The Cotsen Children’s Library: A Celebration and a Conference
by Andrea Immel

New Playthings and Gigantick Histories: The Nonage of English Children's Books
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BRIAN ALDERSON taught children’s literature for many years at the University of North London. In 1990 he was co-curator (with Felix de Marez Oyens) of the Pierpont Morgan Library’s exhibition “Be Merry and Wise,” on the early history of children’s literature in England. Among his recent publications are (for adults) the first volume of a two-volume study, *Ezra Jack Keats: Artist and Picture-Book Maker*, and (for children) *The Swan’s Stories*, a translation of twelve tales by Hans Christian Andersen. He is currently chairman of the Children’s Books History Society.

ANDREA IMMEL, curator of the Cotsen Children’s Library, holds a Ph.D. in English literature from UCLA. Her publications include *Revolutionary Reviewing: An Index to Mrs. Trimmer’s Guardian of Education* (1990) and “‘Mistress of Infantine Language’: Lady Ellenor Fenn, Her *Set of Toys*, and ‘the Education of Each Moment’” (1997).

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Jill Shefrin, a scholar in the field of early children’s books and games, is currently researching and writing a comprehensive bibliographic study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English educational games. She has lectured on games, religious literature, and nineteenth-century fantasy writing for children. As a librarian at the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books, she has been the curator of exhibitions and author of catalogues, including “Ingenious Contrivances”: Table Games and Puzzles for Children and, with Dana Tenny “A Quick Wit and a Light Hand”: Design Movements and Children’s Books, 1880–1910.
On 30 October 1997, when the Cotsen Children’s Library opened to the public, Lloyd E. Cotsen, Class of 1950, realized a dream: to found a “living library” at Princeton that would serve the faculty and students, attract visiting scholars, and delight the families of the surrounding community. Occupying splendidly renovated space in Firestone Library, the Cotsen collection’s 23,000 historical children’s books, manuscripts, original artwork, graphics, and educational toys are shelved in an imposing three-tiered glass-and-steel wall. It overlooks the exhibition gallery with its interactive displays for children designed to encourage them to read.

The opening was celebrated with one of the most festive ribbon-cutting ceremonies in recent memory and the first of a series of annual conferences exploring literary, social, and cultural aspects of children’s books and reading. The theme of the inaugural conference, “Playing with Knowledge: Text, Toys, and Teaching Children in Georgian England,” was the development of child-centered pedagogy in the modern period; its focus was some of the mothers, writers, and publishers whose works succeeded in transforming early childhood education. The subject was a natural one, given the strength of the Cotsen Children’s Library’s holdings in this particular area. Several of its greatest treasures, including the only known copies of innovative games for teaching reading — John Newbery’s *Set of Squares* and Lady Ellenor Fenn’s *Set of Toys* — were on display in the exhibition gallery of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

Four distinguished speakers presented papers at the conference. Brian Alderson compared the little library of innovative teaching materials that Jane Johnson, a vicar’s wife in Olney, invented for
Lloyd E. Cotsen, Class of 1950, at the opening of the Cotsen Children’s Library, 30 October 1997, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Photo by Andrea Kane courtesy of the Office of Development Communications.
the use of her daughter and sons with the new, more child-friendly books to teach reading offered in London booksellers’ shops during the 1740s. William McCarthy analyzed the contribution of Anna Letitia Barbauld, a highly important children’s author as well as one of the first distinguished English women of letters, whose graded readers were the first to show how a mother helps a small child make sense of the world around him during the course of an ordinary day. In her paper on Maria Edgeworth’s influential but controversial study, Practical Education, Mitzi Myers discussed the radical implications of the author’s reconception of education as a process that began with actual children instead of theory. Jill Shefrin showed how the development of educational games was intimately linked not only with that of children’s books, but also with contemporary educational theory and popular trends.

Revised versions of the day’s presentations follow, in the hope of stimulating further interest in a dynamic and fascinating stage in the history of the modern children’s book — a subject still imperfectly understood and presenting many opportunities for further research.
New Playthings and Gigantick Histories
The Nonage of English Children’s Books

BY BRIAN ALDERSON

After bringing greetings and messages of goodwill from across the Atlantic to the Cotsen Children’s Library, Brian Alderson addressed the audience from notes. The following essay is therefore a version of what he said formalized for publication.

The 1740s may be accounted the brief incunable period of children’s literature. Just as the last fifty years of the fifteenth century saw printers bringing before readers a new kind of book, so this decade saw publishers inventing books for a new kind of reader. True, children had always been around to plague adults who had once been children but had forgotten all about it. True, books had been written directly for children with fair regularity for eighty-odd years before 1740. But these efforts were sporadic, without sensing themselves to be within the cuttings and thrustings of a definable tradition. The 1740s saw the foundations laid for that tradition, which has been variably sustained down to the present time.

In broad terms, the reasons why children’s books emerged as a distinct part of English publishing in the 1740s are easy enough to identify. Against a background of commercial expansion the book-trade was flourishing. Bookseller-publishers were functioning as entrepreneurs, often separate from the printers who were becoming operatives working on their behalf. Enterprise and competition were probably fostered by the centering of most activity in London, but a rapidly growing provincial trade broadened the market for London wares and stimulated local activity. Public interest in the written word was fuelled by the spread of newspaper and magazine publishing. Reciprocal to this commercial activity was the response
of a middle-class readership, growing in wealth and confidence and ready to embrace works which spoke to its domestic concerns, whether in the novels of Samuel Richardson or the cookery-books of Mrs. Glasse and others.

Such a readership had a care for its offspring (not least as persons who might further advance a family’s wealth and standing) and was unlikely to have been satisfied with the limited and random resources available for a child’s library — condensations of the Bible, religious lessons in prose and verse, fable-books and books for the school classroom — although at the margins of this dim platoon there were the more dubious, and not entirely child-centered, delights of the penny-merriments and the fantasy stories of Perrault, Madame D’Aulnoy, and the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. Some idea of the dearth of material published to meet the needs of this new bourgeoisie can be gleaned from the extraordinary “nursery library” that was devised and made for her own family by Jane Johnson (1707–1759) during the 1740s. Mrs. Johnson was wife to the vicar of Olney in Buckinghamshire (that same Olney where, twenty years later, John Newton, as curate, was to bring the unhappy William Cowper). At the time she was living there she had two children, Barbara (1738–1825) and George (1740–1814), and it was for them that she set about preparing a complete do-it-yourself home-teaching kit which, one must assume, she believed would serve her better for instructing her children than the rudimentary material available from the booksellers.¹

This “nursery library” eventually became part of the large collection of early children’s books assembled by Charles Todd Owen in England in the early decades of this century, and in the thirties it passed, with his books, to the Indiana collector, George Ball, and thence, via his daughter Elisabeth, to the Lilly Library at Bloomington. It consists of some 438 pieces, including two little home-made books, all hand-lettered and ornamented by Jane Johnson, often mounted on, or decorated with, Dutch flowered paper, and incorporating many printed illustrations which have been cut from published documents. (These illustrations sometimes stand on their own, mounted on card, as pictures for discussion; sometimes they are used directly with texts either as accompaniment to a known proverb or

¹ Barbara (“Bab”) and George figure by name in some of the pieces in the kit. Two other sons reached reading age after it was finished: Robert (b. 1643) and Charles (b. 1648).
saying or as prompt to a piece of original writing, often in verse, by Mrs. Johnson. The original sources from which these pictures came have been identified in only one or two instances.)

