bodies of both men and women may be something that increases with age.) As he approaches eighty, after a half century of deepwater swimming, for the first time Tom Vasilos, "Retirement from Rocketry and Academia," just experienced being rubbed against by a manatee for the first time. In a telephone call he described the incident with the sense of pleasure one might expect in a young child.

While physical limitations become greater with age, there are also ways around them. For example, due to a bad back Sandy Breiner, "Never Retire from a Fulfilling Life," could no longer climb mountains so he had helicopters drop him on mountain plateaus so he could hike around them. When he could not bend over to garden, he had his garden beds raised so he could continue to grow flowers and vegetables. Despite the physical restrictions accompanying age, retirees are more likely to enjoy what their bodies can do than they did when they took their physical capabilities for granted.

The greater longevity of women than of men is perhaps a reflection of retirement being easier for them, apparently because in the past they usually have been more comfortable *being* rather than *doing*. Normally being raised sixty and more years ago to center their lives around home and family helps prepare them for their final stage of home centered life—prior to the "retirement home." (Gender relationships in our world are changing so rapidly that it is hard to predict what the future will bring.) As pointed out by Vivian Rosenberg, "The Retired Self: A Work in Progress," who retired from her professorship to care for loved ones who are now deceased, the need to nurture others is quite strong in some women and the loss of this role may result in some uneasiness and guilt.

The pleasures of retirement should not be underestimated. Seventy-seven year-old Edryce Reynolds, "Not a Finished Product," discusses the joys of her "'retiring years'" in which she continues to discover and rediscover her "talents," "dreams, and my purpose in living," since "it is never too late to have a happy and fulfilling life." One author, whose submission was too literary for our referees to accept, wrote of her utter delight in sleeping late in retirement.

There is considerable gratification in spending money on oneself, on travel, education, and so forth, rather than on the family. The joy of a warmer climate in the dead of winter entices not only Canadians like Don Carveth, "Retirement Fantasies," but many others in the north. While some retirees worry a lot about leaving money for their children or having enough money if they become frail or incapacitated, most recognize that there will be no pockets in their coffins so that they might as well spend what money they have while they can enjoy it.

In conclusion, the pleasures and freedom of retirement beckon and most colleagues answer the call in their sixties and seventies while others choose to work until they are no longer able to carry on or they just die in harness. The more directly all colleagues confront their fears and fantasies, as well as the limits and other realities of aging and retirement, the better off they will be.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, *who has no plans to retire, continues his work of applying psychoanalytic, psychohistorical, psycho-political, and historical concepts, without the jargon, to as many aspects of the human condition as the members of the Psychohistory Forum can visualize. He may be contacted at pelovitz@aol.com.*❑

Symposium: Booth on Dervin

(Continued from page 109)

es Dr. Dervin raises in his paper.

Perhaps one of the most compelling themes in Dervin's work is the clear and general ambivalence people of that era manifested about children. This ambivalence is notable, on the larger scale, by the theopolitical writings of Augustine and Pelagius, who argued in favor of (Augustine) and against (Pelagius) infant baptism. Baptism, in general, would serve to properly place the infant into "right relationship" with the Church (and God) by cleansing the infant of that with which the child was born, namely, Original Sin.

However, Augustine had another agenda, in my view. His thinking, including the ideas he presents in his famous *Confessions,* assumed that humans being born into a state of sin (i.e., born evil) inherited from the first parents, Adam and Eve and, as Dervin adds, from their own parents' sexual behavior. If the child were to die in that state, without benefit of baptism, the child would be lost to God. Baptism, which could be performed *only by the Church*, forced all Catholic families to take their

children to the priestly class which performed the ritual of cleansing. Augustine was one of many who, through time, made the Church a necessary institution, instilling ultimate fear into those who would remain outside its walls. Threats such as "eternal damnation" (which I would argue the human brain cannot even comprehend), became, as Dr. Dervin suggests, one of the ultimate control mechanisms maintained by the Church.

To understand Augustine's role in this endeavor of cleansing, I find it helpful to think about him as a follower of Manichaeism, which regarded all matter as evil, early in his life. Later, as it turns out, he becomes one of its chief opponents, almost as if he converts, reverses his espousals, and severely threatens those who indulge in physical pleasures. His psychology and his theology are, in my view, almost reducible to the simple cliché, "Do as I say, not as I do (did)," albeit that is, of course, far too simplistic an explanation. Jung might consider Augustine to be fighting his own Shadow self; others might consider him in severe reactance; still others, to have as a life goal, following his conversion, to save, like a Messiah, all the world from the evils of the flesh by demanding baptism as a condition of salvation.

