Journal of Teaching and Learning
Vol. 15, No. 2 (2021), pp. 21–39
https://doi.org/10.22329/jtl.v15i2.6724
www.jtl.uwindsor.ca

The End of Innocence: Childhood and Schooling for a Post-Pandemic World

Julie C. Garlen
Carleton University

Abstract

The global pandemic has dramatically impacted the lives of billions of children all over the world, creating a massive disruption in education and exacerbating existing multidimensional inequalities. Given the ubiquity of the virus's reach, is COVID-19 the end of childhood innocence? Building on an understanding of childhood as social practice, I describe how childhood innocence has been enacted through, and pivotal to, education as a social practice since the late 19th century. I consider how the pandemic is challenging the normative views of childhood that have long informed teaching and learning and outline the possibilities for reimagining childhood and schooling in ways that could promote a radical transformation of public education for a post-pandemic world.

Introduction: Questioning Innocence

COVID-19 has impacted the lives of billions of children all over the world, and school closures have been central among the concerns about the pandemic's effect on children. A recent report from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2021) revealed that nearly one year into the global pandemic, 800 million students across the world—more than half the school-age population—were still facing significant educational disruptions due to COVID-19. In North America, COVID-19 has created the most significant disruption in education since compulsory schooling was established. School closures and online learning have created a multi-faceted crisis for children, driving up food insecurity rates among those who rely on schools to provide regular meals, disconnecting students from familiar routines and social interactions, and dismantling vital supports for parents. The quickly improvised remote solutions devised in response to stay-at-home orders, for which many educators received little, if any, specific training, and the pervasive disparities in student access to reliable internet and necessary devices have led to widespread concerns regarding the "COVID-slide," the academic regression

that students are expected to experience as a result (Pietrafetta, 2021, para. 1). One *New York Times* writer went so far as to suggest that an entire generation of children might be lost to remote learning, asserting that "[o]f all the tragedies emerging from the pandemic, a generation of children left to teach themselves on sofas and bunk beds may be the most insidious" (Bellafante, 2020, para. 7).

Considering the formidable challenges children are facing, some have characterized the pandemic as a loss of innocence (McKinney, 2020; O'Connell, 2020; Wickersham, 2020). As I have argued elsewhere (Garlen, 2019; Garlen, 2020), this conception of childhood as a state of innocence—a universal condition of blissful ignorance and inexperience—is a myth, and therefore it cannot truly be lost. All children experience sadness, grief, fear, and disappointment, some earlier and in greater measure than others. And yet, although there has never been a time when children were really excluded from fear, pain, or loss, a pervasive belief in innocence as the ideal condition of childhood has been shaping parenting and educational practices in North America for at least 150 years. Here, I consider how those practices might be reevaluated by understanding the pandemic not as a loss of something that never really existed but as an opportunity to reimagine childhood and transform education. In what follows, I examine the implications of COVID-19 as a potential end to the cultural attachment to the myth of innocence that has informed the discourses, structures, and practices of public schooling in North America. Borrowing from Baker (1998, 2001), whose meticulous historical and theoretical work laid much of the foundation for my analysis, I offer an updated "history of the present" (Foucault, 1979, p. 31), a form of historical analysis "that enables a questioning of how questions are currently posed" (Baker, 1998, p. 118). This Foucauldian strategy interrogates "what governs statements" that are accepted as scientific truths and examines "the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable" (Foucault, 1980, p. 117). As Baker (1998) explains, "histories of the present point to the cultural and historical specificity of categories and concepts used to debate and practice schooling today" (p. 118). First, I look to practice theory to describe how childhood innocence has been enacted through, and pivotal to, schooling as a social practice since the late 19th century. Then, I describe three distinct but interrelated ruptures precipitated by the pandemic, openings that reveal existing ideological incongruities in the innocence myth. These openings create entry points toward reimagining the conditions of childhood and the purposes of education for a post-pandemic world.

Schooling as Social Practice

Education is arguably one of the most unassailable values of Western society; today it is considered a fundamental human right. The concept of education as the facilitation of learning is ancient and not unique to a modern worldview, but the particular knowledge, skills, and habits that constitute an education, as well as the spaces in which that education occurs, are laden with values that are historically and culturally specific. In North America, the systems of free and compulsory public education that exist today were built around a distinct, temporally specific childhood ideal. That it was an *ideal* is significant; it was a hoped-for standard of perfection that never described the actual lived experiences of children. This modern construct of "childhood" was not simply a label for the early phase of human life but a marker of the significance attached to that period as a special, even sacred, time of innocent ignorance (Garlen, 2019). Impossible as it was, the discursive ideal that had been constructed across two centuries of modern political philosophy was concretized through the building of social institutions that included orphanages, children's hospitals, juvenile courts, and, of course, schools. When education was instituted as the only appropriate occupation for

children, schooling and childhood became permanently and inextricably intertwined. As Baker (1998) explains, "schooling and childhood are mutually reinforcing classificatory schemes and social practices. The 'child' is a taken-for-granted subject central to the structure of the educational field" (p. 118). In other words, Western educational practices can be understood as concrete manifestations of the ideologies that inform a modern conception of childhood.

Practice theory, which has been associated with the work of numerous scholars, most notably Foucault (1969), Bourdieu (1972), Giddens (1979), Butler (1988), and Schatzki (1996), offer a compelling framework for exploring the relationship between cultural discourse, schooling, and social change. While the particular approaches differ, Reckwitz (2002) finds in his analysis of these theories that common among them is the attempt to explain and understand action, "namely by having recourse to symbolic structures of meaning" (p. 244). In other words, practices are understood in relation to the hegemonic ideas and discourses that define how the world is interpreted and acted upon. Reckwitz (2002) describes a practice as "a routinized type of behaviour" consisting of interconnected elements including "forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (p. 249). These practices are social in that they are carried out across many places both simultaneously and asynchronously by different people (Reckwitz, 2002). Applied to educational systems, we see such practices occurring at the national, state, and provincial level through enactments of law, architectural design, funding processes, and curriculum development, among many others. Practice theory sees the relationship between practices and social structures as being recursive—these social practices both shape and are shaped by the structures of schooling.

Social practices involve the organization and use of bodies and things and as well as ideas, language, and symbols. Embedded in the practices that form the social structures of schooling are specific "ways of understanding, knowing how, ways of wanting and of feeling that are linked to each other" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 253). For example, the practice of going to school involves a pattern of repetitive bodily behaviours that require procedural knowledge, such as moving one's body from a private "home" space to a public "school" space, placing that body into a desk, and fixing one's eyes and attention to receive instruction. The practice of going to school also involves a certain way of understanding one's self as a student, which, in a primary or secondary school setting, involves particular power hierarchies and expectations for deportment. Also contained in the practice of going to school is a particular way of understanding the world, a view informed by beliefs such as the nature of humanity, the purpose of education, and the appropriate conditions of childhood. As Reckwitz (2002) explains, how we understand the world is a "largely implicit and largely historically-culturally specific … form of interpretation that holds together already for the agent herself (the carrier of the practice) the single acts of her own behaviour, so that they form parts of a practice" (p. 253). It is in this implicit, culturally specific, and largely unquestioned form of knowledge that we encounter the taken-for-granted subject of the modern, innocent child for whom Western public education was ostensibly intended.

