A Child’s Worth

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Expensive Little Cherubs?


Short article about above publication:


"…annual Expenditures on Children by Families report…U.S. Department of Agriculture…latest estimate, a child born in 2007 costs:"

- $204,060 to watch over, feed, cart around, educate, and house from birth to the age to 18 a tenfold increase in less than 50 years
- in 1960 raising a kid cost a mere $25,229

“Government figures don't take into account, and the onerous repercussions for families nationwide. Take child care:"

- $1,220 to $3,020 on child care and education during each of the first two years, depending on household income (USDA figures)
However:

- National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies [NACCRRA] figures estimates the bill at $4,388 to $14,647 a year.
- In urban areas like New York City, where day care centers are few and overcrowded, parents hire nannies at an average of $31,000—and that's off the books. Taxes, benefits and insurance can run an additional $6,000 a year." (Paul, 2008)

“The USDA doesn't include college costs in its estimates.”

- Most financial advisors urge parents to set aside a minimum of $1,000 per child a month, which alone would nearly double the government's total childrearing estimate." (Paul, 2008)

“Though housing makes up the largest single cost [in raising a child] across income groups—33% to 37% of total expenses—the estimates do not include mortgage principal payments.” (Paul, 2008)

This figure does not include and additional extras like extracurricular activities for the child.

“Nor does the report take into account the myriad other products and services that parents today consider essential to raising a child. …first year baby's gear alone clocks in at $6,300.”

Her Book:
Paul, Pamela (2008). Parenting Inc.: How We are Sold on $800 Strollers, Fetal Education, Baby Sign Language, Sleep Coaches,

Cost of Raising a Child in the United States Increases…

The amount of money it takes to raise a child is increasing. The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) *Expenditures on Children by Families, 2007* estimated the annual expenditures on children born in 2007—from birth to 18 years old—by income group, for a two-parent, two-child family (Lino, 2008). In the lowest income group the cost of raising a child can total $196,010, in the middle income group $269,040, and in the highest income group $393,230 (Lino, 2008). “These amounts reflect a tenfold increase in the cost of raising a child in the last 50 years since the department began its annual study in 1960, when raising a kid costs a mere $25,229” (Lino, 2008, p. 1) Obviously, the cost of raising a child has soared (Lino, 2008; Paul, 2008). Ironically, these costs do not include:

- sending a child to college: a four-year private college at $23,000 per year; a public college $9,008 (Paul, 2008)
- the cost of childcare: $1,220 to $37,000 each year for the first two years depending on the parent’s income and where the family lives (Paul, 2008)

Cost of first year’s equipment: $6,300 not including luxuries (Paul, 2008)

References
Calculating the Costs
The Value Attached to Infants in Antiquity


“‘A pregnant woman has one foot in the grave’ according to a proverb from Gascony.” (p. 58)


“Parents sought to represent their children in art and inscriptions: as precocious achievers, loved, and dutiful (*piisimi*).” (p. 20)

“If birth was irregular, such as a breech birth, (‘feet first’, the Romans said), it was considered a bad omen. When Nero turned out badly, people remembered that he had been born this way.” (p. 103)

“If a baby died in its first year, no formal mourning was prescribed...Romans did not consider full mourning appropriate for children under 10 years: between 3 and 10 the mourning period was gradually increased. The young child therefore did not qualify for full recognition of its existence and individuality until the age of 10.” (p. 104)

“Within eight days (for girls) or nine (for boys) the infant was thought to have reached a new stage of its existence. One indication of this was its ability to open its eyes and focus them...
and perceive separate objects and persons. Juno watched over this stage. The end of this stage was associated with the end of the period of greatest danger and pollution, and the ceremony to mark this was the *lustratio*. On the eve of the *lustratio* a ceremony was held, which included a vigil in the house to protect the infant[by] driving off evil spirits.” (p. 110)

“The bulla (a pendant containing an amulet) had particular significance, as a sign of free birth. It was placed around the child’s neck and was worn until adulthood. For boys, this was until the ceremony of the *toga virilis*, when the boy exchanged his bordered toga for the white toga of manhood. Evidence for girls wearing the bulla is sparse...The lustratio was the first of many stages along the child’s path to an individual identity. On this day it was given a name (thus the *dies lustricus* or *dies nominis*).” (p. 111)...the child not long out of infancy, one ‘who can repeat words and stand firmly on the ground.’ This child is anxious to play with his peers, is quick to anger, and just as quick to change moods (p. 137)

“Many factors militated against close and long-lasting relationships between Roman parents and children. Mortality rates were a major factor, reducing the chances of parents and child developing their relationship together over a period of fourteen or more years.” (p. 220)...In any Roman family, the number of siblings close enough in age to have close interaction was quite low.” (p. 244)


