

## CATHOLIC INDOCTRINATION - LET HEREDITARY RELIGION END!

### QUOTES FROM

<http://alexandertheatheist.blogspot.com/2008/03/religious-indoctrination-loaded-gun.html>

Indoctrination / Indoctrinating: teaching someone to accept doctrines uncritically

Socialization: Socialization is the process by which humans or animals learn the values, norms and culture of their particular society. NOTE: This does not necessarily constitute acceptance of all these values and norms, nor does it require the blind adherence of indoctrination to be achieved.

Education: Presenting information on a subject, or many subjects, while simultaneously fostering the use of critical thinking in relation to that subject or subjects. (my definition as an educator)

Critical Thinking /Critical Reasoning: "Active, persistent and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends." (as defined by John Dewey)

--- indoctrination is not true education, which requires critical thinking rather than opposition to it.

---expose the vile intentions of religious indoctrination from the perspective of educational psychology, which proves indoctrination and true education are worlds apart

---Religious indoctrination impairs and corrupts the natural curiosity and critical reasoning skills of children for the rest of their lives.

--- the religious proponents of indoctrination use children for their own purposes and hand them religious concepts they do not understand but will very willing use as a weapon against others.

---Throw your delusions of self-importance out the window and just deal with the fact that the world does not revolve around you or your religion. There are other superstitions out there that are just as vile and reprehensible in their utilization of religious indoctrination, if not more so.

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Early in the 1920s, Swiss Biologist Jean Piaget started working on his theory of cognitive development. His theory, which remains dominant in educational psychology, describes four stages of logical reasoning capability (Ormrod, 25-30):

Sensorimotor stage (birth until approximately 2 years of age)

Preoperational stage (about 2 years until approximately 6 or 7 years of age)

Concrete Operations stage (6 or 7 until approximately 11 or 12 years of age)

Formal Operations stage (11 or 12 years of age through adulthood)

Note: While the age an individual reaches a particular cognitive stage of development varies, the sequence does not.

Unsurprisingly, not much religious indoctrination occurs during the Sensorimotor stage due to the fact that children do not really have the cognitive capacity to be indoctrinated and are still learning such basic functions as how to speak. Religious indoctrination really begins during the Preoperational stage and it often starts at this stage because anyone familiar with even the basics of the cognitive development of humans knows children do not have the capacity to use critical thinking to assess religious concepts that are presented as indisputable, absolute truth and reinforced by various authorities like parents and religious leaders. As a result, most indoctrinated children will simply assume the truth of everything they have been indoctrinated with when they become adults.

Two major characteristics of the Preoperational stage are Preoperational Egocentrism and Transductive Reasoning.

Preoperational Egocentrism is the inability of children to see things from someone else's perspective because they view their own perspective as the only one possible (does this sound familiar?). Transductive Reasoning is where children combine facts that are not related and conclude there is a cause-and-effect relationship because the two events occurred within a short time of each other. (Ormrod, 27) At this stage of cognitive development there can be no reasonable expectation that children can assess any concepts based on an informed opinion and any form of critical thinking. As a result, religious doctrines must be taken on blind acceptance of authority and faith rather than on their supposed merits.

Even when we get to the Concrete Operations stage children can still not fully grasp all of the concepts they are presented or apply anything close to high-level critical thinking skills to them. While children at this stage begin to understand that others have different opinions, and can realize their own perspective may be incorrect, we are still not dealing with high levels of critical thinking. There is still a dependency on concrete reality, making children unable to reason about "abstract, hypothetical, or contrary-to-fact ideas," giving religious concepts the advantage of not having to face any informed criticism (Ormrod, 29). Children at this stage are also incapable of controlling or separating variables or testing more than one hypothesis at a time. There is also a problem dealing with proportional reasoning. As a result, it is absurd to reach the conclusion that children are ready to handle concepts as heavy and abstract as the supernatural mover of the universe and saviour of all of mankind when they cannot even grasp how fractions and decimals are related (Ormrod, 29).

When children reach Formal Operational thought their critical thinking skills are just beginning to warm up. They begin to be able to reason about things that are not concrete or observable reality and are capable of hypothetical and deductive reasoning. They can also form and test many hypotheses simultaneously and skillfully manipulate numerous variables. Adolescents also become far more capable with proportional reasoning during this stage (Ormrod, 29).

