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CHILD ABUSE, RACISM AND THE STATE

by

Chase Parker Turner

Under the Direction of Andrew Jason Cohen

ABSTRACT

Using a Millian framework, this thesis examines whether or not children are victims of child abuse when they are inculcated with racist belief systems. The conclusion is that children are not harmed and so not the victims of child abuse, but instead are badly parented.

INDEX WORDS: Child abuse, Racism, State intervention, Open future, Options, J.S. Mill, Children's rights, Parental rights

CHILD ABUSE, RACISM AND THE STATE

by

Chase Parker Turner

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2008

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Chase Parker Turner

2008

CHILD ABUSE, RACISM AND THE STATE

by

Chase Parker Turner

Committee Chair: Andrew J. Cohen

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Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
December 2008

DEDICATION

Charles Nicholas Turner II.

Son
Brother
Friend

1979-2005

transit sic lente sic celeriter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Andrew Altman and A.I. Cohen, members of my M.A. committee, and my advisor, A.J. Cohen. Without my committee, you would not be reading this; without my dear advisor, you really wouldn't be reading this. A.J. Cohen has provided me with cogent insight and challenged me to strive for perfection. No student can ask for more or better. There is no question that these men have demonstrated both a singular and combined effort towards the advancement of a philosophical education that rival any group of people who hold knowledge, however learned and expressed, and its transmission, so dear. No doubt I have made many mistakes in this work and though they are lessened in this work by their patience, dedication and service, what mistakes may remain are my own. Please treat them as such.

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INTRODUCTION

A liberal society should be comprised in such a way as to accommodate injured parties and adjudicate between them. A problem arises, however, when we consider the relationship between parents and their children. Due to the nature of that relationship, it is often difficult to determine whether or not children are being abused. Sometimes, abuse is physical in nature and can be seen and reported. In other cases, the abuse of children by their parents can be of a mental sort that is much harder to recognize. In any event, cases of child abuse, however constituted, should be reported so that the children may receive the proper aid that is due them.

Often, sadly, when we hear about cases of child abuse, we hear about cases where children are tortured, crippled, burned and otherwise maltreated. What we don't often hear about is whether or not children are being abused when they take on the negative ideas of their parents. This idea can be put in the form of a question: are children abused when they learn racism or cult-like beliefs from their religious upbringing? Imagine a fringe religious group who indoctrinates their children with the beliefs of that community. Imagine that one such belief that is taught to children is that women are to be treated as second-class citizens. Has this religious group abused their children? There seems to be some vacillation in our minds: 1) one inclination is to say that the children have been abused because what they are learning is not conducive to their future development, but we also have the intuition that says 2) parents should be allowed to teach their children their own belief system because that is how a society transmits to children knowledge of what is expected of them and how best to get along in life. The natural question that arises from this contraposition is to ask where the line is between parental rights to educate their children in accordance with their own beliefs and what sort of behavior we consider child abuse.

In this thesis, I plan to look at where to draw that line by first doing a conceptual analysis of what it is that comprises child abuse. Without a full understanding of what child abuse is, one can not move to find the tipping point between what is acceptable, though perhaps unpopular or somewhat life-limiting behavior, and what is truly abusive towards a child. Chapter 1 will revolve around a central question that has to be answered when considering what child abuse is–what sorts of things are harmful towards children? A differentiation between what is harmful to children (and therefore warrants state intervention) and what I call "bad parenting" will make up the bulk of this chapter.

The rest of this thesis—chapters 2 and 3—will seek to determine if teaching children racist beliefs constitutes child abuse. This discussion has two parts. In chapter two, I will seek to determine if children are harmed immediately as a result of some sort of practice that includes inculcation of racist beliefs. Here, I deal with the empirical details, offering an answer based upon empirical research. Though I will also note the limits of such research, I will argue that such research suggests children are not immediately harmed by inculcation of racist beliefs.

Chapter 3 will examine a second way children could conceivably be harmed by being inculcated with racist belief systems–in terms of a child's future endeavors. I will begin by discussing what it is to have an open future and then move the discussion to what the framework for opening or closing future options looks like. My ultimate solution rests upon what we are willing to call success of the future endeavors of children. My conclusion here is that with regard to future endeavors, children are not harmed by inculcation of racist beliefs.

The conclusion of my thesis is that children are not harmed when they are taught racist belief systems, either immediately as children or in terms of their future endeavors. Therefore,

such inculcation is not child abuse and the state has no right to intervene in such acts. However, I also conclude that children are parented badly when they are taught these types of belief systems and that these practices should be avoided.

In my concluding section, I offer my final thoughts concerning the practical application of my conclusion and what should be avoided. Let me turn now to what it means to abuse a child.

Chapter 1. Child Abuse, Bad Parenting, Harm and State Intervention

In order to determine whether or not parents should be able to inculcate their children with racist beliefs, one must first answer three broad questions. The first question is, "what constitutes child abuse?" The second question is, "what kind of harm is child abuse?" And the last question is, "when should the state intervene in matters of child abuse?" These questions serve as a backdrop against which the central thesis can be explored.

I. What is Child Abuse?

In regards to the first question, "what constitutes child abuse," the answer I am searching for is not of a legal nature, though it may take the form of what a legal answer would consider in order to construct a just law.[1] As such, the law provides a good starting point for determining what qualifies as child abuse, both mentally and physically. Federal law in the United States defines child abuse under the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act[2] as the following:

> Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or
>
> An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of harm.

This law captures a great many cases of what we would normally consider child abuse. Such cases would include using one's child as a sex object or selling one's child's sexual services, the repeated verbal condemnation of a child's character, physical attributes and grooming and eating habits such that the child is left mentally scarred, and other physical abuses like locking up a

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[1] With that said, there is a further point to make. Not all laws are moral; consider a conception of Sharia law in Kuwait, which holds that women have no right to vote. Not all morals are laws, either; consider that "the golden rule" is not codified as law. Here, I am not attempting to delineate between what morality and justice are or their intersection. It is enough to point out that such an intersection is not as neat as I *broadly* have stated.

[2] 42 U.S.C.A. §5106g.

child in a cage or leaving a child in a closet with no food or clothing, placing a child in a microwave oven to punish her for crying too much and other egregious acts of the same fashion. This list is by no means exhaustive; presumably, there are many other ways to abuse children that would satisfy the above conditions.

Let me begin defining what it is for an act[3] to be child abuse by first discussing intention. An act of child abuse can either be intentional, unintentional or negligent. Normally, when we think of cases of child abuse like the instance of microwaving a crying child, we believe this act to be intentional on the part of the parent[4] to make the child cease crying. Since the intent is to have the child cease crying, the parent therefore chooses to microwave the child in order to achieve that goal. On the other hand, consider the case of telling your child that he is fat every time you have a meal. The parent is, perhaps under the guise of "tough love," trying to get the child to eat less so that the child will be physically healthier. However, the child begins to form image and self esteem issues that result in an eating disorder. The parent is not intending[5] to abuse their child, even though she is doing so. Cases of negligence, or as the law says, "a failure to act," are another type of act that indicates child abuse. Consider a situation wherein a parent leaves a child unsupervised and while unsupervised, the child is accidentally hurt. It was the parent's responsibility to look after the child and make sure nothing happened to him. The parent could have chosen to supervise the child, as a reasonable parent would do, but did not; therefore, this negligence on the part of the parent is also an act of child abuse. However, it would be incorrect to say that negligent acts are solely concerned with the failure to exercise

[3] My account of child abuse is not committed to saying that acts of child abuse much take the form of *action*.
[4] Either both parents can abuse a child, or one parent can abuse a child. Thanks to A.I. Cohen for this point.
[5] Unintentional acts of abuse are only unintentional in the sense that they are not intending to be acts of abuse, even though some act is still intended.

reasonable care.[6] Negligent acts can involve omission *or action*. In other words, a parent can be negligent of a child's needs either by omitting some action (such as the failure to exercise reasonable care) or by doing something without reasonable care that has the consequence of the child being harmed. In either case, to be negligent of a child's needs is an act of child abuse.

Another way to say that an act of abuse either is intentional, unintentional or negligent is to say that an abuser, "did know," "didn't know" and "should have known better" that his or her behavior in regards to the child would lead to a negative result. Whether the act was intentional, unintentional or negligent is simply a qualifier of both what type of act has occurred and how severe the act is. Presumably, we tend to think that intentional acts are of the worst sort with unintentional and negligent acts considered not as heinous. Nonetheless, child abuse is an act done either intentionally, unintentionally or is the product of negligence, and the intention on the part of the abuser is simply a qualifier of the type of act. So, regardless of intention (which at most acts as a method for determining the severity of abuse), an act can be an act of child abuse. For now, it is enough to say that an act of child abuse is an act directed *against* a child.

The above law also points out another aspect we can discuss of child abuse; namely, its effect. It would seem strange to say that the following acts are child abuse: a child mowing the yard, washing dishes, doing homework or taking out the trash. Certainly, children may find such activities unpleasant. Whether or not an activity is pleasant is not the determining factor of whether something is or is not an instance of child abuse. There isn't the same sort of effect on a child in these cases as there would be if he were locked up in a cage with no food or water, sexually abused or belittled day in and day out. To be abusive, an act must have some untoward

[6] I owe this point to Andrew Altman.

effects.[7] Though child abuse is not understood solely in terms of its consequences, consequences are part of a good understanding of child abuse. If the consequence is such that the child is severely set back in some fundamental way, say in terms of a healthy growth pattern, both mental and physical in nature, then it would seem that the consequence must be of some sort that it would not be something that we think is ordinarily due a child, that is, something that interferes with a healthy growth pattern for the successful development[8] of a child. It would be hard to imagine a case in which a child was abused but did not have some after effect, either mentally or physically. Absent an example, it does not seem conceptually possible to have an incident of child abuse without a corresponding after effect.[9] If just such a case did present itself, I would no doubt have to rethink my position. In any case, we will primarily be concerned with cases of abuse that have after effects.