“Hyo during the Koryo Dynasty (918 to 1392 CE) explicated “the parents’ infinite love of their children” and emphasized children’s devotion to the parents in return…Hyo is completed only when parents and children fulfill their respective roles. It is important to note that parents’ benevolence and children’s respect comes unconditionally. Therefore, children’s filial piety is neither conditioned by a father’s benevolence, nor visa versa (p. 208)…In traditional Korea, the principle of stern fatherhood and benevolent motherhood means that a father loves the children but should discipline the children sternly when they behave inadequately. On the other hand, a mother should nurture children when they do well, and also tolerate them and love them even when they behave inadequately.” (p. 209)

My colleague Aaron Denham (personal communication 1/30/09) has called my attention to excavations of the Apothenai, a pit where Spartans supposedly disposed of defective infants, that failed to find evidence of such a practice.
Little angels

Novice Monk in Rangoon (Yangon)
Angel in Christmas Parade—Oaxaca

“In Ghana, thousands of girls are enslaved to atone for their families’ sins according to the Trokosi tradition. The terms of their servitude are not spelled out, so families may be required to submit girls for servitude over (Bass 2004: 151) several generations. Trokosi girls, some as young as ten, are forced to become physical and sexual slaves of shrine priests to please the gods. Among the Ewe people of northern Ghana…When families were unable to atone for an offense by raising money to buy the prescribed cattle, the shrine priest was offered a virgin daughter for the wrongdoing
family… In theory, the Trokosi girls are wives and servants to the gods.” (Bass 2004: 152)

“The Ghanaian government passed a law in September 1998 making it illegal to send a child away from home for a religious ritual. … few policemen will act directly against the priests. … An approach that has proved more effective is persuading priests to give up their Trokosi girls in exchange for cattle.” (Bass 2004: 152)


Three years ago, a man wearing a skullcap came to Coli’s village in the neighboring country of Guinea-Bissau and asked for him.

Coli's parents immediately addressed the man as "Serigne," a term of respect for Muslim leaders on Africa's western coast. Many poor villagers believe that giving a Muslim holy man a child to educate will gain an entire family entrance to paradise.

Middle men trawl for children as far afield as the dunes of Mauritania and the grass-covered huts of Mali. It's become a booming, regional trade that ensnares children as young as 2, who don't know the name of their village or how to return home.
One of the largest clusters of Quranic schools lies in the poor, sand-enveloped neighborhoods on either side of the freeway leading into Dakar.

In 2005, Senegal made it a crime punishable by five years in prison to force a child to beg. But the same law makes an exception for children begging for religious reasons. Few dare to cross marabouts for fear of supernatural retaliation.

Children trafficked to work for the benefit of others. Those who lure them into servitude make $15 billion annually, according to the International Labor Organization.

It's big business in Senegal. In the capital of Dakar alone, at least 7,600 child beggars work the streets, according to a study released in February by the ILO, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank. The children collect an average of 300 African francs a day, just 72 cents, reaping their keepers $2 million a year.

Most of the boys — 90 percent, the study found — are sent out to beg under the cover of Islam, placing the problem at the complicated intersection of greed and tradition. For among the cruelest facts of Coli's life is that he was not stolen from his family. He was brought to Dakar with their blessing to learn Islam's holy book. In the name of religion, Coli spent two hours a day memorizing verses from the Quran and over nine hours begging to pad the pockets of the man he called his teacher.

It was getting dark. Coli had less than half the 72 cents he was told to bring back. He was afraid. He knew what happened to children who failed to meet their daily quotas.
They were stripped and doused in cold water. The older boys picked them up like hammocks by their ankles and wrists. Then the teacher whipped them with an electrical cord until the cord ate their skin.


“Kabul, Afghanistan—Sauker Ullah says he agreed to blow himself up in March. He did not know how to drive a car or read a book. His only schooling was four months in a Pakistani Islamic madrassa, where he learned to recite the Holy Quran but not the meaning of the verses. But after only a few promises, he agreed to go across the border to Afghanistan and kill foreign soldiers. Ullah was only 14. The clerics “told me if I did a suicide attack, I would not die,” said Ullah, form Barwan village in North Waziristan…Ullah, who allegedly was arrested in a car full of explosives, spoke to a *Chicago Tribune* reporter last month in Kabul.” (p. A11)


“Despite the differences in the descriptions of spirit children, all these societies recognized the preexistence of children in another form. In some instances, spirit children change into “flesh and blood” children in the womb; in others, they metamorphose from frogs, fish, or birds to children at some point during gestation; in other cases, the process happens after birth. There is, however, no separation between spirit children and embodied children; they are
part of the same continuum which links the supernatural and the natural world, and the latter cannot be studied without reference to the former.” (Montgomery, 2008:89)

“The malevolence and cruelty of spirit children is a recurrent theme in the literature.” (Montgomery, 2008:91)