A broad analysis of some of the main constituents of the nursery library may be given as follows:

a) Alphabet cards, sometimes showing only capitals, sometimes only lower case, and sometimes the two together, as “Aa, Bb, Cc” etc.

b) Syllable cards, with wild possibilities for Brobdingnagian invective, as “Bla, ble, bli, blo, blu,” etc.

c) Vocabulary cards, sometimes being lists of unrelated words, as “while, first, world, great, sound” (or was that Jane Johnson’s premonition of the Big Bang theory?), sometimes related, as “bread, cheese, milk, fish, drink, salt, oyl,” or, less healthily, “flea, louse, wasp, bee, fly, gnat, bug.”

d) Sentence cards, which may or may not be illustrated, and which may offer scriptural admonitions:

\[
\text{All wisdom cometh from the Lord,}
\]
\[
\text{to fear the Lord, that is wisdom.}
\]

or maxims related to conduct (in prose or verse):

\[
\text{Love good boys, and play with none that}
\]
\[
\text{swear, or lie, or steal.}
\]

and:

\[
\text{If with wealth you abound, observe this rule}
\]
\[
\text{Spend y\textsuperscript{r} money with judgment and not like a fool.}
\]

or verses related to the natural world and/or local affairs:

\[
\text{In frost and snow}
\]
\[
\text{When winds do blow}
\]
\[
\text{Little Robins do whistle and sing.}
\]
\[
\text{Of all birds they are best}
\]
\[
\text{With their pretty red breast}
\]
\[
\text{And their music does make the woods ring.}
\]
e) Which last example portends a group of cards which draw upon traditional genres for their content, such as fables (a version of “The Lion and the Mouse”); street cries (“Carots and turnips all fresh good and fine / There is none to be had that is better than mine”); or nursery rhymes:

The Cat’s at the Fire, a frying of Fish
The Dog’s at the Table a crumbing a dish
The Bull’s in the Barn a thrashing of corn
The Cock’s at the Dunghill a blowing his horn.²

The cards which make up the steps of this ladder of learning are supplemented by a home-made box containing seventy-eight individual word-chips, which could possibly have been used for some word-making game, and also by the two little books. One of these is called *A New Play Thing* and consists of more alphabet and syl-

² This may be compared with no. 106 in Iona and Peter Opie’s *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): “The cock’s on the woodpile / a-blowing his horn . . .” etc.
lable material. The other has an elaborate title-page, dated 1745, faced by an emblematic monumental frontispiece (was Jane Johnson’s tongue in her cheek here?) and — what is of special interest — consists of vocabulary pages, written in black ink, from which the child is asked to proceed to earnest scriptural injunctions written out in red.

That tally gives a broad indication of the inventive apparatus which makes up the “nursery library.” But Jane Johnson had a posthumous coup de théâtre in store. In 1995 it was disclosed that another little book had been preserved, a work which marked the culmination of the aims of the “library”: Jane Johnson’s commonplace book which included the manuscript of “A Very Pretty Story to tell Children when they are about five or six years of age,” dated 1744.3

Maids will you buy any Milk, will you have some or

no, Unless you come quickly, away I must go.

The “Very Pretty Story” has a main plot which was to be a staple in children’s tales later in the century: The progress towards happiness and comfort of children who behave courteously and charitably, contrasted with the dreadful fate that overtakes a boy of greed who cheats, lies, and steals. The pattern is of course as old as the Book of Genesis, but Jane Johnson’s deployment of it here is original on three counts. First, she casts her own children, Master George and Miss Bab, as characters in the story (they are numbered among the virtuous; it is an adopted Master Tommy who is the villain). Second, she plots the story as a full-length tale rather than as a cautionary anecdote or dramatic incident (as, for instance, Maria Edgeworth would do in such notable tales as “The Birthday Present” [1796]); and third, she interpolates into the everyday comings and goings of her characters passages of symbolic fantasy, when the good children are spirited away in “a fine Chariot all over Gold and Diamonds” drawn by lambs and guided by angels to “the Castle
of Pleasure and Delight,” while Master Tommy is dumped in the hogsty in “a Dirty Chariot drag’d along by two Black-Hogs.”

There is no obvious precedent for the collocation of these three elements in English children’s books before 1744. Victor Watson makes the obvious point that the baroque fancies of the Castle of Pleasure probably derive from a reading of the Contes de fées of Mme. D’Aulnoy, while the incorporation of George and Barbara into the story is much in keeping with the spirit in which many parental narratives are fashioned. But the blending of these characteristics into what amounts to a short secular novel for children is something quite new. Unpublished though it is, the manuscript presently figures as the earliest example of such a work — an achievement as original as the reading scheme to which it is allied.

While Jane Johnson’s endeavors can be seen as emblematic of a new care for children’s reading which was more imaginative (and more systematic) than anything known previously, the strategies that she devised ran parallel to, or even anticipate, the new publishing ventures of the 1740s. John Locke has regularly been seen as a pervasive influence, not least because John Newbery refers to him with enthusiasm in his address to parents in A Little Pretty Pocket-Book, one of his first creations for the “new” market. Admittedly, the reference has to do with children’s physical health; he does not bring in what seems to us more relevant: Locke’s demand in Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693) for “some easy pleasant Book,” suited to a child’s capacity and working as encouragement. “Learning should be made a Play and Recreation to Children,” he said, with “Play-things” to cozen them into a knowledge of their letters. But whether his words were known or not, they articulated a pragmatic educational philosophy which was congruent with the ambitions of the rising middle class in the century that followed.

Because of Harvey Darton’s joyous description of A Little Pretty Pocket-Book right at the start of his historical survey Children’s Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life,⁴ that little compendium has come to be seen as a “key” publication (Darton’s term) among the incunabula of the 1740s. Victor Watson, impressed by the date and the use of “pretty” in the title, wonders whether Jane Johnson may have had a spanking new copy of the book beside her when

she was writing her novella. But we do not really need to hazard a
direct connection because the two books were both influenced by
the prevailing spirit of change. *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* is a sort of
companion-piece to the “nursery library.” It plays with the alphan-
et, running it in upper and lower case at the head of its pages; it
takes for its central subject a picture-sequence of children’s games,
to which it attaches moral maxims, and then throws in nursery
rhymes and fables by way of diversion; and over both books hangs
the same prudential certitude that Virtue will be rewarded in this
world and the next.