Childhood Innocence and Compulsory Schooling

As Heywood (2018) observes, "Nowadays we take it for granted that childhood ought to be an age for play, education and a progressive preparation for life as an adult," but this was not always so (p. 183). Prior to the 19th century, the structure of agricultural societies in Western Europe and North America demanded that most children contribute to the family economy at an early age (Stearns, 2006). By most historical accounts, the idea of childhood as a special time of separation

from the adult world did not begin to take hold until the 17th century, when the authority of the monarchy and religious dogma declined, precipitating a need for new forms of government and social control as well as ways of justifying and enforcing them. Beginning with Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century, political philosophers began to emphasize the importance of the early years of life for the indoctrination of future citizens. A few decades later, John Locke's depiction of the human mind at birth as "white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas" (Locke & Yolton, 1976, p. 18) was both a bold rejection of the prevailing religious belief in original sin and a convenient justification for the social significance of childhood. However, it is 18th century French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau who is most often credited with the popularization of innate innocence (Baker, 2001; Garlen, 2019; Heywood, 2001; Stearns, 2006; Taylor, 2010; Wolff, 1998). The doctrine of innocence flourished in a time of vast social and technological change. However, the belief in original sin, which saw school as a mechanism of discipline and reform, persisted alongside the innocent Romantic ideal, and compulsory schooling thrived in the tension between these two seemingly disparate discourses.

Invoking innocence

Rousseau's (1762/1979) opening to *Emile*—"Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man" (p. 37) —was a radical refusal of original sin that placed the responsibility for evil on society, from which children were to be fiercely protected and left to nature until they had reached maturity. Only such a vigilant "natural" education could produce the ideal citizen, a man whose goodness could survive corrupt society. The fact that Rousseau was publicly condemned for religious heresy illustrates how controversial his work was at the time, given the prevailing belief in original sin that had shaped schooling practices and beliefs for centuries. For example, during the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, the profoundly influential German theologian Martin Luther had called for the establishment of public schools as a defense against child depravity. Luther argued that if the government could command citizens to enter into military service, then "how much more has it a right to compel the people to send their children to school, because in this case we are warring with the devil" (quoted in Rothbard, 1974, p. 12). As Baker (2001) explains, "it was within the auspices of an austere Lutheran theology that the nature of the young was 'reformed,' so to speak, and original sin was to be beaten out of them, reformed yet again" (p. 141). By the 1600s, flogging, both at home and in Protestant boarding and day schools for boys, had become a common practice. Thus, even as political philosophy was shifting away from religious doctrine toward secular structures of authority, this emphasis on education as moral reform remained influential and experienced a significant renewal with the Evangelical Revival that arose in Great Britain and North America in the mid-1700s.

Yet, with the first Industrial Revolution taking hold in Great Britain in the second half of the 18th century, Rousseau's condemnation of society and call to natural simplicity attractively positioned childhood as an escape from the anxieties of a rapidly changing adult world. Through the Romantic art and literature that began appearing in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Rousseau's child was converted from a vulnerable, irrational being into the embodiment of all that was good in the world, sacred "creatures of deeper wisdom" who possessed a "profound awareness of enduring moral truths" (Gryllis, 1978, p. 35). As Heywood (2018) explains, "The Enlightenment view of childhood as a time for education, and particularly education for boys, yielded to the notion of childhood as a lost realm that was none the less fundamental to the creation of the adult self" (p. 29). In a time of uncertainty, childhood came to be seen as the '"kingdom of heaven," a secular

Utopia centered around the nature of innocent and good beings (Neustadter, 2009, p. 146). The emerging belief in the innate goodness of humanity, coupled with the distrust of corrupt modern society, combined to form a social doctrine principled on the preservation of childhood innocence.

Enforcing innocence

From its beginning, the Romantic ideal was classist, patriarchal, and "uniquely useful to the construction and maintenance of whiteness" (Bernstein, 2011, p. 7). In spite of their claims to universality, the tomes of political philosophy in which the modern child first emerged were only concerned with the noble European boys who would become landowners with power and influence. Private schools had long existed primarily for *their* educational benefit. Moreover, the conditions of childhood prescribed by Locke and Rousseau and romanticized in art and literature required, above all, individual freedom, which neither women nor any non-white person was entitled to at the time. As Baker (1998) so aptly observes, "One could have a childhood only if one was eventually able to occupy adulthood" (p. 127). Of those excluded from the childhood ideal, the young daughters of the elite might at least be entitled to protective care as they were prepared for domestic life, but unlike their male counterparts, they could never outgrow the childlike puerility that was ascribed to women. Therefore, the construct of the modern "child" for whom secular educational programs would be developed excluded girls, children of colour, and working-class children, who could only ever approximate the ideal. And yet, this myth—this unattainable standard—would become a central goal around which public school curriculum would be organized. Although the demand to protect childhood became a rallying call for compulsory schooling, the doctrine of innocence did not erase the legacy of original sin, which had long served as a justification for mass education and moral discipline. Therefore, the universally good and morally vulnerable child was juxtaposed with the undisciplined, disobedient not-child who was "still largely independent, not segregated, exposed to drink, crime, neglect, and hard labor, and made to assume responsibilities early" (Schnell, 1977, p. 46, as cited in Baker, 1998, p. 123). Although sin was beginning to be understood as social, not original, it required no less discipline, as the future of society depended on its reformation. In this way, the preservation of innocence could justify violence as needed to discipline the unruly not-child into compliance.

In the midst of the Second Industrial Revolution, rescue became the medium through which innocence became a disciplinary mechanism that operated through schooling. Throughout Europe and later North America, public school systems were established alongside a host of social institutions such as children's hospitals, orphanages, children's aid societies, and correctional facilities that sought to salvage childhood innocence from child labour, poverty, and moral decline in what has become known as the Child-Saving Movement (Clapton, 2012; Pastorello, 2014; Platt, 1969). In the United States, industrialization was just one of a number of sweeping social changes in the 1800s, including the emergence of a middle class, the abolition of slavery, a new wave of immigration, and first-wave feminism, all of which heightened the anxieties about social conflict and control. Of course, these changes did not take hold at the same time or in the same way across nations and regions; however, by the late 19th century, free compulsory public education had been established in most of the U.S. states and Canadian provinces.

