

The Original Sin of the Sperm and Soul Doctrine

The act of impregnation has long been regarded as establishing the definitive claim to gender property ownership. With the centralization of political power came the authority of the State/Church to determine whose claim to impregnation-based ownership would be legally recognized. The crime of rape became institutionalized as the State/Church began to actively assume the role of enforcing the 'right to impregnate'. Tremendous political power has been accumulated by the typically religious institutions that establish themselves as the guardians of 'family values' by codifying the accepted standards for maximizing the perceived worth of gender property. Indeed, by declaring certain forms of gender exploitation too extreme to be tolerated, such institutions have presented themselves as the defenders of female dignity. Over the course of Western civilization that 'right to impregnate' has systematically transitioned to the 'sanctity of impregnation'. The associated 'man-seed' principle holds that all significant inherited traits, most notably maleness itself, are passed through the male seed which is implanted in the soil of the female womb to grow into a future warrior or, if need be, daughter. The political standard of maximized gender property value cuts in both directions. The male who allows his woman to behave in public too independently poses a direct threat to the gender property values for all other men. If the 'morality police' then forcefully 'depreciate' the property value of that deviant woman in the public square, then her man is simply being made to suffer the consequences of his own social negligence.

Shortly after Christianity was formally established as the official state religion of the Roman Empire in 380, St. Augustine introduced his Original Sin doctrine which has served to play a central role across Western Europe in defining common piety within the Roman Church. A key factor in the historical process leading to this doctrine was the issue of infant baptism. In the earliest years of the Christian faith, it was conventional for the rite of baptism to be carried out when an individual entered into the process of joining the Church. By this rite, the soul of the individual was to be purified in preparation for receiving the Holy Spirit and thus creating the opportunity to gain eternal salvation with God through Jesus Christ and His Church. While the biblical justification is open to question, baptism soon became associated with the idea that all of the sins of the individual would be wiped away by the act of baptism so that if no further sin was committed, that person would be assured divine salvation. The obvious political downside to this interpretation was famously illustrated by Emperor Constantine who had openly credited Christ for his major military victory at Milvian Bridge in his conquest of the Western branch of the Roman Empire. He then credited Christ for the subsequent victories in the Eastern Empire which enabled Constantine to declare his rule over the entire (previously divided) Roman Empire. Constantine then proclaimed imperial protection for the practice of Christianity, and he presided over the Council of Nicaea (325) to ensure the establishment of the theological principle that the Christian Godhead must be understood as a Trinity. All of this Constantine did without ever having become a Christian. Instead, he postponed his baptism and admission into the Church until he was on his deathbed so that with no more sins to commit, he would be assured of direct admission into Heaven.

Christianity was not formally declared the imperial state religion until nearly a half century after Constantine's death. Nevertheless, it was surely clear that this future state religion would be fundamentally hamstrung if everyone in society were free to ignore obeying its strictures until they were on the edge of death. Indeed, the idea that the individual should even have a choice in whether or when they would become baptized flies in the face of the concept of a state religion. In practice, it took a number of years before the solidifying political structure of the newly favored religion was able to overcome the example set by Constantine and convince even the emperors themselves that they should have their own children baptized as infants. Augustine formalized that necessity by establishing the doctrine that the curse of eternal damnation is conferred by the act of impregnation. As a result, any woman who failed to bring her newborn child to the Church for baptism was committing a crime against the Church and God in having condemned that child to Hell.

Augustine's Original Sin doctrine holds that the Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden is morally re-enacted by every event of sexual impregnation with its associated attitude of sexual lust. The idea that sexual reproduction is both the moral cause and the physical mechanism for the Fall of Man stands in stark contrast to the empirical reality that sexual reproduction has clearly provided the genetic creativity that enabled life to transcend the limitations of the bacterial world. It has also made possible the process of systematic improvements in how species could more effectively invest in their progeny, thus enabling the dramatic sophistication of the modern biosphere including humanity itself. For anyone who believes in a God that is responsible for the physical universe in which we live and that this world stands in evidence of that God's goodness, it is hard to imagine a more repugnant heresy than the doctrine of Original Sin. Not only does this doctrine demonize the biological process by which the beauty of life has evolved, it has served to starkly disconnect the process of sexual reproduction from the process of parental and societal investment in our descendants. While Augustine was obviously unaware of many of the scientific details of biological evolution,

it is also equally clear that well before his time, the general populace had long marveled at the creative capacity of sexual reproduction. Given the profound historical significance of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin, a consideration of its origin and development is well warranted.