The third component required for an act to be considered child abuse is a matter of the temporal nature such an act requires. The law intimates a similar requirement in the first section when it says, "Any recent act….". In the case of the law, "any recent act," has more to do with overriding statutes of limitations than it does with specific instances of child abuse. Regardless, there are two main roles time may play in an act of child abuse. The first can be seen as part of

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[7] A.I. Cohen points out that there seems to be a question regarding whether or not the law is taking stock of a sort of abuse that rises above a certain threshold and that it is this threshold that is the tipping point between what sorts of actions the law is looking to remedy and other types of abusive acts (such as slapping a child due to impatience) that presumably the law is not speaking to. On a technical reading, I imagine a case can be made against a parent for slapping their child due to impatience; I think, though, that this interpretation would be mistaken. No one gets a perfect childhood and presumably parents do not always parent wisely and sometimes make mistakes- surely the law does not demand perfection. If slapping a child due to impatience happened as part of a larger pattern, then I think it is clear that this would be adequate ground to bring a case against the parents (for the sorts of reasons I discuss below).

[8] I will have more to say in Chapter 3 about what it is to successfully develop.

[9] One reason I am interested in cases of abuse with after effects (in addition to others I mention) is that while it is possible to have a case of abuse in which a child survives intact, I'm simply not sure what we would make of just such a case. I am focusing on cases of abuse that have after effects because they lend themselves better to what it is to conceptually understand a case of child abuse. I believe we normally conceive of child abuse in this way. I owe this point to A.I. Cohen.

the necessary and sufficient conditions for an act to be considered child abuse and the second role is something that can qualify the severity of the abuse. The second role is, like intentionality discussed above, entirely a qualifier of abuse; it tells us about the kind of act and how severe it was.

The first role of time, I think, concerns when the abuse occurs in the developmental life cycle of a child. Should an act of abuse occur early on in the child's life as opposed to later (say one act occurs at four years of age and another at sixteen), this is worse for two reasons: 1) the child at four years of age is more likely to not stay on a proper track for successful development and 2) the child at four years of age has no options to get away from the abuse while a child at sixteen years of age presumably can tell someone or run away. Both are instances of child abuse. What is not an instance of child abuse would be emotionally abusive parents berating their forty-year-old son. It is certainly abusive and the son is the biological result of the parents, i.e. their child. But the son is no longer a child in the sense relevant to "child abuse." It is difficult to say where the cut off line is between the time when someone becomes an adult and is no longer a child. The age of eighteen is used in the United States as the legal indicator for when a child reaches the age of majority and is therefore no longer legally protected as a child. Perhaps that age should be extended upwards. And perhaps the age should be reduced for children who exhibit the maturity of an adult at younger ages. In any case, the age of eighteen does seem like a fairly good cut off point between what we classify as a child and what we classify as an adult, so long as this is understood to be simply a matter of policy and not a point about the conceptual matters of what it is to be either a child or adult. There is no real line, no one specific point (age or otherwise) at which this occurs developmentally for any one person. Adulthood is the

culmination of many different processes and should not necessarily be thought of as solely about reaching a certain age. Age just happens to be the easiest way in which we can qualify people differently. Child abuse is an act that occurs during childhood, however defined. Additionally, *when* the act occurs *during* childhood can be seen as a qualifier on how severe the act of abuse was, and not as a condition for when to call an act an act of abuse. This leads us to the second main role time plays here.

The second main way in which time is at issue in acts of child abuse does not concern the definition of child abuse, but its severity. It concerns the duration of the abuse, and this can have three sub-senses. One sub-sense concerns the length of time over which the abuse occurred (days, weeks, months, years). The second sub-sense concerns the duration of the act of abuse itself (e.g. how long were you physically assaulted each time you were physically assaulted). In the former case, it seems that we are speaking to a larger pattern of abusive acts and in the latter case we are speaking to the durational nature of a single act. The last sub-sense in which time is relevant to acts of abuse regards the frequency or repetition of some act or acts. Someone may "loses their cool" and act inappropriately only once. In such a case, the act can be considered an instance of child abuse, but it would be a tenuous characterization. On the other hand, if someone continues the same behavior over and over such that it has a direct bearing on any children present, it seems clear that this is a form of child abuse much worse than the former. The first case, depending on its nature, *may* be excusable for a number of reasons. The second case does not lend itself to excuse.

Of the three non-definitional sub-senses in which time is a factor in acts of abuse, no one particular sense overrides or is more important than another. Let's put this point another way.

The first (definitional) sense in which time is a relevant concern is best revealed by the question, "When were you abused?" The second (non-definitional) sense is revealed with different questions. The first and second sub-senses are addressed by asking, "How long were you abused?" and the third by asking, "How often were you abused?" Importantly, it does not seem that any one particular sense of time can be any less relevant than another. They all matter. It also seems that the different senses can blur into each other; to ask about the frequency of abuse can also speak to when in a child's life he was abused. I think it is safe to say the following things about the relationship between time and abuse: 1) The earlier in a child's developmental cycle the child is abused, the worse off a child will likely be, 2) the longer the act(s) of abuse in general and the individual practice in particular, the worse off a child will likely be and 3) the more instances of an abusive practice done to a child, the worse off he will likely be.

Again, like intention discussed above, the second (non-definitional) role of time, including all its sub-senses, acts as a qualifier about the act of abuse itself and should not be considered as part of a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for what is or is not an act of child abuse. Time plays a definitional role in abuse because when an act occurs during the child's life determines whether it can be "child-abuse" or not. The other senses of time, like the many forms of intention, are qualifiers by which we can judge how heinous an act of abuse is.

The fourth component required for an act[10] to be considered child abuse is about the nature of justice as applied to children. Children are due justice, much like anyone else. In fact, it seems queer to suggest children are not due justice. Let us posit that children are indeed due justice. What exactly would justice for children look like?

[10] I have no commitment to any particular theory of action and use the term "act" loosely. Thanks to A.I. Cohen for making me see the need to make this clear.

David Schmidtz's book, *Elements of Justice*, produces a roadmap to the elements, taken as a cluster, that comprise what we think of when we consider issues of justice. According to Schmidtz, although justice is a cluster concept of four principles, namely desert, reciprocity, equality and need,[11] this is not to say that we deal with only one concept at a time when deciding what is or is not just.[12] In fact, we may often use the principles in tandem when deciding whether something is just or not. Still, we may end up using different principles of justice as the context requires. If justice is in some way contextual as Schmidtz suggests, then in contexts involving children, which principle of justice do we use?

Schmidtz is clear on this matter when he says that a child is due what he needs.[13] This is not to say that there are no contexts under which children are due reciprocity, desert, equality or other such things not encapsulated in a theory of justice but necessary for the well being of a child. Rather, it is to say that in most contexts we can imagine, a child is due what he needs. As Schmidtz says, "According to my theory, children have needs that ought to be met. A society needs to take responsibility, or hold parents responsible, for doing what it takes to meet them."[14] Whatever these needs may be, there is little question that these needs change over time due to the aging of the child and the different circumstances each successive year brings. There seems to be a dichotomy here of what it is children need: children require their physical and emotional needs to be dealt with but children also need something more in order to be successful later in life. I think we can say that another thing a child is due is a system of beliefs that he can use to be successful later in life. Normally, when we think about what a child needs to be developmentally

[11] Schmidtz 13.
[12] Ibid. 7-8.
[13] Ibid. 18.
[14] Ibid. 178.

successful, we often think about things such as food, water, shelter and love. Children also need a system of belief that will help them become developmentally successful and this is the primary sense in which I am examining what it is for children to be developmentally successful.[15]

The last component of what constitutes child abuse regards the nature of the relationship between the abuser and abused. Normally, we think parents are the main child abusers. For the most part parents are the main culprits of child abuse, though it is not necessarily so. It is possible for other family members to abuse children and it is also possible for someone outside of a family (however construed) to abuse a child. What we don't seem to say, however, is that children can be guilty of child abuse regarding their nefarious acts to other children who are of like ages. Consider two children, both ten years old. One decides to stab the other with a knife and maims her. Is that child abuse? No. We simply call that assault. If two adults do the same thing, it might be battery. But if a sixteen year-old child stabs a four year-old child, we might think that is an instance of child abuse.

The difference between the two like aged children, give or take a year or two, and the difference between the four and sixteen year old is not just about age. The additional component necessary is that one is in a position of dominance over another. By dominant, I do not mean to suggest that one is better than another in any way but that one is in a position of strength or influence over the other. This relationship can take many forms, such as parent to child, teacher to child and so forth. In every case of child abuse, the person performing the abuse has in some way a superior advantage over the child being abused. While this relationship is not solely about age, it certainly seems to act as some function of it: this condition explicitly rules out cases such

[15] Please see Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen's (eds.) *The Quality of Life*, for further treatment of what children specifically need for their development.

as when a ten year old stabs another ten year old and cases like that of an adult sniper shooting a child such that the sniper would have shot any child present, and not one particular child against whom the sniper had feelings of malice.

In sum, if something is to be considered an act of child abuse, then it must (1) be an act which was (2) performed during childhood and which (3) denies a child what is needed to successfully develop by (4) the manipulation of a superior, which (5) results in a harmful effect.[16] For something to be called an act of child abuse, it must have all of the above five components and any act that has these five components is an act of child abuse. The type of child abuse, including the severity of an act of child abuse, is determined by the intent[17] of the abuser and by the differing senses, and the amount, of time as it applies to the act itself. Intent and temporal considerations are simply modifiers to determine of what kind and how severe an act of abuse is. This naturally leads us to the next section and will hopefully shed light on what the harm is that is required by the fifth condition above.