Public schools institutionalized the modern ideal of childhood as a time of separation and protection from adult society, dependence, and delayed responsibility (Ariés, 1962; Schnell, 1977). Compulsory schooling diminished children's autonomy, increased their economic dependence on adults, and normalized the intervention of governments in their education and protection. In order to justify these changes, children's inherent vulnerability and weakness had to be emphasized, and

the "duties and responsibilities of life had to be portrayed as particularly onerous and damaging to children, thereby achieving the final separation of children from the socially useful" (Schnell, 1978, p. 60). However, rescue was not necessary for those who already occupied the space of childhood by virtue of their race and social status. Public schools were not designed to bestow that special status on othered members of society, only to assimilate them into disciplined, rational subjects who could aspire to but never achieve such potential. This function of schooling became clear as scientific advances produced "a variety of tools through which 'data' were collected and used to justify social hierarchies between people in terms of 'nature'" (Baker, 1998, p. 126). Baker illustrates how racial and cultural hierarchies were expressed through the perceived role of the teacher in transforming children from "animals into intellectual beings, and … from intellectual beings into spiritual beings, giving to many their first appreciation of what is wise, what is true, what is lovely and what is pure" (Katz, 1968, p. 120, as cited in Baker, 1998, p. 123).

The utter violence of this approach to "civilizing the savages" (Trocino, 1994, p. 33) was disguised in the seemingly unassailable doctrine of innocence, which for the sake of society (i.e., the existing power hierarchies of white heteropatriarchy) had to be preserved by any means necessary. Schooling as a response to the innocent childhood ideal "is produced and maintained through the rhetoric of protection, which justifies protective practices and policies" (Garlen, 2019, p. 57). These practices and policies function as disciplinary technologies that enforce the "the government of individuals, the government of souls, the government of the self by the self, the government of families, the government of children and so on" (Foucault, 1984, p. 256). Such disciplinary technologies are justified by the seemingly unimpeachable ideal of innocence, which softens the blow of the racist, classist, colonialist logics that drove the demand to school the masses. These logics remain so deeply embedded in the structures of schooling that they are hardly questioned, but, as I will suggest, the global pandemic offers a compelling opportunity to bring them to light.

Exposing innocence

In what follows, I examine what I see as ideological ruptures brought on by the COVID-19 crisis that illuminate existing cracks in the unimpeachable status of innocence. Each of these ruptures presents an opportunity to interrupt widely held myths about childhood and schooling by calling into question the logics often used to justify educational practices. Certainly, the current global pandemic is not the first crisis to expose the fallacies of the "hapless, innocent child" who is "essential to the romantic imagination" and "qualitatively different from the adult" (Silin, 1995, p. 120). In the 20th century alone, children in North America have lived through wars, economic crises, residential schools, school shootings, race riots, and terrorist attacks, but there are some important characteristics that make this pandemic unique. First, COVID-19 has been extraordinary in its ubiquitous (albeit inequitable) impact, with a reach that even the most privileged could not entirely evade. Whereas racial and/or economic privilege could exempt many children from previous crises, permitting a plausible deniability of childhood trauma, the pandemic has impacted an entire generation of children. Second, as described above, the unpredecented disruption of schooling makes it particularly significant in the history of public education. Finally, the pervasiveness of digital technology as both an informational medium and instructional intervention during the pandemic calls attention to the shifting power dynamics brought on by the digital age.

I want to note here my rationale for conflating the undeniably distinct and vastly heterogeneous public educational systems of the United States and Canada. Although it is certainly true that many particular practices of schooling within the two nations are different, including the

role of government, specific curricular content, testing and accountability measures, assessment and disciplinary strategies, etc., the foundational contexts and structures of schooling were and are much the same. Having both been former colonies of Great Britain, both nations were similarly shaped by Western European ideals and settler-colonial logics, were influenced by educational reformers who espoused comparable perspectives, and shared a similar timeline with regards to the adoption of compulsory schooling. The ruptures I describe here address the fundamental ideologies of schooling that were foundational to public education in both nations and premised on a myth of innocence that continues to inform practice today.

Rupture 1: Schooling as Separation

One way that the pandemic has disrupted normative beliefs about schooling in North America is by exposing the illusion of school as a container for childhood innocence. As Silin (1995) observes, discourses of the innocent and ignorant child "locate an ideal childhood in a far-off place and designate the educator as responsible for controlling exposure to the world as adults know it" (p. 122). Furthermore, the goal of compulsory schooling was to "define a single, coherent world in which students would ultimately take their place as compliant, responsible citizens" (p. 122). Initially, in both the U.S. and Canada, these separate school worlds were constructed primarily through reform efforts that sought to remove children from the workforce. Although that goal was never fully achieved, by the middle of the 20th century, innovations in school design reflected an increasing emphasis on protective separation and control (Bevan, 2019). However, these protective efforts were always susceptible to ecomomic pressures and technological changes. During COVID-19, the intense controversy around the safety of schools has further illustrated the pervious boundaries between schools and society.

Separation from work

In the early years of labour reform, the perceived need for education, particularly the ability to read and write, actually superseded concerns about the harsh and often dangerous conditions in which children were working (Schuman, 2017). However, early labour laws that sought to enforce mandatory education for children working in factories were largely unsuccessful, and subsequent laws that set a minimum working age and limited working hours had relatively little impact (Heywood, 2018; Schuman, 2017). It wasn't until school attendance was made mandatory through legislation that the full-time employment of children was virtually eradicated, and even then, it was only through a lengthy process across many decades that school replaced work as the primary occupation of children (Heywood, 2018). One reason for this protracted transition was the prevalence of agriculture, which relied on children's work, often without pay, and was particularly resistant to regulations faced by industry. By 1929, most Canadian provinces had outlawed the employment of children under 14 in mines and factories (McIntosh, 2000). In the U.S., it was 1938 when the Supreme Court actually upheld a Congressional child labour law. However, agricultural work in the U.S. was not covered by federal law until 1974, and today youth as young as 12 are permitted to work on farms with few restrictions on hours (Hindman & Hindman, 2009). There is no federally determined minimum age for children working on farms in Canada. In both nations, informal work such as babysitting and yard work as well as the more challenging tasks of farm work are viewed as beneficial for children's development and future contributions to society so long as it does not interfere with their education or physical health (McNamee, 2016). Furthermore, school itself is a form of work, particularly in the context of neoliberal values that define the

purpose of schooling as the acquisition of "knowledge and skills privileged in the (stratified) economy," which is enforced through curriculum standards and production targets (Lipman, 2011, p. 15).