In the years previous to Augustine's Original Sin doctrine, the question was actively discussed why should an infant even require baptism as they have not yet had the opportunity to commit a culpable sin? Is their soul not already clean enough to accept the Holy Spirit? If an infant were to die without having been baptized, could its soul still go to Heaven? In the fourth century, theologian Gregory of Nyssa offered the plausible middle ground in holding that the soul of such an infant would go to neither Heaven nor Hell but would reside in a pleasant nothingness. More directly to the point, the Eastern Orthodox Church did hold and has always held that an infant is born without sin although it bears the potential capacity to commit sin. The sin that Adam committed in the Garden of Eden brought the curse of potential sinfulness as well as the curse of death upon all of his descendants. Yet according to Eastern Orthodox doctrine, while the Ancestral Sin of Adam in turning against God impacts all of humanity, Adam alone bears the guilt of his act.

Augustine's assertion of Original Sin quickly came to be seen as the perfect complement to the then still recent claim of the Church of Rome that it had been granted exclusive control over the gate into Heaven. Both of these claims were firmly rejected by the Eastern Orthodox Church. If every person is initially condemned directly to Hell, the value of the admission tickets into Heaven held by the papacy would clearly be dramatically enhanced. A direct result of this political logic is that both contraception and abortion must be understood as direct attack upon the authority of the Papal Church. In principle, every newborn child has the chance to be saved for Heaven by the intercession of a Catholic priest. Contraception hinders and abortion removes the priest and the Church from this process. To address the obvious theological dilemma that no Gospel text has been identified that provides any justification for Augustine's Original Sin doctrine, two texts from other parts of the Bible have been commonly cited as potential support. In Psalms 51:5, the prophet Nathan chastises King David for having crassly impregnated Bathsheba, the wife of one of his own generals who David then arranged to be killed. In reality, the various sins that King David committed in this tale provide a far more direct basis for moral culpability than any oblique reference to the Garden of Eden. Seemingly more directly relevant is James 1:15 which states that "Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death". However, an 'Original Sin' interpretation of that text is transparently disingenuous as is made clear by the previous verse "but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire" (James 1:14). Without ambiguity, this text describes that it is one's own desires and temptations that lead a person toward sin. Sin is the result of improperly responding to one's desires and temptations. Therefore, sin cannot exist previous to those desires and temptations.

As was pointed out at the time by the theologian Pelagius, a crucial challenge to the then novel doctrine of Original Sin was the question of whether Jesus' mother Mary had been born in sin. Apparently first having been described in the second century, the widely discussed account of Mary's conception '*Gospel of James*' (or *Protevangelium*) recounted that an angel appeared separately to both her father Joachim and her mother Anne. Running to find each other, they converged at the Temple Gate (aka Golden Gate) and their embrace resulted in the birth of Mary nine months later. Having no theologically cogent rebuttal to Pelagius' challenge regarding the presumed Original Sin of Mary, Augustine offered the lame response "Where sin is concerned, I wish to have no question with regard to Mary" (Boss, 2000, p. 125). Far less lame was Augustine's subsequent direct role in having the Western Church formally condemn Pelagius as a heretic.

With regards to the issue of gender property ownership, it is difficult to overstate the political significance of the transformation induced by the Original Sin doctrine as compared to the earlier Greco-Roman culture. Traditionally, in her youth a woman was basically regarded to be the property of her family and that ownership would then transfer to the husband upon marriage. While many aspects of that legal paradigm remained intact within Western Christendom, under the paradigm of Original Sin, after the act of impregnation essentially all aspects of sexual reproduction and infant care now fell under the formal oversight of the Church. Gone were the earlier days of the Roman Republic in which the husband was not only legally responsible for determining whether a newborn child was to be accepted or terminated, he was entitled to have his wife executed if she were to kill her fetus or newborn without his authorization (*lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficiis* (81 BCE) and *lex Pompeia de parricidiis* (55 BCE)). That said, within that earlier world, the practical problem of dealing with an unwanted pregnancy/newborn child would nearly always fall upon the woman. In the post-Original Sin world, such 'family planning' issues became a sin, and the Church, at least formally, claimed the role of oversight regarding such matters.

