babcock. Babcock writes an in depth article on Augustine’s changes over time on issues of free will, the mind, and sin. In Babcock’s estimation, Augustine became more restrictive over time on the availability of free will to humans. Whereas early in Augustine’s teachings human \textit{must} have free will in
This was Augustine’s position against the Donatists and the Pelagians. It was not, however, always his position. In 396 Augustine considered the Holy Innocents who were needlessly slaughtered to be martyrs who deserved grace regardless of baptism.\textsuperscript{120} As he wrote his autobiographical material in \textit{The Confessions} he reversed his stance; standing firm against what he considered heresy.\textsuperscript{121}

Augustine did not focus on the agency of the infant or the child other than positing Original Sin onto them. He even goes as far to say that infants do not suffer unjustly because of Original Sin, even though they make no choices that would lead to their suffering.\textsuperscript{122} On one hand, he admits that infants have no ability to make rational choices for themselves, and on the other he states that they must continue to be held accountable.\textsuperscript{123} Augustine writes that if infants, having righteousness bestowed upon them, continue in Christian piety, conversion of the heart will eventually follow.\textsuperscript{124} Some scholars believe that Augustine gives the child full agency. I would push back on arguments that Augustine understands the child to have the same agency as an adult in all situations.\textsuperscript{125} All children, even the youngest, are agents of Original Sin. Children order to account for sin, later writings reduce the act of free will down to the initial act of free will in Adam.

\textsuperscript{120} Martha Ellen Stortz, “‘Where or When Was Your Servant Innocent?’: Augustine on Childhood” in \textit{The Child in Christian Thought}, Ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 78.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 97.


moving into adolescence begin to become moral agents in addition to being agents of Original Sin. They are not however, deemed as culpable in action or depravity as an adult. Therefore, Augustine states that they do not have extensive punishment in hell. Sacramentally they are always being-done-to with consent of an adult. Where I agree with scholars, such as Traina, is that there is no grey area where children are allowed to be children. There is only an austere dichotomy of being adult agents or not agents at all. While the infants, due to an “insufficiency of age,” lack the ability to “believe with the heart unto righteousness” or “make confession with the mouth unto salvation,” they can have someone speak on their behalf as to their dedication to God. Augustine is clear, however, in the separation of righteousness bestowed through baptism and a true conversion of the heart. Salvation can only be achieved through having both of those pieces. If this is the case, what is the benefit of baptism for infants? Augustine might say that it is for the purpose of regeneration from the sin of Adam. God, according to Augustine, supplies the want for the conversion of the heart.

When Augustine wrote the two pieces that are examined in this work, he is continued the tradition of certain theologians and Church fathers before him. Augustine is not the first to suggest infant baptism as the norm for the time.

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128 Ibid, loc 2574.

129 Ibid, loc 2563.

and Gregory of Nazianzus, each in turn write on the good of infant baptism. Augustine’s tradition, however, arguably outlive itself within the active teachings of the Church.\footnote{This comparison is meant to highlight movements within the Church and churches that are popular movements. In having worked at a parish and within an Archdiocese for almost a decade, it was noticeable to me that Augustine, even more so than Aquinas, was read and discussed. In speaking with RCIA candidates and catechumen, many had experiences of at least hearing about Augustine and fewer Aquinas. None, however, would be able to identify any teachings or even biographical information of Church fathers who wrote on infant baptism preceding Augustine. In fact, the \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church} was their go-to reference point, many of them not understanding where those teachings originated.} In addition to the teachings of Augustine having a profound effect on Catholic doctrine and social teachings, the teachings of Thomas Aquinas also become very important for Church canon.

\textbf{Thomas Aquinas}

\textit{Context}

Following Augustine by over 700 years, Aquinas revives early Greek philosophy as well as earlier theological thinkers, while also engaging the scholarship of Islamic philosophy and metaphysics. His masterpiece, the \textit{Summa Theologiae}, represents his thinking on everything from creation of the universe to creation of law and governance. Aquinas, calling Aristotle the “Philosopher” to underline the importance of the ancient Greek philosopher for his own work, builds an understanding of the soul based, in part, on Aristotle’s understanding. In addition, Aquinas’ understanding is not unlike Aristotle’s when it comes to his thoughts on children. His understanding of children harkens back to likening them to a lower form of an adult or an irrational animal.\footnote{See Traina and Browning.}
For a child is by nature part of its father. Thus, at first, it is not distinct from its parents as to its body, so long as it is enfolded within its mother’s womb; and later on after birth, and before it has the use of free choice, it is enfolded in the care of its parents, which is like a spiritual womb, for so long as a child does not have the use of reason, he does not differ from an irrational animal.\textsuperscript{133}

Because children, or male children for Aquinas, are the property of their parents in the same way that an oxen or domesticated animal would be the property of a man, children are an instrument or extension of the family.\textsuperscript{134} Infants are entirely helpless. Possessing no rationale, moral, or spiritual formation, infants are nothing but potential. Upon the use of reason, during Aquinas’ \textit{pueritia} stage, the child gains free choice and the right to determine their own interests, including decisions regarding their faith.\textsuperscript{135} Agency is gained in time for Aquinas. Consequently, no agency is granted to a child below the age of reason. Aquinas again takes Aristotle’s lead in looking toward the natural world for cues concerning the essence of children. The question of reason and the age of reason is a common thread woven into the \textit{Summa Theologica}. The age of reason continues to be problematic in canon law. Aquinas’ third and final stage of childhood is \textit{adolescentia}, the age beyond puberty where the person should be treated as an adult, but still is lacking in full maturity.\textsuperscript{136} Making the move from the \textit{infantia} stage to the \textit{pueritia} stage indicates that the child has become verbal and is beginning to decipher moral problems. \textit{Pueritia} is the time where the child gains reason and will reach puberty. During Aquinas’ time this is

\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid, 119.
\end{itemize}
approximately beginning at the ages of twelve to fourteen, though in contemporary scientific understanding we know that the age of puberty may happen around a particular age, but varies greatly from child to child.

Reason, Rationale, and the Soul

Reason for Aquinas indicates one primary theological feature, a rational soul. Reason, as well as intellect are powers that operate from the soul. What is not properly explained by Aquinas, however, is exactly how a child goes from the irrational to the rational or from non-agent to agent. Where is the threshold that indicates rationality? When Aquinas addresses whether or not children can decide to enter religious life, he gives some guidelines as to his prescription of the age of reason. When children reach the age of puberty, which Aquinas puts around twelve for girls and fourteen for boys, he states that children gain the guile of reason. Aquinas explains that this age is a general age that may change from child to child depending on their “disposition.” While there are challenges latent in Aquinas’ discussions and understanding of children, he is ahead of his time in recognizing that this age is flexible dependent on the individual child’s development. How does reason correlate with the onset of puberty? Why would the biological function of puberty be a catalyst for the child to develop a rational mind?

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137 For an in depth treatment on Aquinas’ cognitive soul see Knasas.


139 Ibid.
Reason and intellect for Aquinas are intertwined to each other. The Intellect represents the power in the soul of understanding of things both internal and external. As it develops, the use of the power of intellect is the power of reason. Intellect understands a thing in and of itself. Reason guides the soul in understanding one thing via another thing. Aquinas understands that humans are rational and therefore have free choice, except those before the age of puberty. Prior to the age of puberty, children do have a soul, which is active with certain powers. These powers of the sensitive and vegetative souls are parts of the soul that are natural to the human, but not under their control; they are the involuntary parts. Humans are able to sense, but again involuntarily; the human organs are moved toward for preservation and the good of the body. The vegetative soul is the function of digestion that allows involuntary growth of the body. Children, therefore, are able to grow, digest, and sense, but devoid of the capability of a rational soul and will. The will is the part of the soul that allows for agency. The will, according to Aquinas, is the mover of the intellectual powers of the soul. Aquinas indicates that the sensible part of the intellect is compromised in children. The sensible intellect, for example, would allow

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141 Ibid, 1.1 Q79 Art 8. 421-22.

142 Ibid, 1.1, Q83, Art 1, 436-37.

143 Ibid, 1.1, Q78, Art 1, 407-8.

144 Ibid.

145 Traina likens Aquinas’ movement through stages to Augustine’s. They both indicate that moral and intellectual virtues are gained over time with the experience of aging.

an adult to see a man and understand that the man can be a father, but the man is distinguished from being either the adult’s father or a father at all. Fatherhood is simply one possibility of being a man. Children, according to Aquinas, see a man and believe that the man is her/his father. This shows that the child is not able to distinguish the less common or the more particular features of objects, in this case that only some men are fathers and not all men are the child’s father. The reason that Aquinas gives for this incapability is that children’s brains are too moist. The moistness results in children not having enough strength at birth to use their limbs and body properly, but also unable to use their brains for reasoning. Obtaining rationality and thereby agency for a child, as understood by Aquinas, is only acquired with the maturity of the child beyond the age of being able to generate a new human being themselves; puberty.

Undoubtedly some of these theories and theologies are not accepted in many Catholic communities today. The scientific understanding of human development and psychology has changed how we understand children. Aquinas applies both theological and scientific knowledge of his time. He used the most advanced research from amongst the best scientists of his time. Still, taking into consideration child development, child psychology, and theories in education, our critique of Aquinas must not fall short. We certainly must not continue proliferating a body of knowledge that is in need of refining and editing. Given his method to incorporate the knowledge available to him, would Aquinas still believe that children lack a sense of reason until puberty? As I write on children in chapters Four and Five it becomes


148 Ibid, 1.1, Q99, Art 1, 519-20.

149 Ibid and 1.1, Q101, Art 1, 522-23.
apparent that the definitions of reason and agency are not singular. The gifts of nineteenth and twentieth century theologians is in understanding the child and their stages, as unique in the type of reason and agency particular to them.

Infant Baptism

Another issue that arises within discussions of Aquinas’ writings and theology is the circumstances of infant baptism. Keeping in line with the theological tradition, Aquinas states that in the case of infants, baptism should not be delayed under any circumstance.\(^{150}\) Salvation is only acquired through baptism and as such, if an infant remains unbaptized, their soul is in peril.\(^{151}\) Children also do not need the instruction and conversion to Christ that an adult would need, thus there is no reason to delay baptism.\(^{152}\) Issues regarding infant baptism will arise again in chapter two, where I will discuss teachings on baptism in modern Roman Catholic teachings. Augustine and Aquinas’ views on baptism are important because they inform the modern and contemporary Church on its current teachings. Traina suggests that Aquinas is responsible for bridging the gap between his belief on infant formation from Aristotle and the Doctrine of Original Sin from Augustine.\(^{153}\) Aquinas believes that the newly formed child has the potential to receive God’s full grace and be made whole. Aquinas understands the goodness of the child’s potential from his studies on Aristotle. On the other hand, Aquinas was cautious of suggesting


\(^{151}\) Ibid.

\(^{152}\) Aquinas indicates that this is based on a decree from Pope Leo.

that human beings are able to save themselves because of their inherent goodness.\textsuperscript{154}

Nevertheless, Aquinas stands firmly on the belief in the *limbus puerorum* where unbaptized infants will go in they die a premature death.\textsuperscript{155} Since infants are not moral agents, they are unable to receive a baptism of desire; limbo is their only option.

**Conclusion**

Arguably each of these theologians has been a contributor to the shaping of Catholic Social teachings, teachings on baptism, and the Catholic understanding of the child. Also arguably, Augustine and Aquinas have had a longer legacy and more widely promoted teachings than Clement of Alexandria. The purpose of this research is not necessarily to explain why that might be, but rather to illuminate that there are more theological sources than Augustine and Aquinas. Looking forward into the next chapters, Clement’s sagacious understanding of the child and his use of scripture can guide theologians, teachers, and clergy today to an enlightened way of educating and helping children to grow in Christ. Clement’s methodological approach to children also takes their personhood into account more so than other early theologians. Clement does not speak in terms of psychology or autonomy, but he does have an organic understanding that the child is more than an animalistic mass. These three primary typologies inform theological understanding on children through the twenty-first century.

Chapter two is the pastoral counterpart to this chapter. One of the goals of this chapter was to investigate and understand the theological underpinnings of the teachings on the child. A


\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, 114.
The goal of chapter two is to understand the movements within pastoral theology that fuel teachings on the child. Both of these are important as the theological teachings inform the pastoral teachings as the pastoral teachings then inform the laity. The laity, the parents within our laity, are responsible for the care of their children. What information are they receiving? What teachings are passed down? Do these teachings fairly represent the autonomy of the child and what they need to learn?
CHAPTER TWO

FOUNDATIONAL TREATMENT OF THE CHILD IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

The Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, historically, has used pastoral-moral theology as the foundation for teaching the laity about acting as a morally good agents. Beginning with the earliest penitentials and ending with contemporary Ecclesial teachings, this chapter will discuss the importance and meaning of these teachings for lay members of the Roman Catholic Church. Particularly before the rise of literacy and widespread access to formal education, the laity relied upon their pastors, bishops, and other religious as the connection to the teachings of their faith. These pastoral teachings were present with the laity to help guide their life within families and within the broader community. How would they treat other members of the community? How would they react to difficult situations? Most importantly for this chapter, how did this inform their understanding and care for their children?

Children are often the topic of discussion in many of the teachings. Yet, paradoxically, the teachings do not contain many insightful conclusions or even detailed information on children. In some cases, such as The Catechism of the Catholic Church, the missing information stands out more than the topics actually covered. We can become informed about what has happened to our understanding of children, the child’s agency, and children’s rights based on both the affirmative and absent statements in these documents. When the penitentials were written, there were no sciences that dealt with understanding children’s emotional, mental, or physical development. Understandably, the Church relied upon the resources and understanding
they had to inform their writings on children at that time. Moving into the 20th century, however, sustained study of children’s development was underway. Theologians who wrote these teachings in the last half of the 20th century had access to early scientific studies on child development. But it is difficult to see evidence of these mounting studies were draw upon in the formation of catechisms used in the United States during that time. At the very best, the teachings of John Paul II are fervent for the rights of children, their health, and well-being.¹ They still, arguably, lack an understanding of the needs of the child to develop into a person with personhood and an individual relationship with God.

The goal of this chapter is not to be overly critical of past teachings regarding children. Rather, the goal is to discuss and dig into the Church’s pastoral-moral teachings as a way to grasp the laity’s understanding of children present with the laity. Pastoral theology is closely intertwined with teaching the laity the moral foundations within the Catholic faith. It is our responsibility then that pastoral theology engage the best information possible, including working with the sciences to understand dignity, subjectivity, and the development of the child.

**Sources for Moral Development**

Theological writings have not always been available to the laity for mass consumption. In the sixth through eighth centuries the laity of the Western Church did not have the access, nor the ability to read the works of Augustine or Clement of Alexandria.² While some of the clergy may have had access and ability, it was more likely that an elite population of the ecclesiastical Church were primarily responsible for knowledge of these texts. The repercussions for the laity

¹ See *Familiaris consortio* and *Evangelium vitae*

² As distinguished from the Church of Eastern Rite during the Schism of 1054.
and uneducated clergy in not having access to a moral guide(s) was that their local religious communities of priests became responsible for distilling the morality from these teachings into manuals that were easily understood by the uneducated population as a whole. Out of this need, the penitential manuals were written. The penitentials would be one of the earliest forms of pastoral teachings and documents that would attempt to convey moral theology. The penitentials served as a way for Christian believers to understand and respond to what was being asked of them by their Church and their faith. As Wilhelm Kursawa states in his writings on the penitentials, the Western Church needed a way for the laity to find repentance for sins. They found that the formation of manuals would structure the different types of sin, as well as assign appropriate penances depending on the severity of each sin. In the Eastern Church, a penitent made reconciliation to Christ directly, not through the priest as a mediator. In addition, the penitent also made their supplication public to their entire church community. The Roman Catholic Church sought to make penance less public and with the priest as the intermediary. The penitentials became the foundation, along with theological and biblical writings, for the moral formation of those learning and practicing their faith. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a compiled account of Scripture, theological, and moral sources. It is the modern-day handbook of

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4 As is noted in McNeill and Gamer, the penitentials as a body of canon for the Roman Catholic Church were not researched as a body of work up until the time of their publication in 1990. In my own research, I found that this is still more than less true. It is still difficult to find any decent dating or source work done on the penitentials as a whole, some remain with unknown authors and dates, while scholars have picked apart some individual manuals. Their treatment in 1990 focused on socio-historical questions of character, function, and influence of the manuals.

5 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* will be noted in the remainder of this work as *The Catechism*. 
the practicing or learning Catholic layperson, as well as the primary pastoral teaching method of pastors in parishes. The third and perhaps least widely read amongst parishioners are Papal documents. Papal documents provide another source for moral teachings and authority for modern day Catholics. These documents are made available to the public via print or the Vatican website. Pastors might also disseminate these documents to be read together at the local parish level. Together these three segments of pastoral teaching, which focus in part on moral theology, make-up the body of teachings that the Ecclesia prescribes for how an active practicing Catholic ought to act in given situations.

The Penitentials

_Cummean and Beyond_

Pastoral theology from the time of the _Penitential of Cummean_ in 650 A.D. until Aquinas’ writings in beginning in 1265 used the penitentials to understand the personhood, or lack thereof, of children. The laity used the penitentials as a lens to understand what made children, children. What was the child’s place in society? Were they to be treated morally as adults? Were they owned objects? Yet, the penitential manuals themselves are not reflective of all previous theological writings on children. They tell a different tale entirely of the understanding of children in the sixth through eighth centuries. What is troubling is that they set a tone for the way in which children are regarded as objects rather than autonomous subjects. The penitentials, such as _Cummean_ and _Finnian_, both from the late sixth century, _The Catechism_, revised in 1994, and Papal writings, such as _Auctorem fidei_, in 1794, all affect the social development of the laity in their understanding of how to treat children and act towards them in society.
Irish Penitentials

The development of the penitentials, some also known as the Irish penitentials or penitential manuals, became increasingly necessary for the Western Church in what is now Ireland and Great Britain. The purpose, as discussed, was to provide a manual of sins and penance for the monasteries, but also for the lay communities. The Western Church regarded the penitential practices of the Eastern Church as too awkward and potentially alienating in its public nature for the western laity. Instead, the clergy sought “paenitentia privata,” which would allow those who wanted to be in good faith standing to confess their sins and do the suggested penance. The penitentials were lists with penance fines rather than written manuscripts. Each sin listed had its own particular penitence depending on the severity of the sin. The severity of the sin was dependent, in part, upon how it was categorized into one of three types of sin. Three classes of sin that were presented in the penitentials were capital, later to become mortal, grave, and minor sin. Grave and minor sin later merged into venial sins. Kursawa, who writes in depth on the differences between these types of sins within the penitentials, argues that they use John Cassian’s eight vices to decide on severity and distinction of sin. Cassian’s eight vices were gluttony, fornication, avarice, anger, sadness, sloth/despondency, vainglory, and pride. Out of these sins, gluttony was the source of all other sins. Gluttony meant to put the body before the

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7 Ibid, 25.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.
spiritual and as a result always led the person into other sins. For instance, a thief would become more avarice by being gluttonous; constantly seeking more. Though many of the penitentials built upon the penitentials written before them, they were not necessarily identical. They also did not prescribe identical penances for each particular type or specific sin.\textsuperscript{10} It was up to the discretion of the different communities to decide for their particular setting the need for penances. As Kursawa states, it is hard to find one line of common penances that runs between the penitentials.\textsuperscript{11} It is, however, easier to see the commonality of sins since they were brought over from the earlier writings. Based on a survey of the penitentials, homicide and adultery seem to be the most egregious of capital sins resulting in the harshest penances.\textsuperscript{12} In some cases, however, such as the penitential of Finnian, adultery by a man who begets a son and kills the son results in three and a half years of penance.\textsuperscript{13} If he does not kill the son, the penance remains three and a half years.\textsuperscript{14} There are numerous examples of similar content that indicate homicide was not universally treated in the same manner. It also indicates that other offenses were still deemed more offensive than the taking of human life. While this does not seem like an overt critique on the personhood of the child, the penance served makes it clear that the child’s life was


\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 27.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
not worth a heavier penance. The prime concern was the sin of adultery.

As with any historical document, it is important to remember that these sins and penances were applicable to a particular setting in history. At the time that these penitentials were written, the communities were at the mercy of raids and wars with the invading Vikings.\(^\text{15}\) This was particularly true of the early monastic settlements.\(^\text{16}\) *The Penitential of Cummean*, for instance, though it was a manual diagnosing sins and prescribing penances, also considered blood shed by the community as a result of wars.\(^\text{17}\) Alongside the violence accompanying the invasions, the communities were trying to combat the influences of paganism, magic, and witchcraft.\(^\text{18}\) These were important daily issues for the early to late Medieval Christians. Being in such an anxiety-ridden state of war with loss of life, it is understandable that they focused on homicide and adultery as particularly problematic. Loss of life and loss of the family foundation were detrimental to the entire stability of society. They were already losing many people to the violence of invasion; they could not allow their numbers to dwindle further. Heading toward the

\(^\text{15}\) This particular methodology of regarding this time period, specifically, is also used by Martha A. Brozyna in her studies on Middle Ages gender and sexuality, as will be discussed later.

\(^\text{16}\) Oakley, Thomas P. "Cultural Affiliations of Early Ireland in the Penitentials." Speculum 8, no. 4 (1933): 490. In Oakley’s early historical work on the culture of the Irish penitentials, he notes that relations between the Roman named territory of Gaul and Britannia greatly influenced the creation of these monastic settlements. In addition, some of the penitentials refer to ransoming captives, which would indicate being the center of active warring and raiding.


\(^\text{18}\) Ibid, 29. Also see McNeill and Gamer 25, who also explain that the unique conjoining of, what they call paganism, the customs of the native peoples with Christianity provides a complicated social rendering.
eighth century, communities functioned “coarbially,” as one community with two branches of leaders, having an ecclesial leader as well as lay leaders usually provided by head families.\(^{19}\) As these communities gained a foothold in their prospective geographical areas, the penitentials changed to fit the needs of their communities.

For example, *Praefatio Gildae* and *Sinodus Aquilonalis* focused heavily on families and adultery between married persons versus earlier penitentials like *Cummean* that focused primarily on monastic community.\(^{20}\) This change indicates a continuing shift over time from monastic rules to familial rules. The focus shifts from monastic fornication to marital fornication. No matter what type of fornication, sexual sins remain a central issue. The place of sin in society continued to be a noticeable thread woven into the fabrics of communities and their written rules. The Northern part of Ireland and parts of Great Britain were the epicenter of the production of the penitentials. They had a deeply rooted influence on the formation of both the lives of those in religious vocation and the faith-filled lives of the laity.\(^{21}\) The structure of the community, as well as the hardships the community faced, resulted in the importance put on care of the children within that community.

Martha Brozyna offers her own methodology when it comes to understanding gender and sexuality in the Middle Ages.\(^{22}\) In her introduction, Brozyna discusses how gender and sexuality


\(^{20}\) Ibid, 31.


\(^{22}\) Martha A. Brozyna, editor of *Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, surveys primary documents
were woven into a complex web of social constructs. As discussed previously in this chapter, it is impossible to understand Western societies from the sixth through the eighth century without taking its complexity into consideration. Not only historical documents, but written law, Church Canon, communal culture, and even medical writings were influential in forming opinion and judgment on relationships between people, including the relationship between adults and children.

…to understand medieval sexuality and gender, it is important to examine the regulations of the Christian church as well as their interpretation in both the theoretical writings of theologians and glossators and the practical workings of ecclesiastical decrees and court decisions.

It is necessary to view the dynamic context of this time period in order to examine how children were treated as they were depicted in the penitentials. Ultimately, this treatment of children became socially normative behavior. Revisionist Catholic ethical theory would suggest that these manuals were abandoned for a fully integrated moral theology. Some scholars, such as James Keenan, suggest that as theology developed, the penitentials became less important to the development of moral theology. In terms of the sources, academia has turned to for moral foundations, he may be correct. It can be argued, however, that in terms of the applications of pastoral-moral theology, the penitentials never lost their importance amongst churches and from the Middle Ages that offer insight into the different theories on gender and sexuality.


25 Ibid.

26 See Keenan for more on Revisionist ethics.
communities. The impact of the penitentials is more deeply rooted in Catholic social history and lay communities than originally thought. The characterization of children in the penitentials persists through the next two centuries in Catholicism.

When it comes to looking at specific instances regarding children in the penitentials, *Cummean* may be one of the most interesting. *Cummean* highlights sins against children, as well as sins against animals. For instance, when it comes to fornication, sinning with a beast calls for penance for a year while sinning with a fifteen year old boy calls for forty days of penance. If a layman should lay with a virgin, his penance would be a year while consuming only on bread and water. Yet if a child dies without baptism, a man shall do penance for three years. The focus on the child, which is not unusual for this period in time, is on the sanctity of the soul as well as the importance of begetting children through marriage. What is lost, or perhaps what was never there to begin with, is caring for a child’s whole being; body and soul. The strict focus on baptism, as seen in earlier writings in chapter One and will become apparent in chapter Five, is arguably still the case in twenty-first century society. Penance severity was indicative of which sins against the community were of importance. An *Old Irish Table of Commutations* from the 8th century discusses penance for the abandonment of infants in a Church. The penance time ranges from one and a half years up to seven and a half years based on whether or not a bishop or priest is buried in the Church. The abandonment of a child is inconsequential in terms of

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28 Ibid, 23.

29 Ibid, 32.

penance, while the potential “desecration” of the burial site of a holy man is noted as important. The same document also lists abortion as worthy of excommunication, while crimes against a living child are of lesser offense.\textsuperscript{31} In addition, there is a section of the penitential that focuses solely on the sins of boys listed up to twenty years of age. What is missing entirely from the penitential is any mention of female children other than mentioning them as virgins. The reference to virgins, in context, indicates that they are of puberty age, while infant, toddler, and young female children who are pre-pubescent are rarely mentioned.\textsuperscript{32} In contrast, trespasses such as those against the Holy Communion carry the heaviest of penances. This is, again, not all that surprising of the time, but it does suggest that what was passed down socially may still be latent in Catholic practice today.

\textbf{Catechisms}

\textbf{Baltimore Catechism}

Beyond the penitential canons, there are other sources of pastoral teaching that affect how children are treated and accepted by the laity as promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church. The faithful are the laity who were, and are, trying to stay within the moral laws of the Church and in its good graces.\textsuperscript{33} In 1891, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published the \textit{Baltimore Catechism}, the first of its kind based on the Council of Trent in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{34} The

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{32} On the few occasions in which female infants are mentioned, it is only to indicate a difference in penance based on gender.
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Laws spoken of in this context simply refers to what a person, as a self-declared Catholic, would try to follow in order to think of themselves as being in good standing with their faith and wider Church.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Paul Boudreau, “What is the Baltimore Catechism?”, \textit{U.S. Catholic}, May 2003, 26.
\end{itemize}
The purpose of the text was originally to stand against the Protestant Reformation.\(^{35}\) Four versions of this catechism exist, each one more detailed than the previous. The *Baltimore Catechism* was the first English written copy of Church law and moral teaching for children’s and adult’s religious education. It was the beginning of a new movement of children’s catechism, or CCD – Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, in the modern American Catholic Church. On one hand, the intent of this catechism was to aid teachers in addressing material deemed proper for Catholic learners without having them read primary sources, which were thought to be too complicated.\(^{36}\) The *Baltimore Catechism* broke down this material and made it easier to digest. No explanations of the material were needed, only information to be ingested and recited.\(^{37}\) The risk of presenting material in this manner was that it also oversimplified, distilled, and made pervasive the information being taught. It would become engrained in the children learning it well after the advent of Vatican II. Paul Boudreau, in his short piece on the *Baltimore Catechism*, is still able to recite answers from when he was a child.\(^{38}\) The question and answer format left little for discussion and most to memorization. It did not teach or allow a person to think or contemplate the questions posed.