“The ability that children have, in the spirit world to decide when they will die means that the length of time they spend in the world of the living is determined by the child. The high rate of infant mortality is explained by the pact that these children have made with their creator to remain for only a short time with their parents.” (Montgomery, 2008:93)


“In the Tibetan tradition, it is believed that babies may have special attributes or abilities that adults no longer possess, or that infants may have relations with supernatural elements.” (127)

“Until the child is eight years old it is believed that the child’s mind has a special clarity. Tibetans say that until the age of eight, a child’s consciousness is so fluid and clear that things can come easily into it.” (136)

“There are twenty-four spirit disorders listed in all, along with drawings of the types of images that are believed to possess children. Some images are shaped like animals.” (137)

“After the child sees these images for awhile, the Tibetans believe that the child begins to think he or she is that image. The child
might acquire behavioral characteristics like those he sees in the spirits. This influence may be reflected in the child’s actions, speech, and general behavior.” (137)


“An Anglo-Saxon scribe copied the *Rule of Chrodegang* into Old English, which stated that the adults of the monastery had to keep a strict eye on the children and youths in their care, and to maintain strict discipline, so that ‘playful youth, which loves to sing’ should find no outlet for their exuberance.” (p. 147)…records of saints that beatings may have been a common method of discipline within monasteries, both for adults and children.” (p. 151)
Children defined as “orphans” to facilitate charity…


“Aid agencies say children in dire circumstances—even those in the inhospitable Saharan camps to which Darfur refugees have fled—need their families, not to be flown to the comforts of the West as a charity wanted to do…Authorities stopped a French group calling itself Zoe’s Ark from flying 103 African children from Chad to Europe…Zoe’s Ark said the children were orphans from Darfur…It intended to place them with French host families.” (p. A7)

“The Zoe’s Ark campaign was also condemned in a joint statement distributed by Oxfam and signed by several international aid and development organizations working in Chad.” (p. A7)


“…orphans or street children. Such children, whose ages ranged from newborn to the age of majority, have been found on city streets from the colonial era to the present….According to…novelist Esteban Echeverría, early-nineteenth-century Buenos
Aires was depicted as a place where “everyone was surrounded by the poorly clad children.” (Szuchman 1982:58)

“Between 1770 and 1929 more than one hundred thousand newborns were left at Chilean orphanages, the great majority illegitimate, and from 70 to 80 percent did not survive the first seven years…One infant in ten was abandoned in Chile, and this did not include older children.” (Guy 2002:144)

“…Buenos Aires dealt with street children. Thousands of older orphans and street children were cared for by the municipal defenders of minors, although they had no residential or educational facilities. By the mid-1880s the defenders in Buenos Aires found themselves swamped with abandoned children but unable to house them.” (Guy 2002:147)


“During the eighteenth century, almost a quarter of all children born in Brazil were abandoned, and 80 per cent died before they age of seven.” (p. 100)
Adoption and Fosterage

This will be an added section. When we look at traditional societies, we need to distinguish between those experiencing poverty from those experiencing relative plenty. As we saw in Chapter Two, high fertility may exist in either situation. So, too the willingness to accept children—not born to household members—into the family. Motives may be entirely child-centered, they may emphasize the provision of parenting opportunities for those who’re barren, they may reflect a child-rearing philosophy that identifies non-biological parents as more effective than biological parents and they may reflect an investment for the future.

Ideal Parent Model


“People think that biological fosterage is not the exception but the norm.” (p. 33)

“It is always a single individual of the same sex who takes the rights and duties of foster parenthood. The child normally moves into the household of the social mother or father aged about three to six. This age is preferred for child fosterage for two reasons, the child is not weaned until about three, and his or her younger
biological brother or sister should already be born so that the mother will not stay without a child. It is maintained that the transfer of the child should happen at a young age, before the child would be “knowing”, as the Baatombu say, a change which takes place at around six or seven. Among other things, this implies that the events and changes that happen during this period cannot cause fundamental damage to the personality of the child or adult.” (p. 36)

“Their biological children—those whom one would call their own from a western perspective—belong to another partilineal clan and tend to be fostered by others. In this situation, foster children strengthen the position of married women. They are from the same clan as their social mothers, they are also strangers, and they belong exclusively to them.” (p. 37)

“"Her children" whom she called here “her things” were the biological children of her brothers or sisters. They belonged exclusively to her, whereas the children to whom she gave birth, which she could never call her “own”, belonged first of all to the family of their father.” (p. 38)