In practical terms, Church oversight of 'family planning' issues were largely punitive. Any fetus that died before birth was a lost opportunity for the Church to provide access to Heaven. As such, the woman necessarily was to be held responsible for that lost opportunity, as reflected in the still ubiquitous term

‘miscarriage’. It was her failure to properly carry that child which caused the loss of chance for Heaven. The issue of sin was then greatly amplified for the circumstance in which that woman was regarded to have willfully caused the loss of her fetus. Yet how was the Church to respond to such situations? From a spiritual perspective, the Church’s direct interests really only kicked into gear after the fetus had received its soul. Yet at what time during pregnancy was ensoulment to be assumed to have occurred?

As recorded by Aristotle, well before the coming of Jesus Christ, there had long been the common understanding of a qualitative distinction between early term and late term abortions and their corresponding moral/legal implications. The most commonly applied criterion for distinguishing between the early and late phases of gestation was the ‘quickening’, when the mother can first detect movement of the fetus. In complement to that empirical criterion, a more philosophical divide was applied invoking the Platonic-Aristotelian concepts of ‘form’ and ‘substance’ to refer to the ‘formed’ and ‘unformed’ stages of fetal development. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the issue was typically framed around the question of when the developing fetus becomes human by virtue of having received their soul. As no empirical measurement can ascertain such an event, this question is inevitably a point of religious faith. Drawing upon biblical text (Genesis 2:7), Judaism has long held that the humanity of a child commences at their birth upon the first breath. On the other hand, under the influence of Platonic-Aristotelian philosophical concepts, the third century Christian theologian Tertullian, argued that “The embryo therefore becomes a human being in the womb from the moment that its form is completed” (Tertullian, c. 200). Over the next sixteen centuries, the Catholic Church pointedly avoided committing to a formal doctrinal answer to this question. This long-extended hesitancy of the Church to declare a specific time of ensoulment surely reflected its recognition that, given the promulgated doctrine of Original Sin, calling attention to any specific choice in the timing of ensoulment would create more problems than it would solve. Since the Church’s authority to perform baptism was not understood to apply to the unborn, the Church is powerless to prevent the damnation of any ensouled fetus. While one might argue that God should have the power to grant eternal salvation to any ensouled fetus that dies, the Church long remained loathe to formally proclaim such a possibility since that would directly undercut the political value of the papal “Keys of Heaven”. If the unborn fetus can gain salvation directly from God without an intercession from the Church, why should those who have been born not also have access to Heaven through God directly?

From a legal perspective, there also seemed to be no obvious benefit for the Church to take a specific position on the timing of ensoulment. Under Roman law and later medieval law there was little ambiguity that the pregnant woman had no legal right to destroy the fetus that she was carrying since that fetus was not her property but rather was the property of another. That legal argument stood in force regardless of whether or not that fetus was assumed to be ensouled. One hypothetical option for the time of ensoulment that the Catholic Church had long refused to seriously discuss was the idea that the soul arrives in the act of impregnation. That scenario implies the embodiment of the soul occurs together with the conferring of Original Sin. The direct intertwining of these two events was clearly understood to be a spiritually unsettling concept. Such a doctrine raises theological questions as to whether Original Sin and the soul both reside within the sperm before fertilization, or whether Original Sin and the soul are to be understood as being simply two sides of the same spiritual coin? In response to the associated challenges, the Roman Church long took a hands-off approach to the sin of abortion as embodied in the twelfth century *Decretum Gratiani* which would form the basis of canon law until the beginning of the twentieth century – “he is not a murderer who brings about an abortion before the soul is in the body”. Beyond a two and a half year deviation by Pope Sixtus V between 1588 and 1591, over the following seven centuries the Roman Church pointedly avoided formally declaring when that moment of ensoulment occurs. When in 1869, Pius IX decided to overturn this longstanding Church policy, he attempted to finesse the associated concerns by exploiting the ambiguity in determining when the soul enters into the body. Rather than merely declaring that the soul arrives with the sperm, Pius IX argued that, given the ambiguity in determining the presence of the soul, the faithful have no moral alternative but to assume the seemingly earliest possible moment. Pius IX’s decree simply leaves it up to God to sort out the actual Original Sin/ensoulment dynamics. What the pope did claim in exchange for that ‘act of humility’ was the Church’s assertion of direct moral ownership over all stages of human procreation.