There can be no doubt that the *Pocket-Book* occupies a “key” po-

tion, both for its original composition and as a portent of how
books for children would develop, but it was only a part of the
revolution rather than a prime mover. If you turn to “the great Q

Play” in the *Pocket-Book’s* pictorial survey of games you will find
one of its forerunner’s prettily advertised. This “well-invented Game”
has long been known about, but only in 1995 was part of a set
discovered so that the full implication of its joining Instruction with
Delight could be recognized. This broken set consisted of a com-
plete alphabet printed on twenty-four cards (as was customary, let-
ters J and V were omitted). The Upper- and lower-case letters each
sumounted one line of a versified alphabet, which was printed in
red:

\[
\begin{align*}
A & \quad a \\
Was an & \textit{Admiral} over the Main \\
B & \quad b \\
Was a & \textit{Bomb}, by which thousands were slain . . .
\end{align*}
\]

and below each verse was printed an appropriate illustration, probably
from a soft-metal relief engraving. Along with these cards was a
little 32-page booklet, bound in marbled paper, being *Directions for
Playing with a Set of Squares*, from which one may discern that the *Set*
originally consisted of fifty-six cards, with the missing items being
a second alphabet of 26 letters in italic types linked to “moral sen-
tences,” and probably not illustrated, together with six additional
vowel cards and some “Rules for Spelling.”

Much may be gleaned from the title-page of these *Directions* to
locate the *Set of Squares* in the same new culture as that inhabited
The great Q Play.

Who will play at my Squares?

This well-invented Game’s design’d
To strike the Eye and form the Mind;
And he most doubtless aims aright,
Who joins Instruction with Delight.

Rule of Life.

So live with Men, as if God’s Eye
Did into every Action pry.

D 2 Riding.

by Jane Johnson. The “newly invented” game is devised both to teach and to give “amusement and diversion” to children before they go to school. That concept is acknowledged to derive from “Mr Locke” and about fourteen pages of the Directions are taken up with a huge quotation from that part of Some Thoughts Concerning Education where Locke adumbrates play-way methods. What is also significant is the dating. We are able to extrapolate from the (credible) edition statement and the Newbery/Collins imprint that this Set was published round about 1744, and we know from advertisements that the preceding (sixth) edition probably predates Newbery’s arrival on the scene, and had only fifty squares. Counting back from that therefore could well date the “new invention” in the late 1730s as the work of Benjamin Collins, the Salisbury printer who also claimed to be the inventor of that substitute for horn-books, the battledore.5

Nor was Benjamin Collins the only significant precursor of the man who would become his 1744 partner, John Newbery. Between 1740 and 1743 Thomas Boreman, with a bookselling stall “near the two Giants in Guildhall, London,” produced five “Gigantick Histories” for children in ten volumes. These had a didactic purpose. They were designed to draw children’s attention away from the excitements of street literature, evidence for whose enjoyment occurs in the prefatory verses to the Curiosities of the Tower of London6:

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5 A battledore was a paddle-shaped “piece of cardboard on which was printed the A.B.C., the Lord’s Prayer, and a few short syllables” (Oxford English Dictionary).
6 Volume I (1641).
"Directions for Playing with a Set of Squares," the booklet accompanying *A Set of Squares* (London: John Newbery, ca. 1645). Cotsen Children's Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Tom Thumb shall now
be thrown away,
And Jack who did
the Giants slay.

But the didacticism was not going to be too zealous, since

That author, doubtless,
aims aright,
Who joins instruction
with delight.

and note the echo of that last injunction which occurs in Newbery’s later *Pocket-Book*).

Boreman did indeed offer manifold delights to the children of the 1740s. The very title of his series was a joke, since these “gigantick” works were in a tiny format, not much bigger than the top-joint of your thumb. The publisher added to the joke in his two-volume *Gigantick History of the Two Famous Giants and Other Curiosities in Guildhall*, his first venture in this genre (London, 1740), where he explains to his young customers that, putting all his material in one volume “would come too dear for children and be too heavy to carry in one pocket;” two volumes balance equally so there is no fear of the young reader “growing lop-sided from the weight of such a gigantick work.” Boreman’s kindly, avuncular humor shines through his texts and through his use of pictures and of Dutch flowered paper on the bindings. He even plays jokes in printing lists of subscribers which include personalities such as the giants Gog and Magog.

While these little books may never have found their way to Olney, it seems certain that Jane Johnson was much influenced by a book from one of Boreman’s competitors, Thomas Cooper of the Globe in Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row. *A Child’s New Play-Thing. Intended to Make the Learning to Read a Diversion Instead of a Task* was first published by him in 1742 and was “designed for the use of schools, or [like the *Set of Squares*] for children before they go to school.” Its newness consisted partly in that intention to be a preschool diversion and partly in its quality as a compendium (and note too the use of that Lockean term “play-thing”). For although it is structured on syllabic principles, taking the young reader from single-
to multi-syllable words, it lightens the journey by introducing various narratives for practice — fables, Bible stories, traditional tales (St. George, Guy of Warwick, Fortunatus, and Reynard) — with a collection of songs at the end. Its most original feature was a fold-out alphabet “to be cut into single squares for children to play with,” with letters and sample words on one side and the appropriate line from the nursery rhyme “A Apple Pie” on the other. (It’s not difficult to posit an influence here from the Set of Squares.)

Thomas Cooper died soon after publishing this revolutionary little work; his widow, Mary, fostered and refined it through several more editions, and it remained in print for most of the eighteenth century. One of the early printings must have got to the Johnson household, however, and may well have inspired Jane to her own efforts. She seized upon the book for its progressive structure — her alphabet and syllabic cards correspond fairly closely to patterns found in the printed book — while her vocabulary cards were clearly drawn from it. For example, the insect names noted above may be compared with an equivalent sequence in the Coopers’ “Lessons of One Syllable,” “Flea, fly, louse, wasp, bee, gnat, leach, bug.” By
way of further confirmation, Mrs. Johnson is found calling one of her little hand-written booklets “A New Play Thing.”

Interlocking influences continue to ramify. In 1746 a connection occurs between the widows (presumably) of Thomas Boreman and Thomas Cooper when they appeared as agents for the two-volume *Christmas-Box for Masters and Missies* by “Mary Homebred.” The bulk of the contents of this not-very-festive collection is a set of short tales, illustrated with copper engravings, about virtuous children being rewarded and naughty children getting punished. It is certainly homebred fare, but that is not to deny its current status as the first published example of secular stories for children in England, albeit preceded, as we know now, by Jane Johnson’s much more sustained and attractively composed “Very Pretty Story,” which was not published.