Separation from society

Although school as a universal refuge from work has always been an unfulfilled ideal, it was seen as the accepted norm by the second half of the 20th century. During the post-war period of so-called "urban renewal" during which many residents of city slums, mostly people of colour, were displaced, a renewed emphasis on separation materialized in the style of school architecture that Bevan (2019) refers to as the "fortress school," which "strongly delineates between inside and outside space through few and highly controlled entrances and exits" (p. 552). The fortress school, as a product of urban renewal, "articulates an institutional insularity by turning away from the surrounding community" (p. 553). In the U.S., such designs have become especially attractive in response to a growing number of school shootings over the last two decades. Since the "stranger danger" panic of the 1980s, schools have enhanced safety and surveillance measures to ensure that only authorized adults can gain access. This broader dynamic between school and society involves the regulation of childhood itself; the fortress-like design of contemporary schools reflects the desire to separate children from the adult world and reinforces a distinct adult/child binary.

However, in the 21st century, the school's capacity to insulate itself has been consistently eroded by the proliferation of the internet and smartphone technologies, which keep students constantly connected to the world beyond school grounds. One U.S. study found that by 2009, most middle-school students, nearly half of students in Grades 3 through 5, and one-third of students in kindergarten to grade 2 had access to cell phones for their own use (Project Tomorrow, 2010). Many schools initially attempted to ban phones entirely, but parents' insistence that they be allowed to freely communicate with their children during school hours and questions of legality have led to more lenient approaches to limiting their use (Maddox, 2012). As contemporary schooling in North America is heavily reliant on wireless internet for communication and instruction, most schools have firewalls and content filters in place to prevent students from accessing prohibited content, but students have quickly learned ways of bypassing those systems to access restricted materials. The inability of schools to effectively restrict technology further illustrates that schools are not, in fact, impermeable but are susceptible to infiltration and responsive to the demands of an ever-changing society.

Schools as sites of transmission

If these failures of separation aren't sufficient to dispose of the myth of schools as effective containers of childhood, the pandemic brings fresh evidence of their perviousness. Walls and fences offered no protection against an "invisible enemy" spread through human contact (Shaw, 2020). Consequently, schools were among the first social services to be shut down en masse. By May 2020, schools in 48 of 50 states in the U.S. had closed for the remainder of the academic year, and schools in most Canadian provinces had shifted to online instruction (Chavez & Moshtaghian, 2020; Vogel, 2020). In the context of the pandemic, schools were viewed as sites of transmission and spread rather than containment. The potential for schools to operate as generative spaces is not exactly novel; in fact, a virus is a fitting metaphor for the way that social knowledge has always found its way into schools—circulating, spreading, and changing as it is exchanged between students. In spite of efforts to establish schools as sites of separation, students carry their own

experiences of the world into school spaces that seek to create "distance between children and the disquieting material realities in which they live" (Silin, 1995, p. 104). However, the preservation of childhood innocence demands that those disquieting realities be silenced and the potential transmission of "restricted" knowledge be ignored.

The view of schools as potentially dangerous was controversial and quickly countered by claims of safety. In the U.S., Robert Redfield, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, declared that school was "one of the safest places" that K–12 students could be (Henry, 2020, para. 2). The same sentiment was expressed frequently in Canada, particularly by Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who faced the challenge of decision making for the nation's most populous province (Freeman, 2020). After an initial push to close schools, the messaging shifted back toward school reopening based on largely unfounded assumptions of safety and a general lack of scientific evidence on asymptomatic transmission between children and youth (Donohue & Miller, 2020). Among the debates about school safety, the persistent logic of separation was illustrated in the differentiation between "community spread" of the virus and "school spread," as if schools exist apart from the communities they serve (Wong, 2021). During subsequent waves of the pandemic, school closures and online learning were prolonged for most of the 2020–2021 academic year in some parts of Canada and the U.S. where virus spread was accelerating. Given these concerns about schools as sites of virus transmission, the pandemic offers an entry point into reimagining schools as one of many permeable, interconnected spaces occupied not by the innocent insulated child but by "the child-in-the-society" (Silin, 1995, p. 120).

Rupture 2: Schooling as Dependence

Another way that the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged dominant perceptions of childhood is by highlighting children's autonomy in accessing information outside of school. In addition to the material architecture of separation, the construction of school as a singular, insular container for childhood innocence also relies on a developmental logic that positions learning as a state of dependence. The doctrine of innocence demanded that schools not only remove children from adult work but also separate them from adult knowledge. The moral importance of not knowing was emphasized by Rousseau's insistence that Emile be sheltered from any knowledge of the adult social world. As Postman (1994) asserts, the modern social category of childhood is dependent upon the maintenance of secrets: "Children are a group of people who do *not* know certain things that adults know" (p. 85). The concealment of adult secrets, particularly in the act of teaching, requires a duplicity that Rousseau (1762/1979) unabashedly celebrated. "There is no subjection so perfect," he writes, "as that which keeps the appearance of freedom" (p. 120). As Silin (1995) explains, "When innocence is defined by the absence of the experience presumed to characterize adulthood, the protection of childhood requires controlling access to the knowledge that would signal its loss" (p. 122). In the early years of compulsory schooling, such dependence was enforced primarily through regulation of literacy instruction and reading materials. At the same time, however, innovations in technology and media were simultaneously "working together to undermine that effort and attitude" (Postman, 1994, p. 74). The accelerated distribution of public health information and direct engagement with children seen during COVID-19 further illustrates children's automony in accessing "worldly knowledge" (p. 84).

The rationale for the careful cultivation of children's knowledge was bolstered in the late 19th century by the emergence of developmental psychology, in particular the publication of G. Stanley Hall's *The Contents of Children's Minds on Entering School* in 1893. Influenced by Darwin's theories of biological evolution, Hall believed that the stages of child development

mirrored the historical development of the human race. Therefore, early childhood could be understood as a period of "savagery," a state of ignorant dependence in which the child "accepts without much question whatever is done for him or told him and has no hard and fast notions of law either of nature or society" (Partridge, 1912, pp. 75–76). Teachers, therefore, should be careful not to "overestimate the capacities of children" insofar as the adult world was concerned because "[t]he world we live in is not theirs" (pp. 75–76). Moreover, this separation had to be strictly enforced: "We are 'Olympians' and can enforce our will because we are stronger. We must be tolerated and respected, and must be treated with all the forms of respect and obedience that we require" (Milson et. al, 2010, p. 409). Thus, children were dependent upon parents, caretakers, and teachers to produce and maintain the sheltered child-world they were meant to inhabit.

It is in this capacity to control children's knowledge that social critic Neil Postman (1982/1994) locates the very existence of childhood. Postman asserts that it was the demand for literacy that created the dividing line between children and adults. Such a distinction, however, was simultaneously being undermined by emerging media technologies, beginning with the five-cent picture show craze in the first decade of the 20th century. By the 1920s, the advent of commercial radio broadcasting meant that many children had direct access to news and information that could be consumed simply by listening. By the 1950s, the spread of television invited children into a whole new realm of accessible visual information, a seductive symbolic world Postman dubbed "The Total Disclosure Medium" (p. 81). For Postman (1994), "childhood became obsolete at the same time that it was perceived as a permanent fixture" (p. 74). The same can be said for schools as childhood's container.