II. What is Harm?

Joel Feinberg is perhaps best known for his four-volume opus, *The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law*. Each volume examines a specific principle that may or may not justify state interference. The four principles—the harm principle, the offense principle, legal paternalism and legal moralism—are all specific principles relating to the broader topic of what it is to have liberty, what it is to have a liberal society and how to decide what type of individual behavior can

[16] Presumably, there are ways in which one can harm a child that one would not consider child abuse, such as if a child has their interests set back wrongfully (discussed below), but somehow manages to get what they successfully need to develop. Harm should not solely be linked to the lack of what it is a child needs to successfully develop; however, if a child does not get what they need to successfully develop, then this child is harmed.

[17] By intent, I mean that the act has the qualities of either being intentional, unintentional or negligent.

be limited by the state (that is, what kind of behavior we should make criminal). Feinberg was explicating what Mill had discussed in his work *On Liberty*. Mill held that the *only* reason a state could interfere in limiting one's liberty is what he called the *harm principle*,

> That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.[18]

Whether or not Mill is right that this is the only liberty-limiting principle is a matter for another time. For our purposes, it is best to critically examine what it is to harm someone, since no one disputes the claim that harm justifies interference with an individual's activities. According to Feinberg, there are three senses of harm, two of which are of interest to us.[19] In the first sense, a harm is a set back of interests. In the second sense, a harm is a *wrong*. It is the overlap of these two that Feinberg thinks is relevant to the Harm Principle: a wrongful setting back of interests.

In order to harm someone, one must set back their interests and do so wrongfully. By setting back a person's interest, one must be setting back something in which that person has a stake.[20] Things we have a stake in are things that we can want, such as money, happiness, sex, work, and so forth. These interests must be realistic desires; interests should not be fleeting and should be obtainable. Having a stake in traveling beyond our solar system is admirable, but currently unrealistic. Additionally, there is an order to our interests; we need food and shelter before we need sex or happiness. To set back an interest, then, is for someone to interfere with or rob one of the ability to pursue whichever interest is at stake. To *wrongly* set back an interest is to unjustifiably or inexcusably set back an interest, such as locking a child up in a cage or

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[18] C.L. Ten (1) 3.
[19] Feinberg (1) 32.
[20] Ibid. 33.

striking a child without any reason.[21] These are examples of unjustifiable and inexcusable acts. Henceforth, unless explicitly mentioned, this is the sense of harm that will be used throughout the rest of the thesis.

The interests of children are usually of a hedonistic sort, such as playing video games, eating whatever he or she pleases, not doing homework, not doing chores and so on. Parents, good ones at least, tend not to think much of these interests because these kinds of interests do not adequately equip their children to live in the best possible way. Parents usually believe the converse is appropriate in the above cases because just such a position is more likely to equip the child for their future endeavors. So, while a child may indeed think he is being harmed when he is not allowed to play video games, he is not harmed in the sense Feinberg is describing. Children's interests in this case are indeed being set back (children aren't allowed to play video games), but children's interests are not *wrongfully* being set back.[22] There is a compelling interest on the part of the parent to raise the child in a manner in which the child can best succeed that overrides some interests of children. In this case, we would say the children are not being harmed.

Wrongfully setting back children's interest, then, supposes a broader question about what is necessary for the child to live a good life. And regarding *that* question, many people of like intelligence will disagree. It seems silly to say that between two competing and mutually exclusive manners of directing a child's life, in order to bring about a happy, thriving adult, that there can be only one answer.

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[21] Ibid 34.

[22] There is some debate about what interests are for discussions of harm. There are two basic views: ideal interest advocates and want interest advocates. Those that accept the ideal interests view might claim that the things I have listed are not interests at all because they are not rationally pursued for some greater sake. I am accepting the want interests view.

We are looking for a universal theme amongst all reasonable answers to the question of "what does it mean to raise a child well?" This thesis will only answer a narrower question: "what does a child need *not* to have in order to lead a good life?" By answering this question, perhaps others can determine what sorts of answers to look for in regards to the first question, but I will not take that up.

III. What is Bad Parenting?

We are interested in instances of wrongfully setting back of interests of children that are child abuse. As was mentioned in the first section of this chapter, children can wrongfully set back the interests of other similarly aged children and yet we would not call this an act of child abuse, even though interests have wrongfully been set back. Therefore, not *all* instances of a wrongful setting back of interests of children are an instance of child abuse.[23] It depends on who is doing the abusing. We can say that when a person is in a position of strength or influence over a child and also wrongfully set backs the interests of said, that *this* is always a case of child abuse, so long as the other components of child abuse are present (also mentioned in the first part of this chapter) and the constituents of each component sufficiently warrant calling an act child abuse.

A simple setting back of interests is not an instance of child abuse but can lead to an instance of bad parenting, which is also not an instance of child abuse. Consider the following case:

> Mike and Betty have a son, Bob. Mike and Betty believe that it is important for their son to stay active, and one very good way to do this is to play hockey. Bob is a good son and plays hockey at the request of his parents. Try as he might, Bob just isn't very

[23] An example is to follow shortly.

> good at hockey. No amount of coaching or side instruction or practice is going to help Bob become the next hockey superstar or anything more than mediocre. Bob asks his parents to let him quit playing hockey, as he would like to play basketball instead. They refuse on the basis of their belief that if Bob would keep trying, he will eventually be proficient enough that he will enjoy the sport, even though no such thing will occur. Regardless, Mike and Betty constantly are lavishing praise on Bob in order to get him to keep playing.

Has Bob been abused? It certainly seems like his parents are setting back his interests, though not wrongfully, by not allowing him to try basketball. At least one presumable effect in this example would be that of Bob having an unrealistic sense of self worth: while his parents are singing his praises and comforting him when he does not perform well, the tangible results are clear- Bob is not good at hockey and never will be.

Clearly, Bob has not been abused. His parents have not intended to set his interests back, nor have they wrongfully set his interests back; that is, they have not done something inexcusable. Mike and Betty have tried to be diligent parents, taking Bob to games and making sure he gets extra coaching and practice. Perhaps Bob would be better off playing basketball. But it isn't harmful for him to continue playing hockey in accordance with his parent's wishes. Their hubris is at fault; and a result of parental hubris *can* lead to bad parenting. Non-ideal parenting does not always equal bad parenting. Bad parenting does not always equal child abuse.

What is key to consider between cases of bad parenting and child abuse is whether or not the interests of justice as applied to children have been met. Surely, we believe that children are due something and that something is (roughly) a way in which to have the opportunity to have as good a life as possible,[24] as per condition 3 of the definition of child abuse. No child deserves bad parenting and certainly no child deserves to be abused. The difference between bad parenting

[24] The phrase, "as good a life as possible" is only meant to indicate that in a child's specific context, a child is due the ability to have as good a life as is possible for the parents to realistically achieve.

and child abuse revolves around whether or not the child is getting what is needed in order to successfully develop into an adult (again, condition #3). If children are not getting what is needed to successfully develop in terms of his or her belief systems, which is to say that the children are not getting a belief system that will help him or her develop successfully, the child is harmed (condition #5 of the definition) but this is certainly not the only way in which a child can have interests set back. Consider the Mike and Betty example. Mike and Betty are performing an act with a certain intent that has happened during Bob's childhood on many occasions but does *not* deny Bob the ability to successfully develop, even though Mike and Betty are manipulating him and setting his interests (but not wrongfully) back. Therefore, bad parenting is such that two components must not be present in the composition of what it is to abuse a child: 1) a child should get what he needs in order to successfully develop (as per condition #3 of child abuse) and 2) if a child has interests at stake and are set back, these interests must not be set back wrongfully (as per condition #5 of child abuse). Our next question then becomes, "when should the state intervene in behavior that may harm the child?"

IV. When Should the State Intervene?

As was mentioned above, J.S. Mill, one of the fathers of the liberal tradition, held that the only reason the state should interfere with someone's conduct is to prevent harm to others. In the cases regarding locking your child up in a cage without food and water, selling your child into slavery, and using your child for sexual purposes and so forth, it seems obvious that these children have been harmed through their abuse. Clearly, in cases of child abuse, the child is being harmed and is being harmed in the sense by which Mill was using the term. Mill had many qualifications about state intervention and their harms. However, Mill did not limit state

intervention to matters within a family: should a husband beat his wife, the state can intervene because of this harm and so too can the state intervene if children are not getting an education. According to Mills conception, then, it can be permissible on the part of the state to interfere with the parents conduct regarding their children. What about cases of bad parenting?

Regarding bad parenting, or as I define it, parenting which sets back the interests of children in a way that is not wrongful (or inexcusable and unjustifiable; because the child has his basic needs fulfilled), Mill would have agreed that the state should not interfere. He said,

> The parent owes to society to endeavour to make the child a good and valuable member of it, and owes to the children to provide, so far as depends on him, such education, and such appliances and means, as will enable them to start with a fair chance of achieving by their own exertions a successful life.[25]

Consider Mike and Betty and their hockey-playing son Bob. Would Mill say that the state should intervene in the way in which Mike and Betty were raising Bob? I do not think so; Mike and Betty are endeavoring to make Bob a good and valuable member of society. While Bob may not enjoy hockey, he presumably does learn something about teamwork and what it takes to be a good sport in both victory and defeat. Mike and Betty may be going about raising Bob the wrong way, but Mill would only permit interference with Mike and Betty if they were harming Bob. And, by Mill's definition, it seems quite clear that Bob is not being harmed in a sense in which the state should intervene.

