

Review of Alexander Bagattini and Colin M. Macleod (eds.) *The Nature of Children's Well-being: Theory and Practice*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Springer, 2014.

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This volume, wisely coordinated by Bagattini and Macleod, and the ninth of a research series edited by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's professor Asher ben Arieh, works at the intersection of political philosophy and education and social work. As James Dwyer suggests, this volume deals with "situations in which beliefs lead parents to make childrearing decisions that the state deems contrary to children's wellbeing" (157). For readers not familiar with Asher Ben Arieh's work on social indicator and child's well-being, the volume does a fine work entwining data from social work practice with political theory. In it, classical debates between consequentialism and deontology come back through a discussion of the legitimacy of comprehensive enrollment in childrearing. Likewise, deliberations on what it takes to respect children's autonomy, perfectionism vs antiperfectionism, and the considerations of Schleiermacher's mediations on paternalism are well reflected.

The book is divided in three sections: the first one, the most ontological one, discusses the inherent goods of childhood; the second one is centered in the limits of parental authority over children, and finally the third part tackles children's well-being in clinical practice, assessing child abuse and the intertwining of medicalization and scandalization in the child abuse clinical category emergence. The two first chapters address the comprehensive enrolment i.e. raising one's

children in accordance with one's conception of the world. It also weights the decisions parents make on behalf of their children against retrospective consent. More specifically Professor David Archard from the University of Queens of Belfast challenges the widespread perception that there is a clear-cut between children and adults when it comes to moral autonomy. Delving in the reasons why autonomy is deemed important in moral and political theory, Archard disputes the very fact that there is such thing as a division between autonomous human beings and non-autonomous ones, namely, children. Archard makes the case to the need of listening to children's voice as to inform whatever perception parents and tutors may have about children's well-being. After analyzing different points of autonomy, Archard contests the very notion of threshold that could justify an uninformed paternalism that dismisses the point of view of the child.

Paul Bouhabib and Serena Olsaretti make the case for the importance of children's autonomy as children at the limited autonomy they enjoy during their childhood. What does it take to adequately capture the claims of justice in children? In this chapter they make the case that social theorists fail to address the autonomy that children show as children. In a poignant and nuanced argument, the Icrea researcher develops her main beliefs on the normative significance of the family in relation to autonomy and children's well-being. In a general liberal framework, she suggests that the limited autonomy children enjoy while being children is something to be cared for.

Just as the two first chapters deal with comprehensive enrollment, chapters 3 through 5 deal with the conception of childhood itself. While Anca Ghaeus and Colin Macleod defend the intrinsic value of childhood, Monika Betzler stresses the obligation of parents to enhance children's autonomy. Anca Ghaeus's chapter, "The intrinsic Goods of Childhood and the just society", confronts us with the dangers of rushing children out through adulthood. Anchored in what she calls "the predicament view of childhood", where childhood is only valuable as long as is conducive solely to a successful adulthood, the view that all the childrearing practices should increase the probability of a successful adulthood could devoid any children and adults alike of what she calls the "intrinsic goods of childhood" such as freshness, limitless possibilities, excitement and relative freedom from social expectations" (40). Along the chapter she does argue that the debate on the childrearing practices is skewed by the ideology of late capitalism. She defends that it is polarized between those who advocate practices conducive to a productive adulthood, and those, like Ghaeus herself, who oppose this productivist view of childhood. According to Ghaeus, some of the social features of late capitalism such as the lack of safety nets, extreme

competitiveness frame the debate as if the so called intrinsic good of childhood were incompatible with a productive adulthood. To do so, Anca Ghaeus present us with three stories aimed to show the relevance of childhood goods into adulthood. Also interesting from the point of view of ontology of childhood, the chapter of Streuli approaches the concept of best interest of the child in the clinical practice, providing so criteria to legitimate expert groups who have to step into deciding what the child best interest is. In this case, the basic assumption about what a child is appears again, namely, a creature devoid of agency and vulnerable, whose ability to choose is embedded with their family as a relational unit. In it Streuli advocates a collegiate, multifaceted approach to balance the perspective on children's well-being. However, the differences of sex development approach he takes as an example is being fiercely contested by authors like Nuria Gregory Flor (2006), Daniel González (2015). As it happens with the debate on the first part of the volume, more notoriously on the debate between intrinsic goods of childhood and the good adult life, this chapter takes the side of intervention advocates without adequate assessment of the results in the long run decisions of parents and physicians in the life of intersex individuals. Most notably, Streuli's views seem to be opposed to the recommendation of the interagency statement of the OHCHR, UN, and WHO (2014) that states explicitly that non-necessary medical intervention has been recognized as human rights violations.

In his "Agency, Authority and the Vulnerability of Children", a sweet and delicately nuanced essay, Colin MacLeod urges us to find a middle ground between the need to rush up children into adulthood - in order to reduce their vulnerability, and the need to preserve as long as possible the intrinsic good of children. According to MacLeod, the very absence of mature agency is what gives access to important sources of well-being such as imagination and innocence. Thus, he makes the case against rushing children into adult in the name of agency, imagination, and innocence.

In "Enhancing the capacity for autonomy: what parents owe their children to make their lives go well", Monika Betzler suggests that parents should foster abilities such as evaluative agency and control capacity. Both the ability to deliberate autonomously and the ability to care and commit can be fostered by the ability to have personal projects and autonomy.