“There are numerous taboos and rules of avoidance between biological parents and children. They are forbidden to call the children by their first name. Instead, they have to use nicknames or paraphrases. Even in the first hours after birth I observed mothers expressing distance towards their newborn child in the presence of a watching crowd of friends and relatives.” (p. 40)
“Another belief in Baatombu society is important to understand fosterage—that to change location and the persons to whom one relates does not do any damage to a child. Young children are thought unable to understand and “know” what is happening, and are seen to be able to adapt quite easily to new parents and circumstances…The Baatombu believe that people are unable to act in a consistent and fair way with their biological children, and tend to be too lenient with them.” (p. 41)


“Individual hamlet groups practiced swidden horticulture, frequently moving their hamlets when they moved their gardens.” (p. 16)

“In contrast to the reproduction of the family through…intercourse, conception, pregnancy, birth, and nursing, the social family is created through the process of adoption, which is the cultural transformation of the natural parent-child relationship. The Baining engage quite frequently in adoption. In my genealogies the rate of adoption was 36 percent.” (p. 63)

“An adopted child is said to be one’s “true” child…It is bad to hit such children: one should treat them well, and then they will grow up to be good productive members of society, and, not so incidentally, look after their adoptive parents well in old age. Parents are proud of their adopted children and will defend them from criticism or punishment from outside.” (p. 63)
“The most common form occurs after a birth, when another Baining, male or female, single or married, sees a child and takes a fancy to him or her. The prospective adopter sees that the baby is *alto* (in the sense of being pretty, healthy, does not cry a lot). If this is the case, the prospective adopter(s) may bring gifts of food, and nowadays baby items such as diapers and tee shirts, to the child’s parents and give the parents the gifts while saying, “This is my child.” The parents are expected to agree and express no sadness or regret.” (p. 64)

“If a woman’s children consistently die in infancy, another couple might suggest adopting the next child to see if they can break the pattern of mortality (p. 67)…For the Baining, being able to provide for a child is far more significant than being able to give birth to one. There is no stigma associated with sterility. If partners do not have children, they simply adopt them.” (p. 68)

**Infertility**


“Among pastoral peoples in this part of the world it is quite common for infertile or childless women to adopt children from co-wives, sisters-in-law, or other close female relatives.” (p. 64)

**Child-rearing as an investment**

“‘Her children’ whom she called here ‘her things’ were the biological children of her brothers or sisters. They belonged exclusively to her, whereas the children to whom she gave birth, which she could never call her ‘own’, belonged first of all to the family of their father.” (p. 38)

“Cooking, making fire, carrying water, collecting wood, taking care of small children, being sent to neighbors with messages, and so on. Men need a boy to help them with agricultural work. However, child labor is always connected to the idea that a child should be trained to become a good farmer or a good housewife. A woman without a single foster child to send out and, most importantly, belonging in this context exclusively to her is a poor woman. The fostering person does not only have rights, but duties as well. Possibly the most important (and the most expensive) duty is to give the child his or her first husband or wife. In the case of a girl this implies the payment of the dowry, for a boy, the payment of the brideprice. The payment of brideprice or dowry sets the child free, and is considered compensation for the work the children have done for their social parents... There is an expression for this context. When talking about marriage French-speaking Baatombu very often use the word *libération* (liberation).” (p. 38)
“The child transfers between cities and village has become unidirectional: children are transferred from village to town but not vice versa.” (p. 43)


“I was compelled to ask this question in the course of my work on adoption in Suau, a Southern Massim society of Papua New Guinea. Nearly every household in both of the Suau villages in which I have worked have adopted a person into or out of their generations...as a result of stress on other relationships—a dearth of girls or boys, improperly spaced children, troubled marriages, and outstanding debts....adopted children in Suau were sent along the same ‘roads’ of exchange as brideweath pigs and the services of sorcerers.” (p. 98).

“Nurturing work, valuables, and children are variously conceived as version of one another, which is why one can be substituted for the others.” (p. 104)


“Javanese see many reasons for bringing the child into the family. Since children are wanted even if only to help in household tasks, a childless couple may ask a brother or sister for one of their children to bring up...Adoption of a child is said to bring good luck.” (p. 37)
“He explained that it was a good thing for children to go away from home…If their parents told them to work harder they wouldn’t obey, he said, whereas they would obey someone else.” (p. 116)


“…the Micronesian island of Kosrae…” (p. 45)

“Another kind of transfer in rights and duties over individuals occurs for the purpose of obtaining household service… Rights over the service of young women are particularly likely to be transferred. When a household contains no young women or when the only young women are incapacitated because of illness or childbirth, relatives may be called upon or take upon themselves to furnish a helper for their own household.” (p. 46)

“…nearly 25 per cent of living Utwe residents and nearly 20 per cent of the Malem residents have been adopted. Thus, adoption must be considered a common and pervasive feature of Kosraen social life; but the rates are still considerably lower than [elsewhere in Oceana]…A number of different circumstances may lead to Kosraens to ask for a child. The most common condition among potential adopters is a lack of young children (p. 47)…the desire to nurture is very strong, particularly among women. Kosraens appear to take genuine pleasure in cuddling and handling babies, and the mothering role is viewed very favorable. The high value placed on nurturing encourages adoption as well as high fertility.” (49)