In cases of child abuse, it is clear that the state should intervene on behalf of the children who are abused. This is because these children are harmed, and when someone is harmed, the state should intervene and stop such behavior. However, cases of bad parenting are not

[25] John Stuart Mill II. 2. 14.

something in which the state should intervene because children are not harmed in a manner appropriate to state intervention. The limit of governmental intervention, on Mill's account, is based on whether or not someone is harmed; I will be taking his position when I make similar claims.

Chapter 2. Racism, Family and the State

The main question to be explored in this thesis is whether or not parents should be allowed by the state to inculcate racist or otherwise irrational belief systems into their children. The answer will hinge on whether or not children are being harmed when he or she learn racist beliefs. On the one hand, it seems like teaching racism is doing the child a disservice because, in theory, this limits him by the way in which he can develop fruitful relationships with others that could lead to a better quality of life. If this is a harm, then we are right to claim that children are being abused and the state should become involved. On the other hand, it seems like teaching racist belief systems to children does not harm him or her—or does not harm him or her any more than learning about a particular religion. This learned behavior may lead to harming someone else through the use of racial epithets (or religious war), but children are not harmed when they initially learn about racism any more than they are when they learn about some particular religion.

Another way to think about this question is to ask whether or not teaching racism to children is an act of child abuse, bad parenting or neither. I mention the category of neither only to dismiss it: something is happening when children are taught racist belief systems and since racism is wrong, what goes on when one teaches it necessarily involves a wrong. Teaching racist belief systems to children is either an instance of child abuse or it is an instance of bad parenting.[26] One could argue that teaching racist belief systems to children can be benign, such as

[26] A.J. Cohen points out, in correspondence, that there are at least two ways to badly parent a child in terms of teaching racism: one way is that the teaching of racism harms the child who learns it (either immediately upon learning it, or in terms of their future endeavors) and the other is that by teaching a child racism, that child could harm others. There is a third way in which bad parenting could result in causing harm: a certain sort of "self harm" on the part of an non-racist (a child who did not fall prey to racist inculcation but was exposed to it) who, while not

when children learn about the Holocaust in history class. Of course, this overlooks the point: what children are learning in history class is rightfully history; children are not supposed to be learning, *to take as his or her own*, racial bigotry. There is nothing wrong with the study of racial issues in the areas of history, philosophy, sociology and so on. I am making a claim that goes beyond the academic study of racism and speaks directly about the child who is being inculcated with racial prejudice. In this case, I am speaking of people like the Nazis and their relationship with the Hitler Youth. It would be hard to argue for the claim that the Nazis teaching the Hitler Youth about racial purity was benign and not either an instance of (*in loco parentis*) bad parenting or child abuse. Given what we've said above about Mill's claim that the state can only intervene in the affairs of its citizens when one harms another, if teaching racism is an instance of child abuse (and therefore a harm), then it is an activity in which the state can rightfully intervene. If it is only an instance of bad parenting (and not a harm), then the state cannot intervene.

There also seems to be another issue that is raised when we ask if children are harmed when they learn racist beliefs. If we say that a child is abused by learning racist beliefs, when is the abuse taking place? Are we speaking of an immediately resulting negative repercussion comparable to the immediate negative repercussion when a child is abused such that his arm is broken? This repercussion is immediate and directly after the incident. Or are we talking about repercussions past childhood? Imagine a child, Billy Bigot. He is taught racist beliefs from early childhood and is fully consumed by it. He plays the part well throughout his young adulthood and into adulthood. Let us imagine that he never caused trouble or got into any trouble as a child

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suffering immediately, and not causing others to suffer, is burdened by the knowledge to which they have been exposed.

that could be attributed to his system of racist beliefs. However, later in life, and quite apart from his childhood, he does get into trouble because he uses racial epithets in his workplace. Is it the long-term effect of racist learning in childhood that prompts us to say that Billy was mistreated as a child?

In this chapter, I will only be considering whether or not the teaching of racist belief systems *immediately* harms a child, and by immediately, I mean at the point at which the child is taught racist beliefs or before any subsequent major life changes, including maturity. A child developing a detrimental condition as a function of learning racist ideals would, I think, empirically demonstrate a harm. Such a condition could be, but is not limited to, the following: not being able to jump as high as one previously could, diminished eyesight or poor self esteem.[27] I will leave the question about whether children are abused in regards to their future potential by the teaching of racist belief systems for the next chapter. With this promise in hand, let us begin to examine whether or not children are immediately harmed when he or she are taught racist belief systems by first understanding how children come to learn racism and whether or not this learning process is harmful.

I. Transmission of Racism

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, racism is "the theory that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, qualities, etc., specific to that race, esp. distinguishing it as inferior or superior to another race or races; prejudice, discrimination or antagonism based on

[27] These are not really harms that are likely to be demonstrated by the inculcation of racist beliefs; I am trying to look for some sort of an empirical harm, and these qualifiers would be what we would normally look for in other types of empirical research to indicate something was amiss. My research here is of an empirical nature and is an attempt to demonstrate whether *any* empirical harms could be evidenced.

this."[28] Racism is both an idea and practice; in terms of learned behavior, I am mainly concerned with the idea of racism, its transmission and whether this transmission leads to some sort of demonstrable harm. The practice of racism is no less important as a transmission mechanism for either the development of racist ideals or future racist practices. However, I am not concerned with how racist ideologies continually replicate through the witnessing of a practice (or having to demonstrate a practice). I am using the term "racism" to speak about a certain type of ideology that is taught, and not specifically about racist practices. However, the practice of racism does involve acts that, either towards or from a person, could very well be considered a harm. I am primarily concerned with the harm that comes from the teaching of the racist idea alone and not racist acts.[29] So stated, how are these ideas taught?

Research suggests that racism is transmitted socially[30] and not genetically.[31] That is to say that children learn racism by their social interactions with peers as opposed to learning or having a predisposition towards racism as a function of his or her genetic makeup. There is another viewpoint, we might call it "compatiblist,"[32] that states that both social and biological factors are in play when racism is transmitted from elders to youth. However the problem of nature v. nurture is resolved (which is what the above is speaking to), I am going to work with the theory that children learn racism as a function of how children are socialized. Parents are usually the primary caregivers and therefore most likely to be the candidate from which children

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[28] The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary Vol. 2 1993. 2459.
[29] This is not to deny that there are other types of harms or that other types of harms are not important. My focus, however, is on racial belief systems and whether they are harmful, understanding full well there are many types of harm.
[30] Duckitt 93.
[31] E. O. Wilson, the founder of sociobiology, makes a very convincing case that social behavior can be explained in large part through genetics. If this is true, then it would be the case that some people are probably more disposed to being racists than others. Nonetheless, they would learn their racism from someone else in society. Please see *Sociobiology* 562-563.
[32] Scarr 1333.

learn racism; however, there are other groups of people from which children learn, including extended family members, peer group members and people in positions of authority, such as teachers[33] or police officers.[34] My focus is on the transmission of racist ideas from parents to children and whether or not this is immediately harmful to the child; again, there is no question that other groups play a role in how we are socialized but these other groups are not germane to the question now under review.

II. Studies of Racism and Children

Many studies have been commissioned to study racism. However, many of these studies have examined the effect of racism on its victims, instead of the people[35] who were guilty of propagating racial enmity.[36] There are some reasons why this would be the case: 1) to accurately study racist development in children would require a statistically valid double blind study. Ethically, we cannot study children in this manner, as it would unnecessarily expose children to racism for the sole curiosity of science. 2) Since the results of self-reporting studies are usually questionable (and often invalid), they cannot be used by children to help assess whether or not he or she feels harmed. 3) Even if self reporting studies were a reliable tool, there is no reason to believe that children could accurately self report (if anyone accurately reports at all!) until a

[33] Thernstrom and Thernstrom 17.
[34] Correll, et al. 1006-1023.
[35] I think it is the case that an aggressor in racist behavior is, in a perverted way, a victim of racist learning because they were affected by their learning such that they are acting it out on others. But, it is not the case that we normally would call them victims of racism in the sense meant here or specifically worry about whether they have been affected by racist teachings. This is because they are quite naturally affected by such teachings, otherwise, they wouldn't be acting out in just such a way. Here, I am discussing a shortcoming of many studies, which is that the focus is normally on the primary victim, the person who has been racially prejudged and attacked for being who they are and not about the person who is the racist or has been exposed to racist beliefs. Of this person, I think we can say that they are indeed a victim of racist ideologies and have been affected by it. But to study this in children is difficult, as indicated by the reasons in the text. Thanks to A.J. Cohen for pushing me on this point.
[36] A typical example of just such a study is best summed up by Harry & Anderson 602-619.

certain maturity,[37] which could lead to data corruption. Finally, 4) there are other underlying assumptions that prevent inquiry into the matter, such as the assumption that racism is harmful to the children who learn it, and therefore, is an instance of child abuse, and it this assumption that prevents more direct research.[38] Of course, it is also the very question we are here discussing!

To simply assert that racism is harmful to children (and is therefore an instance of child abuse) is not to provide an argument that this is the case. There must be some sort of demonstrable evidence, however obtained, that would reveal some sort of discomfort of the child or to use Feinbergian language, a setting back of the child's interests, in order for it to be that the children's interests have been *wrongfully* set back. While there are fewer studies about the development of racism in children in general, there have been some. Many of these studies focus on when the child is learning bias for his or her in-group (people who are like each other) as opposed to his or her out-group (people that are not like them in some way). However, I could find no evidence that children are immediately harmed when children learn of racism, only that there is evidence that children do exhibit racial tendencies of prejudice (i.e., that it is learned socially). I will continue this point, below.