Moreover, I sense a certain narcissism and egocentrism when I read Augustine, as well as the presence of a powerful dualistic subtext. Augustine fights Manichaeism so intensely that I wonder what kind of reaction formation might be operating within the man. While he may believe he possessed the answers for the alleged existential dilemma of having been born evil-in-the-flesh, I wonder about the possibility of projective identification here, as well as possible preoccupations with fleshly desires within Augustine the cleric, even as they persist in all of us. Precisely, what was the direct object of his theological war?

Paul Johnson, who considers his *History of Christianity* (1976) an historical analysis of Christianity from 50 BCE to 1975 CE, supports my notion of the possibility of narcissism when he says that "For a thousand years Augustine was the most popular of the Fathers; Medieval European libraries contained over 500 complete manuscripts of his *City of God,* and there were, for instance, twenty-four printed editions between 1467-95." Johnson declares that "above all, Augustine wrote about himself; he issued his *Confessions* in 397, two years after he became a bishop. He was a tremendous egoist: it is characteristic of him that his spiritual autobiography should have been written in the form of a gigantic address to God" (p. 113).

The dualism, the ambiguity about children, the splitting between Augustine's "all bad self" and his mother's (a canonical saint in the Church) "all good self," which may also have been a reflection of his own, given the relationship between Augustine and his mother are, I believe, implied and sometimes directly stated in the Dervin article.

Professor Dervin also mentions that some Medievalists, like Anselm and Aquinas, inserted a less severe negotiation than hell into Augustinian theology by utilizing the Pelagian notion of "Limbo," a "place" where the unbaptized go following death. Thus, Limbo allows the unbaptized to avoid eternal damnation while continuing to deprive them of the Beatific Vision, the immediate presence of God.

It is notable that Dervin, discussing some of the ideas of Wood, indicates that children during the early Christian era were never perceived as mere adults-in-progress. Interestingly, the adults-in-progress notion did make it into the human psyche and language later in the form of the Homuncular theory. The word "homunculus" derives from the latin words "homo" and the diminutive "unculus." "Homo," of course, means man or humankind so, literally, the homuncular theory argued that "a little man" resided in the head of every sperm. Essentially, when a sperm united with an ovum, this interaction resulted in a little person who merely had to grow taller and stronger over time. This theory is not to be confused with Paracelcian alchemy or any other interpretation of the word "homunculus" (see "homunculus" in *Wikipedia*). It was partly from this notion I am here describing that child labor laws were avoided until modern times; multitudes of children were parentified before their time. The notion of developmentalism had not yet been well understood.

I believe that, in view of Professor Dervin's paper, three main ideas can be derived and applied to our cultural and societal perceptions and behaviors today, including those we have about our children.

The first idea is that of Limbo. Limbo is commonly understood to be a state in which we are

merely suspended in mid-air, with no grounding and no clear idea about projecting a future. The word connotes timelessness as well as a vacuous reality. I believe we leave most of our children in "Limbo" even today.

In a time when parents would prefer to be their childrens' friends rather than their authority figures and positive models, children are left in the confusing state of having no one to look up to or to mold them into socialized members of the society in a consistent, systematic, truly adult way. Children are, fundamentally, on their own, even if parents are actually physically present in the home. Working outside the home, balancing family needs with available resources, and the overall pressure of our times leave millions of parents exhausted, thus relegating their children to computer games, excessive television viewing, or poorly socialized and, perhaps deviant, peer networks.

Secondly, leaving our children in Limbo (in this sense) is a subtype of abandonment which, in itself, can and does sometimes lead to unfortunate outcomes in children's lives. We abandon our children by neglecting their psychosocial needs. We abandon them to bullies. We abandon them to too much time with too little responsibility. We also abandon them by not allowing them sufficient access to our attentions and affections. As a society (and partly a matter of public policy) we abandon them to poverty and lack of medical care. In 2004, for instance, thirteen million children were living under the poverty line, with nine million children uninsured medically. The United States itself, for all of our talk about caring about children, did not ratify the document on the Rights of the Child. We underfund the No Child Left Behind Act, making our stated commitment to better and more equitable education hypocritical. This is just the beginning. One might also look at the statistics on physical, psychological, and sexual abuse and ask whether we are vocalizing one thing and doing another. Or, in Alderian terms, are we living a "fictional finalism," a life-lie, with respect to our children? While Dervin supports deMause's conclusion that the early Christian era constituted, literally, the "Abandonment Mode of Childrearing" (p. 81), I would argue further that the child abandonment mode continues still, in many forms, not the least of which is the objectification of children for political and economic gain.