As Postman notes of the ubiquity of television, these changes in the distribution and availability of information have operated to "eliminate the exclusivity of worldly knowledge and, therefore, to eliminate one of the principal differences between childhood and adulthood" (p. 84). And yet, school curriculum is still designed to exclude such knowledge in the service of preserving a child/adult binary. The curriculum operates to maintain ignorance through an active refusal of "inconvenient and discomforting truths," particularly those that engage "trauma, suffering, and violent oppression of groups of people such as racism, nationalism, colonialism, war, genocides and the like" (Zembylas, 2017, pp. 499–500). The absence of content related to such historical and contemporary social trauma is well-documented, illustrating how schools silence topics related to death (Husbye et. al, 2019; Silin, 1995; Stylianou & Zembylas, 2021), race (Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2001), sexuality (Gilbert 2014; Robinson 2012; Taylor, 2010), inequality (Hagerman, 2018; White et. al, 2013), and homelessness (Kim, 2020). One of the main rationales for not bringing such "discomforting truths" into the primary school setting is the preservation of innocence. This assumption is based on a faulty logic that renders silence responsible for maintaining the state of blissful ignorance that has been imagined as the ideal condition of childhood—if adults do not talk about social trauma with children, we can pretend that they aren't suffering.

What is unique about the pandemic as a particular source of adversity is that it has undermined our collective capacity for denial. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is certainly not "the great equalizer" as the media once proclaimed (Galasso, 2020, p. 1), as it has highlighted existing inequalities in its disproportionate impact on people of colour and low-income populations, it is "universal" in the sense that it has impacted virtually everyone, including children, in some way. Aside from fabricating some elaborate fiction, parents and teachers had little opportunity to conceal what was happening given rapid school closures, widespread stay-at-home orders, and constant news coverage of case numbers and death tolls. Child health experts

quickly advised "sensitive and effective communication" with children, including "honest information about changes within their family" (Dalton et. al, 2020, p. 346).

To help facilitate children's understanding of the crisis and their role in mitigating it, government leaders and health officials addressed them directly. In the U.S., CNN partnered with Sesame Street to air a Coronavirus "Town Hall for Families" that featured CNN Chief Medical Correspondent Sanjay Gupta, CNN Anchor Erica Hill, and White House Chief Medical Adviser Anthony Fauci alongside Elmo and Big Bird (Madani, 2020). In Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded via Twitter to an eight-year-old's handwritten letter and later spoke directly to children to acknowledge their fears, concerns, and disappointments and to thank them for their efforts to stop the spread of coronavirus by practising social distancing (Belmonte, 2020). Trudeau also increased funding to Kids Help Phone, a support service that offers free professional counseling directly to children. As these examples of direct engagement illustrate, the pandemic has normalized experiences of fear, stress, and trauma among children as a result of COVID-19 and emphasized children's access to and need for "worldly knowledge."

Rupture 3: Schooling as Delayed Responsibility

A third interrelated fissure in the seemingly "unimpeachable moral status" (Duschinsky, 2013, p. 764) of childhood innocence involves the intention that school functions as a means for delaying responsibility. As previously described, the move to innocence sought to rescue children not only from the responsibility of work but also from responsibility for themselves or others by emphasizing their inherent weakness and vulnerability. This diminished competence was rebranded as freedom and idealized through the fantasy of the carefree childhood. Children's presumed incapacity was reinforced by Hall's developmental paradigm and institutionalized through the work of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, whose stage theories of moral and cognitive development profoundly shaped modern approaches to curriculum and instruction. As James (2008) explains, this model regards "children as not being capable of exercising responsibility, or of being inherently irresponsible as a consequence of their developmental immaturity" (p. 147). As a result, "adults consistently underestimate children's capacities" and "children are denied opportunities for participation in decision making and the exercise of responsibility in many areas of their lives" (Lansdown, 2005, pp. 30–1).

In recent decades, this attitude has been challenged by evidence of childhood responsibility in other cultural contexts, including children engaged in essential work, military service and warfare, and family caretaking (James, 2008). However, the fiction of delayed responsibility as an essential characteristic of childhood is just as easily identified in North America. As Luttrell (2013; 2020) has demonstrated, children in the U.S.—particularly the economically disadvantaged—very often assume family care responsibilities, although this work "goes unrecognized, if not punished as they pursue their own and other's education" (Luttrell, 2019, p. 2019). Moreover, I would argue that children bear the burden of being "our most precious resource, as human capital in formation, as our next generation" (Qvortrup, 2009, p. 632). As Kraftl (2008) observes, "The seemingly logical alignment of childhood with futurity has engendered an affective *logic* of hope that operates on an almost global scale" (pp. 82–83, emphasis in original). Therefore, children have long been tasked with a profound responsibility: they must carry the weight of adult hopes and fears.

However, the emergence of COVID-19 has brought unique responsibilities to bear on childhood. Early on, children were asked to radically alter their behaviour by wearing masks, washing their hands more frequently, avoiding touching their faces, and keeping away from friends and family members outside their household. Initial disease outcomes strongly suggested that

children were less likely to experience severe symptoms, but studies showed they were accelerating the rapid spread of the virus (Cha, 2020). In families who could isolate from older extended family members, children were given the responsibility of avoiding their older loved ones in order to save their lives. For families with multiple generations living under one roof, children were asked to protect the lives of grandparents by taking extra precautions, including not returning to school in person. Yet even as anxieties about children as COVID-19 carriers spread, the increasing indications that children were significantly less vulnerable to the virus became a key tool in economic reopening efforts, illustrating children's role in maintaining the economy. As governments scrambled to get children back in school, educational policymakers and economic organizations emphasized the risks of "learning loss" for the labour market (Ewing, 2020). Although it wasn't clear whether children were to be kept safe by new safety protocols or left to spread the virus among themselves in order to advance herd immunity, what was evident was that the decision to reopen schools was primarily an economic one. As Forbes contributor Nick Morrison (2020) points out, "The reality is, until children go back to school, parents will have to remain at home looking after them, and it will be impossible to fully restart the economy" (para. 11).

Ultimately, the pandemic has highlighted the myriad ways that children are actually given great responsibility in North America, in spite of enduring developmental discourses that classify them as incompetent, immature, and dependent. The responsibilities of following health precautions in order to protect others has positioned them as moral agents, acknowledging their ability to determine right from wrong and to be held accountable for their actions. As Smart et. al (2001) note, the failure of "Western cultures to appreciate children as moral actors" because of their perceived dependence on their parents "leaves unsaid the extent to which adults are also dependent on others, including children, for emotional and material support" (p. 97). The pandemic has illustrated the extent to which we have depended on children to be responsible for the potential implications of their choices. It has also demonstrated how the wellbeing of our economies largely hinges on the success of the school child, underscoring school itself as one of children's most important responsibilities.