III. Absence of Evidence is not Evidence of Absence

The purpose of this chapter was to look for instances of an immediate wrongful setting back of interests when children are shown to have been exposed to racial beliefs. It would seem

[37] Some studies have suggested that children as young as three can exhibit racial prejudice. However, there appears to be confusion about whether the children are showing an out-group bias or favoritism for their own in-group (or both). For more, please see Cameron et al. 118-128.
[38] My thanks to Nannette Commander for helping me to understand the limits of how studies are conducted and constructed.

that the case is shut, that because there is not evidence of harm, we can just dismiss the claim that learning about racial prejudice harms children. Evidence of harm would normally have presented itself in some empirical fashion, such as a hypothetical, "children who show more out-group bias are more likely to have a hard time reading, will not be able to run as fast, have less friends, lower self-esteem" and so forth. In fact, both low and high self-esteem people tend to favor his or her group over outsiders.[39] Even though I did not find an immediate wrongful setting back of interests per se, what we have found is many instances of children who do exhibit some sort of out-group bias[40] and it is this that presumably leads to a path of continued discrimination by these biased children.

As a result, one could argue that since there is no harm done presently, teaching children racism does not indicate that a child has been abused if he learns racism, as it does not meet any of the conditions for what we call child abuse. So stated, it would appear that the racist is free to teach his or her children racist ideals because there is no harm done. This would be a disingenuous claim. Recall that the purpose of this chapter was to look for and report on evidence that a child is harmed *immediately* when he learns of racist ideals. Just because a child is not harmed immediately is not an indicator, or at the very least not the sole indicator, of how learning these ideals will affect him in the future. Just because I could not find evidence of harm in this, albeit empirically limited, manner does not mean that children are not potentially harmed *overall*. What it does mean is that children are *plausibly* not harmed *immediately* when he or she

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[39] Aberson et al. 169.

[40] In a study of Arab and Israeli children, the Israeli children in the 11-13 age group did show an out-group bias against Arabs, whereas the Israeli children in the age group of 7-8 year olds did not. This would suggest that the time for making these kinds of distinctions is occurring around 11-13 years of age (presumably, it could start earlier, from 9-10, though this group was not studied). For more, see Bar-Tal, D. 341-370.

learns such ideals, but there may be future evidence that would disprove my claim. It remains to be seen as to whether or not children are harmed in terms of his or her future endeavors. If there is a place where children can be shown to have suffered a harm as a result of racial teaching, then it is in his or her future endeavors where it will be found, if it is found at all. I turn to that question now.

Chapter 3. Future Potential

The purpose of the last chapter was to illustrate the difficulties of studying the affects of racism in children, and this revealed little in the way of empirical evidence that children are (immediately) harmed when children learn racist ideals. This chapter, on the other hand, is more philosophical in its approach and will consider whether or not children suffer from racist teaching in terms of how his or her life goes, that is, how learning racist ideals can affect a particular child's future.

This path is fraught with some difficulty. Legally, we do not hold a parent responsible for the actions of his or her grown children, as any act committed by a grown child is one that the "child," now an adult, is responsible for answering. But this is not quite what I am concerned with. The question here is: if a grown child is acting in a racially bigoted way that could have been prevented had the parent not exposed the child to, or inculcated racist beliefs into him, would that child be more successful? Presumably, had the parents not exposed their children to this sort of thinking, the child could very possibly have a better chance at thriving in life. Is the lack of thriving in life as a result of racist inculcation, or somehow subverting such an approach to a non-racist life, a wrongful setting back of interests (a harm) against children?

A problem with this question is that it requires normative boundaries regarding what it is to successfully thrive in life. Obviously, there are many different ways to be and act, some of which may lead to increased success and others less. For our purposes here, I am going to focus on whether or not it is the case that a child is somehow harmed because of his or her racist upbringing. I shall understand a child to be harmed by a racist upbringing if it limits the future potential of the child with fewer and/or less valuable options than are available to children who

are not inculcated to be racists. While this is a broad claim, I do not want to suggest that just any opportunity cost to a child constitutes a harm.[41] Nonetheless, such a conception of how to understand a child being harmed through the inculcation of racist belief systems by comparison to the options available to children who are not raised in such a way seems like a rough, but very fruitful, comparison. Therefore, I must come to some conclusion about how many options parents should leave open for their children if those children are to have an appropriately open future for thriving. There are many aspects of parenting that could either maximize options or reduce them. The focus here is on whether or not racist teaching will limit the future endeavors of a child.

Other problems could be raised in this discussion and muddy the waters. While discussions of parental rights, children's rights, children's autonomy and the like are certainly germane to the overall scope of this thesis, I hope largely to avoid discussing these topics. I will be working with a loosely based "traditional"[42] concept of family in order to explore the topic of racist teachings and their affect on children. In such a conception, the parents are the primary caregivers of all the children's needs. Parents also teach and inculcate their children in more or less traditional ways; but whatever path parents choose, the children will, rightly or wrongly, learn from said path. Whether it is right or wrong for parents to inculcate their children with their beliefs generally is the topic of another paper. Here, I am assuming that parents are the transmitters and that children are the receivers.

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[41] Thanks to A.I. Cohen for this point.

[42] By traditional, I do not mean to suggest that I am siding with social conservatives who believe that, legally and morally, a family should have a male father and a female mother. What I mean here is that there are two loving parents involved in their children's lives. This is also not meant to suggest that I mean to rule out single parent families as somehow inadequate. It just happens to be the case that there usually are two people who play the role of parent in a child's life.

I do, however, want to make it clear that I think that parents do owe their children something that is either considered a right to the child or a duty of the parent (or both). Children have to learn and be taken care of by someone. There is no reason that children are not deserving of having options open to him or her such that he or she can make the best out of life. Children do have a right to an open future, suitably construed, because it does seem foundational to the enterprise that we call "raising children." But this requires clarification about "open futures." I turn to that task now. Once I have examined what it is to have an open future, I will discuss whether or not the denial of an open future by terms of racist teaching harms children such that it can be considered child abuse, and therefore, the state should intervene.

I. Undiscovered Country

Children are delicate, if resilient, creatures and great care must be given to them if they are to grow up strong and with acute minds. There are different sorts of care that children need, both physical and emotional. We can simply refer to this set of primary needs as something children have based upon their dependency on adults. Children are not usually in a position to take care of their own primary needs and thus rely upon adults for the basics like food, clothing, shelter and protection.[43] While these needs are important, these are not the only needs that children have. Feinberg thinks another group of needs for children are more important, as he says,

> The child cannot very well exercise his free choice until later when he is more fully formed and capable. When sophisticated autonomy rights are attributed to children who are clearly not yet capable of exercising them, their names refer to rights that are to be *saved* for the child until he is an adult, but which can be violated "in advance," so to speak, before the child is even in a position to exercise them. This violating conduct guarantees *now* that when the child is an autonomous adult, certain key options will already be

[43] Feinberg (B) 76.

> closed to him. His right while he is still a child is to have these future options kept open until he is a fully formed, self-determining adult capable of deciding among them.[44]

Feinberg is speaking to a very basic idea regarding raising children, which is that children should have good decisions made for them by their parents when he or she is a child because, if there are no good decisions forthcoming, a child may not get the ability to thrive because he or she has been given poor options by which he or she bases later decisions. This is one of the most basic requirements for a child to achieve success later in life. This raises an interesting question: how much ability should a parent, through making decisions for the child, try to impart to the child so that he or she can be successful? I'm not sure how much ability one would say is an acceptable amount that a parent must impart to a child. There is an obvious minimum threshold that would include the ability to be self-sustaining. But, what of the ability to be happy? Perhaps happiness is part of what it means to be self-sustaining; maybe everything necessary for a good life is somehow rooted in being self-sustaining. However, I do think there is more required to the amount of ability a parent gives a child than just the ability to be self-sustaining; these things would depend entirely upon what it is to have a good life. Regardless, Feinberg's point is that children have to have proper decisions made for them so that he or she can thrive later in life. If children do not have the proper decisions made for him or her, the children may grow into adults without certain requisites for a good life—for example, children may lack autonomy. Feinberg points out the consequences as he goes on to say,

> When the state justifies its interference with parental liberty by reference to the eventual autonomy of the protected child, it argues that the mature adult that the child will become, like all free citizens, has a right of self determination, and that that right is

[44] Ibid. 76-77.

> violated in advance if certain crucial and irrevocable decisions determining the course of his life are made by anyone else before he has the capacity of self determination himself.[45]

Therefore, parents should be very mindful of these "crucial and irrevocable" decisions so that their children can maximize their future potential by having many options available to him or her, because if parents don't, there is no recourse that can change what decisions have been made for their children and their children therefore cannot do as well as otherwise could. However, there are two problems that result from children having open futures. The first problem concerns how to determine how many options should be kept open. The second, and more important, question for our purposes is whether or not closing options about issues regarding race is harmful to children. I will deal with these questions in what follows.

II. Career and Psychological Options

A child grows up over time and develops into an ever more complete person as he does. Eventually, children will have grown up and (hopefully) have been prepared to go out into the world, ready for its challenges. This goal is achieved by parents raising their child in such a manner that the child could (with some amount of guidance) pick, from a multifaceted array of options, what to do, how to be, and how to succeed. There should be some amount of options from which the child chooses. For example, imagine that a child, Mike Mechanic, is born into a family of car mechanics. His parents selfishly want the family business to go on, so Mike's parents close any other options that could be available to him. Mike Mechanic's only option is to be a mechanic. Now consider a similar family of car mechanics with another child, Muffler Murphy. This family wants the best for their child and they try to encourage him to do

[45] Ibid. 91.

whatever he would like and is able to do. His choices amplify greatly: his options are open to becoming being a car mechanic, garbage man, heart surgeon, lawyer, doctor or career military. Clearly, Muffler Murphy has many more options to choose from and is more likely to be able to succeed better because he would be better prepared to change careers if one does not work out. Not so for Mike Mechanic; if he isn't an astute mechanic and businessman, he will fail and have no alternatives to which he can transfer. In terms of a practical consideration, more choices *can* benefit Muffler Murphy and *possibly* lead to a better life.