Mary Cooper, too, seems to have been the guiding genius behind the most thrilling of all the experimental books of the 1740s, if not the most thrilling of all English children’s books *tout court*. This is the collection of nursery rhymes published by M. Cooper as *Tommy Thumb’s Pretty Song Book*, probably in 1744. Only “Voll. 2” has survived of what was a two-volume set, but that contains a whole heap of rhymes that have lasted, in one form or another, down to the present time. Unlike any of its contemporaries, it had no designs on its child-readers beyond offering them untrammeled entertainment, and it did so with great brio (an apt word here, since one of the editorial japes in the *Song-Book* was to put spoof musical instructions — “toccato,” “timoroso” — at the end of the rhymes). The production, too, was inspired. The whole book was printed from intaglio plates — the text stamped in letter-by-letter, the tiny illustrations engraved — and the plates were inked either in red or black so that the colors alternated as the reader turned the leaves. (Could that have been an idea developed from the two-color printing of the alphabet cards in the *Set of Squares*?)

Examining these few fragmentary survivals, dating back more than 250 years, it is possible to sense the zest with which the publishers were developing and exploiting their “newly invented” literary genre. If Benjamin Collins be the creator of the *Set of Squares*, then he may

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7 I have argued a possibility that the pseudonym may in fact conceal Mary Boreman as author. See *The Ludford Box and “A Christmas-Box*’ (Los Angeles: UCLA Research Library, Occasional Paper no. 2, 1969).
be seen not simply hitting on a new line of business but (despite his seemingly austere entrepreneurial stance) thinking his way into a design that would happily tickle the fancy of his public. If Mary Cooper be the “Nurse Lovechild” who edited *Tommy Thumb’s Pretty Song-Book*, then surely she grinned with triumph as she presented the Enlightenment with a first printing of

Ride a Cock Horse  
To Banbury Cross,  
To see what  
Tommy can buy,  
A Penny White loaf  
A Penny White cake,  
And a Hugey penny pye,

to say nothing of

Piss a Bed  
Piss a Bed  
Barley Butt  
Your Bum is so heavy  
You can’t get up. [labelled Grande]

For the first time ever, child-focussed book-making went hand-in-hand with commercial *nous*, and its success may be measured not simply through the frequency with which works were reprinted or the way they were used as models for new publications, but also through the way they were plundered by unscrupulous rivals. Thus, the all-engraved, parti-colored sheets of *Tommy Thumb* were too tempting to resist and within a year or two we find someone (probably George Bickham) turning out in similar style a mixture of rhymes and illustrations stolen from that book and mixed in, for good measure, with the cheeriest bits of *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*. And in another part of the wood, James Hodges (later Sir James, no less) was putting the standard riddle-texts to good use in his *Child’s New-Years-Gift*, “engraved on copper Plates” and printed in black and red. Despite one or two items which were not exactly “chaste & significant,” as advertised, Hodges commended his book “to all kind Mothers, as an Instructive & Entertaining Companion of their Children.”
Perhaps the vicar’s wife at Olney would not have fully approved, but from our privileged position we can now see that she and all those horny-handed tradesmen were participating in a great communal venture which would lead the descendants of their young readers down rabbit-holes or there and back to the Hills of the Chankly Bore.

By way of conclusion, I must note my absolute dependence upon major collections for the preparation of this talk. Only the garnering (sometimes intentionally, sometimes fortuitously) of these cradle-pieces by institutional libraries has allowed their presence to be known — and, indeed, most of the works cited in this talk are known uniquely in single copies — and only the hospitality of these institutional libraries to wandering scholars has enabled some sketchy picture to be drawn of the making of English children’s literature. The arrival of the Cotsen Children’s Library at Firestone makes a huge and momentous addition to these scholarly resources. I and all students of the subject are grateful to Lloyd Cotsen and to Princeton University.
Among the most famous writers for children was Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743–1825), author of *Lessons for Children* and *Hymns in Prose for Children*. She was known for nearly a century after her death as “Mrs. Barbauld,” creator of “Little Charles,” the infant hero of her *Lessons*. (“Little Charles” was in fact a real person, Barbauld’s nephew.) *Lessons* and *Hymns* were immensely influential in their time; they were reprinted throughout the nineteenth century in England and the United States, and their effect on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century middle-class people, who learned to read from them, is incalculable.¹ Barbauld’s contemporary, William Blake, is generally agreed to have been influenced by *Hymns in Prose*, and the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning could still quote the opening lines of *Lessons for Children* at age thirty-nine: “Oh! how I remember it, book & all,” she exclaims in a letter. Another woman, this one nearly anonymous, remembered in 1869 how as a little

¹ On the nineteenth-century popularity of “Little Charles,” see Charlotte Yonge, “Children’s Literature of the Last Century,” *Macmillan’s Magazine*, 20 (1869), p. 234: “Probably three-fourths of the gentry of the last three generations have learnt to read by his assistance.” *Little Charles* is the title of one American edition from the 1830s which, like many nineteenth-century editions, rewrote and versified selections from *Lessons*. On nineteenth-century reprints (below) see the *British Library Catalogue of Printed Books* and the *National Union Catalogue*, between them they list some 53 editions of *Hymns in Prose* between 1801 and 1905, and some 27 editions of *Lessons for Children* between 1801 and 1878 (these numbers do not include translations). Moreover, the Archives of the House of Longman (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1978) indicate four more editions each of *Hymns* and *Lessons* not shown in either the BLC or the NUC [Impression Books, 1835–1863, 1841–1873, 1892, and 1852 [Reels 37 and 40]]; the number of copies printed is always 1,000, 2,000, or 2,500.
girl she used to take pleasure in reading *Hymns in Prose* “aloud, in a solemn voice, page after page.” In an 1881 essay on Barbauld, Anne Thackeray Ritchie, daughter of the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray and step-aunt to Virginia Woolf, represents her own child as asking for *Lessons for Children* “every morning.”

The way bits of these texts might get into a child’s memory and stay there all the way into sophisticated adulthood can perhaps be sensed by noticing verbal similarities between them and a passage in that formidable modernist poem, T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. The passages turn on the words “Come,” “I will show you,” and “shadow”: from *Hymns in Prose*, “Come, and I will shew you what is beautiful” (Hymn IV); “Come, let us go into the thick shade” (Hymn VII); and from *Lessons for Children*, “Come, let us go home, it is evening. See . . . how tall my shadow is. It is like a great black giant stalking after me.” There follows a sentence about how shadows differ at evening and at noon. In *The Waste Land* Eliot writes:

(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you . . .