Ending Innocence: From Ruptures to Reform

COVID-19 has drastically changed the realities of children's lives, but as my analysis illustrates, the specific challenges it has created for children have not signaled an "end" to childhood as a state of innocence. Rather, the pandemic has made more visible the enduring realities of children's lives that contravene the myth of innocence and challenge the ideological foundations of compulsory public schooling. These ruptures in the largely unquestioned assumptions about the purpose and function of schooling as a mechanism for the preservation of childhood innocence present an opportunity to consider how social practices of schooling might be restructured to reflect post-pandemic priorities, including equity and well-being. As Frankema and Tworek (2020) explain, pandemics "interrogate the foundations of society, the sustainability of its material basis, the role of expertise, our social codes, and behavioural norms" (p. 333). COVID-19 is an opportunity to "end" the myth of innocence as the organizing principle of the social codes and behavioural norms that inform teaching and learning in North America. As McKinney de Royston and Vossoughi (2021) argue, the focus of education moving forward should not be a return to "normal" but systemic change.

What might an end to innocence mean for the way we define childhood in relation to schooling? If we take these ruptures as entry points for reform, we could begin by shifting from

assumptions of separation, dependence, and delayed responsibility to affirmations of connection, interdependence, and agency. First of all, prioritizing connection over separation would require schooling practices that confront the traumas of childhood, not only those brought on by living through a pandemic but those that preceded and are exacerbated by COVID-19 because of social and economic inequalities. As Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2020) assert, "greater efforts are called for in meeting the social-emotional needs of children and implementing trauma- and healing-informed practice, all while making up for learning loss and preparing for the coming unpredictable combinations of distance learning, blended learning, and in-classroom learning" (p. 457). Meaningfully addressing the social-emotional needs of children may be a daunting task given our cultural attachment to innocence. As Templeton and Cheruvu (2020) suggest, "the pull of childhood innocence may be so strong as to only provide a veneer of reconstruction" (p. 144). Sustainable change demands that we move away from thinking about the child and the world as separate entities in order to attend to "the child-in-the-world" (Silin, 1995, p. 229). Focusing on that child's well-being also demands that they not be regarded simply as an economic investment; the skills and knowledge that facilitate human wellness would have to take precedence over those that are seen as necessary to develop human capital.

Rethinking schooling to account for children's interdependence with adults and the larger society requires yet another paradigm shift regarding access and autonomy. Young children, by virtue of biology, are dependent on adults for survival, but their economic dependence is not natural. While the enforcement of dependence through compulsory schooling serves an important social function in that it protects children from potentially detrimental forms of labour, its primary purpose is economic. Children's dependence on adults for the dispersal of knowledge is also socially constructed and, given technological changes that have redistributed access to information, no longer functional except as what Zembylas (2017) calls "wilful ignorance" (p. 501). Drawing on Zembylas's terminology, denying that children have access to and experiences of difficult knowledge creates "epistemological absences" that formulate "'emotional regimes' of ignorance" that can be difficult to disrupt (p. 501). However, the fact is that schools no longer function as sites for the regulation and distribution of information; learning has continued outside of schools throughout the pandemic. The outdated belief that children are or should be dependent on schools as primary sites of learning leads to short-sighted assessments of time spent away from school as "learning loss," concerns that are disproportionately directed toward "youth of color, youth grappling with poverty and/or houselessness, disabled youth and/or those with learning differences" (McKinney de Royston & Vossoughi, 2021, para. 3). This focus on lost learning diminishes the value of what children learn outside of school and "ignores how our social policies created racial, economic, and educational inequities and sustain the conditions in which they persist" (McKinney de Royston & Vossoughi, para. 3).

At the very least, government leaders and school policymakers might interrogate how schools have functioned through the regulation of information to "reproduce the current inequities of our social, political, and economic system" (Ferguson, 2000, p. 50). Returning to Zembylas (2017), the disavowal of suffering that occurs through curricular silence can be understood as "a stance that enables one's community to ignore those aspects of existence that are inconvenient, disadvantageous and discomforting" (p. 500). This disavowal enables the erasure of suffering in which one is complicit and therefore serves the interests of dominant groups by stifling systemic change. The unwillingness to acknowledge children's responsibilities as moral actors is another form of refusal that masks the extent to which the functioning of society depends on children and young people to exercise their agency in ways that reinforce cultural values and maintain the status quo, including the hierarchies of power that have been assigned to age. Through long-established

processes of containment and control, schools have functioned to produce and reproduce those hierarchies, undermining children's capacities and diminishing their social value. Public schools in North America have not fulfilled an egalitarian ideal, in part because schools are not isolated entities but interconnected microcosms of the unequal societies they serve. The pandemic, along with the social movements that have taken place in its midst, have underscored the urgency of confronting existing injustices and inequities. Doing so, however, would require education to adopt a purpose other than producing "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1979, p. 135) to serve the needs of a stratified workforce. A curriculum of conformity cannot be expected to produce change.

Given the long history of innocence as an organizing principle of childhood and schooling in industrialized Western societies, restructuring schools into sites of connection and support where children's experiences, capacities, and responsibilities are recognized and respected is a tall order. However, the intense challenges of the pandemic have presented us with an unprecedented opportunity to radically transform education. The alternative—returning to normal—means wilfully ignoring the systemic inequalities that have been produced and reproduced through compulsory schooling, an untenable choice to prioritize power and profit over possibility and people. The "history of the present" offered here is an invitation to reconsider the kinds of questions we have been asking about schooling as an entry point toward systemic change. Precipitated by the pandemic, the ruptures in the logic of innocence as an organizing principle for school have created openings for us to imagine different approaches. As McKinney de Royston and Vossoughi (2021) point out, such change requires "questioning harmful beliefs about how young people learn and grow" (para. 2). Asking questions about how schools can foster meaningful relationships among and with children by empowering and inspiring them through pedagogies of care and respect is an opportunity for childhood and schooling to finally "grow out" of childhood innocence (Ramjewan & Garlen, 2020). Acknowledging the cultural and historical specificity of our exclusionary and discriminatory schooling practices is an important first step.

Author Bio

Julie C. Garlen is a critical cultural theorist of childhood and curriculum and an Associate Professor of Childhood and Youth Studies at Carleton University, where she has served as the Co-Director of the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies. Previously, she worked in the U.S. South as an elementary school teacher and an early childhood teacher educator.

References

Aries, P. (1962). *Centuries of childhood: A social history of family life.* Vintage Books.

Baker, B. (1998). "Childhood" in the emergence and spread of U.S. public schools. In T. Popkewitz & M. Brennan (Eds.), *Foucault's challenge: Discourse, knowledge, and power in education* (pp. 117–143). Teachers College Press.

Baker, B. (2001). *In perpetual motion: Theories of power, educational history, and the child*. Peter Lang.