For most of the medieval period, the Church remained content to apply the threat of Original Sin against mothers, primarily as a means of insuring that their children would be baptized. This approach became increasingly challenging during the early modern era due to transformations both within the Church and within the general populace. As the Church expanded its rhetoric regarding the doctrine that unbaptized babies are condemned to eternal Hell, the general public became increasingly aware of the foster care services that the Church had long been providing for the noble class. This political dynamic created the impetus for a veritable explosion in the formation of foundling nurseries and hospitals. In the early days of that phenomenon, the mother confronted with a newborn child that she couldn’t afford to raise would leave that child at the entrance

to the local church or convent in the middle of the night to be picked up and taken inside. As this process became increasingly common, the church doors were often modified to introduce a trapdoor and carousel upon which the child could be placed and rotated into the inside of the Church. This arrangement was an obvious win for the desperate mother who could avoid directly causing her newborn to die from exposure or similar abuse, while at the same time assuring that her child would receive a baptism and thus be enabled to avoid burning in Hell. However, ultimately the foundling hospital program would prove to be a political disaster for the Church. In contrast to the earlier years when the foster care programs of the Church served as a childhood training program for the future members of the clergy and Church staff, the required care for this much larger number of lower class newborns created a massive economic drain for which the future political economic benefits were considerably less obvious.

In 1869, when Pope Pius IX reversed traditional Church policy in declaring that all Catholics must believe that the soul arrives along with the sperm, his pronouncement set off an avalanche of historical analyses in the dubious attempt to establish that Pope Pius IX had merely reaffirmed long accepted Catholic faith rather than having formulated a fundamentally new doctrine. In the still ongoing effort to 'prove' that Pius' doctrine of ensoulment with the sperm is an eternal truth of the Christian faith there is a striking absence of discussion of the only historical source that should truly matter. Nowhere in the four books of the Gospels is Jesus recorded to have spoken on the issue of abortion or to have cast the slightest doubt upon the then generally embraced doctrine of the Jewish faith that human life begins at birth. Given how the timing of ensoulment played an important spiritual role then as it still does today, are we to believe that God the Father did not bother to tell His Son Jesus that He imparts a soul to each embryo at the time of impregnation? Or rather, are we to assume Jesus concluded that the distinction between ensoulment at impregnation and ensoulment at birth was too insignificant to justify bothering to tell the Christian faithful?

Given the dramatic implications of Pope Pius IX having overturned such long held Church policy, the obvious question is what led him to choose to take such a major step in 1869? By 1861, across all of Italy, only the Papal States of central Italy and the northern-most region near Austria had not been liberated from foreign and sectarian forces by the Italian Independence movement. Even the previously extensive clerically-controlled lands of the Papal States had been reduced to a rather small region closely surrounding Rome. For the next nine years, Rome and Pope Pius IX floated in an artificial political bubble created by the continuing power struggle between France, Prussia, and Austria. While the intensifying tensions between Prussia and Austria dissuaded the Austrian government from attempting to reclaim its former Italian holdings, these international political dynamics also dissuaded Victor Emmanuel and his allies of the Italian Independence movement from directly assaulting Rome as they feared that the French, still ruled by the duplicitous Louis Napoleon, would use that attack as an excuse to again invade and grab Italian lands for themselves. By the end of the decade, the dramatic defeat of Austria by Prussia had resulted in the transfer of the rest of northern Italy to the Italians. Furthermore, with the general recognition of an impending war between Prussia and France, it had become clear that the political bubble protecting Pius IX would soon burst. In this precarious state of military threat, Pius IX convened the First Vatican Council which began on 8 December 1869 in Rome, at a time when that city had become entirely surrounded by the armies of the Italian Independence movement. The central mission of that Council was to declare an affirmation of Pius' assertion of papal infallibility.