Did T. S. Eliot, as a boy in St. Louis, Missouri, circa 1891, learn to read from Mrs. Barbauld? I don’t know. But I would not be surprised if he had; these four lines from *The Waste Land* are just the kind of conflation one would expect in fugitive memory-traces of impressive texts.

Although most famous as a writer for children, Anna Letitia Barbauld was in fact a general writer, one of the first generation of really successful women of letters in England — a generation that

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2 *Hymns in Prose for Children*. By the author of Lessons for Children (London: J. Johnson, 1781), pp. 20, 43; *Lessons for Children. Part III. Being the second for Children of Three Years Old* (London: J. Johnson, 1808), pp. 42–43. The 1808 edition of Lessons is revised and was the one, presumably, on which all subsequent editions were based. (I have collated with 1808 only the texts of London 1812 and London 1821 [vol. 1] and 1825 [vols. 2–4].)

included Maria Edgeworth and Hannah More, who also, of course, wrote for the young. As Mitzi Myers has observed, the women writers of that generation tended to perform as pedagogues. But Barbauld was known to her contemporaries originally as a poet and essayist, and subsequently as a political pamphleteer, a role in which she made conservatives nervous by showing rather too much approval of Enlightenment politics and the French Revolution. Later still, she performed as an editor, a reviewer, the first biographer of novelist Samuel Richardson, and the author of a substantial body of commentary on the English novel. She was also an eminent teacher, having managed, with her husband, a famous school for boys at Palgrave in Suffolk, where her children’s books were written. It was, all told, a distinguished career; at her death in 1825, some observers foretold permanent fame for her as one of the enduring English writers.

For a number of reasons, that is not the way things turned out, either for Barbauld or for most of her female contemporaries, whom we today are recovering from their gradual but profound eclipse. One of the reasons for that eclipse is to be found in the historiography of children’s literature itself — not the history, but the historiography. Speaking, to be sure, as an outsider, and with deference to those better informed, it appears to me that the canonical story about the way children’s literature developed is a story almost Manichaean in its need to dichotomize, and then to extol or damn its dichotomized terms. Whether the binary terms are “instruction” and “delight,” “didacticism” and “imagination,” or — the title of one of the most fiercely Manichaean books on the subject — *Fantasy and Reason*, the canonical story consistently extols books in which it is pleased to find “imagination,” “fantasy,” and “delight,” and as consistently depreciates, deplores, or denounces books it suspects of

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6 “Her various publications have gained for her a lasting name amongst the best English writers” (“Mrs. Barbauld,” *Christian Reformer* 11 [1825], p. 141); “so long as letters shall be cultivated in Britain, or wherever the English language shall be known, so long will the name of this lady be respected” (“Memoir of Mrs. Anna Letitia Barbauld,” *Imperial Magazine* 7 [1825], p. 397). Other opinions in favor of Barbauld’s greatness will be noticed in my essay, “A ‘High-Minded Christian Lady’: The Posthumous Reception of Anna Letitia Barbauld,” to be published in *Romanticism and Women Poets: Opening the Doors of Reception*, ed. Harriet Lankin and Stephen Behrendt (University Press of Kentucky).
“didactic” intent or a “rationalist” agenda. F. J. Harvey Darton declared in 1932 that “children’s books were always the scene of a battle between instruction and amusement, between restraint and freedom, between hesitant morality and spontaneous happiness,” and in E. Nesbit’s 1913 story, *Wet Magic*, there occurs a literal battle between the “Book People,” who include Barbauld, and the child characters they seek to subjugate. This dichotomizing reappears even in the most current forms of cultural critique. Thus Alan Richardson, in many ways an admirable historical researcher, nevertheless grounds an entire study of pedagogical texts published between 1780 and 1830 in a simple dualism between sinister forces making for an oppressive social hegemony and the “subaltern” groups — children, the poor, the colonized — whose willing submission to that hegemony the pedagogues were supposedly working to achieve. That the hegemonists in his version include Wordsworth, usually counted a hero on the side of child liberation, does nothing to change the Manichaean structure of his discourse.

Mitzi Myers, to whom my understanding of issues in children’s literature is deeply indebted, has argued on more than one occasion that this dichotomizing should be understood as an ongoing reinscription of Wordsworth’s myth of the “natural” boy, the Boy of Winander, tutored directly by wild Nature or at most by a “parent hen,” and gloriously independent of formal instruction by socializing agents such as actual mothers. His American descendant

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7 F. J. Harvey Darton, *Children’s Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), pp. v–vi; E. Nesbit, *Wet Magic* (1913; reprint London; Ernest Benn, 1958), pp. 188–189. See also Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason: Children’s Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985). Peter Hunt remarks that “the most common view of the history of children’s literature is that the books have progressed steadily from didacticism to freedom . . . . But as history it is false because children’s books can never be free of didacticism or adult ideological freight” (“Editor’s Preface,” *Children’s Literature: An Illustrated History* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], p. xii). This sensible view is perhaps a bit compromised by the sentence that follows it: “But it is important to see children’s books as the site of a good deal of anarchy.”


9 Besides “Of Mice and Mothers” (n. 5 above), see, for example, Myers, “Little Girls Lost: Rewriting Romantic Childhood, Righting Gender and Genre,” *Teaching Children’s Literature: Issues, Pedagogy, Resources*, ed. Glenn Edward Sadler (New York: Modern Language Association, 1992), pp. 131–142. Wordsworth celebrates the Boy of Winander, one of “A race of real children; not too wise, / Too learned, or too good,” in *The Prelude* (1850 text, ed. J. C. Maxwell [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971]), Book 5, lines 364–425. This wild boy is proposed as a wholesome contrast to the alleged product of the “modern system” of education, satirized in lines 293–330. The “parent hen” (line 246) is Wordsworth’s metaphor for the
is, of course, Huckleberry Finn, always poised to “light out for the Territory” to escape some woman’s tutelage. The ancestor of both boys, surely, is Rousseau’s Émile, who is supposed to experience woman mainly in the form of the maternal breast, whose only instruction consists of interactions with the world mediated (when at all) by a father-figure, and who must never hear of book learning before age fifteen. All these boys embody the deep hatred of culture itself which has been Rousseau’s troublesome gift to modern ideology: “All our wisdom,” he writes in Émile, “consists in servile prejudices. All our practices are only subjection, impediment, and constraint. Civil man is born, lives, and dies in slavery.”

Who, then, are those tyrannical “Book People” created by this dichotomizing? Myers argues that they are precisely the women who wrote for children: “Theorists,” as she puts it in one place, “forget that in everyday life mothers mediate access to oral and written word alike; they are the bearers of language and literature — and historically women have authored the bulk of writing for children.”