**Baltimore Catechism Q & A**

The questions answered in the *Baltimore Catechism* concerning children, their age of


\(^{36}\) Thomas L. Kinkead, *Baltimore Catechism no. 4 An Explanation of the Baltimore Catechism on Christian Doctrine* (New York: Archbishop of New York, 1891), 10. Though adults are not the subject of the work at hand, it is good to note that adults at times were also treated as children. They are unable to be trusted, to understand concepts, and not to be trusted to their own decisions or reasoning.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.

reason, the danger of their souls, and the need for baptism, were straight forward, leaving no room for questioning by parents or even the children themselves. While the *Baltimore Catechisms* Numbers One and Two say very little concerning who is baptized or what happens if infants are not baptized, Numbers Three and Four include quite developed answers. Some of the answers in Numbers Three and Four should require a deeper theological explanation, and yet none is given. Infants, for instance, who have died and did not receive baptism, are said to “go to some place similar to Limbo, where they will be free from suffering, though deprived of the happiness of heaven.” 39 For a parent who has lost a child before baptism this is of little comfort. Aside from the emotional dismay imposed on such parents by this answer in the *Baltimore Catechism*, it gives no further explanation as to why this is the case or where this teaching originated. Due to the danger to the soul of the infant, it is recommended in question 642 not to delay baptism of an infant. 40 An argument can be made that because of the urgency placed upon salvation for the infant’s soul the rights of the infant are given to the parents. This will be discussed, in detail, in chapter Five. Parents are convinced that the care of their infant’s soul takes precedence over their personhood because of the imminent danger presented to them. The risk is that the infant becomes the obligation of the parent to be baptized, rather than a person with rights of their own. The child has something done to them without being able to make the most important religious decision, agreeing to baptism, freely and based on understanding the impact. Parents are undeniably responsible for their infants’ lives until they are able to

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40 Ibid, q. 642. 88.
communicate sufficiently and become agents in the world who can and must make decisions on their own.\footnote{In the world is an important phrase here because it will be argued that infants \textit{are} decision makers from the time they are born, though these decisions are not? Self reflective and have little to no social meaning or impact.} This does not mean that parents should not baptize their children as infants; rather, my aim is to account for this important de facto stance. Roman Catholic parents must acknowledge the inherent asymmetry in the relationship so that they are able to address that asymmetry as their child develops. The child is dependent upon their adults for a good foundational relationship. Children begin their lives in the Church as passive beings acted upon by parents and religious leaders as baptism is necessary for salvation. Keeping in mind this particular point, when the \textit{Baltimore Catechism} discusses who can baptize in case of necessity, it refers to someone who has reason. Children are said to be at the age of reason “…when he [sic] knows the difference between good and bad or right and wrong. Persons acquire this knowledge at about the age of seven years.”\footnote{Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, \textit{Baltimore Catechism No. 3.} (New York: Archbishop of New York, 1891), q. 122, 26.} The age of the capacity to reason and its continuing problems for the Roman Catholic Church will be addressed in a chapter Five. The importance of noting the age of reason at this point in the research and at this time, in the history of the Church, is that a child’s agency is assumed only after “about” the age of seven.\footnote{In 1892, the Democratic Party was only beginning to promote the ban of factory employment for children under fifteen years of age.} While children were part of the working class, in devastating conditions in many cases, they were not considered as beings capable of reasoning by the Church during the time of the \textit{Baltimore Catechism}. In terms of discussing children, their needs, both developmental and spiritual, in the remainder of the catechism, there is almost no information addressing children. One exception is the section on
baptism in catechism Number Three – the only place to find a discussion about children.

_Baltimore Catechism_ Number Four is by far the most detailed of the set, with instructive material for the catechist or religious education provider. The commentary throughout, which is meant to assist in relaying the material, is a narration of prescriptions and proscriptions, beyond the simple answers presented for each question asked in the manual. While the catechism Number Three answers the questions in more detail than the first two, it does not have narration alongside the answers. Question 154, for instance, in catechism Number Four indicates that baptism is not only needed for salvation, and salvation needed for entry into heaven, but also it continues to indicate that whoever does not baptize their child and allows them to die without proper baptism is “heartless and cruel” to deprive an infant away from heavenly eternity with their family.44

Think then, what a terrible crime it is to willfully allow anyone to die without Baptism, or to deprive a little child before it can be baptized! Suppose all the members of a family but one little infant have been baptized; when the Day of Judgment comes, while all the other members of a family – father, mother, and the children – may go into Heaven, that little one will have to remain out; that little brother or sister will be separated from its family forever, and never, never see God or Heaven. How heartless and cruel, then, must a person be who would deprive that little infant of happiness for all eternity – just that its mother or someone else might have a little less trouble or suffering here upon earth.45

When Vatican II concluded in 1965 it became apparent to the Church that the _Baltimore Catechism_ was no longer sufficient teaching for the laity of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States.46 Vatican II was a watershed moment for the teachings of the Church. The

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45 Ibid.

question and answer format of the *Baltimore Catechism* was too outdated and too simplistic for the heavy theological discussions of Vatican II. Many of these discussions were heard, for the first time, by the lay people of the Church, who began to take a deeper interest in their faith.

**The New Catechism**

Published for the first time in 1992, *The Catechism* became “the first general catechism for the entire church in more than 400 years.” In terms of anyone being inquisitive or searching for poignant answers to questions concerning Catholic doctrine, this is the authority on those subjects. *The Catechism* replaced the *Baltimore Catechism* of 1891. It is also the first catechism of its type since the *Roman Catechism* was published in 1566 following the Council of Trent.

As of today, *The Catechism*, remains the only catechism approved for use in parishes for religious education. While this newly minted version had the stamp of approval from Pope John Paul II as well as noted members of the hierarchy such as Bernard Cardinal Law, Archbishop of Boston. It was also a point of contention amongst religious educators and progressive bishops such as Bishop Kenneth E. Untener of Saginaw, Michigan.

*The Catechism* veered from the familiar question and answer style of the *Baltimore Catechism*. Instead, it progressed through Scripture, sacraments, and Catholic social teachings while utilizing approved doctrine such as the Church fathers and Scripture as authority. The text draws from “liturgical texts, patristic sources, and the writings of saints and mystics.”

Unlike his progressive counterparts, Michael J. Wrenn,

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48 Ibid.

49 Ibid 49.

50 Avery Dulles, S.J. "Symposium Catechism of the Catholic Church: The New Catechism: A Feast of
in the Archdiocese of New York, fought the attempt to replace the *Baltimore Catechism*. Wrenn wrote that the new editions of the catechism resulted in “‘deficiencies’ in religious education in succeeding years - what he refers to as a ‘strange creedless, contentless e [sic], non-cognitive kind of so-called catechesis…”51 In short, there was no consensus at the time as to how effective the catechisms were on their intended students. The arguments for or against using particular methods did not involve pedagogical study. *The Catechism* surged in sales in United States of America after its release.52 A 1994 edition of the *National Catholic Reporter* had sales reaching an estimated two million books.53 For some, it was a unique experience to read something other than the *Baltimore Catechism*, for others, such as Rev. James J. Billinger of the Diocese of Wichita, it meant a return to doctrine and “magisterial ‘substance,’ not fluff.”54 Some educators and priests were excited to have this new catechism to share with their parishioners and students. Others, however, assert as currently as 2011, that any catechism was meant for “namely bishops, priests, and catechists.”55 These authorities would then use *The Catechism* to teach those parishioners or students seeking education on Catholic teaching and doctrine. Avery Dulles, S.J., agreed that the catechism be used for “serene presentation of assured teaching, not to engage in


53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

critical discussion of points that are legitimately disputed.”

Though immediately after this statement, Dulles indicates that a layperson could pick up the text with an understanding of its content. Regardless of this, his opinion of The Catechism is that it is best read by a cautious reader. He writes that the new catechism requires guidance since it is not an exegetical work, nor entirely philosophical in position. Dulles rallies to support the theologians who are experts in these more specific fields as well as the job of the pedagogue.

The New Catechism as Educational

What does all of this information from The Catechism mean for the children of the Catholic faith? In some ways it does not indicate much at all. On one hand, the material within The Catechism is meant to allow for a greater depth than a question and answer series. This should allow children to learn their faith dynamically. On the other hand, as Dulles suggests, the reading of the New Catechism even for adults is not without its difficulties. Some suggest, laity should not attempt to read it without someone considered an authority on Catholic doctrine to guide them. Chapter Five will discuss how many parishes in the United States dioceses use a pedagogy of religious education that lacks substance of theological material or pedagogical methodology. Where in The Catechism, where is the material and doctrine about children and children’s religious education? What does the material on children and children’s religious education mean for the children being raised Catholic and in Catholic education systems?


57 Ibid, 150. Dulles notes the teaching on the Doctrine of Original Sin being the same as was given at the Council of Trent with no changes made. The catechism does not teach or discuss the more fine matters of Augustinian Neo-Platonism or Thomism for example.
One of the most poignant points in *The Catechism* is not any specific writings or details about children. It may seem unimportant to some, but looking at how *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is organized can reveal important information. If one were to go to *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to look up information on children, they would be met with the following, “Children; Childrearing: see Parents.” There is no listing in the index of *The Catechism* for anything regarding children, under children, childrearing, children’s education, child, infants, or anything associated with that stage of life listed under its own entry. Everything regarding children is listed somewhere else such as under “Parents,” “Baptism,” or other sacraments. There is material and information on children, but it does not own its own category. How indices and the material presentation of a book are organized tells a great deal about not only the focal points of the book, but also the importance of those focal points by their listed entries. In searching through the index under “Parents,” some of the points referring to children are listed such as, “childrearing,” “children as a sign of God’s blessing,” “commandment to honor parents,” “duties of parents,” and “God’s fatherhood and human fatherhood.” Under the subject of “childrearing” there are sub-headings for children’s needs and education. Everything presented is from the standpoint of parenting children, not the personhood of the child. It is noticeable in the material that children, and the importance of their stages in life, never exist as a subject that is not sublimated underneath the importance of the parent. In chapter Five this will become even more apparent in the *Code of Canon Law*.

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59 Ibid, 803.
The Catechism undoubtedly reveals itself to be a tool or guide used by the parent to understand their duties to their children as well as to understand how they should parent faithfully. The Catechism does not discuss the growth of the child, the stages of growth of the child, the reasoning ability of the child, nor the moral development of the child. In order to understand religious formation for the child, we must understand how the child is formed as a person. In looking at the passages on childrearing, the positive aspect of the information provided does note that parents’ duty is to love, care, and respect their children as human beings while promising to educate them in the faith.60 “Parents must regard their children as children of God [sic] and respect them as human persons [sic].”61 Different than teachings that have been mentioned previously in this research material, the call to parents is to see children as people, not as animals or a lower-form of person. This is a definite point of dignity for the child. Having parents understand that there is a necessity for respect, love, and affection, is also a step forward.

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home [sic] where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virutes [sic].62

In addition, the meager amount of material on childrearing, however, is about educating the child in the contents and practices of the Catholic faith. It is understandable that The Catechism would include religious formation of the child, but there is no indication as to how the child can and

60 Roman Catholic Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1994), No. 2221-2231, 594-6. The language and use of solely the male pronoun to describe children is noted here as original to the text.

61 Ibid, No. 2222, pg 594.

will learn the material, how their development of reason allows them to know the material, and most importantly, how these children have an ever-present connection to God.

Challenges with Children

Turning to the section in *The Catechism* that discusses the duties of children, the focus of the material is on filial piety; respect for the parents.63 “As long as a child lives at home with his [sic] parents, the child should obey his parents in all that they ask of him.”64 Relationships with parents, and grandparents, are of utmost importance and foremost in the duties of the child. *The Catechism* does not include a discussion on the child and their role in the Church. The child is called a “human person” and yet the responsibility of the child’s moral decisions, outside of obedience to their parents, belong squarely on the shoulders of the adults in their lives.65 Children are done “for” and “to,” lending no indication that they possess authentic self-autonomy or self-determination to make choices, let alone moral choices.

Baptism is also one of the highly discussed areas in childrearing amongst people of the Catholic faith. The standard for a Catholic family, who are practicing their faith, in the Catholic Church is to baptize the child in infancy.66 *The Catechism* states that after baptism, the child will be considered to be in the “post-baptismal catechumenate” phase in which they are to use the catechism as a guide of “grace in personal growth.”67 The purpose of *The Catechism* is to guide


64 Ibid, No. 2217, pg 592.

65 Ibid, No. 2222, pg 594.

66 Ibid, No. 1230, pg 346.

67 Ibid, No. 1231, pg 347.
the child after their infant baptism, but it is not succeeding in that purpose. It is impossible to support the growth of the child if we are unable to first understand child development. *The Catechism* does not include any resource material from child psychologists, child development specialists, or other specialists knowledgeable in appropriate fields. According to the Magisterium, *The Catechism* should be used by an authority in the teachings of the Church; this is inaccessible to children. It is also problematic that the majority of child’s religious education programs at parishes do not enroll children in religious education programs until they are in first grade and beginning preparation for their First Holy Communion. Very few parishes begin religious education for children before first grade. Those parishes that choose to prepare young children, or in even fewer cases infants, face criticism for not following the approved diocesan methods. More will be discussed on the specifics of children’s religious education in subsequent chapters. Ideally, there should be an education program age-appropriate for the catechumenate phase following infant baptism. Currently, there is no rule within the Catholic Catechesis programs at parishes that makes it mandatory for them to hold religious education classes for children before they enroll for First Holy Communion. The infants are not given an opportunity to grow as individuals or to grow in their faith.

Finally, regarding baptism, *The Catechism* states that unbaptized infants will be prayed for and given over to God’s mercy.\(^6^8\) There is no indication given that the unbaptized, no matter how young, will be spared eternity outside of the light of God. *The Catechism* changes in structure from the *Baltimore Catechism* in that it does not state that anyone can know for sure

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where unbaptized infant’s souls will go thereby eliminating the explanation of limbo. In closing the section on unbaptized infants, which consists solely of No. 1261, *The Catechism* states that this is exactly why parents should choose to baptize their children in infancy.

There is progression from the *Baltimore Catechism* to the *The Catechism*. The Catholic Church certainly made strides in viewing children as valuable parts of the family who should be respected, educated, and loved as human people. The research, methods, and understanding of children and the ways to educate children have changed vastly over the past twenty-five years. In chapters four and five, many researchers think of children as reasoning beings who are uneducated in societal norms, but not ignorant, stupid, or animalistic. The good of the child, and the importance of caring for children, is echoed in other documents of the Catholic Church as well. Papal documents and statements from the United States Council of Catholic Bishops both have material dealing with the importance of children. This material, however, is most similar to *The Catechism* and in fact repetitive in nature.

**Papal Documents and Declarations**

**Gravissimum educationis**

*Gravissimum educationis*, the education declaration of Vatican II promulgated by Pope Paul VI, was the first declaration on education in the Roman Catholic Church. Written in 1965, it was a declaration on Christian education with a focus on the importance of receiving a Christian education whether in a parochial, private Catholic, or secular school. In addition, evangelizing is also a primary concern of *Gravissimum educationis*. It is a focus of the Catholic Church to

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69 Forgive the harsh wording. While I, personally, do not deem “stupid” as a word that is appropriate for human beings, it is a word that is commonly used to describe infants and young children in popular circles.
concern itself with the spiritual development of its members. John Garvey relates Matthew 28:19
to *Gravissimum educationis*; “Go forth and make disciples of all nations.”\(^70\) The declaration was
written during Vatican II to refocus the Catholic Church’s education system, but it is important
to note that evangelization was also a prime goal.

The declaration issues twelve points that indicate the areas of importance regarding
education. The first point discusses the need for a “universal right to education.”\(^71\) It states,

Therefore children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances
in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their
physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature
sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in
pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and
constancy.\(^72\)

I would like to question, however, if the Church has truly followed its own guidelines? On one
hand in 1965 there was a push for the use of science, including psychology, in understanding
children’s needs in their development. After examining *The Catechism*, as well as pedagogical
and catechesis documents presented in chapter Five, the answer to that question is no. The
pedagogical methodology applied in catechesis classes from 1965 to the present time, has in the
majority of cases not kept up with psychological developments of the child in line with the best
sciences available.

What of the other eleven points written in *Gravissimum educationis*? Their focus is on

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\(^70\) John Garvey, “‘Gravissimum Educationis’: Does the Declaration on Education Retain Its Relevance?
*National Catholic Register* October 26 (2015).


the importance of Christian faith in education, parents as primary teachers of their children, and how religious education is done in both public and private sectors. Concerning this declaration on education, the Church’s prime motivator is that children should take with them, no matter where they are educated, the moral foundation provided for them by the Church’s teaching as promulgated first and foremost by their parents.

John Garvey, President of The Catholic University of America, rightly poses the question as to whether or not this declaration is still pertinent to today’s atmosphere. While recognizing the inherent social change between 1965 and 2018, Garvey states that Catholic education schools are only pertinent to *Gravissimum educationis* if the material they are teaching upholds “a sense of man’s [sic] transcendence or wonder at creation.”^73^ In his vision, a true Catholic school, a true Catholic education, permeates even the sciences with faith. Garvey’s perspective looks directly at Catholic schools only, not Catholic education programs outside of Catholic schools. While Catholic schools have their share of problems with infusing Catholic teaching into their diverse course offerings, catechesis programs at the parish level struggle to maintain an effective program that not only teaches children about their religion, but also helps them to live their faith.

*Familiaris consortio*

“Marriage and the family constitute one of the most precious human values…”^74^ On November 22, 1981, Pope John Paul II released his exhortation, *Familiaris consortio*, concerning

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the growing challenges of families in the changing world. Throughout the exhortation, a heavy influence is placed on the traditional family unit, the importance of conjugal love as the basis for marriage and family, and how parents are to protect their children and the family unit. Though the majority of this exhortation focuses on the struggle and ideal for the family as a whole, there are a few points that I want to discuss in further detail. These points will be further examples into the Church’s progression of thought concerning the child. Again, John Paul II will turn to three issues of children as a gift of marriage, the rights of children, and the rights and duties of parents regarding education.75

Parental love is a sign of God’s love.76 The heading of section fourteen of *Familiaris consortio* is “Children: The Precious Gift of Marriage.”77 John Paul II quotes *Gaudium et spes* by writing, “According to the plan of God…marriage and conjugal love are ordained to the procreation and education of children, in whom they find their crowning.”78 Children are first and foremost recognized as gifts of love from God. John Paul II, author of *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, is not unfamiliar with this line of thinking.79 The child becomes a physical manifestation of conjugal bliss. The danger with this anthropological claim is


76 Ibid, 14.


78 Ibid.

that the good of the child is first associated with the conjugal act of their parents, not with their own being. It is a precedent set for parents as followers of Roman Catholicism that has the possibility of becoming the foundation of their parenting. As a result, the child’s personhood is in a subordinate place to their parents. In fact, the quotation above is the only section within this part of *Familiaris consortio* on the child as a gift that mentions the child. The remainder of section fourteen focuses on the good and importance of conjugal love. This is not to say that the Roman Catholic Church or John Paul II do not believe the child to have the dignity of a subject. I do argue, however, that how we speak about the child, and how we refer to the child in their relationships determines our understanding and treatment of them as subjects with dignity.

Following the section on the child as a gift, section twenty-six is about the rights of children. John Paul II made great strides in having the humanity of children recognized worldwide, including to the 34th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York city on October 2, 1979. In *Familiaris consortio* John Paul II recalls the spirit of his address first given at this assembly by stating, “In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to the children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity, and a great respect and generous concern for their rights.”

\[80\] It becomes clear from reading this that his intention is not to place children as an after-thought amongst the rest of humanity, but to hold a special and protected place. Dignity, respect, and concern are quite possibly the most important words regarding how we tend to children.

Finally, in section thirty-six of *Familiaris consortio*, John Paul II discusses the rights and

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duties of parents to be the first and primary educators of their children.\textsuperscript{81} Parents are to raise their children with the morality provided by the Church’s teachings. Parents are asked to speak as their infant’s representative at baptism as they are responsible for them until they come of age. Parents are therefore agreeing that their child will gradually grow in the mystery of salvation. They acknowledge that their infant will come to understand the gift of faith that they have received in hopes that they may be a transformative member of the worldwide community.\textsuperscript{82} John Paul II then urges parents, if their children do not attend a parochial school, to enroll their children in religious education so that they may continue with their moral development. But this raises the question. At what point does the Church and the child’s parents allow the child to act as an individual seeking to grow in their faith?

John Paul II presents a problematic exhortation. His anthropological view of the child as first a gift of conjugal love does not match his insistence upon the dignity, respect, and concern for the child as a human person. Their being, their personhood, as given by God is a good that stands apart from any conjugal act. The child is good because of their existence. The child does not become good due to a successful conjugal act.\textsuperscript{83} In grammatical terms children should always be considered the subject, not the object. If they are considered first and foremost an object, their objectification becomes all too easy to act upon. There are problems with parents being the


\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, 39.

\textsuperscript{83} Though it would be diverging too far from the point and structure of this dissertation, I would like to insert here the importance of thinking of children as good in their own being in honor of those adoptees as well. I would also mention children being raised by family members who are not biological parents. Lives are complicated and therefore families are complicated and not always structured as John Paul II may have thought of in traditional constructs.
primary educators, including moral educators, of their children.

Two issues arise from this responsibility as primary educators. First, when parents are having their child baptized Roman Catholic in infancy, they are making statements of faith on behalf of their child. In the words of John Paul II, parents are making a commitment that they will guide their children to be part of the mystery of salvation and under the guide of the Roman Catholic Church to become members of a community. Children aren’t given a choice. This of course, is a main argument against infant baptism. My goal, however, is not to suggest that the Church would be better off throwing out infant baptism, but that it needs to take its task in spiritual and moral development more seriously. Questioning when the child should begin their religious education after baptism is a good start.

Conclusion

From baptism through their childhood, what are the elements of morality that children learn in religious education and in Catholic schools? There is no worldwide curriculum developed for Catholic schools to follow. In the United States of America, each state has its own developed state standards that are set for every subject to have some sort of uniformity. Catholic schools lack that uniformity. In addition, the newly named Executive Director of the Secretariat of Catholic Education for the United States Council of Catholic Bishops holds very admirable education degrees, but no degree in theology, pastoral studies, or religious studies. Mary Pat Donoghue is well adapted and certainly skilled in handling the administration of schools, but I believe what is lacking in Catholic education is not administrative, but a revamping of curriculum and pedagogy all together.84

What I will be discussing in the following chapters is the need for restructuring catechesis programs at parishes based on a deeper understanding of the child. The expected outcome for Roman Catholic children is to understand their moral responsibility to their worldwide community and participating in a relationship with God. These goals are not met by our current education systems. Likewise, there is no consistent teaching method or catechesis program amongst parishes across the United States of America. Each diocese is responsible for their own parishes and for the curriculum taught. These weak programs do not allow children to grow as moral individuals, to fall in love with God, or to understand adequately their faith. There are programs in some dioceses that could serve as models for weaker programs, as will be discussed in chapter Five, but they are often met with general opposition. This chapter outlined a survey of moral-pastoral documents presented by the Church with regard to caring for, educating, and rearing children. The documents, however, lack pedagogical substance, as well as a child-centric lens for understanding children.
CHAPTER THREE

ENLIGHTENMENT PEDAGOGY AND PERSONHOOD

Pedagogy for teaching young students becomes an important focus for many thinkers, writers, and educators at the beginning of the seventeenth century in Western Europe, namely France and Great Britain alike. Locke, Rousseau, Macaulay, and Wollstonecraft were among the major figures developing pedagogical methods for educating and raising children. During the Enlightenment, philosophers like Descartes begin to view children with fresh eyes. Writers developed a new and particular stance on the education of the child. Each raised distinctive questions about the nature and moral agency of the child. They discussed at length how children should be educated academically, as well as socially. The main focus in chapter Three describes the change in interest that occurs during this period. The nature of the child is at the heart of the discussion. How do the views of Rousseau and his contemporaries change pedagogical methods? What could the Roman Catholic Church have adopted into their own methods during this time and in the following centuries?

The views of these seventeenth and eighteenth century writers differed greatly from the views of the then teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on children. Rousseau remains an important figure in discussions on pedagogy and the child. There is some commonality between these thinkers in their views that transcend any previous methodology of working with the child.

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1 See various authors, Johnson, Coleman, Saha, and Sobe in particular.
Locke theorizes that through pedagogy the child can become a reasonable being making moral choices for the good of society. Locke has help on his views on education from a family friend, Mary Clarke. Rousseau places emphasis on the child as a pure and good being, but lacks attention to female children as having equal autonomy. Unlike his contemporaries, Rousseau would like to keep the child out of society and its tendency toward worldly depravations. Finally, Wollstonecraft critiques both Rousseau and Locke for their lack of insight into educating female children as well as male children. She points out dangerous repercussions of not including all children in their understandings of child development and education. Catharine Macaulay writes on the good of friendship in learning, the importance of community, and the basis of all moral learning; seeking the revealed truth of God.

**Locke**

British Western Enlightenment Pedagogy

John Locke wants his pupils to learn how to make moral decisions in the context of their society. Locke’s main treatise on education, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, written in 1693 reflects society’s need for well-educated people. One of Locke’s main themes is that parents need to be concerned with their children being “imprintable” as well as “contaminable.” Simply put, if one teaches children as early as possible the moral good of society, they will become productive members of society.

We are generally wise enough to begin with them when they are very young, and discipline betimes [sic] those other creatures we would make useful and good for somewhat. They are only our own offspring, that we neglect in this point; and having made them ill children, we foolishly expect they should be good men.2

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3 John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Sioux Falls: NuVision Publications), 30.36.
He believes that if one allows children to be spoiled and fallen to vice, they will be a burden to society. “For Locke, not learning virtue and the rational control of the passions and desires were the main goals of education.”4 Locke is mostly concerned with a well-functioning society in order to produce the greatest good. He wants his pupils able to make decisions freely; to choose the good without persuasion. Children need training to become good adults who serve society.5

Though Locke does not directly draw upon religious themes, he does come from a Puritan background and this colors his thinking. Locke lived through a very tumultuous era. He moved to the Netherlands when his employer was accused of treason. After returning, he continued to witness fighting between the Catholic, Protestant, and Parliamentary factions. Locke during this time is best known for his political thought. Locke’s treatise on education, however, is important to parents interested in raising their sons properly during this period. I am only concerned with his ideas on children, specifically, the child’s mind and personhood, the child’s body, habits, and inclinations, and pedagogy in education. Perhaps, however, we gain the deepest knowledge from looking at Locke’s personal life and correspondence with his friends. One family, the Clarkes, were particularly important to John Locke. Their correspondence shines an important spotlight helping us understand Locke’s views on education.

The Mind of the Child

Tabula rasa, the blank slate, best describes Locke’s theory on the child’s mind. Locke believes that children come into the world as unmarred, unreasoning, and untrained in

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controlling their inclinations. In his work, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke describes in detail the workings of the human mind and his understanding of personal identity. While philosophically important in understanding the adult male mind, Locke simplifies his writings on children’s minds. “For Locke, educating children, then, entails instructing their minds and molding their natural tendencies.” The mind, through reason and morality, should come to control irrational desires, vices, and tendencies. Children, however, are not born with the capacity of reason. According to Locke, they are certainly unable to reason morally. The child only learns moral reasoning through having an educated mind. Similarly to Rousseau, the child’s initial inclinations after birth are their primary means of interaction and understanding. Locke considers a tendency or inclination something that is innate to the infant. Children have preferences and personality from birth.

John Locke, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, defends the fundamental belief that humans are born without innate ideas, and thus must derive their knowledge entirely from ‘external, sensible Objects ... perceived and reflected on by ourselves.’

Rousseau and Locke disagree over the notion that inclinations are good or bad. While Rousseau offers that a child’s sensory driven nature are their best tools for education and growth, Locke understands inclinations as something that can, and will, drive a child to an immoral path as an adult. Initially, Rousseau and Locke would agree that rationality and reason are learned

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9 Ibid.