The critical thinking skills of youth really develop and improve from adolescence through adulthood, when religious doctrines and concepts should be introduced and face the scrutiny any true education would receive. And this is likely not done because religious proponents of indoctrination know that a large portion of those not introduced to religious concepts and doctrines until adulthood would reject their appeals to faith and authority in the face of their own informed personal opinions backed by properly developed critical thinking skills. All claims to absolute truth would have to actually earn this title in the face of pure, unadulterated critical thinking, which I will again define here:

Concepts common to many current definitions of critical thinking include using reasoning/logic, judgment, metacognition, and reflection and questioning (Halpern, 2003, p. 6).

Halpern, D. F. (2003, 4th edition). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Clearly, the very purpose of religious indoctrination is to curb true learning/education and avoid the scrutiny of critical thinking by beating it to the punch. And the religious proponents of this tool know all they have to do is get to children and feed them religious doctrines before the latter knows any better and can defend themselves from them with well-developed cognitive abilities. After all, the naive acceptance of authority and absolute truth is often readily given by children who are ill-equipped to effectively argue against such things due to their early cognitive development. Unfortunately, teaching children to dismiss critical thinking and accept religious concepts and doctrines uncritically from an early age can pervert their natural ability to use critical thinking, and seek natural truth, for the rest of their lives.

Jeanne Ellise Ormrod, *Educational Psychology: Developing Learners* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003), 27, 29.

### Perversion of Critical Thinking

Children have an innate, natural ability to seek the truth and look critically at things. In this way, they are very much like sponges that want to suck in as much knowledge as possible from their interactions with others. From an early age when they first learn to speak they ask questions and this natural curiosity and skepticism is an essential, eminently valuable part of human nature. It shows us that from the very beginning we are natural learners who seek to acquire as much knowledge as we can about the natural world we live in. If encouraged and responsibly supported, a child's critical thinking skills can be a powerful tool for their success later in life. And to be certain, religious indoctrination is one of the major obstacles to this success because it perverts the natural curiosity and critical reasoning skills of children from an early stage of their cognitive development.

By presenting religious concepts and doctrines as undeniable truth to children you immediately send them the message that critical thinking and reasoning are not only unreliable and wrong, but should be readily dismissed when inconvenient (see: when you have no logical evidence for your beliefs). Regardless of what proponents of the religious indoctrination of children say, this practice is certainly not teaching or educating when you present a specific religion as indisputable truth to an audience that does not have the capacity to scrutinize the concepts you are giving them with critical thinking and their own informed personal opinions. And because these children do not have the cognitive ability to truly understand the religious concepts and doctrines they are being fed, they will just take the cue of the religious adults around them by

disregarding any critical reasoning and make up their own answers to the gaps in their religious knowledge.

To assume that this practice of fabricating answers will not then spread to other, more practical areas of their knowledge and make them intellectually lazy rather than encourage use of their critical reasoning skills is naive. After all, they have been told that it is wrong to ask questions and challenge the concepts and doctrines their religious authorities have gone to great lengths to indoctrinate them with. It is easy to apply this horrible lesson to other aspects of their lives where they have the opportunity to gain and manage knowledge.

Essentially, telling children they must accept religious concepts and doctrines uncritically harms their ability to attain reliable knowledge and lowers their standard of what valid knowledge is. By cutting out critical thinking skills you replace them with a logical void where you can only feel and believe something to be true and it will be, thus trivializing truth. It changes the very way an individual determines how to acquire knowledge and learn.

In addition to this, religious indoctrination also perverts critical reasoning by strongly reinforcing the paramount concept of Religion 101, namely that a particular religious outlook is the absolute truth and completely correct, which makes all other worldviews unquestionably wrong. This effectively leads religious adherents of this concept to be unable to see things from the religious perspective of others (at the very least) because they view their perspective as the only one possible. What this means is that these religious individuals who use, and are the result of, religious indoctrination are at least partially using the reasoning skills a child in the Preoperational stage of cognitive development (roughly ages 2-7) uses in their outlook of the world.