The maternal is associated with the transmission of culture, especially at a pre-rational level; culture, in Rousseau-inspired ideology, is a force for oppression; the maternal therefore corresponds to the oppressor. The male, on the other hand, is associated with a natural, wild freedom. One reason why we should distrust the canonical binaries of children’s-literature historiography is their pat coincidence with this other binary, gender. How curious that the historiography treats as Enemies of Childhood those women who publicized, who modelled in print, the role performed at home by countless middle-class mothers doing what middle-class mothers did for generations, at least until television stole their place: reading with their children, teaching their children to read.

Barbauld published Lessons for Children in 1778–1779 in four little volumes sized to fit a child’s hand. In her preface to Volume I she lays claim to one innovation, the use of large type and wide margins to make the books “reader-friendly.” To appreciate her claim one need only compare pages from Lessons with pages from one of

mother who, “through a grace / Of modest meekness [and] simple-mindedness” (lines 290–291), makes no conscious effort to educate her child.


its predecessors, such as *The Child’s New Play-Thing* (1763). Previous publishers for children, such as Newbery, had provided children with books of the right size for their hands, but they had not had the imagination to perceive that, while the *page* must be diminutive, the *print* needs to be larger than ordinary in relation to it. They provided, instead, small pages with correspondingly crowded type. Barbauld may have been the originator, and was almost certainly the popularizer, of the modern practice of printing children’s books in larger-than-ordinary type.12

Barbauld’s contemporaries, however, credited her with a much more important innovation: the method of “chit-chat,” as one reviewer of *Lessons* called it, or informal dialogue between parent and child, a method which became for some decades a commonplace of books for children. It was she, Frances Burney noted, who began “the new Walk” in children’s books. Barbauld’s imitator, Sarah Trimmer, accurately characterizes that “new Walk” as “a species of writing, in the style of *familiar conversation*, which is certainly much better suited to the capacities of young children than any that preceded it.”13 To appreciate the sort of difference they had in mind, compare again those pages from *Lessons* with the pages from *The Child’s New Play-Thing*. One hardly knows where to begin enumerating the differences. The earlier primer is abstract and superficially analytical in its structure: abstract in that the lists of syllables and words are unconnected to or by any contextualizing narrative; analytical — but superficially so — in that they embody an “atomistic” concept of reading. In this pedagogy, first you learn sounds (*ska*, *ske*, *ski*, and so forth), then you compose those building-blocks

12 In the use of large type and wide margins she seems to have been preceded by one J. G., who in 1694 published *A Play-Book for Children to allure them to Read as soon as they can speak plain* (William Sloane, *Children’s Books in England and America in the Seventeenth Century* [New York: King’s Crown Press, 1955], p. 211). By 1778 J. G. had probably been long forgotten; Sarah Trimmer, at any rate, concurred with Barbauld’s claim: “infant readers are farther indebted to her for the happy thought of printing first books, in a large clear type. These useful hints given by Mrs. B. have been generally adopted by her cotemporaries” (*The Guardian of Education* 1 [May–December 1802], p. 64). For an account of one such contemporary, see Andrea Immel, “‘Mistress of Infantine Language’: Lady Ellenor Fenn, Her *Set of Toys*, and the ‘Education of Each Moment,’” *Children’s Literature* 25 (1997): 215–228. In 1783 Fenn followed Barbauld in calling for large type and wide margins, giving the same reason that Barbauld had given: the weakness of the child’s eyes.

of words into words, and then you compose those building-blocks of sentences into sentences. The analysis seems based more on ideas of permutation and combination than on the realities of English. It also produces a formidable page, uninviting in its remoteness from any child’s (or any language-learner’s) ordinary linguistic experience. Because it cannot be connected to anything the child normally does, it can only be learned by rote. It was of books such as these that Barbauld’s former pupil at Palgrave School, George Crabb (not the poet, but rather a general writer best known for a work on English synonymy) must have been thinking in an 1801 essay on *The Order and Method of Instructing Children*: education today, he writes, “is a mere system of mechanism. Children collect a number of sounds to which no ideas are affixed. They learn sounds but not things.”

Ordinary linguistic experience is always contextual, always occurs in a time and place, in relation to some activity. A language, said Ludwig Wittgenstein famously, is “a form of life.” Barbauld’s *Lessons* anticipate Wittgenstein’s understanding of language by being contextualized, by being forms of life. They consist of transac-

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tions between the boy, Charles, and a Mamma on whose lap he is young enough to sit. They take Charles through his day, from breakfast to bedtime. (Yes, bedtime. It seems that Volume I of *Lessons for Children* was also the first child’s book to end with putting the child to bed.) And in the course of that day they notice people, objects, and animals from his ordinary surroundings: Puss (the cat), Papa, garden insects, household wares, food and clothing, paraphernalia of rural daily life. Each lesson is a dialogue, a narrative, or a description situated in Charles’s actual or potential experience, a “language game” in Wittgenstein’s sense: a “form of life.” Again, Barbauld’s old pupil, Crabb, theorizes her method:

We ought to direct . . . [children’s] attention to the objects as they occur in common life. Thus, whether we are eating, drinking, talking, walking, reading, or amusing ourselves, we shall find numberless things that deserve the attention of a child; by which at the same time the names of the several objects may be more strikingly fixed upon its mind. . . . Those objects ought to be as numerous as possible, in order to initiate the child into a general acquaintance with things and words; as the sun,
moon, stars, animals, birds, beasts, trees, flowers, herbs, chairs, tables, and all the objects of art and nature which fall within the sphere of observation.¹⁶

Virtually every object Crabb here names is mentioned in Lessons, always represented as something experienced or observed by Charles.

The manuscript of Lessons is long lost, but the book’s original form can be inferred from other, surviving manuscripts. These are little lessons written in print hand for Barbauld’s great niece, probably around 1812, when the niece was four. In the lesson shown, “Anna” is the great niece and “Mrs Robley” is presumably a neighbor in Stoke Newington, North London, where Barbauld was then living. Another lesson for Anna refers to “Queen Elizabeth’s Walk” in Stoke Newington, where Anna later remembered often walking with Barbauld in childhood.¹⁷ I mention these details because they show that Barbauld’s lessons were originally biographical: they probably arose from actual incidents and actual transactions. “Little Charles” was her adopted son, who came to live with her just short of his second birthday in the summer of 1777. Volume I of Lessons was printed by the end of the year and published in May 1778, and Volumes II and III in June. Volume I is for “Children from Two to Three Years Old,” Charles’s age at time of publication. Volumes II and III are for children three years old, and Volume IV (published in 1779) for children from three to four, again Charles’s age. The lessons thus keep pace with the actual growth of the historic Charles. Since they presumably originated in real incidents of his and his mother’s life together, they document (in part) Barbauld’s performance as the mother of a small boy. They are materials for her biography as well as models of a pedagogy. They are private, in some ways intimate, and at the same time public, even in some ways a manifesto. “This little publication,” she writes in her preface, “was made for a particular child, but the public is welcome to the use of it.”¹⁸ That is an understated way of saying “Here is how I did it. Others can, too.”