There is a concern about keeping options open for children who know what it is he or she wants to do.[46] Imagine another mechanic, Betsy Brake. Betsy comes from a long line of mechanics and has learned her trade through working in the family garage. She loves putting on her coveralls and working late into the evenings machining heads, replacing fan belts and doing bodywork. She is quite happy being a mechanic and loves reading car magazines and auto manuals. However, her parents have encouraged her to continue going to school and have tried to keep as many options available to her as is possible in their circumstance. In fact, after much familial debate, Betsy applied to her state university and was accepted. But Betsy wants to be a mechanic and knows it: there is no other way that Betsy is going to be happier than when she is working on cars. Should Betsy's parents have kept her options open when the parents knew, or should have known, that Betsy was destined to be a mechanic? Put another way, if it were possible to determine (perhaps through the use of genetic analysis) what a child would be happiest doing, should we keep options open for that child when in fact we already know what is going to make her happiest?

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[46] This point was raised by A.J. Cohen.

The answer to this concern is that, yes, we should keep these options open in these cases. There are two main reasons why: (1) it is better to have options open so that we can gain more experience and insight into how things are which in turn helps us determine how best to work through similar problems. This is the same reason we include such a broad array of subjects in a liberal arts education: more exposure to different things helps to develop a more rounded person. (2) Children are known to occasionally change his or her mind. I'm not here referring a child who proudly proclaims, at the wise age of 7, that she is going to be a doctor and, as she goes along, decides that she would instead prefer to be a llama breeder. No, here I am referring to the fact that Betsy may indeed love cars and working on them, but she may decide later that she wants to go to school so that she can get the requisite degree to be a car designer. This is just a further extension of her happiness with cars, and one that she would not have developed if she decided not to go to school. She might have been happy just doing what she was, but had she not had these options, she would not have had a chance to perfect her happiness.

Of course, this doesn't mean that children should have options available in which one cannot succeed: if a child wants to be an astronaut but is pathologically afraid of heights and weightlessness, then this option should rightfully be put aside. Additionally, a child should have some limited degree of choice in his options. However, children's choices should be appropriate to a particular endeavor. Much in the same way that our hopeful astronaut can't be an astronaut, a child that wants to be a veterinarian most likely isn't going to get there if he instead decides to take up interpretive dance as an sole focus. Instead, the child would have to learn and do well in biology and anatomy. The choice the child makes, which is allowed by the parent, to take up

interpretive dance as a singular focus instead of the study of science that is needed to be a veterinarian, will most likely result in the child not becoming a veterinarian. By allowing the child to focus on dance instead of the appropriate schooling, the parents have allowed the option of being a veterinarian to be closed. Therefore, parents should guide the child into discarding inappropriate options by making sure that (1) their children can achieve his or her goal, and if not, to disregard the option like our hopeful astronaut and (2) the children performs the right maneuvers to achieve his or her goal, such as studying anatomy to be a veterinarian. Of course, this guidance on the part of the parents must be of a certain quality and with certain informational resources about their child and what is best for their child. Naturally, all parents make mistakes; all good parents try to minimize the size and number of mistakes that are made. If there is a lack of knowledge by the parents about their children or what options to leave open or closed, in good faith, then we recognize that the lack of information caused the mistake and normally would not call such a mistake child abuse.

Options can be set either open or closed. If an option is set open, it means that just such an option is being left open by the parent for the child to make a decision about later. If an option is closed by a parent, this means that a parent has modified the child's behavior or situation in such a way that the child will respond in a certain specified manner regarding that behavior or situation without having had any choice in the matter.

Roughly speaking, we can say that a parent can give three ranges of options to their child: none to few, a moderate amount, and all available options within the bounds of legality and

morality.[47] Another way to think about the different ranges is to first consider what we would call a basic educationalist (zero to few options), and then consider, on the other extreme, a liberal cosmopolitan education (all available options within the bounds of legality and morality).[48] I think that most parents probably wish to provide a set of options somewhere between the two extremes—for various reasons. (1) Most parents cannot afford to expose their child to all possible options. Unless you are quite wealthy, there is only so much one can afford to expose children to without ending up in financial ruin. (2) Many parents are at least partially in tune with their children and do not need to throw a wide net in order to find something of interest for their children that will (perhaps; there are no guarantees) help him or her succeed later in life. These children, quite apart from not having many options, close (in conjunction and with direction by his or her parents) whichever options do not further his or her goals, such as playing a sport or learning a musical instrument. (3) Life decisions by the parents, such as where to work, where to live and so forth, directly influence how many options are available. Similar to the problem of money, if your child is interested in tropical scuba diving but the family lives in the middle of South Dakota, then a parent can rightfully close this option, as it would be too burdensome on a family budget. Of these parents in the middle of these two extremes, we can say that these parents tend to be somewhat like basic educationalists who offer few options and somewhat like the liberal cosmopolitans who offer as many choices as possible. Not every situation requires many options and so it is much easier in these cases to maximize all relevant options.

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[47] Mills 500.
[48] Burtt 246.

Of the options I have described so far, one might think of them as being "career options." Being a car mechanic, a hopeful astronaut or a veterinarian are options that allow one to have a career and are all good futures to have. Parents facilitate these sorts of things by allowing (or put another way, opening) an option for their children and through the use of proper encouragement. Basically, to open an option for sports, a parent need only allow and encourage the child to play some sport. The same can be said of musical options, scholastic options and so forth. There are other sorts of career options, however, that parents should not encourage, such as that of a bank robber. Quite naturally, this type of career option is beyond the bounds of legality and morality, and therefore should be rejected. Career options, however, seem to be of a different character from the type of options parents either open or close in regards to racism or religion.

In a very basic sense, to be a racist or a member of a religion is at least partly a function of the personality involved; a personality determined by the options one is presented with as a child. So whereas a career option being set may answer the question, "What do you want to do?" the psychological option being set answers the question, "How do you want to be?" These two different sets of options work in the same manner: the parent encourages certain behavior by opening and closing different options. Another way to say this is that the parent encourages certain behavior by allowing and denying certain forms of behavior and choices. I think that both options are important to note and distinguish between, but I am more concerned with the psychological option.[49]

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[49] Andrew Altman notes in correspondence that while I have closed certain paths for career options, such as being a bank robber, I have not done the same for psychological options. In other words, it may be that certifiably false beliefs, such as racism, should be ruled out in the same way as being a bank robber is ruled out. Obviously, if certifiably false beliefs were ruled out, there would be nothing to discuss in this thesis. Similarly, the purpose of this thesis is to determine whether or not it is morally acceptable to inculcate children with racist belief systems; if

The formation of a racist begins with parents inculcating racist beliefs into their children. This is accomplished much in the same way that a career option might be: parents encourage their children to be a (mechanic) racist by closing certain options that otherwise would lead to a different path. These certain options I am going to call racial options, and these options can be either anti-racist or pro-racist in nature. I imagine that the most authentic white pride racist probably had some anti-racist options closed to him (and perhaps with more intensity) as opposed to the stereotypical country club elite who, instead of actively protesting about minorities, just refuses them membership into the club. Depending on the specific option, racial options have different components that can be opened or closed, such as racial justice, acceptance or celebration of diversity, and racial toleration. The authentic white pride racist has had all of these options closed to him, whereas the country club elite most likely simply rejects the acceptance of different out-groups, that is, people unlike themselves. A racial option, which can be about racial tolerance or racial acceptance, is a psychological option.

Between the extreme parenting styles of the basic educationalist and the liberal cosmopolitan, there is a difference regarding the availability of racial options. The basic educationalist can have racial options either opened or closed.[50] It is not the case, however, that the liberal cosmopolitans close the option on racial matters, as it is normally their preference to keep all options open, even when this results in negative consequences.[51] Regardless, eventually

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we were to rule out this option for children in the same way the bank robber is ruled out, there would be nothing to discuss.

[50] It is certainly possible to have a group of people who do not care for out-groups and therefore close the option to tolerate racially diverse people. Members of the white pride movement have done this. However, it is also possible to have this same racial option open and set to encourage the toleration of other racial groups, as the Amish have done.

[51] There has been interesting work on the part of Dan Ariely at M.I.T. (and others) to examine what psychological needs may be and how they play a role in our decision-making. Such theories about our decision-making abilities

an option does have to be set (or perhaps opened/closed on the child's part when he or she comes of age, if possible)[52] if there is to be any progress in developing; either you are going to tolerate racially diverse groups of people or you are not and it is this that is formed, in large part, during childhood and directly traceable to one's parents. But which of the three different parenting styles and number of options is best?

I believe that the middle way should be the first choice for parents, the liberal cosmopolitan should be second and the basic educationalist should be third. The middle path, that is, the idea that parents try to give their children more than just a few options but less than those parents who attempt to bring all options to the table, is the one that resembles actuality more than either of the two extremes. But it is not the case that I rank this manner of parenting first because it more closely resembles reality. I think there are practical considerations at hand that make this choice the best and most viable, because as the Rolling Stones once sang, "You can't always get what you want." There are limits to what can and cannot be practically achieved and I think that the closing of certain options for a child teaches him how best to succeed with what he has. Since resources are, unless one is very wealthy, limited, so too are options. But out of this scarcity comes a certain kind of balanced resolve that probably forms the most well rounded child. Knowing that he cannot have everything his heart desires makes a

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are certainly not sacrosanct: further study and information could change the way in which current data is interpreted. Still, it is interesting to note, as one study suggests, that people tend to keep options open only because of an aversion to loss, and not because they want to stay flexible and keep all possibilities on the table. For more, see: Dan Ariely and Jiwoong Shin 575–586.