10 Ibid, 1.

11 Ibid, 16.
and not natural to the child. Rousseau, unlike Locke, believes that reason begins early and is inherent in the child’s experiences. Locke believes children in the infant or toddler stage are devoid of reason and driven entirely by sense and inclinations.

The younger they are, the less I think are their unruly and disorderly appetites to be comply’d with; and the less reason they have of their own, the more are they to be under the absolute power and restraining of those in whose hands they are.\(^\text{12}\)

Anything outside the realm of reason should not be trusted. Unlike Rousseau, Locke does not believe that a child given tools and left to their own devices would grow into an adult who is able to reason morally.

What is the chief function of the mind for Locke’s children? The mind is the person’s tool to control habit, inclination, desires, and vice through reason.

As the strength of the body lies chiefly in being able to endure hardships, so also does that of the mind. And the great principle and foundation of all virtue and worth is plac’d in this: that a man is able to deny himself his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best, tho’ the appetite lean the other way.\(^\text{13}\)

According to Locke, children are born without virtue just as they are born without reason. Since children are *tabula rasa*, the role of the parents is essential in forming proper habits, virtue, and reason in children from their birth. Children’s minds begin to grasp types of rationality as they grow, experience, and especially watch the adults around them. Locke surmises that by watching examples of rationality, children come to understand reason in action.\(^\text{14}\) This is a major point of contention between Rousseau and Locke. While Locke insists children looking to adults to form their habits and reason, Rousseau urges parents to leave the child in Nature, with only their tutor,

\(^\text{12}\) John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Sioux Falls: NuVision Publications), 33.39.

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid, 29.33.

as to develop their reason without interference of society. As Locke puts it,

I imagine everyone will judge it reasonable, that their children, when little, should look upon their parents as their lords, their absolute governors, and as such stand in awe of them; and that when they come to years, they should look on them as their best, as their only sure friends, and as such love and reverence them.

Such is the parent-child relationship for Locke.

**The Body, Habits, Inclinations, and Vice**

As important as the mind of the child is for Locke, some of his first thoughts about the child concern the body. Locke, a physician by trade, takes notice of how the child’s body moves and adapts. The body is able to work with and overcome physical hardship. As Locke states, “Our bodies will endure any thing, that from the beginning they are accustom’d to.” The body, accordingly, should be conditioned as early as possible. The child’s teacher therefore needs to be concerned with the inclinations, habits, and vices that Locke believes are expressed in the child.

He therefore that is about children should well study their natures and aptitudes, and see by often trials what turn they easily take, and what becomes them; observe what their native stock is, how it may be improv’d, and what it is fit for: he should consider what they want, wether they be capable of having it wrought into them by industry, and incorporated there by practice; and whether it be worth while to endeavor it. For in many cases, all that we can do, or should aim at, is, to make the best of what nature has given, to prevent the vices and faults to which such a constitution is most inclin’d, and give it all the advantages it is capable of.

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16 John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Sioux Falls: NuVision Publications), 35.41.


18 John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Sioux Falls: NuVision Publications), 12.5.

19 Ibid, 33.40.

20 Ibid, 45.66.
Similarly to Aquinas, Locke understands habit and vice as the root of unraveling morality and reason. Children are naturally inclined to such vices. Their inclinations need to be meted out quickly beginning after birth. Locke also warns against coddling or over-affection given to the child.

Children should be us’d to submit their desires, and go without their longings, even from their very cradles. The first thing they should learn to know, should be, that they were not to hae anything because it pleas’d them, but because it was thought fit for them. It things suitable to their wants were supply’d to them, so that they were never suffer’d to have what they once cry’d for, they would learn to be content without it, would never, with bawling and peevishness, contend for mastery, nor be hald so uneasy to themselves and others as they are, because from the first beginning they are not thus handled.21

Parents who do not control their children properly will have children who are obnoxious and hated by society.22 Locke writes that children will only be able to practice this control of their inclinations at young ages. It is not until they are adults that they will have the ability to reason well and accurately. The stakes are higher as an adult for giving into vices and inclinations that are prescribed by society. A young man runs the risk of not being accepted in social circles and therefore not having the opportunity for a full and successful life. “He that has not a mastery over his inclinations, he that knows not how to resist the importunity of present pleasure or pain, for the sake of what reason tells him is fit to be done, wants the true principle of virtue and industry, and is in danger never to be good for anything.”23

According to Locke, the progression of reason and morality takes from birth until a young man is ready to enter society. It seems like a clear and straightforward lesson.

21 John Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education (Sioux Falls: NuVision Publications), 32-33.38.

22 Ibid, 29-30.35.

23 Ibid, 35.42.
Pedagogy, according to Locke, is meant for moral and reasonable perfection of the person. Pedagogy is not meant to impart particular knowledge or subjects, such as a necessity to learn math or English. Locke believes that with proper training in habit and control of the self, the child can master subjects naturally as they progressed into adulthood. There is a need to ensure their rational mind, their will, and their morals were in place before any other elements. This is the only way that they will be dedicated members of society. If they are educated properly, they will be able to resist the sins that may be present within. “The great thing to be minded in education is, what habits you settle; and therefore in this, as all other things, do not begin to make any thing customary, the practice whereof you would not have continue and increase.” Locke counters the *tabula rasa* of the child’s mind with a strict guidance in habit and morality.

Since Locke is not interested in teaching subjects, but rather habits, custom, and morality, the choice of the educator was of utmost importance. Locke describes parents as the ideal educators of their child up through young adulthood. Parents are responsible for the earliest corrections and limitations given to their children. As we read earlier, Locke recommends curbing vice and bad inclinations from birth. This means that the parents must be the primary educators, not nannies, nursemaids, or a school system external to the home. Locke’s argument is that the child has not yet entered society and will receive better care and understanding in their

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26 Ibid, 33.40.
household. This forms an interesting distinction between parental power and institutional power. The parents are the sovereign rulers over their household. For Locke this means that not even the government has a right to get involved in what the parents deem necessary for raising and educating their children.\textsuperscript{27} Wollstonecraft, Rousseau, Macaulay, and Clarke all writing around or during the eighteenth century, treat the home as the preferred site for educational instruction.\textsuperscript{28} Parents should only give up educational rights to an institution, such as the government, in grave matters such as a national security interest.\textsuperscript{29} What does this mean for school systems? Under Lockean pedagogy, school systems are appropriate for young adults who have already developed a sense of rationale and morality. After they have developed appropriate habits and customs, they can then move on to learn specific subjects.

Parents are also able to take their children’s individual personalities into account better than an institution.\textsuperscript{30} In order for an institution to teach a large number of students, it has to create concrete rules of morality that are good for the whole and not necessarily the individual. Locke sees that if children stay at home with their parents, their lessons can be created to suit each child individually. Though Locke sees a necessity for parents to be stern with their children from birth, he also recognizes that children have personalities and free spirits.


\textsuperscript{29} Alex Tuckness, "Locke on Education and the Rights of Parents" \textit{Oxford Review of Education} 36, no. 5 (2010): 635.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, 629.
On the other side, if the mind be curb’d and humbled too much in children if their spirits be abas’d and broken much, by too strict an hand over them, they lose all their vigour and industry, and are in a worse state than the former. For extravagant young fellows, that have liveliness and spirit, come sometimes to be set right, and so make able and great men; but dejected minds, timorous and tame, and low spirits, are hardly ever to be rais’d, and very seldom attain to any thing. To avoid the danger that is on either hand, is the great art; and he that has found a way how to keep up a child’s spirit easy, active, and free, and yet at the same time to restrain him from many things he has a mind to, and to draw him to things that are uneasy to him; he, I say, that knows how to reconcile these seeming contradictions, has, in my opinion, got the true secret of education.\(^{31}\)

Parents should be careful to reprimand in private and praise publicly.\(^{32}\) It is up to the parent to decide when anger is a necessary punishment for a child’s misbehaviors.\(^{33}\) A parent withholding resolution might teach the child that they chose unwisely. Corporal punishment is rarely necessary or wise according to Locke. He does not write off corporal punishment entirely, especially in difficult cases. “Beating them, and all other sorts of slavish and corporal punishments, are not the discipline fit to be used in the education of those we would have wise, good, and ingenious men; and therefore very rarely to be apply’d, and that only in great occasions, and cases of extremity.”\(^{34}\) These include episodes of defiance, extreme stubbornness, or giving in to vice on the part of the child. The use of corporal punishment may, however, have consequences and be a detriment to the child’s development. The child must have proper motivation to act in a particular way. Stimulations, such as pain and pleasure, are the only motivators for good behavior.\(^{35}\) Locke, as we have seen, is entirely against coddling and spoiling

\(^{31}\) John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Sioux Falls: NuVision Publications), 36-7.46.


\(^{33}\) John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Sioux Falls: NuVision Publications), 42.60.

\(^{34}\) Ibid, 39.52.

\(^{35}\) Alex Tuckness, "Locke on Education and the Rights of Parents" *Oxford Review of Education* 36, no. 5
children. He has this in common with Rousseau. Without proper training, children will desire only things that they instinctually perceive as good, rather than what a higher reasoning might dictate as good. When we refer to Lockean pedagogy, should we actually continue to use the word “training” rather than “educating?”

John Locke and Mary Clarke: The Letters

Locke’s treatise on education is not the perfect document to describe the personhood of the child or how they should be educated. While it remains an important document to the study of education, it also received much critique since its inception from academics, politicians, and societal leaders. One voice, a female voice, is perhaps the most important critique of Locke’s work.

The Clarke family are good friends to John Locke. Mary Clarke, the matron of the Clarke family, was the party responsible in the household for the education of their children. Mary was not only responsible for a brood of children, but also for the running of the estate as her husband worked away from their home the majority of the time. While the letters between the group of friends begin between John Locke and Edward Clarke of Chipley, it is Mary who soon interjects and proceeds to engage the conversation. She is concerned with the education of her children, particularly her eldest son and her two eldest daughters. While Locke, in the end,


36 The historical background on the relationship between Locke and the Clarkes comes from two major sources, Mendelson and Benzaquen.


is impressed by the intellect and personality of Clarke’s daughter, Betty, he has many concerns about their eldest child, Ward.\textsuperscript{39} Throughout their years of friendship, Locke continuously changes his pedagogical approaches due to the experiences of the Clarke family.\textsuperscript{40} Mary writes about methods that work and methods that do not work for the children.\textsuperscript{41} At the same time, Mary’s chief critique of Locke is that he does not initially take the circumstances of the family into account while writing his pedagogy.\textsuperscript{42} How do children differ from one another? How does a family with nine children educate all of them under the same guidance?

Friends of Locke urge him to publish the letters between himself and Edward Clarke as a guide to educating sons, in this case, Ward.\textsuperscript{43} Yet, it is Mary’s experiences with her daughters, Betty in particular, which provide much of the information for Locke’s pedagogy. There is no mention of educating girls in Locke’s treatise. Mary’s female influence is also omitted entirely.\textsuperscript{44} Locke believes that he cannot write about girls and women being that he is a man.\textsuperscript{45} It is simply

\textsuperscript{39} Adriana S. Benzaquén, "Locke's Children," \textit{The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth} 4, no. 3 (2011): 393.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 390. This is very evident in the case of Ward Clarke and his problems with Locke’s recommended educational approach. Ward was a sick child, as noted by Benzaquen, and never completely recovered. Benzaquen notes that he was described as “melancholy” on page 391. This description of suffering from “melancholy” during this era indicates that Ward may have suffered from or something similar to depression.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 389.


\textsuperscript{43} Adriana S. Benzaquén, "Locke's Children," \textit{The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth} 4, no. 3 (2011): 393, 389.


not socially acceptable during this period. In the end, Betty becomes a rather successful woman. She keeps in contact with John Locke, as friends, despite her parents’ rejection of his friendship. Mary Clarke wondered if using Locke’s methods were the right choice concerning Ward. This ultimately drives a wedge in the friendship between the Clarkes and John Locke. Was Locke’s methodology too strict for a child like Ward? Did Locke’s pedagogy weigh the individuality of each child adequately? What Locke’s pedagogical method lacks, particularly in the case of a child like Ward, is attention to a child who has different needs. Locke’s pedagogy falls short of attending to children who may not fit what society deems is the norm. Mary Clarke, and other women writing at this time, are more concerned with understanding how to attend to differences in children’s personalities, needs, and desires. Sadly in the end, Ward commits suicide by drowning himself.

*Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is a watershed moment in the seventeenth century for a new approach to pedagogy. Locke’s public and private thoughts on education are not, however, identical. Publicly, he provides the gentlemen around him in society with a manual of how to raise young boys into productive young men. This, however, is not the entire truth of Lockean pedagogy. There are undercurrents of context below the many editions of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. Put within the context of a real family, Locke’s pedagogy sometimes works and sometimes does not. His pedagogy works differently for different children. It cannot be prescribed as a “one size fits all” based learning. What becomes of Mary Clarke’s

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47 Ibid.

48 Ibid, 393.
questions, concerns, and critiques? They never make it fully into Locke’s work.

While Locke adapts his manuscript by taking into consideration his experiences with families and children, he does not to our knowledge believe Mary to be a competent editor of his work. Mary, who runs an estate, educates her children, and reads the latest pedagogical approaches so she can assist her children, remains voiceless. What is interesting is that Locke, at least in private, takes her experiences into consideration. Ultimately Locke’s pedagogy does not discriminate between how to raise male or female children. Whether male or female, it also does not take account of a child’s personality or inner struggles.

In the case of Ward Clarke, it is not a lack of intelligence or reason that keeps him from entering society as his parents wish, it is a seemingly complicated mental illness that begins around the time of puberty. His illness is undiagnosed properly due to lack of medical understanding. Ward is diagnosed by physicians as having melancholy. Edward Clarke writes to Locke asking him for advice. Locke’s reply is that when he attends to Ward, he does not note any issues that would be the cause of melancholy. Betty Clarke, on the other hand, is able to follow Locke’s pedagogy having no outstanding impediments. She is an unremarkable case. Since Betty fits the standard, unlike her brother, learning the habits and self-control that dominates Locke’s pedagogy is a fairly easy task. Since the pedagogical basis for Locke’s pedagogy is based on the learning of habit, Ward is unable to conform to the resolute system that Locke proposes. In the end, Edward and Mary Clarke fault Locke for being unable to take an individual child’s context and full personality into consideration in his pedagogical


50 Ibid, 392.
understanding. They also fault him directly in the case of Ward, for insisting that he continue on the normal course of education.\textsuperscript{51} The child’s goal of success as an adult drives Locke’s pedagogical practices, not the needs of the child.

There are scholars who disagree with the extent to which Locke’s use of habit as conformity has been used as the mainline of his pedagogy. Koganzon notes that Locke’s use of habit is to counter conformity and vice, not to create automatons within society. She theorizes that Locke “requires a will strong enough to resist the importunities of \textit{both} nature and society.”\textsuperscript{52} Given Locke’s entire body of work, not only \textit{Some Thoughts Concerning Education}, it is probable that Locke did not want indoctrination as his means of educating children on morality and reason. When \textit{Some Thoughts Concerning Education} was released in 1693, it is Locke’s most widely read document. Parents are more concerned with his pedagogy than his other treatise.\textsuperscript{53} Much of what Locke believes does not make it into his pedagogical writings. Mary Clarke’s concern is warranted as \textit{Some Thoughts Concerning Education} reads as an educational manual and not an aid in shaping a child’s mind. Locke is so strongly opinionated in what parents should and should-not do, that the child is left as a malleable mass-in-waiting. Koganzon speculates that what Locke really wants was for young boys to grow into adults who would not be so easily swayed by the world around them, nor their own vices.\textsuperscript{54} That upon these young


\textsuperscript{52} Rita Koganzon, "Contesting the Empire of Habit’: Habituation and Liberty in Lockean Education," \textit{The American Political Science Review} 110, no. 3 (2016): 548.


\textsuperscript{54} Rita Koganzon’s studies on Locke are very well thought and developed. She may truly be correct in her theory that Locke had a deeper philosophical understanding of habit. The chief concern of this study, however, is how Locke’s pedagogy was received by the public. This is the same goal as it is with our
boys becoming men, they will be able to turn to reason and inquiry.

Rousseau

Émile

The Romantic Child

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is a philosopher, writer, thinker, and revolutionary of the eighteenth century. Born in Geneva in 1712, he was raised by his father after his mother’s death during childbirth. Eventually, after his father flees Geneva, Rousseau finds himself indebted to individuals such as Baroness de Warens and Denis Diderot. It is with the help from such individuals that Rousseau is able to develop into a most creative thinker. Rousseau is arguably one of the most important philosophers of the modern period. It is during this time in France that Rousseau penned his great work on education, Émile.

Émile becomes a success not only amongst those seeking a renewed interest in pedagogical methods, but those interested in Rousseau’s underlying political revolutionary message. In fact, there are some scholars who believe that Rousseau’s purpose in writing Émile is not one of pedagogy at all, but only a philosophically disguised political message. Rousseau only uses his pupil Émile as a means to disseminate a strong political agenda. Émile is not the other thinkers. How does the public consume and view these ideas on children and pedagogy? How does it shape their actions and reactions? Was the pedagogical theory or view of the child responsible in its delivery?


57 For more on this see Harari and Coleman. Harari sees Rousseau, primarily as a philosopher, not an educator. 788. Coleman is a bit more fluid when looking at Rousseau’s work. He sees Émile as highly philosophical, but also meant to teach morality. 766. He notes that further research can be done by looking at P.D. Jimack, The Social and Contract Discourses (London: JM Dent, 1993).
driving force behind the work Émile at all. While reading the work, the reader is drawn to the narrator, Rousseau, and his voice as the tutor. Rousseau uses the character Émile as a foil to his own voice of moral teaching.

Rousseau's discussion of examples as instruments of moral education follows immediately on a passage which deals with lies. This passage appears at a crucial moment in Book II, when Rousseau seeks to distinguish the moral world of adults from the (still) amoral world of the child. While Coleman is not going so far as to say that the motivation of Émile is to stage an uprising against societal norms of the eighteenth century, he does say that it is a work of morality and not necessarily of pedagogy.

Indeed for the purpose of this research topic on children, childhood, and pedagogical methods, Émile is investigated as a book on the growth of the child, moral teaching, and education. To begin, similarly to Clement, Augustine, and Aquinas, Rousseau seeks to explain the development and growth of the child. He seeks to answer questions such as how to educate the child properly. He wants to allow those reading Émile to understand the importance of being a child. He begins his treatise by stating,

People pity the lot of the child; they do not see that the human race would have perished if man had not begun by being a child. We are born weak; we have need of strength: we are born destitute of everything; we have need of assistance: we are born stupid; we have need of judgment. All that we have not at our birth is given to us by education.

To think that Rousseau believes that infants are born “stupid” may be a misnomer. In terms of the word as Rousseau uses it, it holds a connotation that distinguishes a lack of formal societal

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59 Ibid.

60 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Émile: Or a Treatise on Education (Buffalo: Prometheus, 2003), 2. In terms of education, Rousseau will come to a place of negative education.
knowledge, not an inferior being. Infants are unskilled in the ways of society or cultural thinking. Rousseau continues to explain that children are

… born sensible, and from our birth we are affected in different ways by the objects which surround us. As soon as we have the consciousness, so to speak, of our sensations, we are disposed to seek or to shun the objects, which produce them…

Children are malleable both physically and mentally. As such, they are more adaptive to situations, climates, and elements, which as an adult would have a greater hardship enduring. Due to their adaptive nature, children should not, according to Rousseau, be treated as little adults. Children have their own stages of development and several phases within those stages.

“Rousseau’s insistence that childhood is a separate stage in the human development would have profound ramifications in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century culture and society in France.”

Prior to the eighteenth century, stages of development for children are neither important nor noted. Even historical accounts of the child are few and far between; the growth of the child was not of particular interest. It is rare to find philosophers discussing the child in a positive way. Rousseau not only takes a step in discussing the child, but also to describe the child as born good. This harkens back to Thomistic ontological discussions in which Aquinas states that the human is born good and oriented towards the good. The picture of the good infant

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65 Ibid, 54.
66 Refer to discussion on Aquinas in chapter one.
contrasts starkly to earlier concepts of the child, which present the child as animal-like, grotesque, creatures lacking in all intelligence and sense. 67 Many of these conclusions are drawn from medical journals, orthopedic literature and based on the postlapsarian Christian idea of a child born in sin. 68 Even Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that, though good, children are simply waiting to become.

The Child as a Person

For Rousseau, the child is good. The child is pure. Once an infant begins to walk, learn, and talk, they begin to have preferences. These preferences are dictated by what the child finds pleasing by means of their senses. Rousseau states that the progression of knowing is finding likes and dislikes, learning if an object is good or needed, and finally understanding how objects relate to happiness through the use of reason. 69 This is a natural progression that takes place in children. Infants and toddlers who are coddled excessively are destined to become inept adults. 70 Rousseau writes that being left to Nature allows the child the freedom of true growth. 71

Observe Nature, and follow the route which she traces for you. She is ever exciting children to activity; she hardens the constitution by trials of every sort; she teaches them at an early hour what suffering and pain are. 72

Rousseau is not suggesting that an infant should be dropped outside and left to the wolves. He is


68 Ibid, 50.


70 Ibid, 11.


72 Ibid, 13.
insisting, however, that a balance be struck between doing for the child and allowing the child to know the struggle of doing for her or himself. Rousseau suggests that even infants in their state of needing care are constantly developing and learning without any indication to their caretakers. The goodness of Nature matches the goodness of the child. Rather than being taught the corruption of society, Rousseau holds that leaving the child to the goodness of Nature is the better option. Good children become corrupted children through society, the city, and the whim of the adults around them. “I repeat it, the education of man [sic] begins at his birth. Before he can speak, before he can understand, he is already instructing himself. Experience precedes lessons; the moment he knows his nurse he has already acquired much knowledge.”

Children learn from birth. A person’s knowledge is gained cumulatively throughout their lives, by the time they are young adults, they do not remember at what time they had learned all of their prior knowledge. For the time of infancy and, what we now call the toddler phase, the life of the child focuses on walking, talking, and eating. These milestones are the focus for the child’s first few years of life. Rousseau notes the difference between the words “infans” and “puer” are greater than some may think. By the time the child reaches the ages between five and seven, they have moved out of infanthood, “infans,” and into childhood, “puer.” For

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76 Ibid, 26.

77 Ibid, 40.

78 Ibid, 41.
Rousseau this is indicative of moving from this stage of taking in sensory information and beginning to make judgment on that information through reason. Rousseau, however, does not believe children have reason enough to make moral decisions until the age of twelve. “Memory diffuses the feeling of identity over all the moments of his existence.” The child has the ability now to remember moments in life, including choices, reactions, and causation. Rousseau, however, does not use the term “age of reason” for this grouping of children. Rather, they have the ability of self-control, exercised through an increase in knowledge and thought. Rousseau staunchly argues that children are not lacking in reason. Even infants have a sensory reasoning.

On the contrary, I see that they reason very well on whatever they know, and on whatever is related to their present and obvious interests. But it is with respect to their knowledge that we are deceived. We give them credit for knowledge which they do not have, and make them reason on matters which they cannot comprehend.

The child can make moral decisions only concerning what the child has capability of knowing. Rousseau warns against pushing too much information onto the child; it is acting in haste. The child needs knowledge and information of situations that are applicable to them. If the child has to learn extraneous information, then they become responsible for making decisions that are inapplicable to their context. When a child makes decisions based on the convictions of an adult or based on social situations beyond their understanding, their decisions are empty and lacking any moral foundation. This is not to say that when children act they act immorally due to a lack

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79 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile: Or a Treatise on Education* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 2003), 44.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid, 89-90.

82 Ibid, 72.

of reasonable understanding. It only means that children requested to act in a context beyond their stage of life are unable to make decisions that reflect a moral understanding of the situation. Similarly, it can be argued that when a child does make a decision beyond her or his own conventional stage, and the decision is a mistake, that child is not morally responsible for the mistake made.\textsuperscript{84} Depending on the age of the child, the only time that exists is the here and now. The child does not have a grasp on dimensions of time. Any action, relationships, or social context only exists in present time.\textsuperscript{85} For example, a parent may say to a three-year-old child, “You need to behave!” In the next moment the child responds, “I did it!” The concept of the child as a self that has to perform an action over an extended period in time is absent.

Rousseau is cognizant that time for a child differs from that of an adult. He also understands that as the child grows older, the concept of time changes with the child as well. Once the child, a young adult, is able to understand their own being as a being that is fluid in time, they are then responsible for moral decision making.

**Pedagogy of the Child**

Rousseau is greatly concerned not only with whom the child becomes as they grow into adulthood, but also the pedagogy by which the child is taught. Scholars, such as Harari, argue that Rousseau the philosopher inserts his own voice as Rousseau the pedagogue; they are correct.\textsuperscript{86} Rousseau is wholeheartedly committed to describing how the teacher should inform, engage with, and teach the student. In his case, the first teachers of the student are the parents.

\textsuperscript{84} Patrick Coleman, "Characterizing Rousseau's Émile," *MLN* 92, no. 4 (1977): 768.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.

His dislike of nurses and nannies stems from, in his view, an inadequate care of allowing the child to discover knowledge. In his esteem, nurses and nannies over-do for the child. Rousseau presents four main maxims that the instructor should abide by when teaching the child. The first is to allow the child to use their strengths, as they would be found in Nature. This maxim is designed to allow the child self-discovery and the ability to learn freely. Second, it is any instructor’s duty to offer the child the tools that they need, including lending intelligence or strength to the situation. The third maxim, however, is aimed at keeping the second maxim in check. The third maxim would have the instructor not give the child anything other than what is necessary. Rousseau believes that there was a fine balance between giving the child what they need and being indulgent. Coddling is reproachable, but so is abandoning. Finally, the last maxim is to know the child well enough to understand their opinion and personality. When an instructor, be it a teacher or parent, gets to know their child, they are better accustomed to knowing what they need versus being indulgent in non-essentials.

Balance is certainly a necessary word when discussing how Rousseau thinks of educating and raising children. Rousseau’s goal is to focus on the child and do what is right; indulgence and apathy are chief concerns. Rousseau is also against over-teaching the child. His belief is that over-teaching leads to the adult indoctrinating the child rather than allowing them self-discovery. Since Rousseau believes that the child is born essentially good, the child grows in

87 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Émile: Or a Treatise on Education (Buffalo: Prometheus, 2003), 11, 36.
88 Ibid, 33. All of the four maxims can be found at No. 33.
89 Ibid, 47.
90 Ibid, 43.
goodness when allowed self-discovery. Rousseau suggests that learning is life-long, beginning at birth. Though a newborn does not have the same capability as a child, they are nevertheless a learning being. Johnson argues that Rousseau’s *Émile* purposefully focused on disseminating popular ideas that the child was born imbecilic or unnaturally slow to mental growth.⁹¹ I agree with Johnson. Rousseau shifts the anthropology of the child in a positive way. The child is an individual. Rousseau, unintentionally, hearkens back to Clement of Alexandria’s appreciation of the child as a being with autonomy.⁹²

Rousseau’s agenda in *Émile* is a part of a renewal of pedagogy and understanding of the child. He, alongside his contemporaries, makes claims that turn away from the thoughts that the child is a globular mass or more akin to an animal. It is important not to dismiss this turn. Educational systems and parenting ideologies right through the twenty-first century are built upon the theories of Rousseau. In chapter Four I discuss examples of this in Montessori and Cavalletti. As for Rousseau’s maxims, each of them are essential to the whole pedagogy. The first maxim is the foundation to the rest. Rousseau believes that it is necessary to strip away the structures and norms created by society so that the child can find a place of pure learning.