Bellafante, G. (2020, November 6). Are we losing a generation of children to remote learning? *New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/06/nyregion/nyc-remote-learning.html

Belmonte, L. (2020, March 19). *Justin Trudeau responded to an 8-Year-Old Canadian's letter about COVID-19 & it's so sweet*. Narcity. https://www.narcity.com/en-ca/news/justin-trudeaus-twitter-reply-to-an-8-year-olds-letter-about-covid-19-is-so-sweet

Bernstein R. (2011). *Racial innocence: Performing American childhood from slavery to civil rights*. New York University Press.

Bevan, A. (2019). Designed for threat: Surveillance, mass shootings, and pre-emptive design in school architecture. *Surveillance & Society*, *17*(3/4), 550–564. https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v17i3/4.7077

Bordieu, P. (1972). *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle* [*Outline of a theory of practice*. Trans. R. Nice, 1977, Cambridge University Press] Le Seuil.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble*. Routledge.

Cha, A. E. (2020, March 17). Coronavirus looks different in kids than in adults. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/03/17/coronavirus-looks-different-kids-than-adults/

Chavez, N., & Moshtaghian, A. (2020, May 7). *48 states have ordered or recommended that schools don't reopen this academic year*. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/18/us/schools-closed-coronavirus/index.html

Clapton, G., Cree, V. E., & Smith, M. (2012). Moral panics and social work: Towards a sceptical view of UK child protection. *Critical Social Policy*, *33*(2), 197–217.

Coles-Ritchie, M., & Smith, R. R. (2017). Taking the risk to engage in race talk: Professional development in elementary schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *21*(2), 172–186. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2016.1193562

Dalton, L., Rapa, E., & Stein, A. (2020). Protecting the psychological health of children through effective communication about COVID-19. *The Lancet, 4*(5), 346–347. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30097-3

Darling-Hammond, L., & Hyler, M. (2020). Preparing educators for the time of COVID … and beyond. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *43*(4), 457–465. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1816961

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. The New Press.

Donohue, J. M., & Miller, E. (2020). COVID-19 and school closures. *JAMA*, *324*(9), 845–847. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.13092

Duschinsky, R. (2013). Childhood inncence: Essence, education, and performativity. *Textual Practice, 27*(5), 763–781. https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2012.751441

Ewing, J. (2020, December 28). The ridiculousness of learning loss. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnewing/2021/12/28/the-ridiculousness-of-learning-loss

Ferguson, A. (2000). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of Black masculinity.* The University of Michigan Press.

Foucault, M. (1969). *L'archéologie du savoir* [*The archaeology of knowledge*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, 1972, Pantheon Books]. Gallimard.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Vintage.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972– 1977*. Pantheon.

Frankema, E., & Tworek, H. (2020). Pandemics that changed the world: Historical reflections on COVID-19. *Journal of Global History*, *15*(3), 333–335. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022820000339

Freeman, J. (2020, November 18). *Extended holiday for Ontario kids due to pandemic 'not necessary': Lecce*. CP24. https://www.cp24.com/news/extended-holiday-for-ontario-kids-due-to-pandemic-not-necessary-lecce-1.5194187

Galasso, V. (2020). COVID: Not a great equalizer. *CESifo Economic Studies*, *66*(4), 376–393. https://doi.org/10.1093/cesifo/ifaa019

Garlen, J. C. (2019). Interrogating innocence: "Childhood" as exclusionary social practice. *Childhood*, *26*(1), 54–67.

Garlen, J. C. (2020). *Coronavirus isn't the end of 'childhood innocence,' but an opportunity to rethink children's rights*. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-isnt-the-end-of-childhood-innocence-but-an-opportunity-to-rethink-childrens-rights-134478

Garlen, J., Chang-Kredl, S., Farley, L., & Sonu, D. (2020). Childhood innocence and experience: Memory, discourse, practice. *Children & Society*, [Advance online publication]. https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12428

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. Teachers College Press.

Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis*. MacMillan.

Gilbert, J. (2014). *Sexuality in school: The limits of education*. University of Minnesota Press.

Gilson, E. (2011). Vulnerability, ignorance, and oppression. *Hypatia*, *26*(2), 308–332. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01158.x

Gryllis, D. (1978). *Guardians & angels: Parents & children in 19th century literature.* Faber & Faber.

Hagerman, M. (2018). *White kids: Growing up with privilege in a racially divided America*. NYU Books.

Hall, G. S. (1893). *The contents of children's minds on entering school*. E. L. Kellogg & Co.

Henry, J. (2020, November 20). *Schools are 'one of the safest places' for kids during pandemic, CDC director says*. WUSA9. https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/cdc-director-schools-are-one-of-the-safest-places-for-kids-during-pandemic/65-b1cc9e39-d05f-4d56-8ac6-bab061228d59

Heywood, C. (2018). *A history of childhood*. Wiley.

Hindman, H. D., & Hindman, H. (2009). *The world of child labor: An historical and regional survey*. M. E. Sharpe.

Husbye, N. E., Buchholz, B. A., Powell, C. W., & Zanden, S. V. (2019). "Death didn't come up at center time": Sharing books about grief in elementary literacy classrooms. *Language Arts*, *96*(6), 347–357. https://www.proquest.com/openview/3b078206cd175fea7722d2c16c817191/1

James, A. (2008). Responsibility, children and childhood. In J. Bridgeman, H. Keating, & C. Lind (Eds.), *Responsibility, law and the family* (pp. 145–168). Routledge.

Katz, B. (1968). *The irony of early school reform: Educational innovation in mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts.* Harvard University Press.

Kim, J. (2020). Homelessness as difficult knowledge in early childhood education. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *48*, 815–823. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01045-5

Kraftl, P. (2008). Young people, hope and childhood-hope. *Space and Culture*, *11*(2), 81–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331208315930

Ladson-Billings, G. (2001). *Crossing over to Canaan: The journey of new teachers in diverse classrooms*. Jossey-Bass.

Landsdown, G. (2005). *The evolving capacities of the child.* UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre/Save the Children. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/384-the-evolving-capacities-of-the-child.html

Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Routledge.

Locke, J., & Yolton, J. (1976). *An essay concerning human understanding: An abridgement*. J. M. Dent & Sons.

Luttrell, W. (2013). Children's counter-narratives of care: Towards educational justice. *Children & Society*, *27*(4), 295–308. https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12033.

Luttrell, W. (2019). Picturing care: An introduction. *Gender and Education*, *31*(5), 563–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2019.1621502

Madani, D. (2020, December 20). *Fauci tells kids not to worry, he gave Santa Claus the Covid-19 vaccine*. NBC News. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/fauci-tells-kids-not-worry-he-gave-santa-claus-got-n1251855

Maddox, N. (2012). Silencing students' cell phones beyond the schoolhouse gate: Do public schools' cell phone confiscation and retention policies violate parents' due process rights?. *Journal of Law & Education*, *41*(1), 261–270.