Two months before the start of that Council, Pius IX had dramatically tightened up the provisions of gender property ownership by overruling longstanding Church policy in issuing his *Apostolicae Sedis moderationi* which declared that all faithful must act according to the belief that the soul arrives at the moment of impregnation and thus excommunication should be applicable for abortion carried out at any stage of pregnancy. Through his proclamation, the recently discredited man-seed doctrine was dramatically resurrected into its present day clerical role as the fundamental divine creative force that God has imparted to humanity. The second half of the nineteenth century had marked the ultimate collapse of resistance against the idea that males and females contribute equally to the genetic inheritance of their progeny. No longer could one seriously pretend that genetic superiority is passed exclusively through the male lineage. In Pius' reformulation, the dominance of the male lineage becomes manifest through his act of impregnation and the immortal soul which that impregnation conveys. Once again, the woman was returned to her traditional role of merely providing the soil in which that divine man-seed can grow. By proclaiming the Church's obligation to promote this understanding of ensoulment, Pope Pius IX established the doctrine of the Church's zero investment guardianship of the unborn (ZIGU).

At least from the perspective of Pope Pius IX, the perceived benefits of his Sperm and Soul doctrine for banning all forms of abortion were clearly believed to outweigh the resultant intimate theological intertwining of Original Sin and the ensoulment of the body. While neither Pius IX nor any subsequent pope has declared a formal end to the doctrine of Original Sin, by the second half of the nineteenth century it had become clear that

the political utility of the Original Sin doctrine had largely run its course. From its beginning, the Original Sin concept of Augustine was designed to be a defining doctrine for an enforced state religion. By the time of Pius IX, that political circumstance had effectively disappeared across the Western world. From the perspective of Pius IX, the primary challenge for the Church was no longer its efforts to keep each of the faithful in line. Rather it was the emerging fear that society would become based upon a democratically-determined political order which he and the Vatican hierarchy clearly regarded to be an existential threat. An additional consideration was that the diminution of the Original Sin doctrine made it far easier to openly celebrate the sanctity of impregnation and its associated man-seed doctrine which has long been understood to be the principal cornerstone of gender property philosophy.

At the same time, the modern fascist doctrine of 'family values' was then coming into its own. With the family being cast into the role of the basic military unit in a society institutionalized as an army, the role of the woman was quite explicitly to maximize her production of future soldiers. "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them!" (Psalms 127:4). In such a perspective, the act of impregnation is synonymous with 'family planning', and the woman was understood to have a minimal role in that planning process. With the rejection of the inheritance-based man-seed doctrine that was unfolding at that time, it would be the delivery of the soul along with the sperm that would define the passage of the essence of humanity through the male lineage.

From 1869 to this day, Catholic theologians have been stuck dancing around the myriad of contradictions which Pius' Sperm and Soul papal bull has introduced. After sixteen centuries of rejecting the option, with the formal approval of Pope Benedict XVI, Roman Catholic Church now speaks of the unborn going straight to Heaven while still claiming to profess a belief in Original Sin and the plethora of Catholic doctrines that are founded upon that core principle (Sanna et al., 2007). The central message of this recent proclamation is that God Himself has now been formally acknowledged to have the authority to grant entry into Heaven without the prior approval of the Roman Church. This Pope Benedict XVI-sponsored proclamation unavoidably reintroduces the question of why God is not equally empowered to grant entry into Heaven for all breathing persons as well. If so, then what is the operational significance of the papal "Keys of Heaven"? It should not be overlooked that, given the fact that 40-60% of embryos are lost between fertilization and birth without any conscious human intervention (Jarvis, 2016), this Pope Benedict XVI-sponsored proclamation directly implies that the considerable majority of those souls who reach Heaven have gotten there by the 'good fortune' of having been spontaneously aborted.