¹⁶ Crabb, Order and Method, pp. 36-38.
¹⁷ [Anna Letitia LeBreton], Memories of Seventy Years, by one of a literary Family, ed. Mrs. Herbert Martin (London: Griffith & Farran, 1883), p. 42.
¹⁸ Lessons for Children, from Two to Three Years Old (London: J. Johnson, 1787), p. [iii]. This is vol. 1 of a four-volume composite set (British Library C.121.aa.16). of which vols. 2-4 (Lessons for Children of Three Years Old, Parts I and II, and Lessons for Children from Three to Four Years Old)
Did what? Taught my child to read, of course; but also, more broadly, educated him. For Lessons is much more than a reading primer. While offering reading material suitably graded as to difficulty for children from ages two to four, it also initiates the child into the elements of society’s symbol-systems and conceptual structures, inculcates an ethics, and encourages him to develop a certain kind of sensibility. All of this is accomplished, as Sarah Robbins has observed, by a guiding, interpreting mother.\(^9\) She is a mother who

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Manuscript reading lesson by Anna Letitia Barbauld for her niece, ca. 1811. Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs. Alison Brodribb.
takes the preceptorial role assigned by Rousseau to the male, a
mother whose understanding of the world is tacitly but deeply philo-
sophical: an Enlightenment Mother, *une Philosophe*. But also she is a
mother who does all this casually, and as it were by the way, in the
midst of carrying on her daily chores; a mother who is an ordinary
middle-class woman (albeit an eighteenth-century middle-class
woman, which means one assisted by servants, who also make an
appearance in *Lessons*).

To do justice to the density of implication and breadth of refer-
ence in *Lessons*, one would have to go through it page by page,
commenting on almost every line. This is true especially of Vol-
ume I, in which conceptual systems seem to assemble themselves
before our eyes. In the later volumes, as more formal structures
are introduced, the texture of implication thins out a little. This is
a consequence of the graded, or developmental, order of *Lessons*,
the aim of which is to secure the child’s understanding of the con-
cepts which ground other concepts. As Crabb puts it, “a child [ought
never] to spell and pronounce what has not been previously pre-
sented to his understanding.” Barbauld’s method, and Crabb’s
description of it, would appear to anticipate the development in
modern cognitive science of what is called “schema theory.” A
“schema” is the mental representation of an experience. Schema
theory conceptualizes the mind as an organizing agent which works
hierarchically, “embedding” one representation within another in
an order ascending from simple to complex. Thus, for example, to
understand the sentence, “The little girl heard the ice cream man
and rushed upstairs to get her piggy bank,” one needs not only to
have a concept (or schema) of ice cream and of modes of selling ice
cream, but also a schema (or set of schemata) for buying and sell-
ing; embedded in these would be subordinate schemata for money
itself, for places where money is kept (piggy banks), and so on. It is
on this kind of hierarchical, progressive structure that *Lessons for
Children* is founded, in contrast to its predecessors.

For illustration, refer again to the illustration of The Child’s New

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20 Crabb, *Order and Method*, p. 38.

21 For my understanding of schema theory I depend on Mary Crawford and Roger Chaffin,
“The Reader’s Construction of Meaning: Cognitive Research on Gender and Comprehen-
sion,” in *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts*, ed. Elizabeth A. Flynn and
4–6.
Like *Lessons*, previous primers had sought to inculcate an ethics, and they did it in the bluntest possible way, by sandbagging the child reader with lists of what Barbauld calls “grave remarks,” sentences like “Speak the truth and lie not” and “Live well that you may die well.” Like the lists of syllables and words, these remarks are without context and abstracted from any reference to forms of life. In her preface to *Lessons*, Barbauld notes that “a grave remark, or a connected story . . . is above [the] capacity” of a child from two to three; he cannot be expected to understand them, stripped as they are of any relation to his experience or previous learning. Hence, in *Lessons* she introduces its single specimen of a “grave remark” only after preparing a context for it:

Now we must make hay. Where is your fork and rake? Spread the hay. Now make it up in cocks. Now tumble on the hay-cock. There[,] cover him up with hay. How sweet the hay smells! O, it is very hot! No matter; you must make hay while the sun shines. You must work well.

Here Mother is teaching Charles how to make hay, an operation which has to be performed during the heat of the day. It is therefore quite literally true that “you must make hay while the sun shines,” and the literal truth of the remark underpins its figurative meaning — a meaning which she then states outright (“You must work well”). Charles is being introduced to the possibility of inferring from a specific experience to a general idea.

Likewise with “connected story,” which Barbauld also thought to be above a small child’s capacity. She departs from previous reading primers by introducing elements of story, or narrative, piece-meal before introducing her first story. Again, in terms of schema theory she can be said to be introducing the simpler schemata which, combined, constitute the complex schema, “story.” Thus Charles is encouraged to think in terms of past-present-future (the schema of temporality) by being reminded that he used to be a baby, is now a little boy, and will (when older) have a horse to ride like Papa. He is encouraged to think in terms of *sequentiality* by being led through

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22 Barbauld, *Lessons*, vol. 1, p. [iii].
23 Vol. 2, pp. 20–21.
the days of the week and the twelve months of the year. Only after that does Mother tell him his first story.

Barbauld does not, of course, expect a two-year-old reader to understand all the implications of what she is doing. It is a truism about children’s books that they are written for two audiences at once, the child and the parent. They instruct and/or amuse each on different levels. In Lessons for Children, those levels are congruent and mutually supportive: the meaning available to the child’s understanding enfolds philosophical and ethical possibilities which the adult will notice now and the child later, as he matures.

This is already evident in the very first lesson in the very first volume, about Puss and the rabbit. Much food for thought is offered here. First, the fact of death: a rabbit has been killed. The structure of Lessons being, among other things, recursive, dead animals — and in particular, dead rabbits — are going to reappear throughout. Eventually the possibility that Charles himself could be injured or killed will be mooted. Barbauld was never a euphemist in her view of life and did not encourage bowdlerizing experience for the young. (Some of the parents who bought Lessons felt differently: the Yale copy of Volume II has had its references to death vigorously inked out.)

In the current critical climate of deep suspicion of claims for the coherence of different “levels” within texts, it may appear naïve (or worse) to propose that Lessons achieves congruence between its “child” and “adult” meanings. I am happy, therefore, to be able to cite similar claims by theorists who cannot be accused of naïveté, Mitzi Myers and U. C. Knoepflmacher, editors of vol. 25 of Children’s Literature (1997): “Authors who write for children inevitably create a colloquy between past and present selves. . . . Most of the writers, artists, and editors we consider in this volume manage to integrate the conflicting voices they heed. Their constructs involve interplay and cross-fertilization rather than a hostile internal cross fire” (p. vii).