Ayacucho…highland town in Peru

… child circulation, a practice in which children grow up outside of their natal homes. “Improving oneself” is a reason for relocating children into the homes of better-off urban relatives, as well as the justification for placing children with less-well-off rural relatives so that a parent can pursue the same goal…. In child circulation, young people (ranging from approximately 4 to 18 years old) from small villages and towns are sent to live with city-based relatives. In this migration of the young, children provide assistance in the home of the receiving family, who in turn provide for their care and upbringing (p. 60).

…child circulation…There are unfortunately no reliable statistics indicating exactly how common this practice is; I can say that I chose to study it because of the frequency with which I was offered babies on one of my first trips to the region…(p. 64)

Child circulation can (p. 65) involve unpaid labor (sometimes to exploitative degrees), sexual abuse, and other serious risks. Accordingly, both nongovernmental organizations and government agencies sometimes label this long-used strategy of relocating children “child trafficking,” lumping it with prostitution, panning for gold, and other fairly unvarnished forms of exploitation. In these institutions’ view, the risk to the child who is circulated to get ahead is far too great to justify the relocation. But in the
unspoken understanding maintained by my interlocutors in Peru there are degrees of mistreatment, and in many cases these risks or problems are unrecognized, deliberately overlooked, or tacitly accepted by young people or their families. (p. 66)

A young person may be left temporarily at an orphanage while his or her parent goes elsewhere for work, allowing the parent an opportunity for getting ahead without the danger of permanently losing a child. However, if the parent never retrieves the child, he or she is declared legally “abandoned” and made available for domestic or (p. 68) international adoption. This situation, rather than orphanhood, is what creates the vast majority of adoptable children in Peru. Most children currently residing in the orphanages will never be defined as adoptable and will instead eventually return home. This system gives some clues as to how children are valued differently by gender, most notably the following paradox: There are more girls than boys in the orphanages, but more boys than girls are placed for adoption. (p. 69)

Child-centered


“The age at which a child reached theoretical adult status was still twelve years old.” (p. 42)

“The early seventh-century law of Hlothere and Eadric similarly made provision for a man dying, leaving a wife and child; ‘it is right that the child should remain with the mother, and one of its
father’s relatives who is wiling to act, shall be given as its guardian to take care of its property, until it is ten years old’. (p. 43)

“The mortality rates indicated by the cemetery studies also offer insights as to why parents felt that sending their children out to become part of other families was in their children’s best interests. Given the average adult life expectancy of thirty-three to thirty-five year, it is evident that many children would have (p. 129) suffered the death of one or another parent before they reached maturity.” (p. 130)

**Interesting reversal. In traditional societies, adults adopt in order to earn a significant return on their rather small investment. They expect the adopted child to take care of them as it grows older. In contemporary bourgeoisie society, the precious cherub who is adopted is even more precious than one's biological offspring. Adoptive parents make larger than average investments with no expectation of a return.**


Contemporary legal and scholarly debates emphasize the importance of biological parents for children’s well-being. Scholarship in this vein often relies on stepparent families even though adoptive families provide an ideal opportunity to explore the role of biology in family life. In this study, we compare two-adoptive-parent families with other families on one key characteristic—parental investment. Using data from the Early
Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten-First Grade Waves (ECLS-K), basic group comparisons reveal an adoptive advantage over all family types. This advantage is due in part to the socioeconomic differences between adoptive and other families. Once we control for these factors, two-adoptive-parent families invest at similar levels as two biological-parent families but still at significantly higher levels in most resources than other types of families. These... patterns suggest that adoptive parents enrich their children’s lives to compensate for the lack of biological ties and the extra challenges of adoption.


“One agency is suspected among others things of forcing or actively encouraging birthmothers to give up their babies in exchange for some kind of compensation. It also manipulates the legal system in order to get children quickly and efficiently through the adoption process, securing a high delivery rate.” (Liefsen 2004:185)


“Medical provision, cultural attitudes and economic provision enable a pregnant women to decide whether or not to have the child. Abortion on demand has been available since 1975. Single
mothers are not stigmatized and they receive sufficient financial support to enable them to bring up children on their own. These factors have led to few unwanted babies being born and, hence few Norwegian-born babies available for adoption.” (Howell 2004:227)

“Today, one increasingly hears that children arrive with a “backpack” full of past experiences. Although the amount of “baggage” in the backpack varies with each child, the implicit message of this metaphor is that the past, however, brief, has consequences for the child’s development in its new circumstances.” (Howell 2004:229)

“Many parents are developing a new-found interest in the period before the child came to them.” (Howell 2004: 229)