[52] One of the problems about options, and them being open or closed, is whether or not they are set once forever. It would be odd to say that options are set forever. The racial option set as a child can be changed as an adult, such as in the movie *American History X*, where Edward Norton's character reverses his earlier neo-Nazi position into one of tolerance.

child focus more on what he can achieve. This well-rounded grounding is what should be at the heart of what parents try to achieve with their children.

I am sympathetic to the position of the liberal cosmopolitan. As an ideal, I think it is wonderful that parents would attempt to allow the child as many options as is humanly possible to consider. Nonetheless, I think it is a disservice to a child to keep too many options open because it does not lead to the ability to a properly developed path; that is to say that there is very little in the way of finding the proper direction one should try to achieve with his or her life if one is simply always presented with more options. If one day a child is presented with the option of being a Buddhist, and then the next day she is given the option of becoming a ballet dancer, the next a green's keeper, and the next a sexton, and so forth, the child is not likely to conclude that any particular path is what she truly wants to be. The main failing of the liberal cosmopolitan giving their children too many choices is that it makes life seem as if it is a smorgasbord. You get a little taste of everything, but not enough of one thing to see if you really could eat a great deal of it.[53] I agree with Claudia Mills when she says "the goal of pursuing all options leads to a life that is superficial and glib, as well as frenetic and exhausting."[54] The major failing of the liberal cosmopolitans is not that he tries to maximize options, but that when he does so, the options become depreciated and more rote than what truly is desirous on the part of the parent and child. Such a shallow existence does not seem like it would lead to more success in life, especially in terms of happiness. Children need some amount of direction, and this means that some options must be closed.

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[53] Mills 503.
[54] Ibid.

This leaves our basic educationalist parents in last place. On the one hand, it seems like these parents have every right to raise their child as they please, so long as this sort of upbringing does not constitute child abuse.[55] On the other hand, it seems like something is wrong with this type of upbringing because of the potential of the child to become more than he is (or destined by his parents to be) if he were to have more options available to himself. The issue this type of parenting raises centers solely on the potential that the child may have but is not allowed to realize, and that, theoretically leads to a lower quality of life for the child as an adult. This style of parenting is probably of a dictatorial sort. Imagine a female, Rachel Racist, who is raised to be a racial bigot because her parents have encouraged her to not tolerate out-group members. No one could plausibly make the argument that this style of upbringing, which is the closing of the racial toleration option, is a good idea. This is due to the fact that we live in a world of diverse people and as a result we normally find that it is better to tolerate (within limits) other varieties of people because it helps to make life easier.[56] However, there are other ways to close the racial toleration option that are not offensive in the same way that Rachel's upbringing is.

Imagine a fellow, Andy Amish. Andy was raised devoutly Amish and believes that people are worthy of racial toleration. As a result of this upbringing, Andy is a very tolerant person. Much like Rachel, the racial toleration option was closed as a child—Andy had no say so in whether he wanted to be racially tolerant and therefore also had a closed future, whereas Rachel's option was similarly closed, but in the other "direction." Both Rachel and Andy have

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[55] Here I intend to keep my discussion limited to harms to the child while recognizing that there may be other just laws that prevent parents from abusing their children that are not based on abuse. Thanks to A.J. Cohen for this point.

[56] This is not intended to mean that there is no other good reason why in a liberal society one should tolerate others, as there are many reasons why this would be a good practice. Here, I use this reason, not for its philosophical considerations, but instead for its illustrative purposes which will be seen below in regards to Rachel Racist and her workplace.

closed futures in regards to their racial tolerance. The question before us now is not about whether or not Rachel or Andy should have had a say in how her or his options are set. The question now is whether or not this closed option has harmed them in a manner consistent with what we call child abuse.

III. The Measure of Success

There are two ways in which one can interpret the question of whether a child is harmed by the closing of the racial toleration option by their parents during childhood. The first way to think about this question is to ask whether parents have abridged children's future autonomy rights when children's options are closed. I am not interested in this question. The ontological status of both children's and parental rights, the manner in which these rights are so constituted, and how to adjudicate between what could very well be competing interests are all interesting topics but not what I am seeking to determine here.

The way in which I think the question of whether children are having their interests set back when their parents close the racial toleration option is a question of how successful the children will actually be with said option closed. There are many different ways to think about success. Some view success as gaining large amounts of material possessions. Others view success as helping others overcome difficulties. Still others may find success by developing a way to live that maintains their hedonistic lifestyle. Some may find success by achieving spiritual perfection. And others may find that being the very best authentic racist to be success.

I think the way in which to determine if a child has succeeded in life is whether or not she has met or exceeded her parent's station.[57] A station in life is partly about possessions and partly about position in a community. Another way to say this is to say that one's station in life is partly made up of what it takes to fulfill physical needs and partly made up of maintaining one's social standing through social interaction in one's group. I take it to be the case that most parents want what is best for their children. Usually, what is best for their children is something more than the parents currently possess. If my father was a garbage man, he might want me to become a supervisor at the city dump. If my mother had been a bank teller, perhaps she would have encouraged me to be a trust officer. Of course, there are people –call them the "super rich"—whose children most likely cannot surpass their parent's wealth, which is naturally part of their parent's station. But material possessions are not all that are involved with one's parent's station. Children of the super rich can explore other possibilities with the safety net that their parent's wealth provides. So long as the children meet or surpass their parents in one of the ways indicated—in terms of accomplishments about wealth or social stature—children can be considered a success on this understanding. As I said, *usually* what is best for children is something more than the parents currently possess. That does not disqualify the children of the super rich from attaining their parent's station even though he or she does not possess the same amount of wealth. This suggests that super rich children can take a station, however construed,

[57] This conception of success relies heavily on the finished product- that is, looking at a fully-grown child. This does not mean, though, that we must wait until a child is fully developed before determining that they were abused. My position is that we should always be vigilant regarding evidence of abuse, no matter what the age of a child and there can be cases where there should be intervention early in the child's life. If a child is being harmed presently, then the state should intervene. What is at issue here is whether or not learning belief systems counts as abuse and whether we should wait until the child is fully developed before state intervention. If children are harmed presently by the inculcation of irrational belief systems, then yes, the state should intervene; but as this is not clear (Chapter 2 deals with this question), the only way to see if there should be early intervention is whether or not fully grown children are somehow defective and act accordingly for future children. Thanks to Andrew Altman for the point.

in life that has less wealth than their parent's and be considered successful. Of the people not so financially blessed, the same can be said of them. To meet one's parent's station is about more than just an amount in a portfolio. Meeting or exceeding one's parent's station is achieved by the degree of success, relative to scope, one has in meeting their physical needs and social standing relative to their parents.

There is a concern that there are people who we would call successful but that do not meet the above criteria.[58] Certainly, I'm sure that there are just such people that on the above definition would not be considered successful on my account. About this concern, I have two things to point out: (1) In considering a child's future potential, it seems reasonable to think that a measure of their success is naturally related in some way to their parents. Of course, this is not the only manner to determine how we would call someone successful. I am using my account above because I think it captures the majority of what has been at issue in this thesis, which is whether or not children suffer from abuse if their parents inculcate them with racist belief systems, which is directly related to measures of success and thriving in life. (2) Such a simple accounting of success in children is naturally going to have conceptual holes that allow certain examples to fall through. Absent an example, I'm not sure what could be added to my conception above that would include all persons—something that would be able to define what it is to be a success for everyone. It may be rough, but it is a good start.

It is not clear how closing a racial toleration option in either Rachel or Andy's case would deny them the ability to fulfill any conditions of what it would take for them to maintain any of their physical needs. In Andy Amish's case, it isn't clear how having a closed option could have

[58] I owe this point to A.J. Cohen.

conceivably prevented him from doing any type of work that would deny him what it takes for him to maintain his physical needs. Rachel Racist's case is quite different. Presumably, one would imagine that people enjoy working in an environment that is free from discord. It could be the case that a Rachel is employed in a workplace that has different racial groups. The inclusion of different racial groups in the workplace could very well be something that is burdensome to her. Had racists not raised her, such a workplace would not bother her (at least, it would not bother her because of racial tolerance issues). Of course, Rachel also has the option to leave the workplace and do something else. In this case, Rachel is able to maintain her physical needs, but she may find that she is limited in the way in which she can pursue some particular interest. This limitation does not limit her ability to get a job; she may not want a *specific* job, but this doesn't mean that she can't get a job *simpliciter*. The balance here is whether or not this racial toleration option limitation is such that it retards the manner in which someone can pursue their physical needs or whether or not it only interferes with those trivial concerns that fill our day to day lives. In neither case has a closed option during childhood prevented either Rachel or Andy to maintain her or his physical needs.

What of Rachel or Andy's social needs? Here again, it does not seem the case that Andy is having any difficulty maintaining his social standing. In fact, he is fitting in socially quite well. Rachel probably isn't having any difficulty fitting in socially, either. Staying in a workplace that is racially diverse, Rachel would probably endeavor to find other people similar to herself and ignore, as best she could, people of other races. Of course, a workplace is just one of many different ways in which we maintain a social identity. Rachel probably lives in a community, or near one, of people like herself. Socially, Rachel doesn't seem to have any problem maintaining

her social standing; even if she is found out to be a bigot in her workplace, she still can return to her bigot community and continue on like she was previously. Like the physical needs above, in neither case has this closed option during childhood prevented either Rachel or Andy to maintain her or his social needs.