We can conclude that this religious worldview (no matter what its specific form) is decidedly in opposition to critical thinking and reasonable thought, and that this is the religious tradition and legacy that religious indoctrination forces upon each new generation to continue. There is not even a second thought by the religious because they are so convinced they are absolutely correct that they feel their children are being done a favor. Of course, by indoctrinating their children with beliefs similar to the one where only they and people like them have the ultimate truth and reality in the universe (by ironically worshipping something outside of it), confrontations with other children based on disagreements concerning religious concepts they hardly understand are inevitable.

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## Conclusion

In the end, religious indoctrination is as much an ingenious tool for religious conversion as it is a vile and traditional one to keep religion alive. By utilizing it, religious and parental (and other) authorities overtly seek to benefit from, and take advantage of, the naivety and lack of cognitive development of children in order to instill religious concepts and doctrines that are encouraged to be accepted uncritically and will remain with them forever. As a result of not being able to defend themselves from this religious indoctrination with an informed personal opinion and well-developed critical thinking skills, most children simply assume most of what they have been indoctrinated with is true when they are adults. Religious proponents of indoctrination know this and that is the point - to capitalize on the cognitive vulnerability of children. Ethical behavior takes a back seat to ensuring the survival of a specific religion.

By teaching children to accept religious concepts and doctrines uncritically, you dim their perception of the world around them and pervert their ability to use critical thinking later in life. When children are told that critical thinking and reasoning are liabilities when it comes to religion they will easily apply this horrendous lesson to other aspects of their life. As a result, their overall concept of truth is trivialized because their standards of how to acquire any real knowledge are diminished by the blind acceptance of authority and simply feeling, by use of uncritical blind faith, what they have been indoctrinated with is true. What's worse is that this religious indoctrination also makes them behave like a child in the Preoperational stage of cognitive development as an adult because they are unable to view the world from the perspective of anyone who does not share their specific religious beliefs, which they view as the only possible set of answers.

Additionally, telling a child that by blind, uncritical acceptance of the religious concepts and doctrines they have been indoctrinated with they hold the ultimate truth and are on God's side is like giving them a loaded gun and setting them loose on the world. Children will very willing use their incomplete understanding of religion as a weapon against others, especially peers, because the implication is that anyone who disagrees with them is not only completely wrong, but a serious threat to, and enemy of, their specific world outlook and God. These conflicts are the direct result of the fact that the cognitive development of children is not advanced enough to be able to completely understand the very concepts they are using to attack and judge others with.

Finally, religious indoctrination should be condemned for, and opposed as, the unethical manipulation of children and the perversion of their critical thinking and reasoning skills that it is. The religious proponents of this malicious process know that they are not truly educating children, but simply beating the cognitive development of children to the punch by instilling them with religious concepts and doctrines presented as absolute truth before their cognitive ability is advanced enough to know what hit them. By using children as religious tools, the proponents of religious indoctrination also

negatively impact the ability of children to acquire knowledge and think logically and critically as adults. It is clear that religion should keep its hands off of our children and introduce itself to them when they can truly make an informed decision, but this will never happen so long as it wants to survive and thrive

A COMMENT IN RESPONSE: Parents blithely assert that when children reach maturity they can decide for themselves. This is a lie and they know it. This is what I write to parents.

“On average let us say children are taken into the indoctrination process when they are three and are free of their parents control at 18. So After 15 years of indoctrination you think they are free of the mind control and have a questioning mind? Are you merely making the assumption that at 18 they are going to be autonomous and self determining people? The facts are, after many years of indoctrination during their crucial formative years, when any sign of thinking for themselves was stifled, a child most probably will:

1. Believe there is a transcendental purpose to life (pure dogma).
2. Believe they are sinners and they need salvation (pure dogma).
3. Believe people who profess religion enjoy an exalted position in the community and are privileged (group think).
4. Worry that if they leave your religion they will be thought of as disloyal.
5. Depending upon how insular your faith community is, worry that their friends may disown them.
6. Worry about what the rest of the family is going to think if they leave.
7. May be cursed with a false view of reality (evolution is just a theory)
8. May be working with an untrue, distorted and unsupportable view of history.
9. Probably fear holy retribution for sins.
10. Probably feel helpless to escape the 24/7 oversight of a powerful supernatural being.
11. May need professional counseling to cope with items 1-10.