In Nature, the child is able to find their inner strength without interruptions. Rousseau acknowledges Nature can guide them in learning the basic principles of the world. Nature’s classroom transcends the traditional classroom. Educational activities are found to be authentic

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⁹² I have found no indication that Rousseau read, evaluated, or referred to Clement of Alexandria in his research and writings. Rousseau’s turn in child anthropology is mostly due to his understanding of Cartesian philosophy.
when a student is able to use interior knowledge to engage in real-world meaningful tasks.\textsuperscript{93} For Rousseau, this is why traditional assessments in the classroom, such as written tests, fail. Traditional assessments only indicate if the students are able to find the correct answer, not if they possess knowledge that can be used in authentic situations.\textsuperscript{94}

Observe Nature, and follow the route which she traces for you. She is ever exciting children to activity; she hardens the constitution by trials of every sort; she teaches them at an early hour what suffering and pain are.\textsuperscript{95}

Rousseau makes it clear time and again that children are naturally more adaptive to natural changes in situations, climates, and elements. They are malleable both physically and mentally. Rousseau likens cities to graveyards.\textsuperscript{96} He stresses that in this impressionable state, children must stay away from society. Ultimately, children require the freedom and free movement of being let loose in Nature. “Our pedantic mania for instruction is always leading us to teach children things which they would learn much better of their own accord, and to forget what we alone are able to teach them.”\textsuperscript{97}

What is the instructor’s task during this time? If the child’s parents are their first instructors and Nature their second, why should the child require a formal instructor at all? In Rousseau’s second maxim, he suggests that the instructor’s task is to acquire any external tools the child might need in their education. The instructor sets the stage for the student so that they

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Jean-Jacques Rousseau, \textit{Émile: Or a Treatise on Education} (Buffalo: Prometheus, 2003), 13.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Ibid, 25.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Ibid, 43.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
may live their own experiences. Wollstonecraft and Macaulay are both critical of Rousseau for this decision. When Rousseau suggests leaving the child to Nature, he actually means a crafted pedagogy that directs the child in Nature. The child believes that they have ultimate freedom, which aids them in personal growth. A successful instructor, however, will not get in the way of this growth. They will merely aid the student in engaging in authentic activity. The instructor has control of the environment in which the student learns. Does Rousseau provide enough of an authentic experience with his pedagogy? Is freedom for the child, that is ultimately planned by the instructor, allow to find authenticity? If so, the instructor has done their job in lending the student the proper tools for experiences in education. The instructor needs to use the student’s attention as a tool for crafting their mind to these authentic situations. Rousseau writes of the child’s restlessness as a student. A good instructor will take this restlessness and turn the student’s attention to engaging situations. Attention becomes a tool of the instructor. It aids them in molding the student’s mind to a particular course of education.

Attention can also be a difficult tool for the instructor to use. If the student’s attention is diverted, it becomes a liability. Rousseau’s third maxim is that the instructor should not give anything to the student other than what is necessary. Frivolous fancies are a distraction to authentic experiences in education. Rousseau agrees here with John Locke, whose own treatise on education precedes Rousseau’s. Rousseau stands staunchly against the indoctrination of the student. Indoctrination, or over-educating, the student only leads to puppetry of ideas, not


authentic learning.\textsuperscript{100} Again there is emphasis that the student’s attention is turned toward what is necessary, not what is frivolous.\textsuperscript{101} The instructor must leave behind lessons where the student is having information engrained entirely. Education as an experience allows the student to master their skills and tools before acquisition of knowledge.\textsuperscript{102} A student has an authentic educational experience when they are able to make inquiries regarding the standards and mastery levels of their disciplines.\textsuperscript{103} The student is successful when they can reflect upon the principles guiding their own experiences. This acquisition can only happen if the instructor does not insist on engraining information rather than providing tools for self-discovery.

The instructor’s job, and Rousseau’s fourth maxim, is to know the student’s personality and opinions. The student is becoming and growing into adulthood. Their identity is forming with each of these authentic educational experiences. The instructor needs to understand their student in order to assist them in finding tools for education and leaving aside frivolity. If students are able to understand their work and identity as having application in the real world, they are more likely to understand themselves to be authentic.\textsuperscript{104} “Memory diffuses the feeling of identity over all the moments of his existence.”\textsuperscript{105} As the student gets older, their reflections upon their work begin to form their identity.

\textsuperscript{100} Jean-Jacques Rousseau, \textit{Émile: Or a Treatise on Education} (Buffalo: Prometheus, 2003), 63.


\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 141.

\textsuperscript{105} Jean-Jacques Rousseau, \textit{Émile: Or a Treatise on Education} (Buffalo: Prometheus, 2003), 44.
Rousseau provides a clear methodology beginning with his thoughts on the child’s personhood through their education into adulthood. For Rousseau, the child is not an object. The child is pure, important, and malleable. The child is inherently good due to their lack of corruption. It is because of this identity that the education of the child and the pedagogy used to educate the child is so very important. If as instructors, we are given not a blank slate, but a pure and good being to educate, then it is our job to assist them well. The ultimate crime for Rousseau is to take this good child and have them become another object in a corrupt system to become corrupted. If we are to take Rousseau seriously, that means when we educate a child, we need to address them as persons with a growing identity of their own. We need to address them as beings with their own special type of reasoning. We need to cherish their pure, uncorrupted minds.

**Pedagogical Refutes**

The Issues of Enlightenment Pedagogy

Rousseau and Locke are undoubtedly two of the most read pedagogical theorists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They critique each other, however, just as other notable thinkers and writers critique them as well. Locke and Rousseau differ greatly in their approaches to educating and raising the child. Locke turns to nurturing the *tabula rasa* as a means to educating the child through proper habit and reason, while Rousseau sees perfection in the child’s natural state. This provides the thinkers of the eighteenth century with two different views of the child. Locke determines that the child’s inclinations will only turn toward vice via want and desire. Locke is determined to stamp out ill-bred habit. Rousseau determines that the child’s inclinations are indicative of a pure form of human being. The natural child is free of the

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stink and savagery that society will teach him. With these differing anthropologies of the child, the pedagogies that follow are also quite different. “… The role of parents, the proposed method of education, and the duty of the educated man in society …” are all concepts that contrast between Locke and Rousseau.  

What does this mean for the child? Do Locke and Rousseau propose fundamentally different accounts of the basic nature of the child? While the child is anthropologically good for Rousseau, does Locke suggest that the child is born completely neutral? Locke and Rousseau see the inclinations of the child as dangerous and pure, respectively. In fact though, they both agree that the child has inclinations even if they differ on their meaning. Locke and Rousseau also diverge on the child’s ability to reason. Locke puts the parents in the forefront of the child’s life as educator because the child will follow the parents’ moral lead. While Locke doesn’t believe the child has the capability to reason on their own, he does believe that they can come to understand reason through example. Rousseau does not believe that the child is capable of reason, particularly moral decision making, until the age of twelve. The child does possess a sort of sensory reasoning from birth. Due to their delay in ability to reason, the job of the parents is to keep them away from society at large and in Nature. In this natural setting they will follow their pure inclinations and eventually make and understand moral choice. Locke and Rousseau would agree that the child is important, as is their development. They also agree that educational institutions are highly problematic as their teachings are impersonal and agendized. Despite any difference, each thinker highlights different needs and importance of the child. This is quite different from the treatment of children just a century before. It is suggested that by the

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108 Ibid, 12.
eighteenth century there were three different types of anthropology for the child, as she/he exists at birth.\textsuperscript{109} The first coming from the theological anthropological Augustinian view that the child is born corrupt and in sin.\textsuperscript{110} The second, favoring Rousseau, is that the child is innately good.\textsuperscript{111} Finally, the Lockean view that the child is \textit{tabula rasa}.\textsuperscript{112} Though these are certainly three neat examples of the understanding of the child during the eighteenth century, it is overly simplified. Augustine, though certainly read more than other theological thinkers, is not the only position on the anthropology of the child. Locke also sees the goodness of the child, but believes it needs more nurturing than Rousseau. The child’s being, personhood, autonomy, is not so finely defined by the seventeenth century, let alone the eighteenth century. Rousseau and Locke are leaders in coming to understand the child in a more favorable light, but they are not alone.

\textbf{The Women}

Mary Clarke, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Catharine Macaulay, are three women who are determined to understand children and their pedagogical needs. Mary Clarke, as discussed, provides a practical example of a mother at home with her children. Her critiques of Locke to update his pedagogy to fit her and her children’s needs are, at times, unanswered. Nevertheless, she continues with their home education by altering his pedagogical method as she tries to fit it to her different children.\textsuperscript{113} Unfortunately, as with her son Ward, this is not always successful.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[110] Ibid.
\item[111] Ibid.
\item[112] Ibid.
\item[113] Field notes that Wollstonecraft, in addition to her concerns over primarily female children, also felt that after a certain age children should be enrolled in an education program that suited them personally. Some teenagers should be take into trades, rather than stay in school as fit their personalities and skills.
\end{footnotes}
She is not the only woman who took the time to study pedagogical methods. Mary Wollstonecraft, feminist, philosopher, writer, and mother to Mary Shelley, is highly concerned with education for girls. As noted, how to educate female children is not mentioned in the writings of Locke. Rousseau writes on the education of Sophie, but only to provide a needed counter-part to her husband, Émile.114 Both Wollstonecraft and Macaulay do not approve of the female pupil being disregarded in pedagogical theory. Yet, there is no standard instruction for educating a girl at this time.115 This is a problem for both Locke and Rousseau. They did, however, side slightly more so with Locke in that he did not see a difference in the early education between male and female students.116 Wollstonecraft appreciates Locke and Rousseau’s theories that link education and childrearing to the good of society, but that well may be where her affinity for male Enlightenment thinkers ends.117 Wollstonecraft’s focus on the female child should not be taken lightly. It might seem narrow to not consider the male child, but her argument is that the female child is not allowed to be a child at all.118 Rousseau’s view of

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118 Ibid, 199.
women, young women, and girls was highly romanticized and based on male need. Historians of childhood and youth would do well to consider Wollstonecraft’s assertion that the fundamental barrier to sexual equality in the eighteenth century was not women’s confinement to a particular “sphere” but rather the lack of any clear transition between dependent girlhood and independent womanhood."

Wollstonecraft surmises that young girls are taught to run a household, but upon becoming women are asked to be more pleasing by maintaining girlish attributes. Having women act girlish does not afford them the ability to actually transition into a role where they are using their faculties. In addition, and important to later research in this body of work, there is a danger in sexualizing the young girl. As men prompt women to act as young girls, it is perpetuating a cycle of objectification. Objectification of children is highly problematic.

Wollstonecraft also critiques Rousseau on writing of women in a way that not only sexualizes their girlishness, but also their lack of intelligence or thought. “‘Rousseau,’ Wollstonecraft wrote, ‘is not the only man who has indirectly said that the person of a young [sic] woman, without a mind … is very pleasing.’” Wollstonecraft asserts the men of that period prefer having women who hide their intelligence or are never even allowed to explore it. As girls become women, they are taught by society to act as decorous embellishments for their husbands. As an adornment or ornament, and not autonomously thinking women, they become

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121 Ibid, 208.
objects. Women’s objectification and sexualization rely on turning them back into children. They are stripped of their personhood, growth, and achievement. This is a danger to children. Wollstonecraft maintains that children should remain innocent.\textsuperscript{122} If women, however, are desired to be innocent, sexual, and child-like, the same is too easily desired of children as well. Meaning, there is risk of increased sexualization and objectification of children. Macaulay also highly criticizes Rousseau for his theory that women need to be truly feminine, coquettishly feminine, in order for a man to achieve his true masculine state.\textsuperscript{123} Men are dependent on submissive women to feel like men.

Aside from their stance on educating girls and women, Wollstonecraft and Macaulay both stand for pedagogy based on moral truth. Each dissent from any educational instruction that involves manipulation, coercion, conniving, or convincing.\textsuperscript{124} In different ways, this includes both Rousseau and Locke. A critique of Rousseau is that the pedagogy he proposes including moving to the country and allowing the child to be free, is actually highly controlled by the intentions and directions of the tutor. Locke, to a lesser extent, still insists that the parents control their child’s habits. Wollstonecraft and Macaulay have a lesser problem in general with Locke than Rousseau. Though their goal is to seek out community, not control.

Perhaps most importantly, both Wollstonecraft and Macaulay ground their pedagogy in practical application of a household that teaches the lessons of reason and morality. Every day


\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, 604.
moments in the household should be used as teaching moments and invaluable lessons.\textsuperscript{125} Familial conversation, as well as structured conversations with guests and visitors, become very important to developing critical thinking, moral decisions of the community, and friendships.\textsuperscript{126} Children are able to learn not just facts, or standard habits, or how to feel free, but how to live. Macaulay feels that friendship, particularly, is important, as it is foundational to learning.\textsuperscript{127} Friendship is a moral good that requires communication and responsibility to another. Isolated children, perhaps even Rousseau’s Émile, are raised singularly, responsible only for themselves until the prescribed age of reason. Macaulay finds a space for the child between isolation from the community and objectification by the community; a respected friendship. Wollstonecraft uses stories, fables, and conversations as a basis for critical-thinking and exemplifying virtues.\textsuperscript{128} Both Macaulay and Wollstonecraft believe that in truth children can be taught virtue.\textsuperscript{129} Their pedagogies are both based on the belief that God is truth. Reason and rationality are innate to human beings. We teach children to act and think virtuously by leading them in reasoning through moral principle.\textsuperscript{130} They see, better than their contemporaries, that children are not without reason or rationality. Children do, however, need to be guided and aided in learning to navigate their world so that they can be moral decision makers.


\textsuperscript{126} Ibid, 448.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 455.


\textsuperscript{129} Ibid, 604.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid, 610.
**Conclusion**

Rousseau and Locke dominate as pedagogical theorists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively. Many pedagogical theories are born out of Rousseau’s liberation of the child and Locke’s emphasis on self-reflection and control. Though their pedagogies differ in method and means, they each begin with a positive view of the child. The child is essentially good. Locke understands the child to be *tabula rasa*, but that does not have a negative connotation of a child born in sin. Their anthropological views differ so greatly from the thinkers who wrote pre-Enlightenment. Society has changed. The Enlightenment writers assist in changing their world as they also change with the world. Education becomes an unavoidable topic amongst parents. In order to create a better society, citizens need to educate their children bearing in mind the outcome desired. If you want citizens who make moral decisions, then you have to teach children how to make moral decisions for the good of society and themselves.

Many thinkers, such as Wollstonecraft and Macaulay, understand the risk of objectifying children, particularly female children. Objectified human beings are stunted in their ability to become or to act as autonomously reasoning adults. Wrongs and degrading acts that are committed against children who are objectified are atrocities to humanity. While Locke and Rousseau are able to change the anthropological view of the child, it was Wollstonecraft, Macaulay, and even Mary Clarke, who are able to understand how to work with the child. They have an understanding of how to take these innocent lives and help them navigate a sometimes-unforgiving world. If Wollstonecraft or Macaulay were to have a chance at working with Ward Clarke, would he have had a different life? It is, of course, impossible to say for sure. We can surmise, however, that conversations, stories, and allowing Ward to learn on his own terms, may have eased his tension. Wollstonecraft writes of her vision for education being a system where
both male and female students would learn together not only in academic pursuits, but also practical ones. Her vision is not one of class or wealth, but of understanding what each student’s needs were and helping them.

Moving from this Enlightenment period into the present, the influence of some of these thinkers becomes evident. Major strides have been made on behalf of the child at this point in time. Unfortunately, not all of them are universally accepted. The poor in society certainly have a more difficult time being able to educate and allow their children space and time to grow. Education is privilege. Over the course of time schools of thought, philosophy, and religion that did not adopt some of the theories set forth by these thinkers, have been a hazard to the educational system. Even into the contemporary era, children are objectified or not given their proper place as rational autonomous persons.

There are pedagogists, however, who take the lessons learned by our Enlightenment thinkers to heart. In chapter four, it will be evident that some of the best pedagogical methods available for education, religious education in particular, are born of principles set forth and founded during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If we continue to build our pedagogical methods on poor anthropology, our children will remain things that are treated as such. By taking up the theories that uphold the child’s personhood, they can be educated well to have fulfilling lives for themselves and in community.

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CHAPTER FOUR

REVERSING THE AGENTS: PEDAGOGY THROUGH THE CHILD’S EYES

The Enlightenment brings about various changes regarding how the person thinks about themself in the world. For the first time, thinkers such as Locke, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft suggest that the person be considered an agent who acts for and on behalf of a greater community of individuals. This turn to the self does not suggest that communities should be abandoned in search of an individualistic society. Self-reflection allows the individual to understand themselves in light of their context, their environmental situation, their family unit, and in their lived communities. Each individual works, plays, and lives daily in their community.

A healthy individual, according to Locke, is an asset to their community and to society as a whole. For Rousseau, self-reflection leads to an organic understanding of goodness and morality. Wollstonecraft asserts that an individual must consider their own agency in order to recognize the rights of another person.

In chapter Three, I examine these and other thinkers to determine their views on childhood and the pedagogy of education for children during the Enlightenment. Locke, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft each develop comprehensive pedagogical methods. How is their knowledge fundamental for foundations in religious pedagogy for children? How do the anthropological ideas of Locke, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft form Post-Enlightenment views of
the child?\footnote{1} Chapter Three highlights the secular changes at work in the field of education and in society. Chapter Four complements chapter Three by turning to Post-Enlightenment Christian thoughts on childhood and the dignity of the child under the conditions of modernity. The Roman Catholic Church, pastorally and theologically, has not formally adopted any revised anthropology of the child or universal pedagogical methods for children’s religious education.\footnote{2}

The nineteenth century is, among others, characterized by the Industrial Revolution that radically transforms parts of the Western World. Europe experiences several revolutions, beginning with the French Revolution, as well as large-scale wars such as the Napoleonic Wars or the German-French War, while the United States survives the Civil War. Due to hardships faced by lower to lower-middle class families, including many immigrant families and families suffering slavery in the United States, there are two different portrayals of childhood in the nineteenth century. Some writers portray the realism and violence that harms children’s lives. Other writers are part of nineteenth century Romanticism, a discovering in childhood movement. This movement, which portrays the happy nature of the child’s life, presents childhood as a relief from societal ills. Christian scholars of this era rarely address the hardships of children living in poverty. They do write about the child as a person, as an intrinsically valuable person, which is the basis for creating an equitable treatment of all children.

Post-Enlightenment Christian scholarship takes a different approach to thinking about the

\footnote{1}{The purpose of using the term “Post-Enlightenment” is to designate a period in time during which the Enlightenment thinking transforms into what is now called Modernity. For thinkers like Schleiermacher, to whom I will turn in this section, it is a broad term used since he does not so easily fit into a category. He is critical of the Enlightenment philosophy and is categorized as Romantic, but again, he does not quite fit that category either. Schleiermacher’s theology was the foundation for parts of modern theology, but he was not technically writing during that period.}

\footnote{2}{This chapter and the next will discuss areas where it is attempted.}
child. It assumes a complicated but essential role of bridging early Christian teachings, Scriptural writings, and the Enlightenment philosophical and pedagogical insights about the child. The new approaches must consider both the assumed corruptible nature of the child from Early Christian thinkers such as Augustine, but also the philosophical anthropology of the Enlightenment. Is there space in a Christian ethics of the child that retains the Christian theological identity but acknowledges the child’s dignity as seen in modern ethics? This chapter discusses this possibility.

During the nineteenth century, Protestantism begins to flourish with thinkers like Schleiermacher. They garner a new era of progress. By the twentieth century, the works of Schleiermacher are used in pedagogy and anthropology for the child.

The subject of children and their experience is not a regular dogmatic commonplace, and the sources for retrieving children’s experience seem either nonexistent or at least relatively difficult to recover. Moreover, among the ideas about children that one can retrieve from traditional theological texts, very little is directly helpful for a contemporary theology of childhood; any of our Christian forbears’ ideas and practices demand critical exposure, not triumphant reprisintation [sic].

Romanticism is a period in which Christian theology strives to capture the essence of the child and childhood, while attempting to work within established theological doctrine. Similarly to Clement of Alexandria, Schleiermacher turns to the Gospels as having the authoritative view on children. In addition, however, he acknowledges the child’s subjectivity as dignity, based on Enlightenment anthropology. Schleiermacher also elevates the goodness and essential nature of childhood.

Philosophies of the child that indicate the child has intrinsic value, i.e. dignity, catch the attention of an Italian physician at the end of the nineteenth century. Dr. Maria Montessori is not

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only a medical doctor, but also the founder of the pedagogical method, the so-called Montessori Method. Starting from Schleiermacher’s framework for the intrinsic value of the child, Montessori and Montessori interpreters put Schleiermacher’s framework into action. From the nineteenth century into the twentieth century, children are more and more recognized as having intrinsic value in child development and education scholarship. Many of them experience the trauma of hard labor and war as they try to have a childhood. While Schleiermacher affirms the child’s intrinsic value via the Gospel and theological anthropology, the Montessori scholars give shape to this concept by using the intrinsic value of the child in relation to their relationships, their being, and education. Other than the Romantics, the Realist novels of Charles Dickens, and others, paint a much darker picture about the realities of children in the nineteenth century, highlighting the importance of pointing to children’s own subjectivity and dignity.

**The Subjectivity and Dignity of the Child - A Nineteenth Century Transition**

In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt, as injustice. It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to; but the child is small, and its world is small, and its rocking-horse stands as many hands high, according to scale, as a big-boned Irish hunter.4

The Industrial Revolution is a dangerous and damaging time for children in Western History. Charles Dickens, heralded as one of the finest writers of the nineteenth century, often writes about the lives of children. Born into the period of the Industrial Revolution, he experiences, witnesses, and lives the hardships that burden children during this time. During his lifetime, the Industrial Revolution reaches its peak, and the scars that mar the children of Great Britain are indelible. Meanwhile, the United States of America also experiences the effects of the

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Industrial Revolution. Just as in Great Britain, the children of the United States work in factories, doing hard labor alongside their families. Children, brought and born into slavery, labor in fields under horrific conditions. Children as young as three are documented as working in coal mines, shucking oysters, and picking cotton.\(^5\) The Industrial Revolution in the United States continues longer than in other countries due to the effects of the Civil War.\(^6\) Children face unprecedented dangers in their work during this time in United States history.\(^7\) There are few labor or educational laws in the United States during this period. As a result, decrees and laws, to be discussed in chapter Five, are enacted to ensure the safety, welfare, and prosperity of children. The Industrial Revolution, though potentially the most dangerous, was not the first time in history where Western children are exposed to hard lives.\(^8\) The Industrial Revolution brought to the forefront the experiences of enslaved children, marginalized children, and immigrant children who are seen as objects in an exploitational system. The reality is that children are continuously at risk, even in the twenty-first century, to being exploited through labor and trafficking conditions.


\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Laura L. Leavitt, “Orphan Trains,” in *The World of Child Labor: an Historical and Regional Survey*, ed. Hugh D. Hindman (Armonk: Routledge, 2009), 464. Leavitt describes the state of poverty throughout her article. The whole section on North American child labor is a resource as to the horrific work conditions children faced from glassworks to coal mining during this era.

Authors like Dickens, Sinclair, and Hugo each write about children’s lives as they witness them. The works of these writers are contrary to the works of Enlightenment writers like Locke and Rousseau. Even Locke, whose description of childhood is more austere than Rousseau's, understands childhood to be a time of education and development, not of peril. The nineteenth century conditions under which children labor are so horrific that they garner much criticism. Not all authors, however, shoulder this responsibility. Formidable nineteenth century authors such as Longfellow, Wordsworth, and Twain take up the banner of Romanticism when it comes to childhood. They write optimistic visions of children’s imagination, play, the beauty of youth, and happy lazy afternoons on the river. While these certainly encapsulate elements of childhood, they are not universal experiences of children. They do not represent the lives of all children coming of age during the Industrial Revolution. What the Romantic period authors provide is an idyllic vision of childhood that they believe every child should live. In a very Platonic sense, the perfection of childhood extends just beyond human reaches, but remains visible.

Germany in the early nineteenth century sees a shift from the Enlightenment thinkers to the Romantic writers. This shift, however, is not sharply defined. In addition to the shift in philosophical views, Germany also experiences a shift in social structure between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The separation of the nuclear family shifts from civic

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9 Stables writes about Wordsworth in particular. Wordsworth was noted for his descriptions of Romantic childhood. The period of Romanticism differs between the locations of each of these authors, yet has enough in common to discuss them in general. It is also noteworthy that these authors may not have considered themselves to romanticize childhood. For instance, while Twain’s popular story of Tom Sawyer portrays a laid-back adventure-filled childhood for some, the realities of Huckleberry Finn’s life, and the story that Twain wrote surrounding Finn, are quite a sobering portrayal of slavery.

10 Dawn DeVries. “‘Be Converted and Become Little Children’: Friedrich Schleiermacher on the
society and political life. For children – especially those of the bourgeois households – this shift means that parents, particularly the fathers, are responsible for their upbringing and education. The roles of parents are defined within the family and institutional structures. For men it means participating in governance. Women are mostly relegated to the sphere of the home, but may also own small businesses such as fashion shops. With this social transformation, there are changes in religious and faith structures as well. The nuclear family is a church within a Church, at least in the Protestant faith groups.

Schleiermacher’s Dialogue on Children

Schleiermacher is a Romantic thinker and writer. Some scholars, however, see remnants of Enlightenment thinking in Schleiermacher’s writings. Schleiermacher, like many other Romantics, writes literature in addition to lectures and sermons. His writing is therefore also a critique on rhetoric and a turn to the didactic, both notable in Kantian thought. Kantian reason does not stand alone in Schleiermacher’s dialogue. He turns to feelings of dependency, relationality, and essence. For Schleiermacher the question becomes, “How do I raise a Christian family?” The teaching authority resides with the children’s parents. As a pastor, and

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12 Ibid. Newey states that Schleiermacher, while part of the Romantic movement, did not lose his roots in Kant.


14 Ibid, 340.
the son of a pastor, Schleiermacher knows the importance of keeping faith alive within the household, particularly amongst its youngest members.

The turn to the subject that begins with the Enlightenment is a central motif of the Romanticism writings. Apart from acknowledging the subjectivity and dignity of the child, Schleiermacher’s love of the Gospel becomes the cornerstone for his philosophy of the child and childhood. Applying the Gospel, he understands the child as a subject having intrinsic value, i.e. dignity in Kant’s sense. “Children are born endowed with a basic dignity.” Schleiermacher’s love of the Gospel becomes the cornerstone for his philosophy of the child and childhood. Applying the Gospel, he understands the child as a subject having intrinsic value, i.e. dignity in Kant’s sense. “Children are born endowed with a basic dignity.” Schleiermacher’s love of the Gospel becomes the cornerstone for his philosophy of the child and childhood. Applying the Gospel, he understands the child as a subject having intrinsic value, i.e. dignity in Kant’s sense. “Children are born endowed with a basic dignity.” Kant believed that this happened in large part through education. The child hears narratives of morality and at the same time reflects upon their interior moral capability. They begin to associate the moral motive with their own dignity as a moral doer. Both Schleiermacher and the Montessori scholars use the Gospel as moral narrative, which fits well in conjunction with Kant’s development of dignity through education.

Childhood does not exist in a vacuum. Childhood and adulthood are quite complementary. Each thrives because of its relation to the other. Their intertwining reveals that the child-adult relationship is dynamic and must aim at mutual respect. The relationship is not about one side affirming the other, but a constant tension between the two. Scholars, child psychologists, and theologians take until the twentieth century, however, to explore children’s subjectivity, their dignity, and the child-adult relationship. Schleiermacher does not have this

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16 Ibid, 616.

17 Ibid, 617. I do mean doer here and not an agent in the sense of ultimate freedom to act. This goes to autonomous proportionality that I discuss in chapter five.

18 In chapters Four and Five I refer to the child-adult relationship of the child-parent relationship. In terms
knowledge available, and so he expresses his own insights and experiences, contributing to the
growing literature on the child and childhood during his lifetime.

In medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist; this is not to suggest that children
were neglected, forsaken or despised. The idea of childhood is not to be confused with
affection for children: it corresponds to an awareness of the particular nature of
childhood, that particular nature which distinguishes the child from the adult, even the
young adult. ¹⁹

Ariès affirms that concepts of childhood were missing altogether through the medieval era. In
theology, until Schleiermacher, concepts of childhood and the essential child-adult relationship
are missing in theology altogether.