If success is measured in this way, then it is hard to see how parents are setting back the interests of their children by closing the racial toleration option for them. Recall that the measure of child abuse, which is also the only manner in which the state can intervene in the affairs of parents and children, is to (1) be an act which was (2) performed during childhood and which (3) denies a child what is needed to successfully develop by (4) the manipulation of a superior which (5) results in a harmful effect. It does not seem, from what we've seen, that parents deny a child what she needs to successfully develop when said parents close the racial toleration option for their children. These parents have raised their children in a manner consistent with the principles these parents themselves hold dear; if these principles were themselves not working for the parents, or were placing some undue burden on them, then it seems highly likely that the parents would discontinue the practice and teach their children to avoid such a practice by inculcating some different belief system. Parents may believe in all manner of strange, and perhaps repulsive, ideas. So long as these ideas do not harm the children, it seems wrong to suggest that the parents should cease such behavior especially when it is not setting back their own interests.[59] I think Louis Brandies had it right when he suggested that states are like laboratories

[59] If a belief system is harming the parent, under my conception, it would also be harming the children that parent is responsible for. It makes sense that parents have an interest in teaching their children what has worked for them so that the children themselves will benefit from it. If a view was not working out for a parent, it seems odd to suggest that just such a view would be taught by a parent to their children for the child's advancement. However, there is an objection to this view, which follows below.

for new ideas about how things should be politically done.[60] So, too, I think that families, like states, are laboratories for differing methods of how to successfully raise children. So long as there is no developmental setting back of interests on the part of children, I can find no way to suggest that the state should interfere simply because it finds the methods and ideals of the parents in bad form.

There is an objection to this view.[61] Imagine a poor hillbilly family. This family has next to no formal education and makes their way in the world by manufacturing and selling moonshine. Due to their ignorance, these parents raise their children in the same way, and this manner of raising children includes having their racial toleration option closed as children (so that the children are intolerant). This ignorance is based on fear of the outside world and it is this fear that precludes the parents from trying to open the racial toleration option because if these parents were to do so, the children might leave them and move away when the children come of age. This is something the parents do not wish to happen. Even if the children are successful in maintaining their physical needs and social standing as adults as described above, which is what I have suggested *is being successful*, we would not ordinarily call these children successful because of the resulting failing way of life. In other words, it is possible to raise your children to be as successful as you are and yet such a success would normally be considered a failure.[62]

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[60] As Justice Brandies said, "To stay experimentation in things social and economic is a grave responsibility. Denial of the right to experiment may be fraught with serious consequences to the nation. It is one of the happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country." *New State Ice Co. v Liebmann*, 285 U.S. 262, 311.

[61] I want to thank A.J. Cohen for pressing me on my view and raising this objection.

[62] A question arises, here: while the hillbilly parents had no intention to make their children fail, why is it the case that the parents cannot be arrested for negligence in regards to raising their children in a failing way of life? According to my conception, these parents are not negligent- rather, they are badly parenting their children. Bad parenting is not the same as negligence, though it is certainly possible badly parenting is a result of negligence. That is not the case here. Thanks to Andrew Altman for the point and pressing me on my view.

Such a counter example, however, shows that something else is occurring than just teaching children racism. If these hillbilly parents are teaching their children in some manner so that the children will stay at home and not leave them, then surely something larger than just what is being taught is happening. Indeed, if the parents are teaching their children in some manner so that the children will not leave a failing way of life, I think we can safely say that the parents are acting in some inauthentic manner of a parent. Such a selfish style of parenting seems to me to be more morally problematic than simply teaching your children racism. But have these parents wrongfully set back the interests of their children? I think this could go either way. If we say the parents were manipulating their children in this way because of selfish needs on the parents' part, I would say that these parents are abusing their children psychologically and therefore the state should intervene. But if these parents are teaching their children racism without any intention of using such teachings to keep the children in a failing way of life, I think these parents are guilty of something in which the state cannot interfere. What these parents have done is parent badly.

Before I move on, let me make another point. What is at issue here is my claim that parents have an interest in teaching their children what has worked for them because these parents believe it will work for their children, even though what has worked for the parent (and will be transmitted to the children) maintains a failed way of life. No doubt some of these parents probably think of their lives as failures and give themselves comfort by telling themselves various platitudes about having done the best that is possible under the circumstances. I'm sure such people exist. My answer to this concern is one rooted in the psychological aspect of human behavior; it cannot at first speak to the normativity of just such behavior.

The reason parents teach their children things that have worked for them is proportionately related to how well it does work for them.[63] Psychologically, there is a consequential nature to our actions that guide how we modify our future behavior. I am speaking directly about operant conditioning, made famous by the work of B.F. Skinner. In a nutshell, the reason we perform certain actions has everything to do with what the resulting consequences will be. If we receive enough positive reinforcement, that is, if we receive enough benefit from our beliefs or actions, then we will continue to believe or do those actions to receive that benefit. If, on the other hand, we receive enough negative reinforcement, normally considered a penalty to our actions or beliefs, we will eventually cease that behavior and attempt another type of behavior in its place. And if we receive enough positive reinforcement from our actions that counter any negative reinforcement, we will psychologically be predisposed to continue with whatever behavior it is that brings us some sort of happiness. Therefore, the hillbilly moonshiners will continue believing that their way of child rearing is correct, simply because the hillbilly moonshiners do not get enough negative reinforcement from their behavior that would dictate to them that an alternative course of action would be better. While this stimulus and response approach to explaining human behavior is satisfactory to justify the claim that parents do teach their children what has worked for them, it does not answer any questions about how well this life is lived based on this behavior. In fact, it seems to run counter to what we might call a failed way of life; that is to say that if it was truly a failed way of life, death would be the immediate result. Instead, what we find are high inefficiencies, or in these terms, a large amount of negative reinforcement that is slightly offset by our positive reinforcement, of what it is to

[63] I owe this resulting response to Nannette Commander.

approach a good life, however construed. The hillbilly moonshiners are living an authentic, non-failed life, simply because if the negative reinforcement were greater than the positive reinforcement from their actions, then he or she would cease this behavior unless he or she were psychologically disabled in some way (and it certainly isn't clear this is the case). But as a result of having so much inefficiency of making choices that limit negative behavior, I think I can safely argue that, of whatever a good, non-failing life is, it has less negative reinforcement the further one gets to perfection, should anyone get to perfection at all. Understood in this purely psychological way, the hillbilly moonshiners are not guilty of child abuse as these hillbilly's have not *wrongly* set back the interests of their children but are instead guilty of bad parenting because the hillbilly's have set back the interests of their children by teaching them a failed way of life which is due to the psychological obstacle of operant conditioning and the education necessary to understand what it is to have or lead a non-failed life.

I recognize that this response is limited to understanding failed ways of life in terms of psychological behavior. This will not satisfy all criticisms regarding my conception of why it is the case that parents act in the way they do and why such behavior on the part of the parent is not to be considered child abuse. However, my conception is perhaps the most plausible *description* of what is occurring and why; nonetheless, it is certainly weak in character. Whatever criticisms may spring from this will help to move the overall discussion forward, and that seems, even if this conception is a philosophical failure, only beneficial to the overall topic.

Recall that bad parenting is such that it is to (1) be an act which was (2) performed during childhood by (3) the manipulation of a superior which (4) results in interests being set back (but not wrongfully). Parents who teach their children racism certainly do not feel as if they have set

back the interests of their children and certainly do not feel like they have wronged their children. I doubt that the children have had their interests *wrongfully* set back; however, this is not to say that the children have not had some interests set back. In the case of our hillbilly parents, it is clear that they have set back some of the interests of their children because of their own upbringing. But it is not clear that parents have done this wrongfully, as it is merely their intention to raise their children to be moonshiners as they themselves are moonshiners. What these parents have done is set back the interests of their children to be anything more than moonshiners, just as Andy Amish's parents have set his options such that all he can be is nothing more than a good Amish. Since both the moonshiner child and Andy are successful in maintaining his physical needs and social standing, I'm not certain that we can say that he didn't get what he successfully needed to develop. I do not like the basic educationalists, but without setting back the interests of their children wrongfully or depriving them of what he needs to successfully develop (which includes both physical and emotional needs, along with belief systems), I can only conclude that what the hillbilly moonshiners have done is badly parent their children, and therefore the state should not intervene.

At the end of the day, it is not the case that the state can direct parents to cease teaching their children racist belief systems because the parents have not harmed the children. However, it is the case that a child suffers from bad parenting when she is taught racist belief systems because she presumably will not be as effective (a far cry from being developmentally unable to do something, or, developmentally *unsuccessful*) due to her belief and the resulting discomfort. Discomfort is not the same as inability; but discomfort can be the result of bad parenting and, like bad parenting, should be avoided.

Conclusion

The conclusion of my argument is that children are not abused, and therefore the state should not intervene, when children are inculcated with racist beliefs. However, parents who teach their children racism are guilty of bad parenting. As the state cannot rightfully intervene, parents can use other measures to keep their children away from other children who have been inculcated with racist beliefs. While this idea of containment, staying away from people who have or express racist beliefs, is lacking because it cannot always be enforced, it is the best solution overall because it is the most practical one. If you do not like something or someone, then it makes perfect sense to keep yourself and your children away from it or them. However, such a widespread practice could very well lead to the majority of society dominating the minority. The problem that can arise from just such practice could eventually lead to a social injustice by vigilantism couched under the banner of "doing the right thing" to those people in the minority who do not acquiesce to the majority. Such a practice should be avoided.

A liberal society must hold the line for people who live in an unpopular manner. An atheist may believe that people of the Catholic faith should not be tolerated because of the Catholic's beliefs. Similarly, perhaps a Jew may believe someone of the Baptist faith intolerable and wish to cease the teaching of Baptist life. And perhaps all of them would regard the agnostic as a heretic and try to expel them from the country. I could go on. The point here is that a liberal society must hold the line so that, if the time ever came, their most cherished belief systems do not fall under the axe. In order to accomplish this, a liberal society must stake out how far it is willing to tolerate people who live in questionable manners. The farther out we set the stakes of toleration, the harder it is for the state to eventually threaten your own beliefs.

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