"The witches situation started when fathers became unable to care for the children," said Ana Silva, who is in charge of child protection for the children's institute. "So they started seeking any justification to expel them from the family." Two recent cases
horrified officials there. In June, Ms. Silva said, a Luanda [Angola] mother blinded her 14-year-old daughter with bleach to try to rid her of evil visions. In August, a father injected battery acid into his 12-year-old son's stomach because he feared the boy was a witch, she said. Many boys describe pasts of abuse, rejection and fear. Saldanha David Gomes, 18, who lived with his aunt until he was 12, said she turned on him after her 3-year-old daughter fell ill and died. After, he said, his aunt refused to feed him and bound his hands and feet each night, fearing that he would take another victim.

Afonso Garcia, 6, took the shelter's last empty cot in July. "I came here on my own because my father doesn't like me and I was not eating every day," he said matter-of-factly. After Afonso's mother died three years ago, he moved in with his father. His stepmother, Antoinette Eduardo, said she began to suspect that he was a witch after neighborhood children reported that he had eaten a razor. Besides that, she said, "he was getting thinner and thinner, even though he was eating well."

Sivi Munzemba said she exorcised possessed children by inserting a poultice of plants into their anuses, shaving their heads and sequestering them for two weeks in her house. Once a soothsayer or healer brands a child a witch, child welfare specialists say, even the police often back away. "Of course it was a crime," Mr. Bulio said. "But because it is witchcraft, the police do not take any responsibility." In Angola’s Bantu culture the idea of child witches has a long history. However, an alarming increase in the number of children accused of being witches is on the increase. Child advocates estimate that thousands of street children in Angola,
Congo, and the Republic of Congo have been “accused of witchcraft and cast out by their families, often as a rationale for not having to feed or care for them” (p. A1).


Among the Bariba (Benin) infants born prematurely or in the breech position or with anomalies like neonatal teeth or initial maxillary teeth [...] natal teeth are associated with syndromes producing congenital abnormalities that may include such features as cleft lip, cleft palate, congenital heart malformation, and dwarfism [...] are declared witches (*machube*) and are killed, abandoned or given to a neighboring tribe as slaves. Witch babies can cause harm including making their mother sick (p. 79-80).

"That which is defined as infanticide may vary according to cultural conceptions regarding the actual beginning of life. The point at which the child receives a name may indicate induction into society and formal recognition of existence. In Bariba society, a newborn is immediately named according to rank order (e.g., first son, second daughter) and may be given a Muslim name at Baptism eight days after birth. Formal Bariba naming for the aristocracy occurs at age four or five. Infants are said to be similar to animals, warm and playful but without reason. They become human by age two--when a child is "too big" to nurse and is therefore weaned. In some instances, children are not named until several years of age; there seem to be progressive phases of recognition of the child as a permanent member of society, key among which is the appearance of teeth. Both mothers and fathers
state that they await the appearance of teeth anxiously to determine
the future of the child and, in fact, to identify the child's essence--
human or witch substance. (p. 82) When mothers were asked
whether they would grieve for a witch baby given away or killed,
they responded that a mother should not grieve because her
husband and his patrilineage had been endangered by the threat of
illness or death. (p. 83) Mothers are under considerable strain to
make a determination re a newborn's status and may call in the
midwife…for consultation…A decision that the child is a potential
witch usually involves the household head and infanticide is most
often performed by a ritual specialist. " (p. 84)

"The threat of witches continues to be perceived as potent by urban
Bariba, although infanticide as a response to this threat is said to be
increasingly rare. Ethnographic evidence from observation and key
informants suggests that witches remain a danger to be reckoned
with and accordingly alternative means of countering the potential
power of witchcraft are emerging. One solution, mentioned above,
is to give the unwanted child to a mission to be raised. The
evangelical missions in the Bariba region have received abandoned
witch babies for many years." (p. 90) A child may be suspected of
being a witch if it is socially maladjusted or developmentally
delayed (p. 92).
The smiling boy second from right is the very same child threatened as a witch depicted on page 98 of the book. He was rescued by photographer Paul Raffaele who sent me this photo via email on February 4th, 2009.
Children as Chattel

Slave-Girl Tending Goats in Niger


“In the large Adjame market of Abidjan, Côte d’ Ivoire, investigators discovered a “maid market” wherein young girls were being bought and sold from a ramshacke, corrugated iron and
wood shack. A small group of slaves who had been liberated from the estimated 20,000 slaves in Niger again showed children substantially represented. In the late 1990s the Sudanese government was implicated in the practice of allowing marauders to carry out “slave raids” in which innocent women and children were captured and then sold as domestic and agricultural slaved. Amnesty International estimates that 90,000 black Africans still live as ‘property’ of Arab Berbers in Mauritania and that 300,000 freed slaves are trapped both psychologically and economically into continued servitude under their former masters...Slave families at Taudenni in the north of Mali mine the salt blocks sold in Mopti.” (Bass 2004: 149)