"Paternalism in Education and the future" is the first and central chapter of the second section. Paternalism is acting in the person's best interest, but against her manifest will. Since this attitude is deeply entrenched in the realm of education and upbringing, it comes as little surprise to have it as a pivotal role in a volume

on children's wellbeing. Dieter Birnbacher discusses all the nuances and subtleties of assessing a person's future well-being to limit the present and current liberty of action. Without avoiding the ethical tension implicit in every intervention on behalf of another person for her own good, Birnbacher presents us a temporal framework that puts into question the legitimacy of weighing present frustrations against future benefits in a sort of cost/benefit analysis. Taking Scheilermacher's arguments against paternalism in education, Birnbacher proposes that legitimate paternalism should be indirect, aimed at preventing people from hurting a person without exerting coercion on the person herself, and protective, whose sole purpose is not only enrolling the person in any kind of good life, but to prevent harm. In any case, the intended goods in the future should outweigh present frustrations of the child, being the value of good and bad estimated regardless of the time when they happen.

In the eighth chapter, Matthew Clayton makes the case for antiperfectionist childrearing. In an exhaustive debate against comprehensive enrolment, Mathew Clayton dismisses the comprehensive enrolment by the same arguments used to keep at bay state intervention. In it, Clayton applies the very same arguments that liberals use to limit the intervention of the state, namely that endorsement of any conception of good life should not be commanded without solid reasons. Clayton stems from Rawls' notion of public culture, which should allow individuals with ability and opportunities to choose between comprehensive ends. Against the objections defending that the antiperfectionist childrearing does not provide any commitment due to its formality (vagueness), Matthew Clayton claims that antiperfectionist childrearing is an inquiry about what kind of reasons can guide parental conduct and, more importantly, about what kind of childrearing fosters the moral reasoning of a child. In relation to this antiperfectionist childrearing, he makes the case against what kind of comprehensive enrollments are coherent with a public culture, as Rawls understood it, that is, compatible with the principles of liberal citizenship while protecting the intrinsic goods of childhood. Antiperfectionist childrearing has got an active commitment with public reason, which is hardly consistent with the imputation of negligence.

James Dwyer, on its part, holds an opposite view in terms of the place given to the state in private life. Dwyer proposes in his article "Who decides?" that when it comes to ultimate decision-making, the state should be given priority over any private parties. His argument stems from a well delineated concept of personhood, "it happens before a child begins to make and communicate conscious decisions, which is consistent with prevailing views of moral status" (158) to ascertain how the rules regarding the authority over the life of autonomous person apply to the babies,

child rearing and custody of children. In his detailed argumentation he covers the ways debates on custody and adoption easily waive the interest of the child in favor of the adults who want to adopt, the interest of the society as a whole as opposite to somebody who acts a fiduciary of the interest of the child. The complexity of his argumentation relates to hot debates as surrogate mother-hood, anti-vaccine activists, and religious education.

Also, fleshing out the concept of personhood, although using it as a mean to justify the concept of human dignity, Holger Baumann and Barbara Bleisch provide in "Respecting children and Children's dignity" a very much welcome definition of what counts as children's dignity. This concept, somewhat elusive, has been used in bioethics to invoke a consensus that does not exist (Currie 2003). The authors use a conception of dignity derived from active personhood. Respecting child's dignity means above all respecting her activity, which allows her to sustain a perspective of her own in a way that very much resembles the concept Dwyer will present in his chapter. From this point of view, respecting a child's activity, which is expressed by having and developing a perspective from one's own, is an essential prerequisite of developing an identity of self.

Heiner Fangerau, Arno Görgen, and Maria Griemmmert from Ulm Universitat have a foucaultian take on the concept of child welfare and child protection. They draw a genealogy of the concept of child abuse since the eighteenth century. Their chapter works best showing how scandalization and medicalization come together in creating a child protection narrative. Arno Görgen's sound knowledge of history of medicine proves useful as to trace back what kind of clinical signs became proofs of child abuse, and a poignant description of the battered child syndrome. Once syndromes were defined, the moral framework in which these clinically defined situations should be interpreted through a spectacularization of it would be provided. As it happened in 1987 at Middlesborough general Hospital, they show how the process of guilt attribution plays a central part of child protection policies. However, the article would have benefitted from the work of reputed historians like John Boswell (1988).

The chapter entitled "Children's Right. Well-being and Sexual Agency" tackles a truly foucaultian topic, namely, the sort of sexuality not regarded as such (Foucault, 1978). Samantha Brennan and Jennifer Epp draw out a revision of the arguments frequently brought out about sexual education in public education debates, such as the ongoing question about whether children can be considered sexual agents of their own. Acknowledging the facts that prove the children's sexual agency as they

grow up, they inquiry about what it necessary for children actual sex engagement to be qualified as consensual. Authors end up pointing out that power imbalances should require a careful consideration in terms of what kind of bad choices are the adults allowing children to have, such as those that happen in precluded relations between adults and children, being considered as consensual and risky.

In line with the liberal assumptions of many of its authors, the book argumentation revolves around the rational action theory. It would be interesting to incorporate the views of authors like Gerd Gigerenzer, whose ecological approach to reason, namely adaptive thinking, is a good counterpoint of kantian authors, like David Archard or Matthew Clayton, or utilitarists like Colin McLeod. Gigerenzer concept of adaptive thinking would give an alternative view of the mental processes involved in the decision making regarding issues like childrearing or best interest.

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