I recently finished reading David France's book entitled *Our Fathers: The Secret Life of the Catholic Church in an Age of Scandal* (2004). This was a very painful book for me to read, comprising 587 pages of human damage, clerical narcissism and self-protection, and an overwhelming number of evasions, denials, projections, and rationalizations on the part of Church clerics, including many in Rome. While reading the book, I was reminded of my own Catholic school socialization/indoctrination and years of seminary training (both of which I have abandoned for numerous personal reasons). I felt like I was sometimes in an altered state of consciousness as I read page after page of the evil perpetrated and maintained by the leaders of the church to whom I had once been devoted. More importantly, though, I was acutely aware of how little many clerical celibates truly value the children under their direction. During my seminary years, I came to understand that no one in the Church was quite as important as the priestly class because priests are "chosen" by God Himself. The "others," the laity, the "outsiders," were to be led to the truth but not allowed to debate it or participate in exploring it.

I came to the conclusion that many priests who had sexually abused children had traded their religious responsibilities for momentary gratification without actually considering their behavior problematic and, if problematic, not responsible to civil authority. After all, I believe many unconsciously believed "I am special; I am a priest who can be forgiven by one of my fellow priests." So, the abandonment issue that Professor Dervin writes about and deMause's Abandonment Mode remain intact with us, and are played out in our politics.

Finally, the dualism Dervin discusses, which can be traced back to times prior to Augustine, remains strong: there are the "worthy people," who feel entitled to tax breaks and excessive salaries, and there are the "unworthy," who are not similarly entitled. The salaries of chief executive officers (CEOs) of large U.S. corporations are 230 times those of the median income category—this has major consequences for average children without vast familial resources. As we watch where the money goes, we can find our social values.

Although the psychological and other human sciences have made progress in reducing the

Cartesian split between mind and body, it remains present in our day. Many Christian churches still preach from the Augustinian persuasion; many people continue to prefer to maintain a poor class for many reasons; and many people still separate "body" problems from spiritual and psychological ones. One of the scholars attempting to bridge the gap between the body self and the psychosocial and spiritual selves is John Dominic Crossan (a former Jesuit priest), the Catholic theologian. In one section of his book, entitled *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (1994), he discusses the miracles described in the Canonical Gospels. He argues, in short, that the incident with lepers was actually not addressing leprosy at all because of the etymology of certain words that have nothing to do with leprosy as we know it; but, Jesus was, Crossan says, dealing with a body issue, perhaps, psoriasis. Due to the body problem referred to as leprosy in Scripture, the society had cast the afflicted out, severely labeled and denigrated them, and completely ostracized them from all social intercourse except with each other. Crossan argues that the salient dimensions of stories like this is not merely the body issue itself, but Jesus's actual touching of the "leper," which defied the entire society's normative structure, and the psychological issue of "curing" the leper by helping the victim to perceive herself or himself as "worthy," *despite* the body ailment. Because of fundamental psychosocial and psychological worthiness, Jesus sent the leper to the priests at the temple, which was equivalent to a social revolt within the Jewish community at the time.

Crossan, then, is attempting to interpret what is perceived as a mere medical problem in both social and psychological terms. He is deliteralizing the medical condition, broadening it to encompass Jesus's true mission, which was, he argues, in part, to revolutionize the perceived and real helplessness of an oppressed Jewish population, so human honor could be restored. In so doing, over time, the Romans would theoretically be dealing with an objectively oppressed group, but one whose sense of humanity and self-efficacy had returned. This is surely a non-dualistic perspective that confronts aspects of literalized faith for many but opens up many possibilities for others. It, and work like it, constitute a good beginning.

In closing, I would again like to say that Dr. Dervin's article took me not only into the early era of Christianity, but also sparked other psychohistorical and sociopolitical ideas about which I have long been concerned. I found his work to be insightful and intellectually stimulating.

Richard Booth, PhD, *is Professor of Psychology at Black Hawk College at the Quad-Cities Campus in Moline, Illinois. He is also a licensed psychotherapist and Adjunct Professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the University of Maryland University College in Adelphi, as well as a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum. Dr. Booth has published widely in professional journals and can be reached at boothr@bhc.edu.*

<>><>><>CP<><><><

Children in the Early Christian Centuries

Jerrold Atlas
Medieval Historian and Hypnotherapist

Dan Dervin has created a consequential overview of the life opportunities for children—from the Greek/Roman era through to the late medieval period—and finds that children were treated with caring and love and a unique group-accepted identity. This is in stark contrast to my own findings and the difference seems to lie in how one interprets some of the documents and how one defines generalized group attitudes. The author seems to believe that the punishment of the children he describes was acceptable and the result of Catholic theological conundrums, that the punishments and teachings weren't designed to create delusional thinking about self and the heavenly reward. I'll try to show the opposite in my remarks.

While I'm certain that Professor Dervin doesn't join in this child abuse or hatred, his dispassion may be seen as favoring the historicity of it. Indeed, he focuses on the Limbo problem for the unbaptized addresses a current issue for the Church – why would God choose to ignore the unbaptized when he embraces and loves all people? The issue will soon explode into Catholic consciousness and favor the unbaptized as having entitlement to heaven-