The Gospel

In chapter One, I noted that Clement of Alexandria is one of the few theologians who
centered the adult pedagogy on the Gospel passages on children. Clement was a teacher and a
pastor. As a teacher, as a theologian, and as a pastor, Clement explains the Gospel through
sermons to catechumens. Schleiermacher, similarly to Clement, does the same. He understands
that the Gospel message about children is particularly valuable. It is not the adults who Jesus
calls to himself but the children. Schleiermacher turns specifically to Matthew, chapter 18 as

¹⁹ Philippe Ariès, Centuries of Childhood: a Social History of Family Life (New York: Vintage Books,
1962), 128.
well as the Nativity narrative to examine children’s place in creation.\textsuperscript{20} In Matthew 18:1-5, Jesus says to the disciples,

‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.’\textsuperscript{21} There are at least five ways Jesus interacts with children throughout his Gospel teachings, which Schleiermacher adopts.\textsuperscript{22} First, Jesus blesses children and hands them the reign of God. Second, Jesus makes children the models for receiving the reign of God. Third, Jesus shows children to be exemplary in receiving the reign of God. Fourth, Jesus asks all to be called to the service of children as a sign of God’s greatness. Fifth, Jesus tells his disciples that service to children is the ultimate way of receiving himself and God. In the Matthean passage quoted above, Jesus explains to the disciples that unless they become like little children, they will not receive the kingdom. Children are not subordinate to their parents in their being or personhood; instead they are held up as the standard of being. Jesus’ Gospel message in Matthew is the foundation for how children ought to be treated according to Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher singles out Jesus’ message in Matthew. While some scholars argue that Jesus’ message in Matthew is a message of humility, Schleiermacher sees it as more.\textsuperscript{23} He is


\textsuperscript{21} NIV Matthew 18:1-5.


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 40-41. Her explanation of Matthew is well done and accurate in highlighting the humble nature of a child. I believe Schleiermacher digs more deeply into the message to understand it as indicative of dignity and subjectivity.
surprised by the call for the adult disciples to become children once more. To become a child again is to step into a different stage in life. The child’s humility in Matthew 18:1-5 is evidence of the child’s acceptance of each moment. The child does not see themselves as who they will become, but as-they-are. Children’s ability to exist within a different mode of temporal consciousness than adults allows them to exist in each moment. Many adults lose this ability as they develop, leaving children as models with this capability to live in the “here and now.” Schleiermacher understands the Matthean passage to reveal the intrinsic value of childhood, and he emphasizes the dignity of children in their own right: children are no longer merely an analogy, held up for didactic purposes as in Clement. Rather, children’s own subjectivity becomes the center of interest.

**Being**

Expression of Feelings

Matthew 18 is not the only passage of the Gospel where Schleiermacher finds inspiration. He develops *Christmas Eve Celebration: A Dialogue*, which is based on the Nativity accounts in the Gospel. *Christmas Eve* is Schleiermacher’s first published dialogue. It is written at the turn of the century in 1805. His purpose is to engage the reader with the love and joy of Christmas,

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25 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Christmas Eve Celebration: A Dialogue*, ed. and trans. Terrence N. Tice (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010). *Christmas Eve Celebration: A Dialogue* is published under other names such as *Christmas Eve: A Dialogue on the Celebration of Christmas*. *Christmas Eve Celebration: A Dialogue* will be for the remainder of the dissertation notated as *Christmas Eve*. Note that the title is changed from the original version through subsequent publishing. Tice notes that at one point the title is shortened to just *Christmas Eve* as well. They are all the same work from Schleiermacher and the from the English translation by W. Hastie in 1890.

but also to examine feelings of rebirth through the living Word as Schleiermacher recognizes them in children. As the dialogue unfolds in Platonic fashion, Schleiermacher introduces each of his characters. Immediately we meet Sophie, the gregarious child of the household. Sophie is the focal point of the dialogue. “…it all centers in the dancing eagerness, the honest enthrallment, and the tenderness of a child.” In parts two and three, respectively, there are speeches from three women and three men at the party. It is Sophie, however, who mirrors Christ in the Nativity. Schleiermacher deftly reaches deeper into the Gospel message and into the Nativity story to discuss the ontology of the child. Sophie is very open with her feelings and her love of God. She draws ire from another guest, Leonhardt, because she so remains sincere in her feelings about her faith. Schleiermacher uses Sophies’ openness to further examine the being of the child. Leonhardt, in contrast, represents strict reason. His need for reason alone makes him suspicious of a child who connects with her faith by any other means. Schleiermacher


critiques Kantian reasoning through the character of Leonhardt.\textsuperscript{33} Although there are many traces of Rousseau’s view on emotions, Schleiermacher also critiques him. For instance, Rousseau is highly critical of community as the foundation for a child’s upbringing.\textsuperscript{34} Schleiermacher, however, situates the child directly in the community as an extension of Church. He indicates that both Leonhardt’s Enlightenment skepticism and Rousseau’s turn to nature can corrupt the child. For Schleiermacher, the child’s being means something else entirely. The child does not let reason dominate their relation to God. The child is open to sense, feeling, and response.\textsuperscript{35} Nor should the child be left isolated from a faith community. The child not only receives guidance from the community, but also gives to the community. As exemplary blessings, children help lead adults in sanctification. They are models of a life in the present, shedding the obsessions with work, and bringing back into focus basic human relationships.\textsuperscript{36}

Acceptance of Feelings

Just as Sophie is open with her feelings about her faith, she is also open to acceptance of her feelings in the moment. Schleiermacher marvels at a child’s willingness to express how they feel, and to accept these feelings. Like living in timeless communion with God, the child accepts whatever is in the immediate present.\textsuperscript{37} Adults are not able to do this with such ease. For an

\textsuperscript{33} Edmund Newey, \textit{Children of God the Child as Source of Theological Anthropology} (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 97.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, 90.


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 348.
adult, it is difficult not to think of time and action as dependent on the past and future. Adults work to control the present through actions both backwards and forwards in time. As a result it becomes very difficult to be in communion with God in the way a child is in communion with God. A child is able to be, without reflecting on the actions that take them to the present or what they need to do to become. Schleiermacher, through his character of Karoline, suggests that when adults are in the presence of children, the children are able to draw the adults back into the present time of being through play and joy.38 Throughout the dialogue, Schleiermacher focuses thematically on the difference between men and women as Christians. The adults discuss that men have to shed off their rough character of youth in order to convert back to Christianity. One party-goer, Eduard, notes that the child is not in need of conversion at all, because they are with the Christ-child in the moment. “… what is the celebration of Jesus’ infancy but the distinct acknowledgment of the immediate union of the divine with the being of a child, by virtue of which no conversion is further needed?”39 The child is unique in their position to identify with Christ because they are not adults. The child feels and accepts the presence of God wherever and as-they-are.

Utter Dependence

Schleiermacher teaches that children are held in highest regard by God. They are the examples by which adults may enter the kingdom of heaven within God’s holy reign. Children, however, are not mini-deities. They are not omnipotent or omniscient. The child’s openness of expression, acceptance of their present being, and dependence on those around them, make them


God’s favored amongst humans. Yet, the child’s greatest gifts are also what make the child the most vulnerable. When we hear dependence in contemporary culture, it can carry a negative connotation. We do not like to think of ourselves as dependent on others. Perhaps it is likened to being childish; not living as an adult. Schleiermacher sees dependence in a different way. When he discusses the child that is dependent as a gift, he likens it to humanity’s dependency on God. “…children qua children possess a spiritual perspective that is necessary for Christian faith. In their utter vulnerability and dependence, children mirror the relationship between God and humanity.”

Children are born vulnerable. Though they possess sharpened instincts and proportional means of reasoning, children are dependent on adults to live. Schleiermacher understands this state of dependence to also be indicative of openness to God. Parents and the community are responsible for teaching the child and developing a sense of higher understanding. Similarly, humanity is utterly dependent on God for God’s in-dwelling in the soul, and for communion with God, as Augustine has already laid out in his Confessions.

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40 The discussion on vulnerability will unfold in chapter Five. The concept of vulnerability begins here with Schleiermacher, but finds its fruition with Benjamin and Haker contextualizing it for the twenty-first century.


42 Studies in the fields of psychology and child-development now suggest that children as early as 10 months are able to logically reason. See study in Developmental Science by Stella Lourenco of Emory University. As adults we have looked for signs of child’s reasoning capability based on our own normative concepts, cognitive understanding, and societal relationships. I would suggest, however, that once we - the adults - learn to understand children without these pre-conceived notions, we may find that their abilities go beyond what we currently understand.

Schleiermacher accepts that adults are hesitant to acknowledge their dependency, even in their relation with God. Children, on the other hand, are ready to accept their dependency, which is already part of their experience, making the communion with God and the in-dwelling of Christ in the soul easier to welcome imminently.  

Schleiermacher holds that fostering a trust of dependence in the child requires parents and communities to make their love a self-sacrificing act. Parents must have the best interest of children in mind. If they lose the child’s trust, fail to respond empathetically to their emotions, or harm the child, the child becomes at risk of being exposed in their vulnerability.

Schleiermacher indicates in the *Christmas Eve* that the relationship between the child and the parents needs to be healthy. Sophie states that she can see Mary, the mother of Jesus, in her own mother. When Ernestine, Sophie’s mother, is questioned about this, she replies,

‘I truly feel that she did not say too much when she thought that I might well be the mother of the blessed child, because I can in all humility honor the pure revelation of the divine in my daughter, as Mary did in her son, without in the least disturbing the regular relation of mother to child’

The relationship between parent and child, this means, must aim at mutual love.

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46 Ibid, 342, The Child in Christian Thought. DeVries notes these items in regard to losing a child’s trust. In my discussions with Dr. Haker and her own work, it has become clear that vulnerability is an essential piece of understanding the parent-child relationship. I will be discussing this more in chapter five.

**Childhood and Children’s Pedagogy**

The Good of Childhood

Through this project one could see that Schleiermacher develops a theological anthropology of the child that is unique for the nineteenth century. He challenges the philosophical ideas of Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas, for instance, regarding the child’s development and the nature of the child’s being in the world. He also makes a case for the deepened connection between the child and God.

Sophie herself joined in appraising this with evident satisfaction as her masterpiece. She had imagined herself a second Corregio in doing it, and she now kept her craft a tight secret. Only she did admit that as yet she had schemed in vain over how she might bring in a rainbow too, which she had very much wanted, she explained, for Christ is the true surety that life and pleasure will never more be lost to the world. 48

He is attentive to the Enlightenment turn to the self, while opening up to the potential of spiritual feeling and experience. He is not entirely steeped in Enlightenment reasoning, but he does not entirely romanticize the child either. Schleiermacher understands childhood as a stage with intrinsic value. 49 If childhood has only potential value, Schleiermacher’s position would not differ from scholasticism. Childhood’s *intrinsic* value means that it has its own set of rights and responsibilities along with corresponding value and worth. 50

Adults often view childhood merely as a stage in life on the way to adulthood. Yet for Schleiermacher, adults search for the irretrievable joys of childhood throughout their adult lives.


49 Dawn DeVries, “Toward a Theology of Childhood,” *Interpretation* 55, no. 2 (2001): 162-3 for the following discussion on instrumental vs. intrinsic, cf. this article.

50 Ibid.
Adults often reminisce about their childhoods looking to turn back time as they approach the ends of their lives. In *Christmas Eve*, Schleiermacher emphasizes this point: while Sophie is in the midst of basking in Christmas joys, the adults are in other rooms conversing about Christmas’ past, what they like, the issues, and the meaning of Christmas. It is not until the last adult enters, Josef, that the other adults stop thinking about Christmas and begin living it.

‘So, I have roamed about the whole evening, everywhere taking part most heartily in every little happening and amusement I have come across. I have laughed, and I have loved it all. It was one long affectionate kiss that I have given to the world, and now my enjoyment with you shall be the last impress of my lips, for you know that you are all the dearest to me’.

Josef implores his friends to be with Sophie and to sing in joy. Schleiermacher suggests through his writing that adults are able to regain childhood experientially. It is not a time of life that is entirely forgone. Childhood and adulthood are complementary; each gives the other what it needs. None of them exist in a vacuum. Adults are able to assist children in developing for the future, while children bring the joy of the moment back to adults. Each role is as significant and needed as the other. Each dimension of personhood creates humanity as a whole. Without one, humanity is lacking in substance on the whole.

The Good of Pedagogy

We can build upon Schleiermacher’s theological anthropology of the child and his views of childhood. Schleiermacher creates a solid framework for a child pedagogy. He is able to use his theological knowledge, his belief in Christ, and his Enlightenment understanding to construct

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pedagogical methods that focus on child-centric learning. Pedagogy for children can have its own intrinsic value. Schleiermacher does not teach children only for the good of society. He teaches children as beings that are ends in and of themselves. This is unlike Locke who views children as instrumental to society. In order to foster pedagogy for the child, adults need to be sincere in their relationship and efforts to help the child. As is the case for Wollstonecraft, for Schleiermacher, too, the child has its own subjectivity. Therefore, the methods of teaching them must change as they do not meet the standards of dignity and subjectivity.

Schleiermacher is highly critical of traditional religious education. As his education is in the Pietist tradition, Schleiermacher has difficulty with the religious education of the Magisterial Reformers. The Magisterial Reformers have the support of the governing authorities. A few of these reformers include John Calvin, Martin Luther, and Ulrich Zwingli. The Magisterial Reformers, according to Schleiermacher, have a cold and legalistic way of teaching religious education. Their religious pedagogy turns to catechisms rather than religious experience and interaction with children. The Pietist tradition develops a church-in-home approach. This means that they teach living the Christian faith within households. For children to experience the in-dwelling Christ, they have to be able to interact with Christ in their own living environment. Memorization, catechisms, and formal doctrinal training teaches them about their religion, but it does not help them to experience their faith.


54 Ibid.

55 Ibid, 333.
Schleiermacher holds a radical view within his own circles, arguing that children’s play brings them closer to Christ.

The difference between adults and children, he said, is that children play and adults practice. Play is an activity that is done for its own sake, for the present enjoyment of the activity, without regard to future outcomes. Practice, by contrast, is the arduous repetition and development of skills for the purpose of mastery and perfect execution of some future production or artifact.56

Children practice and memorize religious elements such as prayers, but this shouldn’t be the focus of their education as play helps them interact and experience their love of God.

Schleiermacher is indeed ahead of his time. He asserts the essential role of Christ’s Gospel is recognizing the intrinsic value of children. He affirms not only the goodness of children, but that their very being holds privilege. Only children are able to express and accept their feelings in the moment. These specials times allow them to understand their utter dependency as communion with God. Schleiermacher develops parameters that define pedagogical methods for children to live and learn.

Turning toward the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, scholars begin to look more closely at the subjectivity of the child. They want to understand the theological anthropology of the child in a new way that involves the child’s lens. Using the child’s perspective, they form pedagogical methodologies that guide children in developing their relationship with adults, learning capabilities, emotional capabilities, and their relationship with God. John Dewey, Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, and Lawrence Kohlberg all influence thinking on child development from the psychology/child development field. Scholars, such as Maria Montessori, use their work in child development to begin their own studies on pedagogical methods for children. While the field of psychology has much to contribute to this project, it is

not the main focus. In the next section I will turn to three people working in the field of education. Their first-hand experience guides how we should work with the child.

From the Child’s Perspective; Montessori, Cavalletti, and Berryman

Theology and philosophy develop concepts that determine the moral status of the human being. Theology through the Enlightenment seeks to understand human beings as seen in the imago dei. How are human beings created to be creators? As scholasticism becomes enthralled by the great chain of being, theologians turn toward questions of sentient beings, rationality, and will. Aquinas elevates his knowledge of Greek philosophy into natural law metaphysics. Philosophy aims to understand the human being through concepts of the person, their capability to reason, and their abilities to live within environments or communities. In various ways, these two main disciplines of method and thought guide the concepts about what the human being is and how the human being functions. As these concepts in theology and philosophy change over time, so does how people think about their own being as humans. Self-reflection, for instance, is the apex of the Enlightenment. This is a point in time that highlights changes in thinking about being human and being a self. All of this, however, is accomplished through two broad channels; theology and philosophy. Referring back to chapter One, we see that Aquinas develops an idea of the person that is moving always from potentiality to actuality, and from imperfection to perfection. Philosophically, the person achieves the state of personhood as they become a rational being with the capacity to higher thought processes. While these are indeed broad strokes, the previous chapters outline the progression of these two main disciplines, theology and philosophy, up until the nineteenth century.

For an ethicist who wants to understand and explore the subjectivity of the child, problems arise from these main sources of understanding. Neither framework, describing what it
means to be a human being, takes human beings in their early stages into consideration. In theological terms, the child’s moral status rests upon the potential for becoming a rational, reasonable, cognitive, good adult. In philosophical terms, similarly, the child’s moral status is determined by their capability to function morally as a rational being. That is why the counterpoints, exemplified by Clement on the one hand and Schleiermacher on the other, spanning almost the whole history of Christianity, are so important. If we, as theologians and ethicists, take the Gospel message of Matthew 18 seriously, neither the theological nor the philosophical anthropology is adequate to understand children, explicitly blessed as God’s favored state of being. Most of theology and philosophy until the nineteenth century, if it studies the child, follows the biblical understanding. The child is conceptualized and understood in a world of adult norms. Very few thinkers create the space to discuss the child through a different lens. Even using the term “anthropology” is not quite adequate in understanding the child. The adult sense of anthropology means understanding the child, as the adult sees the child in society and the world, not as the child sees herself. If no space is made for the child to experience being a human being, being a person, being an agent, and being autonomous on their own terms, what do we stand to lose as part of our overall humanity?

Beginning with the new interest in the child in early nineteenth century, the methods that explore the childhood and the child's autonomy and agency are more and more based on careful observation of children in particular environments. Whether we turn to Schleiermacher, Montessori, Cavalletti, or Berryman, the method is similar: they all aim to elevate the child’s perspective and elevate their agency and autonomy.
There is also much that is unknown about a child. There is a part of a child’s soul that has always been unknown but which must be known. With a spirit of sacrifice and enthusiasm we must go in search like those who travel to foreign lands and tear up mountains in their search for gold.57

Montessori develops an alternate method for learning about children. Rather than imposing her knowledge and her environment on children, she takes the role of the cautious observer. Montessori’s name lives on in her method that produced many schools throughout Europe and the United States. While her pedagogical method is important, her writings about the child-adult relationship, the psychic development of the child, and the child’s place in the world are of equal importance.58

*The Secret of Childhood*, by Maria Montessori, is published in 1936 in Italian. Over the next fifty years her book is republished in countries all over the world. Montessori seeks to enter into the child’s “psyche” and reveal it.59 She does not choose to interview or work with children from privileged homes, but rather those living in marginalized neighborhoods.60 In *The Secret of Childhood*, Montessori begins by explaining the child-adult relationship. She notes how important the relationship is to the development of both the child and the adult. She also includes her own thoughts on the development of child psychoanalysis. At the time Montessori writes *The

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58 Montessori uses the term “psychic” in her writings. It does not, however, refer to the colloquial meaning. “Physic” for Montessori refers to the development of the child’s brain alongside the development of their personalities and conscience. It is closer in definition to the Italian psyche, which is derivative of the Greek word for soul or spirit.


60 Ibid.
Secret of Childhood, psychoanalysis is a new science. Montessori is deeply interested in the alternative understanding of the child’s being and growth. Her pedagogy is based on the knowledge she gathers in the areas of psychoanalysis, observation, and theology. “If psychoanalysis had not sounded the ocean of the subconscious, it would be difficult to explain how a child’s mind could give us a deeper understanding of human problems.”\footnote{Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood, trns. M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J. (New York: Ballantine, 1972), 8.} We must acknowledge Montessori’s judgment of psychoanalysis. While she is excited and fascinated by new academic work, particularly by Freud’s work, she hesitates as the work does not express what is at the heart of a child. Psychoanalysis lends insights into child development, but not to Montessori’s understanding of the child’s relationship to God. Her pedagogy is a reflection of whom she believes the child to be. Perhaps her most valuable pedagogical insight is the relationship between children and adults.

Twentieth Century Child Psychology in Pedagogy

The most notable studies from Piaget to Kohlberg to Gilligan emerge in the 1950s to the 1970s, heralding a new era for the study of children. These studies are helpful to understand child development through different lenses. They do not, however, bridge the gap between the child’s ontology, theological anthropology, and societal conventions. They are helpful as they indicate the importance of studying children and childhood issues at all. If the child is uncared for, misunderstood, and ill-treated, they will become a suffering adult. Is the child’s prospect in their adult life all there is to worry about? No. It is of utmost importance to know the child as they are as a child. It is of utmost importance to wrestle with the concepts of theological anthropology, autonomy, and agency for the good of the child. These areas of study must be
addressed before developing any pedagogical method.

The foundation and framework of any pedagogy is to know the needs of the children whom one is teaching. A good pedagogical method takes into account not only what the child must learn, but how, and why. It is easy to give textbooks, workbooks, and lessons with the expectations that the child needs to work and learn the content of faith. It is more prudent to want to know how they will best come to understand the essence of the material. For children, their pedagogical foundation begins with how their earliest relationships develop. If they have supportive mutual relationships, then they will be able to exercise their intrinsic capabilities to learn freely. If they are given that chance, along with a proper learning environment, they can thrive. Montessori writes, “In reality a child is isolated from society; if an ‘adult’ influences him [sic], it is a specific adult, the adult closest to him [sic]. And ordinarily this would be first his [sic] mother, then his [sic] father, and finally his [sic] teacher.”62 The adults in the child’s life are the environmental stewards as they are the adults who foster the child’s journey via their intimate relationship, providing them with the proper space to learn, and implementing pedagogy wherein the adult takes a passive role.

**Montessori’s Child-Adult Relationship**

The first encounter that a child has as they arrive in the world is with adults. Depending on the kind of birth, a child may encounter a doctor, nurses, and then the parents. Montessori understands that children are born into an alien environment that is manufactured and crafted by adults.63 They are essentially isolated from society because they are not born with the tools to

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63 Ibid, 21.
understand an adult environment.\textsuperscript{64} As children grow, in their earliest stages, they develop bonds with the adults closest to them. In, perhaps, most cases this is their parents. Bonds are formed with other adults as well who are consistently in the presence of a child as a family member or caretaker. As a newborn who is utterly dependent on the adults in their lives, they have no choice but to form a relationship with the adults. In order to survive, the child has to rely on the bonds of these relationships. It appears, at first glance, that the child is a passive receiver of attention, care, love, and support based on their helpless status. On the other side of the relationship is the adult. The adult has brought a child into the world or accepted the responsibility of caring for a child. Adults have autonomy and agency that are linked to their ability and capability in rationality and reason. Adults are helping, caring for, teaching, loving, and supporting the child. These are, seemingly, active roles. The adult acts upon the child in a way that presents them with goods both physical and emotional. If this is always the lens by which we see the child-adult relationship, then it might be tempting to think that it is impossible for the child to possess subjectivity in the relationship.

Schleiermacher, however, already argues that the child-adult relationship is not only one of presenting and receiving. The relationship, to \textit{be} a relationship, must exist in a complementary manner. The adult has very much to give to the child, but the child has something very precious to give to the adult at the same time. Montessori happens to agree: “The child can change the hearts of men; in the midst of children their hardness disappears. The child can annihilate selfishness and awaken the spirit of sacrifice. This happens every time a child is born in a

Disproportionate Relationships

The child’s actual state of utter dependency changes the adults around them. Meaning, adults do not perceive children as acting, but nevertheless the child’s mere being is a causation of change in the adult life. In chapter Five I will discuss how this reciprocal relationship can deepen in mutuality to the benefit of both children and adults.

The child-adult relationship is not without its share of problems. The relationship burdens an inherent disproportionate structure of power in favor of the adult. To reiterate, the person of the newborn, of the toddler, even of the adolescent child is one of dependency. Adults have it within their power to treat the child as they see fit. They could treat the child well with care and love or they could treat the child as an object of abuse. But it is crucial to understand that dependency and vulnerability, particularly moral vulnerability, differ. Where children experience dependency as a lack of ability, not capability, as do-ers, moral vulnerability is an experience for both the child and the adult to be open to the other. This will also be discussed in chapter Five. In the case of abuse, the child does not become an object because they lack agency. The child becomes an object because the adult has stripped the child of their means of agency. The adult has the power to damage the relationship, to break the mutual relationship, in order to ensure their power over the child.

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66 Ibid, 8.
Adults have not understood children or adolescents and they are, as a consequence, in continual conflict with them. The remedy is not that adults should gain some new intellectual knowledge or achieve a higher standard of culture. No, they must find a different point of departure. The adult must find within himself [sic] the still unknown error that prevents him [sic] from seeing the child [sic] as he [sic] is. If such preparation is not made, it the attitudes relative to such preparation are not acquired, he [sic] cannot go further.\(^67\)

The child may then lose their inherent agency as they lose their importance in the world as children. “The child has almost disappeared from the thoughts of the adult world, and the adults live too much as though there were no children who have the right to influence them.”\(^68\)

This relationship must maintain a balance between each side. Each side feeling the pull to give and receive from the other. In terms of Christian types of love, it is not an entirely self-sacrificing agapic love, nor is it an erotic or philia love.\(^69\) Arguably there is a medium between agapic love and erotic love where a love of “equal regard” exists.\(^70\) Scholars, such as Montessori, addresses the child-adult relationship in terms of love. She feels that love is the connection between these two stages in life. A distorted sense of relationship is destructive not only to the relationship, but to the child’s development long-term. Montessori states,


\(^69\) Montessori at times in her writing in *The Secret of Childhood* does describe self-sacrifice of the parents as love. I would argue, however, that she does not insinuate a self-sacrificing love of the parent without a relationship of reciprocity from the child.

In their dealings with children adults do not become egotistic but egocentric. They look upon everything pertaining to a child’s soul from their own point of view and, consequently, their misapprehensions are constantly on the increase. Because of this egocentric view, adults look upon a child as something empty [sic] that is to be filled through their own efforts, as something inert and helpless [sic] for which they must do everything, as something lacking an inner guide [sic] and in constant need of direction.\textsuperscript{71}

The problem in the relationship does not begin with the child, though it is the child who will feel the brunt of the burden from an imbalanced relationship. While Locke’s summation of the child’s being as tabula rasa was astounding for its time, the child is not a blank space waiting to be filled by someone with ideas. The child \textit{is}. The present tense of the verb \textit{to be} indicates that something already exists when the adult initiates the child-adult relationship. Adults tend to be preoccupied with their own environment and the issues that come along with it.\textsuperscript{72} Montessori writes in both \textit{The Secret of Childhood} and \textit{The Child in the Church} that it may be hard to counter this tendency of egocentrism. Humans tend to view things from their own perspective. Adults need to acknowledge that they are coming to the child-adult relationship with their own bias. Their initial thought, reaction, interaction, and response to the child is going to be skewed in favor of the adult rationale. Montessori writes, “An adult who acts in this way, even though he [sic] may be convinced that he [sic] is filled with zeal, love, and a spirit of sacrifice on behalf of his [sic] child unconsciously suppresses the development of \textit{the child’s own personality} [sic].”\textsuperscript{73}


This is not mutual or of equal regard. If the adult is able to acknowledge that they are inherently approaching the relationship with bias, then they can work to correct their bias. To reference Matthew 18 once again, adults must come to the relationship as little children. How can adults come to the relationship taking the child’s perspective into consideration if they don’t understand who the child is in the first place? They can’t adequately address a situation that they do not understand. To participate in the child-adult relationship, which ultimately leads to being able to assist in the child’s development, the adult first has to understand what it means to be a child.

While Montessori seems to admonish adults for their lack of perspective concerning the child’s needs, she does not see the relationship as inherently negative. Her chapter in *The Secret of Childhood* is titled “The Accused.”74 The accused are adults, all adults, as adults are responsible and obligated to the care of children.