Returning back to Pope Pius IX's political predicament in the face of the surrounding Italian Independence armies, there was a lively resistance among a minority of bishops at the First Vatican Council who objected to the foregone conclusion that the doctrine of papal infallibility would be approved. John B. Purcell, Archbishop of Cincinnati, pointedly cited the list of nearly forty former popes, composed by the seventeenth century St. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine of Galileo fame (*Inertial Common Time – Ernst Mach and the Dilation/Contraction Scam*), who were identified as having held erroneous theological positions (Hennessee, 1963, pp. Chap VI, p.239-240). If so many popes had been found to be in error, how was the principle of papal infallibility to be justified? Such arguments notwithstanding, 23 years into his papacy, the large proportion of the bishops in attendance were of Pius' choosing. Furthermore, the animosity toward democracy, particularly among the predominant number of Italian bishops, helped secure the approval of the pope's demand. By the time of the final vote on 18 July 1870, nearly a third of the bishops had departed the Council rather than remain to cast a negative vote against the doctrine of papal infallibility.

In the presumed hope of once again calling forth the 'miracle of Gaeta' (*Epigenesis and the Emergence of Cell Theory*) when in 1849 Louis Napoleon sent his French troops to conquer Rome and return Pius IX to the Vatican, Pius then promptly invoked his new authority to affirm that his declaration of the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception, made during his escape to the fortress of Gaeta, had been infallible. To this day, the only other formal invocation of papal infallibility has been the declaration of Virgin Mary's bodily ascension into Heaven (Assumption) by Pope Pius XII in 1950. It must be stressed that papal infallibility is not an assertion of the authority to provide a definitive interpretation of some aspect of Holy Scripture. There is no biblical verse that provides any plausible support for the proposition of Immaculate Conception. Without ambiguity, papal infallibility as proposed and applied is a claim to direct access to the Mind of God, a fusion with the Godhead that is distinct from the message that Jesus brought to earth. If the Mind of God can be so directly accessed, then all Christians must ask what purpose was served by Jesus having come to earth since the Word that He brought can be so easily beamed down from Heaven.

As the First Vatican Council cast its vote on papal infallibility, the armies of Louis Napoleon and Chancellor von Bismarck were pitched in mortal contest over who would establish himself as the definitive embodiment of the true fascist Leader in transforming the appearance of democratic institutions into a passive

stage backdrop for authoritarianism. Thus even before the resolution of the Franco-Prussian War, Pope Pius IX had established an unprecedented claim to absolute unconstrained authority within the political/theological world of the Church. By wiping away the longstanding theological ambiguities regarding when a fetus becomes human by the process of divine ensoulment, Pius secured the divinity of impregnation and thus secured the unconditional principle of gender property upon which the fascist principle of family as military unit could be founded. Despite these efforts by Pope Pius to rally support for his own cause, in early September the word came of the crushing Prussian victory at Sedan which ended any hope that Louis Napoleon would once again save him. When the leaders of the Italian Independence movement then reached out to arrange for a peaceful surrender (De Cesare, 1909, p. 444), Pope Pius IX insisted that the foreign mercenaries that he had assembled in Rome must put up at least a semblance of military resistance so that he would not have to face the humiliation of a willing submission. It is a deeply revealing fact that in the resultant 'Fall of Rome', the citizens of Rome and the former Papal States constituted only ~1% of those who fought in the defense of Pope Pius IX (De Cesare, 1909, p. 443; Marraro, 1944-45).

In contrast to the political success that had followed Pius' earlier declaration of Mary's Immaculate Conception, his proclamation of the Church's role as the absolute guardian of the unborn failed to provide a useful rallying cry for staving off the immediate threat posed by the military forces of Italian independence. Yet a century later, that claim to the zero investment guardianship of the unborn (ZIGU) would become an extraordinarily effective rallying cry for those who wish to deny the humanity of fellow citizens who differ in their views toward such moral/political issues. Some will surely take offense at the idea of Pope Pius IX having made such influential papal proclamations for such earthly intended benefits. Yet how are we to otherwise understand why during the 32 years of the longest recorded papacy in history, Pope Pius IX rendered these most transformative decrees at the height of the two occasions when his political control of Rome was caught in a military standoff with the forces for Italian independence?

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