“Children in pre-Conquest times were themselves often treated as products. We know that they were given to the state as a form of tax payment. In addition, they were highly valued as the most propitious of sacrifices offered at critical junctures such as epidemics, war, and the coronation of new heads-of-the-state.” (Dean 2002:44)

“In Recife, the capital of the state of Pernambuco in Northeast Brazil…” (p. 1)

“The boy sat on a towel on the ground while the older man talked and prepared the crowd for the performance. He told us that the boy would lie down on a blanket of broken bottles that lay a few feet from where he sat on a towel. Prior to this, the boy would put a sewing needle through his arm to show how impervious he was to pain…Most people in the crowd gasped and turned away as the pointed end of the needle came through opposite side of his arm. After the needle performance, the older man walked through the crowd soliciting money. As people rummaged through their purses and pockets for change, one woman yelled, “I’m not giving any money until he lies down on the glass!” Others repeated her demand. The boy then lay on the glass expressionless.” (p. 1)

“In Brazil, over six million children between the ages of 10-17 and 296,000 children between 5 and 9 are working….Children produce much of what Brazilians eat, wear, and sleep in…The cacao, gems, minerals, soybean, and grape industries have all required the use of cheap (children’s) labor.” (p. 2)

“Another guide, Fofao, was forced to leave his home because of “problems with my stepfather. He didn’t like me.” He was sent to live with his aunt. “I was basically one of my aunt’s employees, and I think that is exactly why I was given to my aunt.” From as far back as he can remember he was expected to work and help his family. “When I was six years old, I was selling ice-pops. It was my aunt who set me up. She bought the styrofoam box for the ice pops. It was clear to me from the beginning that I would have to
work; there was never any question about it. I was forced, really, and have to say that I never really liked, it. I do not like to sell things on the street. I always wanted to study, to stay in school. However, after I moved to my aunt’s, they took me out of school because, basically, if we wanted to eat we had to work. When I was not selling ice-pops, I was selling *cocada* (a coconut pastry). When I started working as a *guia*, it was great because, in a way, it was a form of studying. I taught myself. It was easy. I got a map and studied.” (p. 78)…It is my aunt who pretty much decides how the money will be spent.” (p. 79)

“[Gloria] “So, a man my mother knew (p. 91) decided to take me, because he only had a child. After I was born, my mother put me in a sack, and gave me to him. He put me together with his bananas and took me to his house.” (p. 92)…Gloria decided it was time to leave the favela and try their luck elsewhere. She contacted a cousin in Rio, and with her youngest son, aged two, went to stay with her. The rest of the children, aged 10-20, stayed behind with her husband. A few weeks later, he sold their house for 800 *reais* (about US$400), bought a bus ticket to Rio, and left the rest of the children behind.” (p. 95)


**Book Review.**

“*Its analysis of the assimilation, and resistance to assimilation, of the Italians of New Haven from 1879 to 1940.*” (289)
“For the *contadini* who came to New Haven, children were to be willing participants in a family compact that put claims of kin before aspirations of one’s own. Childhood was but a brief period of dependency. Youth began wherever opportunity to work and to contribute to the family economy, first presented itself. Compulsory schooling challenged the very premises of that immigrant outlook, both economically and ethically. It cost the family income it needed.” (289)

“Education also challenged the prerogatives of the elders in moral instruction. It instilled upon children the wrong lessons about obligations to others, and in the deepest sense it was considered amoral.” (290)


“A study of the Tonga people of Zambia.” (Bass 2004: 83)

“Not all child labor is bad...Ebeneezer, who works to support his family, explains, “There’s nothing wrong with working because I have to look after my mother. My father’s dead and I have four brothers and three sisters (p. 3)...I saw Emeria being beaten by her mother because she refused to go to the field. Changu, a fourteen-year-old girl, describes, “Mother beat me for not working and I was very angry.” (p. 83)
“Mae Tonga children also work in the fields during middle childhood, but they have more time for leisure activities than their female counterparts from age eleven to age fourteen.” (p. 84)

“Child labor can be viewed as keeping children from participating in school. Conversely, the proceeds from children’s labor often can make the difference in being able to afford the costs of school.” (p. 99)

“Independent school migrants have become common…These children migrate from rural areas and then bear the responsibilities of being full-time students and of sustaining themselves independently in the urban milieu. These children have successfully completed their primary school education in rural areas, but must relocate to a regional city in order to access secondary and higher education. Secondary schools are not equipped with dormitories, so these children are required to rent on their own or with a group of classmates. Many of these temporary household consist only of children who are ten to thirteen years old…Children who do well in school are those who develop daily urban survival strategies. Most children try to go home on the weekends to assist their parents in the fields or collect food for the week, regardless of their academic calendar of exams and activities. Because parents often do not have cash to buy everyday school supplies such as paper and pens, children develop small businesses to earn pocket money.” (p. 119)

Documents the pattern whereby wealthy individuals who utilize child labor in Africa bring their “chattel” with them to USA. One particular case of a young girl whose mother had “leased” her to an Egyptian couple is described and the couple in question were prosecuted and jailed. Their children treated the maid like she was subhuman.