All those who speak out on behalf of children should make this accusation against adults, and they should do so constantly and without exception. Then, suddenly, this accusation becomes an object of keen interest, for it does not denounce unwitting errors, which would be humiliating, in as much as this would imply some personal failure, but unconscious [sic] errors. Such an accusation leads to self-knowledge and an increase in stature, for every true advance comes from a discovery and utilization of what was unknown.75

Montessori does not see being accused as having an indelible evil. She wants the reader to know that being accused makes way for the possibilities of addressing the issues at heart.

Stages of the Child, According to Montessori

“Children are small adults.” “Children are human beings who are born helpless with the potential of becoming an adult.” “Children are a blank slate.” Each of these definitions is true.


75 Ibid, 14.
Children in each of these definitions, however, are defined from the perspective of an adult. The essence, being, or personhood of a child is not definable contingent upon the essence, being, or personhood of being an adult. Children are children as children. Montessori examines distinct phases that, for her, establish subjectivity in the child. As a physician, Montessori is knowledgeable in the creation of life from a scientific perspective. She examines the forming and splitting of cells through the process of fertilization of an egg. Being familiar with the biological sciences, she is capable of establishing that, for humans, there is a physical element to our existence. Montessori, however, as an educator and even a theologian, questions whether a child’s subjectivity begins and ends there.

But the being that is born is something more than a mere physical body. It is like the germ cell in that it has within itself predetermined psychic principles. Its body will not function merely through its various organs. It has instincts which are not to be found in the individual cells but within a living body.

Montessori believes that the psychic development of the child begins in utero. She likens the development of the psyche to having innate principles within the self. “When a new being comes into existence, it contains within itself mysterious guiding principles which will be the source of its work, character, and adaptation to its surroundings.” Montessori does not directly refer to any theologian, Church document, or Scriptures in her examinations of the child’s being. Her understanding is steeped in a reflection of an ordered universe in the natural world. It is my belief that she has a simplistic Thomistic understanding of how humans become ensouled. She

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77 Ibid, 19.

78 Ibid.
criticizes science for not looking deeper beyond physical being.

Science prescinds from a child’s ‘incarnation,’ and simply regards the newborn infant as a complex of organs and tissues that make up a living whole. And yet even this is a mystery. How could such a complicated living being ever have come into existence?... If we understand by ‘education’ a child’s psychic rather than just its intellectual development, we may truly say, as it is said today, that a child’s education should begin at birth.\(^{79}\)

Montessori does not believe that the child is ever entirely idle in their psychic development. She also writes that, “The child’s psychic life is independent of, precedes, and vitalizes every exterior activity.”\(^{80}\) The term that Montessori uses to explain this stage of development is “spiritual embryo.”\(^{81}\) The spiritual embryo indicates that the child is not just physically a human being, but possessing of internal “sensibilities” that develop over long periods of time.\(^{82}\) During this time the child experiences an incarnation through which the spiritual embryo will grow.

The child becoming incarnate is a spiritual embryo which needs its own special environment. Just as a physical embryo needs its mother’s womb in which to grow, so the spiritual embryo needs to be protected by an external environment that is warm with love and rich in nourishment, where everything is disposed to welcome, and nothing to harm it.\(^{83}\)

For Montessori, the manifestation of this spiritual embryo is sacred. In her understanding of the sacred we find the child as a subject, as an “I”, already spiritually connected to God. Montessori creates a space for the child that tends to the needs of their psychic and spiritual development. As


\(^{80}\) Ibid, 32.

\(^{81}\) Ibid, 34.

\(^{82}\) Ibid.

\(^{83}\) Ibid.
the child grows, Montessori turns to a concept called “sensitive periods.” The sensitive period is originally conceived by a Dutch scientist, Hugo de Vries. Though de Vries uses this method of sensitive periods to understand the growth of animals, Montessori takes his principles and extrapolates them to understand the development of children. Montessori defines her understanding as being,

A sensitive period refers to a special sensibility which a creature acquires in its infantile state, while it is still in a process of evolution. It is a transient disposition and limited to the acquisition of a particular trait. Once this trait or characteristic, has been acquired, the special sensibility disappears…Growth is therefore not to be attributed to a vague inherited predetermination but to efforts that are carefully guided by periodic, or transient, instincts.

A child may repeat an activity that heightens their sensibility of growth in a particular area. This manner of repetition makes way for cognitive adaptation and functioning. Montessori asserts that the child may focus on one sensibility at a time, very intently, while shutting all others out. In time as the child grows they continue to develop until they reach the pivotal age of approximately five years old. Montessori’s primary interest is within this stage of early childhood. I would agree with her that these early years are written about the least in theology as well. What Montessori provides in scholarship is assertion that the child is not a passive object,


85 Ibid, 38.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid, 38.

88 Ibid, 42.

89 Ibid, 60. Note that age for Montessori is not firm. Five is an age where a majority may be beyond the age of sensibilities, however, all children are on a different timeline that is very personal to them, their needs, and their developmental state.
but an active subject. Even during period of quiet, or inner sensitive periods, the child is extremely active and at work. Children need a suitable environment, not an adult environment, in which they can make these giant strides in development. Montessori creates her method to aid parents and teachers as they work to provide the best environment for their children to thrive.

Montessori does not insinuate in her work that children can or should reason or have autonomy as adults. Many of the thinkers in this study state that the child cannot reason until a certain age. The child should not have to reason as an adult to be a subject with dignity. The norms of the adult world are not part of the child’s environment. Montessori’s description of the adult world as an alien world to newborns is appropriate.90 What Montessori and Frierson, on Montessori’s behalf, argue is that given the appropriate child environment, the child can make choices that are proportional to their development in these sensitive periods “Montessori shows, in contrast to many ordinary and philosophical assumptions, that children’s incapacities for autonomy are best understood as due to an absence of adequate external conditions, rather than intrinsic limitations based on their stage of life.”91 Critics of this may say that children inherently make bad choices, are unruly, are prone to a lack of rationality.92 These critics are only viewing the children in an environment created for adults and understood only by adults. To see and experience the child’s autonomy means kneeling, listening, and working in an environment that


91 Patrick R. Frierson, “Making Room for Children’s Autonomy: Maria Montessori’s Case for Seeing Children’s Incapacity for Autonomy as an External Failing,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 50, no. 3 (2016): 333. Autonomy is a complex word in this dissertation, and in general. Frierson uses autonomy, I believe, because Montessori uses the word autonomy. I would argue, however, that the word is not defined by Montessori in the sense of freedom to make an autonomous choice. Montessori discusses autonomy in the light of a child being able to make a choice in an environment that is designed for the child, not in the world in general.

92 Ibid, 335.
is sensible, reasonable, and normative for them.

**Critics of Montessori**

Subjectivity is a primary part of Montessori’s understanding the child. Theologically speaking, the status elevation of the child that takes shape under Schleiermacher cannot be ignored. Montessori, however, in continuing Schleiermacher’s line of thinking is not thought of as a theologian. Her books are, however, steeped in theology, spirituality, and religious imagery. *The Child in the Church* is entirely about the place of the child within the sphere of religion. Scholars are quick to dismiss her because she was not a theologian by trade. Her method was picked up secularly, and she, supposedly, had a romanticized Christology of the child. The first two in that list are entirely true. Montessori was primarily a physician who began research and studies on child development. From there she founded schools for all different types of children throughout Europe. The Montessori Method, particularly in the United States, was picked up by secular schools as a pedagogical method that allowed children to use their environment to work and learn. Montessori’s romanticized Christology is both a simplification and exaggeration of the beliefs she writes in her texts. Looking back to her language of “incarnation” it may seem that she is insinuating that the child is incarnated as the Divine. This is not her approach or her Christology. As she writes about the “spiritual embryo” she states,

> One of the most profound mysteries of Christianity is the Incarnation, when ‘the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.’ Something analogous to this mystery may be found in the birth of every child, when a spirit enclosed in flesh comes to live in the world.⁹³

Montessori explains that the language of “incarnation” describes the animating force that helps

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the child grow.\textsuperscript{94} She is also not the first to be accused of romanticizing the lives of children. Karl Barth argues that Schleiermacher comparing children to the Christ child elevated them to the status of quasi-deity.\textsuperscript{95} Understanding goodness in the child, as Wall would suggest in a bottom-up theology, does not necessarily indicate a romanticized nature of the child.\textsuperscript{96} Montessori’s decades of careful observation of the children in her care teaches her equally about the poor child as it does about the affluent. She writes about children from different socio-economic backgrounds. Montessori does not delude herself into believing that all children behave in the same manner, come from the same background, or will live the same lives. Understanding the child as a child means that those adult constructions are not prevalent in the same way as they are for adults.

The Doctrine of Original Sin is another problem for critics of Montessori and Schleiermacher. Is it possible to reconcile the child as being essentially good, but steeped in original sin? Montessori does not deny the idea of original sin in terms of broken humanity. “Original sin, for her, is not passed through semen. It is not bequeathed through sex nor any other biological process. It is passed through our inescapably damaged environment.”\textsuperscript{97} Original sin can be passed down through generations of humans, but perhaps not quite in the Augustinian manner. Montessori attributes tantrums and anger in the child as frustration with their

\begin{itemize}
  \itemEdmund Newey, \textit{Children of God the Child as Source of Theological Anthropology} (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 102-3.
  \itemJohn Wall, \textit{Ethics in Light of Childhood} (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 30.
\end{itemize}
environment or having a sensitive period broken or interrupted. “The tantrums of the sensitive periods are external manifestations of an unsatisfied need, expressions of alarm over a danger, or of something being out of place.”

Children are not only small adults. Children are not only human beings that are born helpless with the potential of becoming an adult. Children are not a blank slate in need of definition. Children are embodied, full, emotional, capable, unruly, developing, sensible, people. They are born into a world not of their choosing. They are dependent upon good mutual relationships to develop. They can develop well if the adults in those relationships foster an attitude of mutuality. They also need the expectation that in order to truly understand the child, they need to do it from the child’s world.

**Pedagogy**

In 1916, Pope Benedict XV asked Maria Montessori to write a general syllabus for Catholic Schools. Montessori, who identified her work as Catholic in foundation, could have easily written a syllabus to teach religious education to parochial school students. Unfortunately, Pope Benedict XV passed away before he was able to see his wish come to fruition. Subsequent popes do not pick up the mission of having a universal syllabus for Catholic Schools based on the Montessori Method. Pope Benedict XV was unique as a leader of the Roman Catholic Church who sees the potential in Montessori’s work. Right now, in 2021, there is not a consensus amongst Church leaders in the United States of America about religious education pedagogy. In the United States especially, not only does the pedagogical method, material, and

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training vary from diocese to diocese. Within a diocese it differs from parish to parish. Children, who need a reliable method of learning about their faith, continue to go without. It is hard to believe that as One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, the hierarchy does not appear to be concerned with the education of its children. If Pope Benedict in 1916 was able to seek a syllabus that can be used in all Catholic Schools, why is there not a prescribed pedagogy today?

Seen from an ethical perspective, any pedagogical methodology requires a mutual child-adult relationship and an understanding of the child as a subject. You cannot educate if you do not know your pupil or do not have a relationship with them. Pedagogy is not entering a classroom and teaching, it is a method that asks the teacher, “How should you teach?” Three components come together as the infrastructure of a pedagogical framework to teach children religious education. Children need the proper environment in which to learn. Proper environment in learning is not a new concept. One of the big reforms that Montessori promotes is the attention to the environment in which children can learn. Hence, any good pedagogical methodology discusses creating an appropriate environment. For religious education, the children need a specific type of environment in their own space so that they can grow. In addition to a proper environment, the pedagogical method should address how the children learn. Children have cognitive needs so they can learn. How they learn can be as important as where they learn. Finally, what is the role of the adult? What is the interaction between the teacher and pupils? The teacher in Montessori’s model needs to take the child-adult relationship seriously, but with a surprising twist: a teacher should be a mostly passive guide. This structure changes the classroom into a learning environment optimized for growth. Passivity, according to Montessori, is an important part of the child-adult relationship for the adult. Montessori writes about the teachers in her schools, but this also applies to the relationship that adults have with their
children at home,

The role of the teacher in our schools has been an object of interest and discussion. By his [sic] passive attitude he [sic] removes from the children the obstacle that is created by his [sic] own activity and authority. The children can thus become active themselves.\(^{100}\)

A passive teacher who is guiding rather than leading ideally makes space for the child. In chapter five, I will discuss how this concept of passivity is important when we turn to hierarchical structures within canon law. The constant drive of “activity and authority” on the part of the adult leaves little to no room for the child in the relationship.

Environment

Stepping into a Montessori classroom is like stepping into a world geared entirely for children. The word “classroom” does not do justice to the environment that is created by Montessori teachers. Many school systems in the United States have not considered altering the traditional classroom in favor of a Montessori classroom. Approximately only one in eight schools have Montessori programs for children over the age of nine.\(^{101}\) In terms of religious education programs in the Roman Catholic Church, it is even more rare to find consistent Montessori programs that support the use of dedicated environments for learning. If the child is not able to learn well or explore sensitive periods in an adult or adult-centered environment, then why are more religious education programs not adjusting the environment to suit the needs of the child? “An adult environment is not a suitable environment for children, but rather an aggregate of obstacles that strengthen their defenses, warp their attitudes, and expose them to adult


Children in an environment suitable to their needs are able to act freely, without coercion, to make choices about what they wish to work on. When children act freely in their own environment they are able to grow in attentiveness and self-direction, cultivate self-discipline, find social cooperation, and even recognize legitimate authority. Children, by nature, will not choose anything to work with that is too complex or superfluous to them or their needs. Sofia Cavalletti applies the Montessori method to religious education in pedagogy. In doing so, she creates an environment for the child in which they can thrive spiritually.

Religious Education according to the Montessori Method: Sofia Cavalletti

Sofia Cavalletti, a third generation Montessori interpreter, dedicates her life to transforming the Montessori Method into religious education classrooms. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) program contains atriums for the children to work, experience the Christian mystery, and fall in love with God. An atrium is likened to a classroom, but different in execution and design. “The ‘atrium’ is the name that Maria Montessori gave to the environment dedicated to the child’s religious life, recalling that space in the ancient Christian basilicas which served as the anteroom of the church, both in the material and metaphorical sense.


of the word.”

The atrium is not meant to be a place of learning, but of growth and living religious life. In this space the children should be free to pray, meditate, work, and discover their religious faith. Manipulatives, that are appropriate for each age group, are organized in the space at stations that are intuitively designed for children to access with freedom. The lead CGS catechist that is designated for a particular level will give a presentation to the group. One such presentation could be using the parable of the mustard seed from Mark 4:30-34 in which the catechist would assist the children in planting their own mustard seeds to watch them grow. Another presentation may be to dress a doll in different colored vestments or set the altar. All the presentations are brief to allow the children free time to move and work with whatever manipulative calls to them. Their environment is familiar to them. It does not change from class to class or week to week. Each atrium most commonly has one set of a type of manipulatives per class. For instance in the case of the vestments, if an atrium has ten children, there are still only one set of vestment manipulatives. The children have to learn how to parse out resources, how to be flexible, and find work in various places. As the children become older they move to a different atrium. Each atrium has new presentations for the children alongside new manipulatives

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107 Ibid.


for their age. You would not have twelve year olds necessarily planting mustard seeds, but you may have them drawing the passage in a meaningful style to them.

Each part of the children’s environment is interwoven with the workings of the mass from Liturgy to Eucharist. In addition, the name *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* is not just a nice sounding name for a religious education program. The parable of Christ as the good shepherd, working always to tend to the flock, is central to the teachings in CGS. Looking back to Schleiermacher once again, Sophie’s use of manipulatives in his *Christmas Eve* is astonishing. One of the first activities that Schleiermacher gathers the friends together is to view the nativity that Sophie has created by hand. The text describes, however, not only the birth of Christ, but many other significant religious events as well.\textsuperscript{110} The adults looking upon Sophie’s Nativity have a hard time finding the Christ child. While Sophie understands all these events as representative of the living Christ, the adults are looking only for the physical child in front of their eyes.\textsuperscript{111} Schleiermacher describes Sophie’s interaction with the Nativity,

Now, among all these highlighted objects one sought for a long time in vain for the birth scene itself, for she had wisely contrived to conceal the Christmas star. One had to follow after the angels and after the shepherds gathered around a campfire, then open a door in the wall of the structure – the house having been given only a decorative function – and there in an enclosure, which actually lay out of doors, one looked upon the holy family.\textsuperscript{112}

The environment and manipulatives that Sophie creates for herself have meaning beyond what the adults are able to see.


\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.

The religious education environment creates a world for the child to live their faith, not only learn about their faith. One of the best features of CGS is the focus on the environment. While the environment is a marvelous and essential way to guide children in their religious education, it also poses problems. In Roman Catholic Diocese in the United States, it is up to the parish to facilitate their catechesis program. While some diocese may help shoulder the financial burden of a religious education program, the funds come from the parish itself in the majority of cases. In CGS, though many of the materials are made and kept for years, there is still a cost associated year to year for the program. In addition to the materials, there is also a need of space. The atriums, which are best kept set up and in place, have a large physical footprint. Many parishes do not have the space available for a program with multiple atriums in addition to any high school programs. The cost of CGS can increase if space needs to be rented or obtained. Finally, the training for CGS catechists is extensive. The training modules are year to year, which is an additional cost for the parish. It can be an added expense to hire a Director of Religious Education who has experience in CGS. If a parish has to pass these costs on to the families, tuition for a CGS program can be costly. The point of CGS, which is a Christ-centric program calling to all, can be quickly diminished by its cost. Children who are growing up in high-risk neighborhoods may benefit immensely from the prayer, love, and reflection they may find in a CGS program. Unfortunately, since CGS is not supported in all dioceses, the cost passed down to the families means that not all have access to the program.

**Work and Play**

Within the atrium, and amongst Montessori interpreters, there are deep discussions on the

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113 Cavalletti also develops a deep love of kerygma and feels this is a starting point for the children. The proclamation of CGS involves the first call of the Christian community to the children.
idea of work versus play. Montessori, and Cavalletti in her footsteps, think that children are
drawn to working as they see adults working. Children gravitate towards doing work that is
challenging, but satisfying. Children work to perfect themselves using their environment
around them while adults work to perfect their environment. The action for the child is the
telos. The child has no need to hurry through an activity simply to complete it when they
genuinely enjoy being in the moment with that activity. In addition, as Montessori states, the
child is in no rush to complete a sensitive period before they feel completion of the task. The
atrium is a place of work where the child lives out the parables while having a relationship with
God. The child does serious work in the atrium that develops their whole person. Work seems
to come naturally to the child. Children often love to perform activities like doing the dishes,
sweeping floors, and even doing laundry. Children also do not feel the pressure of perfection in
their task in the way an adult seeks perfection. For instance, this morning while working, my son,
who is four, scoots his way onto my lap. He asks what I am doing while looking at this project
on the computer screen. I explain to him that I am writing words to create a book. He reaches
over to the keyboard and types this: Efrrgt34fghe4wsdsdgfdcty. These typed letters and numbers
are nonsense to adults. If any adult were to see it, the text is out of context. It’s entirely possible
that he is mimicking my own actions of pressing the keys. When I ask him what he is doing,
however, he responds, “I was just doing some work for you.”

116 Ibid, 345.
Children desire good work. They work carefully, persist in their work, restrain impulses while working and even have a sense of dignity in their work.\textsuperscript{117} In each atrium the freedom of activity allows the child to not only choose their work, but to repeat their work as frequently or persistently as needed. Repetition of an exercise for a small child actually allows them to feel rested as their mind is absorbed and away from excess stimuli.\textsuperscript{118} Montessori notes that the children never play with the fancier toys that they bring for the classrooms.\textsuperscript{119} Children choose simpler toys that have meaningful actions. Their actions and work have meaning. If the environment is created for children then children are able to work in their environment. Children can pour liquids if the cups are within reach and the containers light enough in weight. Children can count communion wafers with care and enough time. Children can pray with drawings and crayons and paper.

In the Montessori Method, work is the center of life. Work has a stabilizing and grounding effect on the child. Montessori and Cavalletti believe that children seek work over play. Play is frivolous and disorienting while work inherently has purpose. Not all Montessori scholars agree with this assertion. Do play and imagination have a more important role in pedagogy? When children turn to work as their focus they rely on daily prosaic activity. Their commonplace activities do assist them in becoming more grounded and focused. What do they lose by not also using their imagination in play? Montessori, in particular, does not believe that


\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, 122.
fantasy worlds have a positive effect on children. In fact she thinks they represent an inability to adapt to the realities of life.\textsuperscript{120} Fantasy also has a tendency to create desires in children that are unrealistic to their lives.

Not all scholars believe the same about aspects of play and fantasy. Though Montessori works with children from all socio-economic backgrounds, she does not directly relate the use of imagination as a coping skill. Other scholars, such as Jerome Berryman, insist that imaginative play is \textit{exactly} how children are able to cope with existential issues like death, isolation, and problems with freedom.\textsuperscript{121} Berryman turns to imaginative play as a means of spiritual therapy for children in need. “Imagination and creativity enabled communities to produce art, symbols, rituals and stories as means by which to give voice to the community’s experience of the sacred.”\textsuperscript{122}

If children are trying to cope with issues, such as abuse or death, they can use imagination as a way to empower them to overcome in a safe place. Play also enables children to live out alternate realities in which they may not face harm.\textsuperscript{123} This type of imaginative play allows the child to transform the world into whatever they may need for the time being. “Playing takes place in the intermediate and overlapping area of experience between the ‘me’ and the ‘not me.’”\textsuperscript{124} Children who participate in imaginative play have tools to engage God on any level they

\textsuperscript{120} Angeline S. Lillard and Jessica Taggart, “Pretend Play and Fantasy: What if Montessori Was Right?” \textit{Child Development Perspectives} 13, no. 2 (2019): 87.


\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 347.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, 348.

\textsuperscript{124} Jerome W. Berryman, \textit{Godly Play: An Imaginative Approach to Religious Education} (Minneapolis:
can imagine. They do not necessarily have to find God in a particular system or place.

The child is supported by both work and play pedagogies. If the child works in an environment that is specifically created for them, they will flourish. If the child engages in imaginative play they create a space where they can engage their relationship with God. Both pedagogical methods support the child’s need for developing their spiritual and sensitive selves. Each brings to the forefront the voice of the child by the child.

Conclusion

In John Wall’s book, *Ethics in Light of Childhood*, he states that historian Philippe Ariès too dramatically states that children are not cared for during human history. Wall takes the opposite stance that adults have “always deeply cared about children.” Wall is correct in asserting that people have cared deeply about children throughout history. Ariès is also correct in suggesting that children have not been cared for enough. The most important question we can ask ourselves is one that Maria Montessori poses in her book, *The Secret of Childhood*, “‘What have you done to the children I entrusted to you?’” If one child is suffering, then we are still failing.

There are ways to begin the process of correcting thousands of years of inadequate treatment of children. The theologians and thinkers in this chapter represent a group of individuals who, in the span of 150 years, strive to understand children’s intrinsic value and act

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126 Ibid.

on it. They use the good of the Enlightenment thinkers, as well as the pedagogists who came before them, to create a theological anthropology of the child by the child. That foundation allows them to manifest a new pedagogy that steeps itself in the world of the child. The child has subjectivity. The child can make definitive choices of growth if allowed to operate within their own world.

Moving beyond Schleiermacher and the Montessorian Scholars, there are further dimensions concerning the treatment of the child to take into consideration. Chapter Five builds upon the bedrock established in chapter Four. Chapter Five will challenge the concepts of subjectivity and dignity that are applied in the Roman Catholic Church’s understanding of the child.
CHAPTER FIVE

CHURCH GUIDELINES TO RELIGIOUS PEDAGOGY OF CHILDREN

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops sets forth seven pastoral directives that should assist in developing children’s catechesis. Adults should be able to understand, communicate, listen, be sensitive to, and aware of children’s values and need for respect. Adults should recognize that children have dignity and value of their own as they are now. Adults should encourage children to respect, know, accommodate, and adapt to concerns of other races, cultures, ethnicities, and persons with special needs. Adults should understand that children develop their capabilities gradually and present deeper faith as they mature. Adults should provide material that links to Liturgy and promotes the celebration of the Eucharist. Adults should promote prayer from the heart and foster community. These seven guidelines are positive structures for any parish to consider as foundational for their catechesis programs. They do not explain, however, their development out of moral theology. The guidelines do not explain how parishes can enact each guideline for the benefit of their children. Some of the guidelines support the theology and pedagogy of the chapter Four thinkers like Schleiermacher and Montessori. Certainly, Schleiermacher and Montessori agree that children require respect, have a value as children, should foster healthy relationships with the community, and have dignity. A child,

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however, also requires agency. One of the guidelines in particular is problematic for the requisite of agency. Guideline four, while it rightfully suggests that children develop their capabilities gradually, suggests that it is their coming maturity that deepens their relationship with Christ. The thinking that maturity indicates depth of faith is counter to the insights of the chapter Four thinkers. The Roman Catholic Church makes progress with their first three guidelines as they are in line with standards set by other children’s rights groups and advocates. In the fourth guideline, however, the Church reveals their entrenchment in an authoritarian hierarchy where the child is not complete until they reach maturity.

Children’s subordination to adults, spiritually and in their faith-lives, is just one issue that chapter Five aims to tackle. The Roman Catholic Church has not been clear in its understanding of children’s needs, in supporting children’s subjectivity, or in developing a pedagogy that parents, parishes, and catechists can follow. Several concepts of the child are present in the Church’s theology. Children are viewed as being part of fallen humanity having their sin assessed in the same way as an adult. Children are seen as being favored for their potential in what they can become as adults. Yet children are also favored via the Gospel as God’s model human beings. Depending on the context, some of these concepts engulf others throughout the Church’s teachings. Looking at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ guidelines, children are pegged as becoming deeper in faith through their potential to become adults. At the

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2 Agency is a term that I have not frequently used in this dissertation. Agency has many different applications as well as varying understandings. I will use the term agency in Chapter Five because I will be providing a framework under which I do believe that we can assert that children have agency. When used in the context of dependency and vulnerability, agency is actually a needed term in Kantian ethics to give the child subjectivity and dignity.

same time, the Church reaffirms their goodness as children, which is a step forward. Ideally, this mixed moral theology can be given shape and form to better assist those who need to be present to children on their journey.

In addition to the recommendations at the state-wide level, other guidelines exist at the diocesan level as well. The Archdiocese of Chicago’s “Catechetical Ministry” webpage outlines what religious education is for children. It roughly prescribes a methodology for educating children. The methodology pinpoints the parents as the primary source of catechesis for children in the family.4 In addition, the Archdiocese begins by stating that “Traditional Religious Education is the primary model utilized to engage children and adolescents in catechetical formational activities. A Family-Led Model enhances the participation of the entire family in lifelong formation.”5 The Archdiocese does not describe a traditional religious education model. There is a curriculum portion of the website containing documents with standards, recommended activities, and assessments for each level.6 These sets of educational standards may be helpful for directors of religious education, but not for a standard parish catechist. The Archdiocese of Chicago does not choose for each parish what their educational pedagogy will entail. As in the case of St. Teresa of Avila Parish, my place of work for nine years, the choice of the pastor and director of religious education is Cavalletti’s Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. While embraced by some, this choice was met with opposition from the hierarchy. The inconsistency of support is a problem in itself. The diocesan lack of direction for the directors of religious education means


5 Ibid.

that each parish is responsible, ultimately, for those children who are seeking religious education outside of parochial schools. Each parish must find their own program and pedagogy.