McIntosh, R. (2000). *Boys in the pits: Child labour in coal mining*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

McKinney, K. (2020, May 15). *The Coronavirus brings a loss of innocence to healthcare and the workplace*. Illumination. https://medium.com/illumination-curated/the-coronavirus-brings-a-loss-of-innocence-to-healthcare-and-the-workplace-16a7f9b5b512

McKinney de Royston, M., & Vossoughi, S. (2021, January 18). *Fixating on pandemic "learning loss" undermines the need to transform education*. Truthout. https://truthout.org/articles/fixating-on-pandemic-learning-loss-undermines-the-need-to-transform-education/

McNamee, S. (2016). *The social study of childhood*. Palgrave.

Milson, A., Bohan, C. H., & Glanzer, P. L. (2010). *American educational thought: Essays from 1640–1940.* Information Age.

Morrison, N. (2020, May 1). Reopening schools is as much about economics as it is about education. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/nickmorrison/2020/05/01/reopening-schools-is-as-much-about-economics-as-it-is-about-education/

Neustadter, R. M. (2009). *The obvious child: Studies in the significance of childhood*. University Press of America.

O'Connell, M. (2020, August 27). Santa Claus ain't coming to town. Is childhood innocence worth preserving? *The Economist*. https://www.economist.com/1843/2020/08/27/santa-claus-aint-coming-to-town-is-childhood-innocence-worth-preserving

Pastorello, K. (2014). *The progressives: Activism and reform in American society, 1893–1917*. John Wiley & Sons.

Partridge, G. (1912). *Genetic philosophy of education: An epitome of the published educational writings of G. Stanley Hall of Clark University.* Sturgis & Walton.

Patel, R. (2020, March 29). *Trudeau pledges more help for vulnerable Canadians struggling with coronavirus crisis*. CBC News. https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-announces-more-help-for-vulnerable-canadians-1.5514055

Platt, A. (1969). The rise of the child-saving movement: A study in social policy and correctional reform. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *381*(1), 21–38.

Pietrafetta, M. (2021. February 16). *Admissions officers should consider resilience*. Inside Higher Ed. https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/views/2021/02/16/covid-19-era-college-admissions-officers-should-pay-attention-resilience

Postman, N. (1994). *The disappearance of childhood*. Vintage Books.

Project Tomorrow. (2010). *Learning in the 21st century: Taking it mobile!* Speak Up. https://tomorrow.org/speakup/mobilelearningreport_2010.html

Qvortrup, J. (2009). Are children human beings or human becomings? A critical assessment of outcome thinking. *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali*, *117*, (3/4), 631–653. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41625246

Ramjewan, N. & Garlen, J. C. (2020). Growing out of childhood innocence. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *50*(4), 281–290. https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2020.1851521.

Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *5*(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310222225432

Robinson, K. (2012). *Innocence, knowledge and the construction of childhood: The contradictory nature of sexuality and censorship in children's contemporary lives*. Routledge.

Rothbard, M. (1974). The historical origins of compulsory schooling. In W. Rickenbacker (Ed.), *The twelve-year sentence: Radical views of compulsory schooling* (pp. 5–27). Fox & Wilkes.

Rousseau, J. J. (1979). *Émile, or on education* [A. Bloom, Trans.] Basic Books. (Original work published 1762).

Schatzki, T. (1996). *Social practices: A Wittgensteinian approach to human activity and the social*. Cambridge University Press.

Schnell, R. (1977). *"The most ordered of rescues": A reinterpretation of childhood history and the common school* [Paper presentation]. Annual Meeting of the Midwest History of Education Society, Chicago, IL, United States.

Schuman, M. (2017, January). *History of child labor in the United States—part 2: the reform movement*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2017/article/history-of-child-labor-in-the-united-states-part-2-the-reform-movement.htm

Shaw, D. M. (2020). Invisible enemies: Coronavirus and other hidden threats. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, *17*(4), 531–534. [Advance Online Publication]. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-020-10015-w

Smart, C., Neale, B., & Wade, A. (2001). *The changing experience of childhood*. Polity.

Silin, J. (1995). *Sex, death and the education of children*. Teachers College Press.

Stearns, P. (2006). *Childhood in world history.* Routledge.

Stylianou, P., & Zembylas, M. (2021). Engaging with issues of death, loss, and grief in elementary school: Teachers' perceptions and affective experiences of an in-service training program on death education in Cyprus. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, *49*(1), 54–77. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2020.1841700

Taylor, A. (2010). Troubling childhood innocence: Reframing the debate over the media sexualisation of children. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, *35*(1), 48–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911003500108

Templeton, T. N., & Cheruvu, R. (2020). Childhood innocence for settler children: Disrupting colonialism and innocence in early childhood curriculum. *The New Educator*, *16*(2), 131–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688X.2020.1734264

The Canadian Press (2020, April 10). *Teachers' unions, parents accuse Legault of using kids as guinea pigs over school reopening idea*. CTV News. https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/teachers-unions-parents-accuse-legault-of-using-kids-as-guinea-pigs-over-school-reopening-idea-1.4892041

Trocino, C. (1995). Civilizing the savages: Comparison of assimilation laws and policies in the United States and Australia. *Glendale Law Review*, *14*, 33–72.

UNESCO (2021, January 25). *UNESCO figures show two thirds of an academic year lost on average worldwide due to Covid-19 school closures*. https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-figures-show-two-thirds-academic-year-lost-average-worldwide-due-covid-19-school

Vogel, L. (2020, June 12). *Covid-19: A timeline of Canada's first-wave response.* CMAJ News. https://cmajnews.com/2020/06/12/coronavirus-1095847/

White, E., Mistry, R., & Chow, K. (2013). How do teachers talk about economic inequality? The complexity of teaching at a socioeconomically integrated elementary school. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *13*(1), 370–394. https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12024

Wickersham, J. (2020, May 1). Reading the coronavirus pandemic as a loss of innocence. *The Boston Globe.* https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/05/01/opinion/reading-coronavirus-pandemic-loss-innocence/

Wolff, L. (1998). When I imagine a child: The idea of childhood and the philosophy of memory in the enlightenment. *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, *31*(4), 377–401.

Wong, J. (2020, January 12). *COVID-19 vs. school: We asked experts about transmission risks and what is needed to keep classrooms open*. CBC News. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/covid-19-schools-newyear-1.5865427

Yousif, N. (2021, January 22). Pandemic school disruptions wreaking havoc on children's mental health, Sick Kids report says. *The Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/01/22/pandemic-school-disruptions-wreaking-havoc-on-childrens-mental-health-sick-kids-report-says.html

Zembylas, M. (2017). Wilful ignorance and the emotional regime of schools. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *65*(4), 499–515. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2017.1290785