“Bonerate belongs to Kabupaten (district) Selayar in the province of South Sulawesi in Indonesia….The island, formed of coral, is almost circular in shape and is fringed by extensive reefs.” (p. 1)

“In the past a combination of trading, slaving, and piracy formed (Broch 1990:1) the based of the island economy (p. 2)…Although some fishing and agriculture go on, the major economic activity…is shipbuilding.” (Broch 1990:3)

“A crying baby is rarely heard. Miang Tuu villagers say that they all feel uncomfortable at the sound and will try to do something about it, no matter whose baby it is. If the mother is close, the baby will be nursed. If that does not calm the baby down, he or she is rocked in somebody’s arms, and talked to (in baby language). Adults often fiddle with the genitals of the baby to make it smile.” (Broch 1990:29)

“It is extremely rare to see expressions of physical aggression, even among children in the village.” (Broch 1990:42)

“Before the age of four to five years, boys and girls are treated alike in most contexts…and both run naked most of the time.” (Broch 1990:62)
“Children are not burdened by too many chores and are given the best of many aspects of life. They sleep with they want to, cook their own small meals, and often receive the best pieces of food and fruits gathered for the household. During the season, children gather lots of sweet mangoes that they may or may not share with their parents. Generally children are reluctant to share their goodies with adults but are more generous with their playmates.” (Broch 1990:74)
The Priceless Child


DEAF parents should be allowed to screen their embryos so they can pick a deaf child over one that has all its senses intact, according to the chief executive of the Royal National Institute for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (RNID). Jackie Ballard, a former Liberal Democrat MP, says that although the vast majority of deaf parents would want a child who has normal hearing, a small minority of couples would prefer to create a child who is effectively disabled, to fit in better with the family lifestyle. Current legislation is discriminatory, because it gives parents the right to create “designer babies” free from genetic conditions while banning couples from deliberately creating a baby with a disability. Next month a coalition of disability organisations will launch a campaign to amend the bill to make it possible for parents to choose the embryos that carry a genetic abnormality.

**Sarah Palin syndrome where expectant mother gains a great deal of social capital in martyring herself to an expensive and difficult child.**

Anonymous, 2008. Many keeping babies with Downs: More Down's syndrome babies are being born than before pre-natal screening became widespread, figures show. *BBC Online Edition*
Following the widespread introduction of pre-natal testing for the syndrome, the number of babies born with Down's fell from 717 in 1989 to 594 at the start of this decade. But during the current decade the birth rate has increased, reaching 749 births of children with Downs Syndrome in 2006, the latest year for which figures are available. In general, the overall birth rate has been increasing in recent years. But figures from the National Down's Syndrome Cytogenetic Register suggest Down's births have risen by approximately 15% as a proportion of all live births since 2000.

The Down's Syndrome Association (UK) surveyed 1,000 parents to find out why they had pressed ahead with a pregnancy despite a positive test result. Most respondents said they felt supported by their family and friends and considered that the future was far better today for those with Down's syndrome.


http://www.sptimes.com/2008/02/24/Hillsborough/One_year_old__one_lav.shtml

His parents pay $3,000 for the special day. Eyes wide, "Prince" Clayburn Reed looked around astonished at the nearly 60 faces as they sang happy birthday in unison. To celebrate his first birthday, his mother, Sheila Chapman, rented the Palms Room at the Tampa Palms Golf and Country Club and invited friends and family for his special day.
"I think it's one way of a person having a gala for themselves, using the child's birthday," If Chapman has her way, though, young Clayburn will be feted this way every year. "These are the memories I want him to have," she said. "I want him to know how important and special I think he is."


“Parents reported that they tried to honor the child’s selection of role by cooperating in purchasing or constructing a costume, and through assistance with hair, make-up and/or prop. Even if they needed to visit several stores to find a particular costume, mothers generally sought to fulfill children’s expressed role choice.” (292)

“The adult role as an appreciative audience was amply noted by young informants who reportedly “showed off” their fictive selves and were generally praised for the display.” (293)

“Adults were said to be a receptive, supportive audience. Children generally liked having parents present during the “march” around school, and admitted to disappointment when a parent missed the parade. The Halloween parade, I was told time and again, is fun for children in large part because of providing a chance to see and be seen in costume.” (293)