At the parish level, there are many differences in programs as there are many different programs available. The Archdiocese of Chicago requires that catechists are trained in safety measures for the children in light of the Church abuse scandals. It does not, however, require that catechists are trained in religious education pedagogy in order to serve as catechists at the parish level. Each parish may require training, but that is up to the director of religious education and the parish staff. Under Cardinal Cupich, the Office of Lifelong Formation has made great strides in offering assistance to those wanting catechetical training. The training program, a three-level process, is available for parishioners who feel called to participating in religious education.7 The online-based program, My Catholic Faith Delivered, is designed to allow catechists-in-training to access educational series based on the Catholic Tradition. The Archdiocese should be applauded for directing their adult catechists to deepen their understanding of their faith and teaching methodology. Yet, these measures for education and training, which are not required, do not go far enough. The content in My Catholic Faith Delivered follows along the theological lines of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the National Directory of Catechesis, and the General Directory for Catechesis.8 In chapter Two, I discuss the shortcomings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church at length. In addition, issues with the Catholic Church’s understanding on the child are still prevalent throughout teachings today. As I explain in chapter Four, The Catechesis


of the Good Shepherd program has an extensive training pedagogy for its atrium leaders. Each new atrium requires training, it is not optional. The catechists can continue their training and education in the Montessori based program for years, deepening their understanding of the children they guide as well as the foundational theological teachings The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is based on. It ensures that the catechists who are guiding the children understand the needs of the child, the dignity of the child, and the subjectivity of the child.

Neither the guidelines on catechesis from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops nor the content from the My Catholic Faith Delivered training program begin with the child. The perspective of the child, indicated as most important by the chapter Four thinkers, is engulfed by the perspective of the adult once more. Not all is insufficient in the Church’s teachings on the child. Upholding the child’s rights, dignity, and well-being in life and in their faith are admirable movements. They are also, however, abstract and misleading, of course, in the basic understanding of the child evolves beyond Medieval theology. Adults have responsibilities to children throughout the world. Children are dependent upon the adults in their lives and their governing bodies to care for their needs. Adults have obligations to children. These obligations are explained in universally adopted political Declarations, Conventions, and Treaties from the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1924 to the CHRC, but also explained in the obligations set forth in The Code of Canon Law. Obligations to the child mean that all children are protected, should be protected, as dependent human beings.

In this final chapter, I will discuss the steps that are necessary to further develop the theology of the child in three parts. Each part represents a pillar of thought based on the work of

9 To refresh, the atrium is the design of the learning space for CGS. The atrium leaders undergo years of training in Catholic theology, Scripture, and child development in order to lead any of the atria.
Mary McAleese in *Children's Rights and Obligations in Canon Law*. While this project does not represent juridical concepts on the development of the child, their subjectivity, and their education, these concepts are the bedrock of the Roman Catholic Church’s stance on children. McAleese’s work provides a complementary framework for the ethical building blocks explored in my project. As such, I will defer to her expertise on, specifically, Canon Law, the relationship of the Holy See to other governing bodies, such as the Children’s Rights Convention. I have complemented her work in this study with some further insights from history of the Church’s role in caring for and educating children. McAleese provides the best scholarship we have to date on children under the Code of Canon Law.

The first pillar concerns the membership status of children in the Catholic Church. What does membership mean for children? What are the parameters, if any, that children must follow as members? The second pillar is the *canonical persona* of the child under Canon Law. *Canonical persona* indicates the status of a child under Canon Law. Finally, the third pillar deals solely with children’s rights. What are the rights of the child under the canons? Each part of this chapter will defer to these three pillars throughout the discussion. The first part, Obligations, looks to these pillars in their purest form. What are the obligations under membership, *canonical persona* status, and to children’s rights? Part two reflects back on these three pillars with critique and criticism. I will look at asymmetrical relationships in Church membership, the tensions of the Church’s *canonical persona* versus other frameworks of subjectivity, and children’s rights via creating safe spaces for children, particularly in educational settings. Finally, using the three pillars I will state my own guidelines for updating, rebuilding, and securing developmental, just, and relational pedagogies for our children.
Obligations

Church Membership

Membership into a community means becoming a part of a larger group of persons. Most of the time there is a common goal, idea, or value behind becoming a member of a group. In the United States, when we use the term membership there is sometimes a price attached to being a member whether it is a monthly fee or recommended donation. Most people in the United States are a member of some group. Becoming a member of a group can be a rational choice. We choose to become a member at a gym, we choose to join a social club, or we can choose to become a member of a religious group. Membership, in general, means agreeing to belong and to hold the title of being a member of that group. Becoming a member of a group also means that a person has to abide by obligations, rules, or bylaws of the group. Oftentimes, members need to sign documents agreeing to acquiesce to the parameters of being a member of the group. If a member chooses not to abide by the rules and obligations, they can be asked to leave the group and lose their membership. There are also benefits of being a member of a group. Each group has rights, perks, and opportunities for members who dedicate themselves to the group. Membership creates a relationship between a consenting person and a larger body of persons sharing commonality. This section discusses membership into the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁰

There is not only one way for a person to become a member of the Roman Catholic Church. There are actually three main ways to join. As an adult, a person can convert to Roman Catholicism by going through the R.C.I.A. Program, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.

¹⁰ Note that Mary McAleese uses the term Latin Church in her work. For continuity with the rest of the work, I will use Roman Catholic Church instead.
This program catechizes the adult and invites them to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. If a person has already been Baptized into a Christian denomination using the Tridentine Formula, they do not receive the sacrament of baptism again as you can only receive baptism into the community of Christian faith once. Adults progressing through RCIA have a choice to receive the sacraments or at any time during their journey stopping. While RCIA is fascinating in its connection to Early Christian communities, it is not the focus of this project. In this model of membership, Adults are free to choose their pathway into becoming members of the Roman Catholic Church or not.

The other two ways of becoming members of the Roman Catholic Church concern children. Similarly, to becoming Roman Catholic as an adult, a child can choose to become Roman Catholic if they are over the age of seven. I will get into deeper explanation on the designation of age in the Roman Catholic Church later in this chapter. As an adult would journey through RCIA to receive the sacraments and become a member of the Christian community, the child journey through R.C.I.C. - The Rite of Christian Initiation for Children. These children who would receive the Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation, also have a choice in either accepting or declining the Church’s invitation of membership. The RCIC children are called the credobaptized. That leaves one group who become members in the Roman Catholic Church, those who receive infant baptism.

Paedobaptism and Credobaptism Obligations

In contrast to credobaptism, those who receive baptism as infants are paedobaptized. The paedobaptized are under the age of seven and, in the majority, have a parent(s) or legal guardian who is a member of the Roman Catholic Church. Unlike the other persons who become members, unlike most types of membership groups in the United States, the paedobaptized do
not *choose* to become members. More importantly, they cannot choose to be unbaptized. They cannot choose whether or not they are catechized, receive the sacrament of Reconciliation, or the sacrament of First Communion. They are the only members of the Roman Catholic Church whose consent is taken for granted from their birth.

Baptism gives the person a three-fold promise upon reception: freedom from all sins, including Original Sin, entering into the community of Christ, and becoming a juridic person with canonical rights and obligations. Baptism is, theologically speaking, how a person receives salvation, but the effects of baptism impact the lives of the Christian Faithful. Baptism invites, in some cases, and requires in others a *canonical persona* for the person. The depths of *canonical persona* are to be discussed later on in this chapter. In the case of the *paedobaptized*, the parents accept the Church’s invitation for the infant to enter into the Church through Christ. *Paedobaptized* are considered minors under the age of seven because seven is the age of reason as determined by Canon Law. Canon 11 of the Code of Canon Law 1983 states that the ecclesiastical law sees those who are seven and older as possessing the *natural* ability to reason. According to the Code of Canon Law, both 1917 and 1983, a child under the age of seven is a minor who is unable to accept Christ’s invitation to salvation on their own. These

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12 Ibid, 11.

13 Ibid, 4.

14 Ibid, 11.

15 Ibid, 244.

16 Ibid, 244.
children under seven are considered infants by the Roman Catholic Church and are non sui
compos, incapable of personal responsibility.\textsuperscript{17}

The credobaptized are those who possess that natural ability to reason as they have
celebrated their seventh birthday. Declining or accepting the invitation for baptism from the
Church is entirely up to them. Once they arrive at their seventh birthday, their parents no longer
have the ability to speak on their behalf. The minor, who is a child under the age of eighteen,
must be a willing and autonomous participant in the sacraments. The credobaptized are even
allowed to participate in RCIC without the permission of their parents.\textsuperscript{18} The most important
thing to note is that the credobaptized’s consent is instrumental in their membership.

Canon 96 of the Code of Canon Law 1983 states that baptism enters a person into the
Church of Christ with the duties and rights that are proper to Christians.\textsuperscript{19} That canon is
considered a general canon that applies to all members of the Church, not only the members with
use of reason. Membership, in short, means accepting the invitation to baptism, having a parent
or guardian accept on your behalf, and abiding by the obligations and rights that come with
membership into the Roman Catholic Church.

Parental Obligations

Whether a child is paedobaptized or credobaptized parents have obligations to their child
concerning their membership as part of the Roman Catholic Church. For the paedobaptized the

\textsuperscript{17} Mary McAleese, \textit{Childrens’ Rights and Obligations in Canon Law: The Christening Contract} (Leiden:

\textsuperscript{18} This means spiritually and according to the Church. There may be secular and governing rules of state
that would bind them from participation if their parents have not given permission legally.

\textsuperscript{19} Mary McAleese, \textit{Childrens’ Rights and Obligations in Canon Law: The Christening Contract} (Leiden:
Brill, 2019), 245.
role of parental obligations concerning the Church begins at birth and continues until their child reaches adulthood. For the credobaptized parental obligation begins from the time the child indicates they want to become a member in the Roman Catholic Church. Just as membership obligations for the child differ depending on their type of baptism, so too do the obligations of the parents. Catholic teaching indicates that some of the parental obligations to children are more general, while some differ depending on context and situation of the family. The focus for the Church, according to Familiaris consortio, is that the family unit is the primary structure for the child. Parental obligation consists not only of raising children, but to ensure their propagation as well.20

The Code of Canon Law 1983 contains canons directly related to parental obligations. The Church also turns to Papal documents as well as the Catechism of the Catholic Church as guidance for parents raising children.21 As discussed in chapter Two, most of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is written to and for parents concerning children, while little to nothing is written to or about children directly as active members. Generally speaking, canon 226 obligates parents to ensure that their children are raised and educated in the Catholic faith. Other canons that deal with parental obligations are directed toward baptism. It is interesting that parental obligations really revolve around two items: baptism and education.22 Gravissimum educationis


21 Note that the term “parents” is most frequently used in these Church documents. While the obligations would also apply to legal guardians, part of the hierarchy’s arguments, as explained in this project, is to keep make the nuclear family the prime structure for children.

22 Mary McAleese, Childrens’ Rights and Obligations in Canon Law: The Christening Contract (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 79. McAleese points out that the majority of obligations for the parents and most of the rights for children revolve around education.
reaffirms that parents are the primary educators of their children, children should be instructed in their faith as early as possible, and parents have a right to choose schools but should educate their children in a parochial school.\(^\text{23}\)

\[\ldots\] Parents are bound by the obligation and possess the right of educating their offspring. Catholic parents also have the duty and right of choosing those means and institutions through which they can provide more suitably for the Catholic education of their children, according to local circumstances.\(^\text{24}\)

Parents are obligated to send their children to a parochial school, if available, and to support Catholic Schools financially.\(^\text{25}\) They are obligated to support their bishops and pastors in continuing Catholic education.

Parental obligations concerning baptism are more specific. For the credobaptized the parental obligation is to lend full support and effort to their minor who is seeking initiation and membership into the Roman Catholic Church. It is their obligation to ensure that their education in Roman Catholicism continues beyond their initiation. For the paedobaptized, parental obligation is entrenched in raising the child from infancy in the ways of the Church. Canon 867 states that new parents should have their infant baptized within weeks of their birth, they must get proper catechization in preparation for the baptism and raising their children in the Catholic faith, they must agree to bring up their child, according the Roman Catholic law, and through marriage they must continue to propagate children to build up the people of God.\(^\text{26}\) Parents are


\(^{24}\) Ibid, 217.

\(^{25}\) Ibid, 225.

\(^{26}\) Ibid, 215.
the responsible parties for the paedobaptized. Once the paedobaptized reach the age of seven, it is still the parental obligation to ensure that the child continue to be catechized. From the Code of Canon Law to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, to the papal documents of *Familiaris consortio* and *Dignitatis humanae*, parents are addressed directly about their obligations to their children and the Church. Little is said of their children’s rights in baptism, education, or development. *Dignitatis humanae* even suggests that if the minor is forced by a governing body to worship a faith aside from Roman Catholicism, it is the rights of the parents and not the child that have been broken.\(^{27}\) Similarly, *Familiaris consortio* states that it is the parents’ obligation to baptize their child. It does not state that it is the child’s right to be baptized.\(^{28}\)

The responsibility to raise children as Roman Catholic, to make the majority of the decisions for children, lies on the shoulders of their parents. Parents are obligated to baptize, catechize, and educate their children under the Roman Catholic Church’s teachings. The place of the parent in the family is one of authority over their children. Other than the *credobaptized* accepting their own invitation into the Church, parents are obligated to make the majority of the decisions on behalf of their children.

**Church Hierarchical Obligation**

Mary McAleese writes, “The Catholic Church is the world’s largest non-governmental provider of educational and welfare services to children (not all of whom are members of the Catholic Church).”\(^{29}\) The people of the Roman Catholic Church come to the aid, financially,


\(^{28}\) Ibid, 89.

\(^{29}\) Ibid, 3.
emotionally, and prayerfully to millions of people. McAleese is right to affirm the good that the Church and the Church’s community of Christians does in terms of social services. Catholic social teaching certainly calls all Christians to provide and care for one another. Just as parents have parental obligations to the Church on behalf of their children, so too does the Church itself.\(^\text{30}\) In terms of the Code of Canon Law and juridical Church documents, the Church’s obligations to children mostly concern education. The obligations of the pastors, specifically, are detailed to include general care and well-being for their entire congregation. The obligations of pastors do not contain material on children alone outside of education. Canons concerning the greater Church hierarchy, including bishops, are specific to education, schools, and articles of faith.

In 1965 the Second Vatican Council publishes *Ad gentes*. *Ad gentes* states that it is the role of priests and bishops to ensure that children are imbued with Catholic faith concerning missions and ministry from infancy.\(^\text{31}\) From the Code of Canon Law 1983, canon 803 posits that the Church must design all teaching and education around principles of Catholic doctrine.\(^\text{32}\) The role of the bishop where children are concerned is to fulfill the obligation that Catholic children will learn their faith properly in the hope that they will become adult Catholics. The bishops are required to provide schools modeled on the Christian spirit.\(^\text{33}\) In parochial schools, the bishops lead on most matter,

\(^{30}\) Note that the documents hold that the obligations are due to the Church and not necessarily the child. The child as indicated in *Pacem in terris*.


\(^{32}\) Ibid, 225.

\(^{33}\) Ibid, 224.
The role of the bishops is all-embracing, operating at the level of set-up, pedagogy, subject-matter, staff appointments and dismissals, oversight over curriculum, academic standards of schools, oversight over qualifications of teachers, teaching competency and probity of teachers’ lives inside and outside school or university in terms of Catholic witness and behavior. In such ways is the Latin Catholic child’s educational environment consciously shaped to ensure the conformity of all its important elements to the Church’s magisterium.\(^{34}\)

Teachers are expected to work side-by-side with parents to ensure that Catholic children are receiving the best standards possible as part of their education. The relationship between parental obligations, Church obligations, and pedagogical obligations is hierarchical. Just as children defer to their parents, the teachers and parents defer to the bishops, who defer to the Ecclesial Church.

However, the juridic relationship between these two sets of rights, of parents on the one hand and the Church on the other is not a balanced relationship of equals but a hierarchy of rights in which the Church can define the rights of parents and direct them as to how and ever where to educate their children.\(^{35}\)

Even the canons that are noted as Church obligations come down to obligations by the whole of the faithful or the parents. Canon 800 states that the faithful need to promote, establish, and maintain Catholic schools.\(^{36}\) The bishops determine everything from the pedagogical method (if any is chosen) to the staff of the schools. Parents are obligated to send their children to the parochial schools that are designed by the bishops. If parents do not send their children to parochial or private Catholic schools, they are obligated to send them to a catechesis program through their local parish. Above, I have already spoken in detail about the inefficiency of the

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\(^{35}\) Ibid, 224.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
catechesis programs. They are not required to be consistent in their program or pedagogy throughout varying diocese, they often do not require catechists to be trained to understand the needs of the children they are teaching, and in many cases the pedagogical method is outdated. Even if we look at this from the parents’ perspective, there are obligations that parents need to fulfill even before the Church takes seriously its obligations toward the best education possible. Membership is only the technical aspect of a child entering into the Roman Catholic Church. It is how the child becomes a Roman Catholic, which differs from what it means for them to be Roman Catholic. The *canonical persona* describes what it means to be a child in the Roman Catholic Church.

**Canonical Persona**

The *canonical persona* is the second pillar that I am gleaning from McAleese’s writings on canon law. The *canonical person* according to McAleese is, “The *persona* (person) in can. 96, canonically, means a physical person who has been baptized into or received into the Church and as such has become a member with rights and obligations.”

37 There are general guidelines by which a member of the Roman Catholic Church would gain rights and be held to obligations, including children who are baptized. In *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, John Paul II writes that norms must exist for all individuals as members of the Church. 38 John Paul II understand norms within the Church to outline the parameters of freedom for the faithful. *Canonical persona* choose freely to be in communion with the Roman Catholic Church and uphold the obligations set forth. Freedom for individual members of the Church is linked to a relational dimension to each other.


38 Ibid, 96.
and most importantly to God. In freely choosing baptism, the *canonical persona* gives themselves over to God’s love in trust of God’s goodness. To freely give themselves to God and to accept the invitation into the Church, a person has to be able to make a reasonable and autonomous choice.

There are general canons that apply to all *canonical persona*. Canon 96 is a general canon that is intended to apply to all. It is impossible to ignore, however, that there are differences between the *canonical persona* of an adult, a *credobaptized*, and a *paedobaptized*. The Code of Canon Law does not indicate in its general canons a differentiation between these three groups based on varying age, ability, or status. Writing, specifically, on children, there is a difference between the *paedobaptized* and the *credobaptized*. It is helpful first to discuss children in general terms and then in specific terms to each group.

Age matters under the Code of Canon Law. Age is defined to be indicative of maturation within the broad group of children. The term *minor* is used rather than children in the Code of Canon Law. A *minor* is a child under the age of eighteen. Upon reaching the age of eighteen, a child has matured fully into adulthood. Under the age of seven, a child is considered an *infant*. Infants are considered *non sui compos*; incapable of personal responsibility. Infants also do not possess the ability to reason, which is determined, as stated already above, at the age of seven making the age of reason, seven, the most important threshold with respect to Canon Law.

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40 Ibid, 115.

41 Ibid, 116.

42 Ibid, 122.
age of reason is a canon that was not altered from the Code of Canon Law 1912. Though many
important discoveries and developments continue to take place in children’s developmental
studies, the age of reason has not been a topic of discussion in the greater Church. Obviously, the
capacity to reason is reached at a different point in each person.

What can fail to produce by way of innovation was any change in the centuries old view that the use of reason is presumed to start at the age seven (cf. Can. 97 §2) and that
obedience to the precepts of merely ecclesiastical law starts on reaching age seven and
having sufficient use of reason (cf. Can. 11).

The use of reason for the Roman Catholic Church is as much a matter of continuing to abide by
the tradition as anything else.

Though these canons are the same for all children, their effect on the credobaptized
versus the paedobaptized differ. Since the credobaptized can choose from age seven to accept the
invitation of initiation into the Church, they are not strictly under the authority of their parents in
this respect. Canon 210 indicates that minors’ sui compos assume an individual commitment to
the Church and leading a holy and faithful life. They acknowledge their personal relationship
with God, the accept baptism into the Church, and they accept full communion with the
Church. These children attend RCIC as a means of education as well as preparation for
receiving of the sacraments. The Code of Canon Law treats them as human beings with an

44 Ibid, 122.
46 Ibid.
independent subjectivity, capable of using their ability to reason to make autonomous decisions. Such provisions in the Code of Canon Law “. . . place minors under parental control but also provide for a degree of personal choice and autonomy.”49 As an *infant* the child has no voice or choice in their baptism, their education, or their faith life. “For paedobaptized minors raised in the Catholic faith, going to Catholic schools or receiving Catholic catechesis, being prepared for and receiving the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation, there is no personal baptismal decision point as there is with catechumens.”50 The *paedobaptized* members of the Church are assumed to have accepted their faith on account that they are spoken for by their parents. Even a *paedobaptized minor* who is beyond the threshold of reason is still considered to be under the direction of their parents and pastor to receive their sacraments on a different timeline than the *credobaptized*.51 In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *paedobaptized* are categorically placed in a system of obligations that they must follow, handed to them by their parents and the Church, while RCIC is about choice.52

“It is axiomatic therefore that Latin Catholic children, as Church members have canonical rights and obligations by virtue of their baptism. They also have inalienable rights by virtue of being human persons.”53 The rights of the child as members of the Roman Catholic Church are not easy to pin down. They are afforded protection, they are granted education, and they have a


51 Ibid, 220.

52 Ibid, 162.

53 Ibid, 463.
right to be cared for by their parents. The rights of the child exist by way of being a *canonical persona* within a familial structure.\(^5^4\) The Code of Canon Law enunciates the rights and obligations of the faithful. Children are part of the faithful *canonical persona*, but they are never given a more specific sub-category that addresses their more specific needs.\(^5^5\) For the *paedobaptized* their personal formation focuses on “submission to authority.”\(^5^6\) These are not representative of the rights that the child requires under guidelines set forth by governing bodies at least since the United Nations adopted the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1959. In sum, the defined *canonical persona* for the child is lacking and confusing at best. In conjunction with other efforts to assert rights for children, the Roman Catholic Church must elevate their efforts to clarifying the moral status of the child.

**Children’s Rights**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Important developments in the fight for children’s rights in modernity has been taking place since the League of Nations formed the *Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child* in 1924. Over the next fifty years, the push for securing children’s rights continued with the formation of *UNICEF* in 1946, the United Nations’ *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1959, and the United Nations’ *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict* in 1974. After these declarations in 1959 and 1974, the Holy See creates the *Code of Canon Law 1983*. The Holy See edited the 1917 Canon Law to form the

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\(^{5^5}\) Ibid, 5.

\(^{5^6}\) Ibid, 60.
1983 version keeping much of the material unchanged despite access to all of the material that the United Nations formed between 1924 and 1974. In 1989 the United Nations charters the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.\textsuperscript{57} Thirty years after the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and less than thirty years after the Second Vatican Council, the efforts of the most detailed bill of rights comes to fruition. This convention has ambition rights to guarantee every child has protection, access to education, and care. The \textit{UNCRC} is built up from previous declarations and guidelines to be comprehensive in its coverage for children’s rights. The \textit{UNCRC} covers four types of rights for the child, survival rights, developmental rights, protective rights, and participation rights.\textsuperscript{58} These rights include the right to life, the right to nationality, the right to family, the right to health, the right to education, and the right to worship a faith of their choosing, just to name a few. The \textit{UNCRC} aims to elevate the rights of children and the child’s right to self-expression while limiting their range of autonomous decisions.\textsuperscript{59} The rights afforded to the children are dependent upon capability, maturity, and age. The \textit{UNCRC} does not suggest that children have the ability or the availability to make choices that go beyond their maturity level.\textsuperscript{60} For each right that the child is granted, an obligation is determined on the part of the governing bodies to ensure that the right is protected and promoted.\textsuperscript{61} The United Nations with

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid, 363.
\item Ibid, 360.
\item Ibid, 361.
\item Ibid, 364.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
this convention ushers in one of the most important discourses on human rights. As a result, one of the initial signatures, the Church also joined the Convention in 1990 and elevated its discourse on human rights in the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{62}

With the exception of the United States every other member of the United Nations is also a State Party to the UNCRC. This means that most Catholic children live in countries whose governments have undertaken, as State Parties to the Convention, to respect and ensure the rights set out in the UNCRC ‘to each child within their jurisdiction.’\textsuperscript{63}

The Holy See is a State Party to the \textit{UNCRC}. While The Holy See signed \textit{United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child}, it signed only two of three Optional Protocols from 2000 and 2011. The two Optional Protocols signed are from 2000. The Holy See has not signed the 2011 Optional Protocol on communication procedure in assisting children. The Church, however, and particularly the Holy See, has not participated or abided by the CRC fully in demonstrating its fervor for children’s rights. The Vatican State as well as the universal Roman Catholic Church publishes documents that are loosely about the family. Most of the documents, however, do not even mention the rights of children. The argument by the Holy See in 2013 for not updating their teachings or enacting the rights, globally, set forth by the \textit{UNCRC} is that they are only geographically responsible for Vatican City.\textsuperscript{64}

The CRC for its part says that as a State Party to the UNCRC the Holy See like every other State Party has undertaken to implement the Convention in the interests of the children within its own internal legal domain and that means many millions of Catholic Church child members. It means making and updating canon law and Church teaching to ensure compatibility with the Convention.\textsuperscript{65}


\textsuperscript{63} Ibid, 22-3.

\textsuperscript{64} See McAleese in depth sections in chapter three of her book that go into detail as to the legal names and governing bodies throughout this line of argumentation.

\textsuperscript{65} Mary McAleese, \textit{Childrens’ Rights and Obligations in Canon Law: The Christening Contract} (Leiden:
The Catholics outside of Vatican City have other jurisdictions. According to McAleese, this is a strawman argument. When needed, the Holy See promulgates obligations that their members must follow in order to be in communion with the universal Church. The Code of Canon Law is promulgated outside of the walls of Vatican City. McAleese states,

According to can. 361 the term ‘Holy See’ means not only the Pope but unless clearly stated otherwise ‘the Secretariat of State, the Council for public affairs of the Church and other Institutes of the Roman Curia’. The Pope is the supreme head (and legislator) of the universal Catholic Church (cf. can. 331). Can. 360 says that the Pope usually conducts the business of the universal Church through the Roman Curia ‘which acts in his name and with his authority for the good and for the service of the Churches.’

Canon law has no organization that indicates foresight into materializing children’s rights though the CRC works to implement them in their own convention. “Children’s right and obligations in canon law are as a consequence distributed across a range of subject areas throughout the CIC.” McAleese criticizes that the Canon Law does not provide a systematic treatment of children under the law. The United Nations asks for the Holy See to make provisions to update and change the way they understand children’s rights. Up to today, the Holy See does not comply fully or is late or absent in their reporting, though since they did not sign the last protocol, they are not bound by it. When the Holy See submits their reports to the Optional Protocol bodies of the UN CRC, some of the responses increase tension. Once item in particular states that though the child has the right via human dignity to choose their own beliefs,

Brill, 2019), 379.

66 Ibid, 380.


68 Ibid, 243.
it is the rights of the parents to choose the religious upbringing for the child. Not only does this not uphold the rights of the child, it also further confuses the matter between paedobaptized and credobaptized minors. Who has the right to make choices and who does not? The UNCRC sends the Holy See a catalogue of failings on the part of the Church to implement needed children’s rights protocol. The items range from the non-investigations of the Magdalene Laundries to the lack of action and follow-up of the sex abuse scandals. Some of these items have yet to be addressed.

In the past thirty years, the Roman Catholic Church, led by the Holy See, has made attempts to put children at the forefront. The Church has dicasteries concerning aiding the child and protecting them from abuse. There are commissions on education and the right to life, and documents that reaffirm the dignity of the child. According to McAleese,

Nowhere in any official Church document can one find a methodical, explanatory and thoroughgoing account of the rights and obligations of child members of the Catholic Church much less a critique of them in the light of Church teaching on human rights and international law on children’s rights.

The Roman Catholic Church as a whole must take the need for a revision of children’s rights seriously including theological doctrine on their understanding of the child, the person of the child, and the need for a reform of children’s catechetical education.

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70 Ibid, 24-27. McAleese lists these events and the formation of groups that have been created for the rights of the child.

71 Ibid, 461.
The Right to Education

Membership - A System of Asymmetrical Relationships

The Roman Catholic Church has been specific as to what it requires of its members. It states obligations in canon law, papal documents, and Church doctrine. McAleese writes in great detail about where the Church is successful in explaining the obligations and rights of its members. She also takes the time to dig down through the canon law to examine where the Church falls short, particularly to its youngest members. Looking at the body of Church teaching and doctrine on children, the importance of familial relationships is evident. *Pacem in terris* and *Familiaris consortio* both place the child under the care of a family, preferably parents in a married relationship. The family unit is where the child finds their rights.\(^{72}\) Children are a complicated grouping of human beings. They *are* human beings, which according to the *UNCRC* means they have inalienable rights. Children also live in countries with governments meaning that they are given legal rights. Their human rights and their legal rights should not be compromised by any membership or relationship. There are canon laws and teachings that supersede these human and legal rights. The right of a child to worship in their choice of religion is superseded by the Holy See’s comments to the *UNCRC* Optional Protocol committee.\(^{73}\) Taking a step back to chapter Four and Wall’s understanding of adults’ relationships to children, the Church operates in an authoritarian top-down structure.\(^{74}\) Children need to be taught obedience, children need to be treated with dignity and care, but they function within a structure that is


\(^{73}\) Ibid, 422.

superimposed upon them. The canon law states time and again that a child’s parents are their prime teachers, their moral guides, their caretakers, and their voices before they are deemed to have one. The child-parent relationship followed by the child-teacher relationship are relationships that determine child development. While a good relationship can assist a child in flourishing, a negative relationship can cause damage to a child’s growth and development. The Church, however, is not wrong in their view that the adult has control where the child does not. The relationship is inherently asymmetrical. Acknowledging this, it becomes essential to understand that asymmetry. Ethically, how can an asymmetrical relationship be just? How can it help the child grow if it has inherent imbalance of power?

Taking the insights from previous chapters into consideration, two major typologies emerge: one that affirms the subordination of children, the other the equality of human beings. According to the first model, children are categorized as inferior, lacking in ability and capability. At best they have potential to become fruitful adults. In most cases, even to many Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke, children should be subservient to adults and not to question their authority. There is no recognition of the child being fulfilled as they are, in their own place in time. A second typology sees the child as an equal member of society with equal responsibilities, obligations, and sufferings. In this model, the child is distinguished in their uniqueness, but taken more as a small adult than child. “The model of childhood it operated out of was strongly influenced by the idea of the child as a sinner, primarily in need of salvation through a personal formation which was focused on submission to authority.”

75 Augustine’s influential theology of sin and grace especially suggests that the original sin makes the child

makes equally culpable to any adult. McAleese unmasks in her work on canon law that these views held by the Church have not changed over time. The language has softened over time in Church teachings. The twentieth century teachings, in particular, provide the language of dignity of the child. Dignity of a person, especially someone in an asymmetrical relationship, is easily at risk to being violated. The Church makes clear in its writings that the parents, as primary caregivers, represent the rights of the child as their guardians. The parents, at least for *paedobaptized* children, inquire and respond to invitations of membership through baptism. The obligations for upholding communion with the Church are theirs, not the child’s. The parents decide on education for the child. Once again, the education they choose must meet the standards of obligation in the Church. Therefore, there has to be a relational partnership, fully understood in its asymmetry, that will open both parents and children to working together. A child needs to experience both dignity and subjectivity via agency to flourish as they are in each of their moments. Children should neither be treated as subordinate nor treated as small adults. Nor should parents be fully subordinate to a Church that is not updating their laws and teachings to reflect the needs, rights, and obligations to children as determined in the *UNCRC*. At this time, I’ll be considering the child-parent relationship primarily as it is the main relationship of consideration by the Roman Catholic Church. The child, however, realistically navigates many relationships around them. In addition, though many institutions influence a child’s life, the focus here is the Roman Catholic Church as governed by the Holy See. I am calling into question the Roman Catholic Church’s standards for the child, including its stance on child relationships.

The truth about children is that they are children. That word, children, brings with it a different context and set of guidelines than being an adult. It can be a confusing and difficult stage of life. As an adult looking at a child, the child encompasses the past, present, and future in
everything they were, are, and will become. Perhaps our greatest failing, however, is continuing to write children’s ethics, rights, and pedagogy from the perspective of an adult or as an adult sees children. As for a child, they are not so concerned with their past or future. Their life, as explained in chapter Four, exists temporally in the present. That shift in perspective changes everything from relationships to the classroom. One of Schleiermacher’s marvels is the child’s utter dependence on those around them. The asymmetrical relationship of dependency is natural between the child and their adults. “Dependency, neediness, and therefore dependent care are central, inevitable aspects of human existence.”

Sandra Sullivan-Dunbar writes extensively on issues of dependency and care ethics. She carefully notes the tension existing between the inevitability of dependency and humanity’s drive for equal rights. “It is also a concrete reality: human persons are, ontologically speaking, invested with a dignity that give us a fundamental equality, and we should be treated accordingly.” Her work on dependency in a child-parent relationship is essential, as dependency creates bonds between the child and the adult. Sullivan-Dunbar’s conclusions on dependency and an ethic of care vary, however, from my own. Her perspective is needed to address the shortcomings of ethics that conceal the dependency inherent in many relationships, but she is primarily interested in the position of the caretaker. To do justice to my project here, namely of forming a coherent and responsible ethics for the child within the framework of the Roman Catholic Church, the child’s perspective must be elevated. To properly elevate the child’s perspective, let us look at four focal points of dependency in the

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77 Ibid.
child-parent relationship. First, the child is entirely dependent on the parent. I have acknowledged this dependency throughout my project. Second, speaking of equal human rights is not enough without recognition of asymmetrical relationships in order to fully address inherent inequalities. Third, a system of “nested obligations” a term that Sullivan-Dunbar attributes to Eva Feder Kittay exists outside of a system of equal reciprocity. Finally, I will address and confront the issue of vulnerability in the parent in the child-parent relationship in order for the relationship to be one of mutuality.

The first focal point, the child’s utter dependency, has been acknowledged in various places throughout this work. Dependency of the child is vital to their livelihood. The child trusts the parent or the adult in the role of caretaker. The child’s needs to eat, be healthy, learn, and even find enjoyment are dependent in large part upon the adult. To harken back to Montessori, the child is born into an alien world that is not their own. It is only natural that they do not find recognition in their surroundings. Newborns are unable to move or protect themselves, which creates a fundamental child-parent relationship. Canon law requires parents to take on steep obligations when it comes to their children, in part, to protect those most in need of protection. The Church’s obligation to ensure that its most fragile and youngest members are cared for is not taken lightly. Neither McAleese nor the UNCRC argue these points. Children’s dependency on parents, family, organizations, governments, and schools is not in question. The Code of Canon Law 1983 does not nuance the capabilities of a newborn from a six-year-old. The degree of dependency and agency varies greatly throughout the different stages of childhood. As dependency shifts in the child-parent relationship, the child becomes able to make reasonable

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choices for themselves. According to the *Code of Canon Law 1983*, this would be on a child’s seventh birthday. As stated earlier in this chapter, the law does not account for psychological states of personal development of each child. The tension in the law is between parental rights versus the participation rights of children under the CRC. The United States of America also hesitates to ratify the *UNCRC* due, in part, to article 12, which states that, “Citizen participation, of course, is a key value of a democracy, and the CRC paves new ground by viewing children as ‘agents who share the power to shape their own lives’ and encouraging them to exercise their own rights as ‘members of society.’”79 Similarly, canon law does not reflect the child’s ability as they mature to be agents of their own lives in making choices for their flourishing. “This new vision of youth marks a ‘paradigmatic shift’ from the traditional attitudes toward children and the paternalistic ‘best interest’ focus that consider minors as passive subjects of parental or state authority.”80

Understanding children allows us to form an ethic that elevates the child’s perspective. The child’s dependency does not exist in a vacuum. Their dependency, in fact, is created by a complex web of needs supported by relationships. Regarding the second focal point, asymmetry in relationships, I turn to the concept of dependency. Naming the unequal distribution of power in the asymmetrical child-parent relationship is crucial. The Roman Catholic affirms the dignity and human rights of the child. The Church, however, is stuck, theologically, in Scholasticism in terms of understanding relationships in a hierarchical structure. Chapter One explains the Thomistic view of the great chain of being and its grave flaws in the Church’s theology.


80 Ibid, 693.
Sullivan-Dunbar also nods to the issues of using a Thomistic worldview in the twenty-first century.

Aquinas’s conception of the order of love is pervaded by the assumption of a hierarchically ordered universe, created and governed by God’s providence. While we may share a notion of God’s providence, we cannot share Thomas’s conviction that the hierarchical world order in which he lived mirrors providence.  

Aquinas’ concept of the great chain of being was driven by his understanding of sentient reasoning creatures down through non-sentient creatures driven by instinct alone. This leads to the third focal point on “nested obligations.” This concept of “nested obligations” seems to create continuity of care from person to person between dependent parties. It is not about the dyadic relationship of person via person. It does not need strict reciprocity to function. “This reciprocity is not a two-party reciprocity because a dependent often cannot reciprocate care; rather, it must exist in the form of a system of ‘nested obligations.’” Ideally this normative framework is expressed in an ethic of care that could promote shared obligations in society. It is also an ethics that, I believe, would function substantially better in relationships that are not power-driven. In the theological sense, the dependency of the child is nested in the parent. The obligations for the parent to the child’s well-being and Christian formation is nested within the Church. The relationships exist only in a hierarchy of authority emphasizing dependency over rights of the dependent. But what if these obligations, these duties, are not fulfilled? The Roman Catholic Church is in the midst of a world-wide crisis of abuse. Individuals, representative of the hierarchy, have acted in ways which abuse their power within relationships.

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82 Ibid, 53.
Finally, Sullivan-Dunbar writes, “Dependent care also renders the caregiver vulnerable; it prevents the caregiver from competing on an equal basis in the world of ‘fully autonomous’ participants in the market employment.” The obligations that the Church expects its members to abide by are arduous. To expect a single caregiver of multiple dependents to worry about catechesis may be asking too much. The United States of America has more multi-generational households now than in the past seventy years. In most cases the middle-aged mothers/daughters are caring for dependents of young children and/or elderly parents. Sullivan-Dunbar rightfully accentuates the burden that this puts on caretakers. In turn the burden they shoulder makes them a vulnerable group as well. Caretakers become vulnerable through their deeply rooted understanding of their dependents’ needs; often taking them as their own. Caretakers experience marginalization in employment due to restrictions of time, resources, and gaps in employment history. This certainly makes them vulnerable in their relationships. A mother becomes vulnerable the day she affirms her pregnancy. I would like to thank the feminist theologians who have worked endlessly to acknowledge the struggle and pain of caretakers.

At the same time, I turn back to a different understanding of dependency where children are concerned. Schleiermacher’s concept of utter dependency emphasizes the child’s close relationship with God. It is through this dependency that the child is open to unity with the

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divine. I affirm the goodness of Schleiermacher’s concept of utter dependency in chapter Four because it informs my understanding of dependency as working directly with vulnerability. I challenge the Church’s limited understanding of children’s dependency as it stymies the child’s subjectivity.

Fully dependent children are not care-takers. Yet, as children mature and learn the processes within a household, they are in fact able to act as caretakers in the stead of their parents – and many children take on this role. Dependent children, however, are vulnerable in the child-parent relationship in different ways than their caretakers become vulnerable. Canon law that pushes for the subordination of children to their parents and seems to assume that children’s rights exist within the confines of the family. The child-parent relationship is imbued in dependency, marked by inequality, expressed hierarchically, and entirely open to vulnerability. Yet, a corrective lens for the Church’s teachings is aligned with dependency, inequality, and particularly, vulnerability. In the next section, I will reflect back upon the fourth focal point, vulnerability, in view of the canonical persona.

**Canonical Persona - Vulnerable Agency Over Authority**

Discussing minors in the Roman Catholic Church also means discussing parental obligations simultaneously. Church membership for the child is as much about rights as it is about obligations of the parents. Due to the child’s dependency on their parents, canon law views the family as one unit rather than a particular constellation of individuals. Canon law does not address the unequal differences in treatment between paedobaptized and credobaptized children. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes different teachings for each group of children. While the general canons insinuate that their canonical persona should be treated identically, this is in fact not the case. The canonical persona, the description and understanding of what it
means to be a member of the Roman Catholic Church differs between documents, between types of baptism, and even between parishes and institutions within the world-wide Church. First, as theology professors, teachers, directors of religious education, and catechists, we are only as proficient in the religious education of our children as the material we engage allows us to be. Training catechists or educators, but not allowing them to use material that goes beyond the current teachings of the Church fails our children. Second, to correct the Church’s understanding of children means to ensure that the child’s dignity and subjectivity are complementarily. Accomplishing this objective is possible via the idea of vulnerable agency and proportional autonomy.

Magisterial Training vs. Catechetical Training

All pedagogical methods and materials are the responsibility of the bishop and the magisterium. The *National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the United States* states concerning sources, “The NCD therefore draws upon the Church’s biblical, patristic, historical, liturgical, theological, missiological, and catechetical heritages.”86 Throughout the entire NCD there are not available references to Church father’s, theologians, or primary sources outside of those promulgated by the magisterium. The NCD claims to make use of the latest scientific developments in its introduction, yet the section on stages of human development and behavioral sciences is devoid of any scholarly work.87 The citations for that particular section include papal

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87 Ibid, 3 and Chapter VIII section B.
documents, canon law, and pastoral constitutions such as *Gaudium et spes.* The NCD is meant to provide answers for catechists and those seeking pastoral degrees in the Roman Catholic Church, yet it is lacking in appropriate content to develop pedagogy or to guide children. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which is another work used to train catechists as well as catechumens, references Church fathers, but does so in a selective manner, in particular Augustine and Aquinas. The references beyond that are sparse. Even private institutions that train directors of religious education and pastoral associates are not required and oft times do not use primary sources that would deepen their knowledge. Even Loyola Chicago’s Institute of Pastoral Studies, which works hand-in-hand with the Archdiocese of Chicago, lists courses on Christian Moral Theology and Ethics, IPS 553, with the only primary sources being Aquinas and Aristotle. The body of material for Roman Catholic teachings is vast. I am not insinuating that one course, or one book can or should cover every aspect of material regarding the studies of children. I do believe, however, that as an institution we are lacking in reflection as to which teachings and materials are appropriate. Catechists who will be guiding children as passive teachers, allowing the child to lead, need to receive training to achieve that task. The Church has failed in its attempts at formation.

As important as it is to recognize the imperfections of the whole, it is more important in this project to examine the particular problems of catechesis and children. Are we creating catechesis programs that attend to the needs of the child as *canonical persona*? McAleese argues

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89 Dan Rhodes, “Christian Moral Theology and Ethics” (Syllabus Loyola Chicago Institute of Pastoral Studies IPS553, Chicago, 2021), 1.
that there must be a continuing discussion concerning canon law and the age of development-related reason, the grouping of children, and children’s rights. I argue that in addition the pedagogical methods to guide children in their faith development need to improve. The NCD states that, “While giving increased emphasis to adult catechesis, the faith community must also strive continually to provide parish programs of high quality for children.”90 Children’s catechesis programs are created in addition to the primary program of adult education. There is also no specification as to what “high quality” programs entail. A high-quality program ideally means that catechists are well-trained in a pedagogical method, such as The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The majority of the NCD, however, is not about children, but adults. “Preschool programs should focus mainly on parents, providing them with opportunities to deepen their faith and become more adept at helping their children ‘form a foundation of that life of faith which will gradually develop and manifest itself.’”91 From Rousseau to Schleiermacher to Montessori there is disagreement across the board. Parents who are engaged in their children’s faith journey are not necessarily the source of their child’s faith. Parents, as Cavalletti suggests, should take a passive role allowing the child to interact directly with the material. The NCD states that “God’s love is communicated to infants and young children primarily through parents.”92 On one hand, parents communicate their own love, which is encompassed in divine love, to their children. On the other hand, the language of mediation of God to children through the proxy of their parents is problematic. It undermines the direct faith experience of the child. It also is in direct conflict


91 Ibid, 142-3.

with Matthew 18 as children are those who are exemplar in their faith, not adults. *Canonical persona* are in full communion with the Church and direct receivers of God’s love. The status of *canonical persona* for the *praedobaptized* under the age of seven is that of a dependent child whose only rights are mediated through the child-parent relationship.

The Vulnerable *Canonical Persona*

Relationships are often not as clear and simple as we would like them to be. Their ambiguity makes them inherently difficult to navigate and even more difficult to describe on a meta data level. The Roman Catholic Church’s task in creating law, obligations, doctrine, teachings, and pedagogy about the child-parent relationship is an arduous task. It is also a sobering task. Millions of children across the globe receive catechetical teaching on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church every day. The status of the child in the Roman Catholic Church hinges, in part, on two things, first understanding their capabilities as children and as different aged children through proportional autonomy, and second understanding that the child-parent relationship may be asymmetrical, but it is also relational through vulnerable agency.

Using Montessori’s wisdom, Sofia Cavalletti creates *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* program. Cavalletti’s writings, based in part on the atrium-style classrooms of Montessori, allow children to experience a world designed to their needs.

Indeed, we believe that early childhood is the time of the serene enjoyment of God, when the response the creature gives to God consists in the very acceptance of the gift in fullness of joy. The time for a different response will come, a response that will even involve the person in effort and struggle. But we must respect the stages of human development.\(^93\)

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Understanding parents to be the mediator of God’s love is to misunderstand and misinterpret the child’s depth and relationship with God. The child is in communion with God without external accoutrement. The atriums are designed to provide the child with the materials they need to develop their faith. The atriums are not a space of excess nor marvels of technology. Materials provided are objects that access the senses, cognition, and depths of feelings that the children experience in their faith and time with God. When we speak of proportional autonomy, we are speaking of a concept that understands the child as being able to make autonomous choices in an environment, in proportion to their capability. For instance, a Montessori classroom would have cups and carafes. A carafe may be filled with a drink to pour into the cup. Unlike an adult setting, the cups are within reach and smaller. The carafe is not overflowing, but small with a small amount of liquid that a child would be able to pour on their own. Similarly, the design of the atriums guides the children in their faith life without forcing them to experience their faith in an adult setting. The items that a child would use to set the altar are smaller and lighter in size. The altar itself would be low to the ground where the child may kneel to set it. The atrium may also have a pen with sheep figurines as well as the good shepherd so that the child may tend to a flock. They are able within their community of peers to choose, to give, to grow, to pray, and to work. Montessori and Cavalletti both provide anecdotes of their time with children in which the children make autonomous decisions that are proportional to their age group and setting. Of these episodes, Cavalletti reflects, “… they let us glimpse in some way the mysterious reality present within the child; they manifest the child’s potentiality and richness, the nature of which we are not successful in defining clearly.”

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Proportional autonomy accompanies the concept of vulnerable agency. Together these provide a framework by which beneficial teachings on children can be formed by the Church, theologians, or those working in pastoral ministries. Previously in chapter five concepts of dependency and vulnerability are brought to the forefront as characteristics of the child-parent relationship. Dependency, when thought about as restrictive to freedom, has a negative connotation. As adults we seek freedom in all that we do. We act purposefully as autonomous choosers and take pride in our abilities to choose. In view of this ideal of autonomy, children are not autonomous. In contrast to autonomy as independence, Schleiermacher’s dependency means openness to full acceptance of God without fear. Children experience this utter dependency as a positive opening. Dependency requires trust in asymmetrical relationships.

Asymmetry, this means, does not necessarily lead to domination and submission but may instead be regarded as one constellation among other that allows for mutual recognition. Crucial for mutual recognition is only the simultaneous transformation of self and other in their interaction.

Haker notes in examining Jessica Benjamin’s work that mutual recognition is not a dyadic relationship, but a system of recognition that involves more than the child and mother. The child, of course, sees and responds to the parent. The child experiences the recognition of the parent. The parent also receives recognition in return. Though the duties of the parent, exemplified by Benjamin as the mother, are asymmetrical to the child in responsibility, the parent does not escape vulnerability themselves. The child is vulnerable in their dependency.

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95 The terms proportional autonomy and vulnerable agency are terms used by Hille Haker in her work on recognition.

96 Hille Haker, Recognition and Responsibility, Chapter 4 (unpublished Manuscript), 6.

97 Ibid, 5.
is vulnerable in their openness to the transformation they experience through mutual recognition with their child.98 “Yet, it makes a difference, for example, whether the caretaker only tries to ‘manage’ the baby’s need while dissociating her own difference, her own subjectivity of vulnerability and agency, or whether she can allow for the experience of mutuality that may transform herself as much as the infant.”99 Though the child should not be described as an autonomous chooser or rational agent, the child is a distinct vulnerable agent and has the capacity for rational agency. In Kantian ethics all human beings are broadly vulnerable, while some, such as children, are especially vulnerable.100 Vulnerabilities are conditions of rational agency. “The core normative focus of Kantian ethics is on the dignity or absolute worth that human beings have in virtue of their capacity for rational agency.”101 There exists a great risk to seeing the child as especially vulnerable without granting them agency – they can be seen as objects.102 As children are especially vulnerable, adults are broadly vulnerable. The relationship of broad vulnerability alongside special vulnerability must be held in tension together. Only then can the child-adult relationship be mutual by way of human dignity achieved through the acknowledgment of vulnerability.


100 Paul Formosa, “Vulnerability in Kantian Ethics,” in Vulnerability New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy, eds. Catriona Mackenzie, Wendy Rogers, and Susan Dodds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 91. This presents a separate discussion, but important to note that the broad type of vulnerability applies to all rational agents, while the narrow to special groups such as the elderly children, minorities, etc.

101 Ibid, 88.

102 Ibid, 92.
Reflecting back on the status of *canonical persona*, the Church’s understanding of the child as having subjectivity only as mediated through the parent is inadequate. As a vulnerable agent the child transforms the parents and the family by their mere presence. A person cannot be transformed by a non-entity, or a potential person, or an object. A person is transformed in and through a relationship in which they receive recognition from an other, from a subject, from an I. The child as a person, even as an infant, possesses remarkable capability and ability for their stage in life. But theirs are not the capabilities of an adult and thus should not be measured by adult scales. Children deserve the dignity of being seen through their own lens. The risk of not recognizing their dignity and subjectivity is too great. “When others contemptuously treat us as if we were worth less as a person, or mock and ridicule our practical judgments, then it can be very difficult to preserve, or develop in the first place, respect for ourselves and our own judgment.”\(^{103}\) In the concluding chapter I discuss five resolutions that form a new child-centric framework steeped in dignity and subjectivity for the child.

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CONCLUSION

Children’s Rights: A Corrective Lens for the Twenty-First Century

The Holy See’s conflicts with the *UNCRC* over children’s rights are contextually important to this project. The matters that are discussed in the protocols, reports, and resolutions all involve immediate and direct rights of millions of children. On a macro level, that the conflicts take place at all is also significant. For hundreds of years the treatment of children under the care of the Roman Catholic Church remained unchallenged and not monitored. That is not to say that every child has faced abuse while within Roman Catholic institutions, certainly not. If only one child is abused, however, the system has failed. We, as Catholics, have failed. These resonate as harsh words for all of us. Sexual abuse survivors across the globe now range in the thousands, potentially hundreds of thousands of both known and unknown cases. Many have not stepped forward yet, suffer the trauma of the abuse in silence. This project began with the hope of changing the way we see, or don’t see, children within our Church. It’s time to change and it must begin with the leaders of the Church, the law, and the teachings. These five resolutions are at the heart of this project.¹ Their aim is to create an environment where children can attend catechesis, attend their parochial schools, attend mass, and experience safety, understanding, and catechization.

¹ I begin these resolutions with “we.” I am speaking on behalf of myself as a Catholic, a mom, and an ethicist. I say “we” to my fellow Catholics who wish to create change instead of sitting by and watching. Finally, I say “we” to include the magisterium who are also part of the Body of Christ of the Church as Catholics.
1. As Catholics, we need to make use of the available teachings, documents, writings, and resources regarding the study of children, not only what has been approved as a matter of tradition. Chapter One examined several Church fathers and theologians to get to the heart of how the understanding of the child is formed. Some theologians are referenced frequently in Church teachings, such as Augustine, while others such as Clement of Alexandria are hardly referenced at all. Even biblical passages that uphold the goodness of the child are set aside for more traditional teachings such as Aquinas’ natural law. These teachings need to be made available to those seeking an understanding of the depth of understanding of the child and the child’s anthropology. The Church must work to help Catholics access these documents rather than setting them aside.

2. As Catholics, we need to be inclusive of all children’s rights as set forth by governing bodies such as, but not limited to, the UNCRC and their mission of child flourishing. The Church makes great strides in the twentieth century concerning the rights of children. Yet, there are United Nations protocols that have yet to be ratified and changes in accordance to the protocols yet to be made. Human rights violations against children continue to happen globally, and they in Roman Catholic institutions, too. The Church needs to be responsive, swift, and decisive in actions taken for the protection of children’s rights everywhere. Mary McAleese notes that there is no department dedicated only to children in the Vatican. I would add that many dioceses also do not have departments dedicated to children. These departments all too frequently only include the education of children, but not the rights or welfare of children.

3. As Catholics, we need to create catechesis programs that are formed with better pedagogical methods, current secular teaching methods, and child development methods. Though some bishops may hold degrees in fields such as education and child development studies, most do
not. The National Catechetical Directory sets aside studies, training, programs, and pedagogy from experts in the fields of education, child development, and psychology to train its catechists and directors of religious education by means of magisterial approved resources. If a teacher does not understand their students’ needs, they are not able to teach them effectively. Teaching is as much about the pedagogy and ability to enter into a relationship with the student as it is about the material being taught. We need to truly use the best information of our time for the good of the children we are teaching. Cavalletti’s *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* is still looked at suspiciously in some Catholic circles because it does not follow what has made the tradition. Yet Cavalletti’s pedagogy is more child-appropriate and child-centric than most traditional catechesis programs. I call on the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops to produce guidelines to be implemented in local dioceses that suggest new pedagogical methods as part of a greater ethical framework in support of the child. Parishes can use this normative framework of the understanding of the child that is based on their dignity and subjectivity as agents with the capacity to reason. This child-centric framework is foundational to catechetical programs.

4. *As Catholics, we need to understand that the child has a deep relationship with God.* Children do not need adults as mediators to feel or understand God’s love. The utter dependency that Schleiermacher adores speaks volumes to the child’s intimate experience of faith. Adults use their own lens to see the world of the child. The adult lens is incapable of understanding or traveling back to the child’s perspective. We can find recognizable joy in the face and presence of the child. Fyodor Dostoyevsky writes in *The Idiot* that “Children soothe and cure the wounded heart.”² I believe that he is correct.

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² Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot* (London: Vizetelly & Co, 1887), 64.
5. As Catholics, we have a moral duty to understand the child as having dignity and subjectivity which compels us to take action to ensure the protection of that status. It is easier to write that a child has dignity and harder to ensure that they are entrusted with dignity and subjectivity. Dignity means upholding the rights that we commit to. Subjectivity means an openness to become vulnerable in their presence and allow us, the adults, to be acted upon. We are compelled to continue working, indefinitely, until children are bestowed the dignity of being a human person or the subjectivity of being a vulnerable agent.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


VITA

Dr. Saccucci was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, before moving to Orlando, Florida at age nine. After graduating from Dr. Phillips High School in 1999, she earned Bachelor of Arts from Loyola University, New Orleans, as a double major in Religious Studies and Classical Studies, with a minor in Medieval Studies. She graduated magna cum laude in 2003. Dr. Saccucci also earned her Master of Arts in Theology, Christian Ethics, from Loyola University, Chicago, in 2009.

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Currently, Dr. Saccucci lives in Northwestern Illinois with her husband and two children. She has plans to continue her research in ethics for children, as well as working toward renewing the religious education system.