The Yale copy (1794) is Beinecke Library 1b 94/12/v.1. For Barbauld’s disapproval of bowdlerized books for the young, see “On the Uses of History,” A Legacy for Young Ladies, ed. Lucy Aikin (London: Longman, 1826), p. 134: “If a young person were to read only the Beauties of History, or . . . stories and characters in which all that was vicious should be left out, he might as well, for any real acquaintance with life he would gain, have been reading all the while Sir Charles Grandison or the Princess of Cleves.”
But there is much more here than death to notice. The question put to Puss, “Why did you kill the rabbit?” is both funny and profound. It is profound because it points towards ultimate issues: why are cats permitted to kill rabbits? Why is cruelty in the world? Or is it cruelty for one animal to kill another? Puss is supposed to catch mice, not kill rabbits — but “supposed” by whom? Is it part of the Divine Plan that cats are ordained to catch mice, or is it rather that human beings demand certain behaviors of them and condemn others? Is Puss guilty? The question is funny because, of course, Puss can’t answer it. Everybody knows you do not ask animals to account for their actions — everybody, that is, except two-year-olds like Charles, who do not yet realize that animals lack speech. “Puss cannot speak,” and that ends the discussion. We smile at Mother (or perhaps it is at Charles) earnestly moralizing to Puss, and as we do so — indeed, because we do so — we realize that Barbauld has just quietly linked morality to the faculty of language. No language no morality, she is saying by way of the most straight-faced irony, voicing the child’s innocent question.\(^\text{30}\)

Charles, on the other hand, has obligations towards Puss, even if Puss may have none towards rabbits. He must not pull her tail, for that hurts her, and he must stroke her fur the right way. These obligations are enjoined in the pages immediately following the one in which he begins to read his book — another way in which Barbauld associates language with ethics. Mother, we see, is a Humanist. She is going to teach Charles that the power of language distinguishes him from all other animals. Although in some ways he resembles other animals (he is a biological being like them in that he, like them, eats food and grows,\(^\text{31}\) and they are “cultural” beings like him in that they, like him, have, at least metaphorically, “houses” and “wear clothing,” as later lessons will tell him), Charles is nevertheless unique in being endowed with the power of lan-

\(^{30}\) Richard Lovell Edgeworth, who wrote a lengthy commentary on Lessons as soon as it was published, objected to Barbauld’s raising the issues of death and animal “morality”: “The Idea of killing is in itself very complex and if explained serves only to excite terror. And how can a child be made to comprehend why a Cat should catch mice & not kill Rabbits; indeed I know of no reason why this species of Honesty is to be expected from an Animal of Prey” (Bodleian Library, MS Eng. misc. c. 895, f.54r, quoted by permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford). Edgeworth seems either unaware of or unwilling to entertain the possibility that Barbauld wrote ironically.

anguage, and this endowment confers obligations on those who possess it, humans.32

The morality of Lessons is not enforced by any reference to God or religious sanction. That would be much too abstract: “spiritual . . . ideas,” her old pupil Crabb declares, “. . . have never been produced in the mind of man but by the progress of cultivation.”33 Unlike earlier primers, which often lead the child straight from word-lists to catechisms (“Who made you?” “Who redeemed you?” they ask34), Lessons is utterly free of any church doctrine: it is entirely secular, with no suggestion whatsoever of any power transcending the empirically-known natural world. The do’s and don’ts of human ethics are enforced, then, by human means: Mother’s approval or disapproval, promises of rewards (such as having a garden of one’s own to grow35), Mother’s teasing mockery,36 or — very occasionally — tales telling of punishments or rewards to other boys who did wrong or did right. Such a tale, the very first regular story in Lessons, tells of a boy, not named Charles, who cruelly mistreated a robin, pulling out its feathers and starving it to death. This boy — whose name, significantly, Mother does not remember — soon finds himself abandoned by his parents and shunned by his neighbors: “we do not love cruel, naughty boys.” Being too

32 In a later work Barbauld refines her distinction between animals and humans: “Your cattle cannot discourse; they like each other’s company, they herd together, they have a variety of tones by which they can make each other sensible when they are pleased, angry, or in pain, but they cannot discourse. To discourse is to communicate ideas, that is thoughts, to compare — to reason upon them. This is the privilege of man” (Civic Sermons to the People. Number I [London: Johnson, 1792], p. 4).

Elsewhere in Lessons (vol. 2, pp. 54–56), Barbauld treats human language as simultaneously biological and cultural — a sophisticated and very “modern” understanding of it. She achieves this by setting up a long series of parallel sentences, beginning, “The dog barks. The hog grunts. The pig squeaks. The horse neighs,” and so on through twenty-nine animals and their utterances, to end with “Charles talks.” The syntactical parallels between “Charles talks” and the preceding sentences place “talks” on a par with “barks,” “grunts,” and “squeaks,” i.e. “biologizes” it; while the difference between the proper name “Charles” and the generic names “the dog,” “the hog,” and so on distinguishes him from them as a cultural being. The passage adumbrates one of Wittgenstein’s remarks: “Commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing” (Philosophical Investigations, p. 12 [my emphasis]).

33 Crabb, Order and Method, p. 38.

34 Quotation from Tom Thumb’s Play-Book (Boston: A. Barclay, c. 1760), p. 20; another catechism appears in The Royal Primer (London: J. Newbery, c. 1776), pp. 23ff. If not catechisms, the books print “Scripture lessons” of other sorts, or simplified Psalms; in one form or another, God makes his appearance around page twenty. I am grateful to Andrea Immel for information concerning earlier children’s books, here and elsewhere in this essay.


young to look after himself, he wanders into the woods and disappears; Mother believes he was eaten by bears. The boy is punished, in short, by exile from the human community, and in exile he cannot survive. The story is, let us say, blunt in its message, but its moral realism is unimpeachable. For the human, there is no alternative to being a socialized creature except extinction. There are, Wordsworth to the contrary notwithstanding, no Boys of Winander; every human being needs other human beings in order to live. Humans are communal entities, or, in a phrase favored by the young Karl Marx, “species beings.”

I quote Marx deliberately, to suggest that the idea of society offered in Lessons belongs to that strain of middle-class Enlightenment humanist ethics which eventuated in Marx. There is no question, in Lessons as in Marx, of the Romantic individual glorying in some transcendental solitude; people always live together, in some form of mutual dependence. Thus another of Lessons’ ethical imperatives is work: “Every body works, but little babies; they cannot work.”

And Charles is given a lesson in political economy when he demands bread and butter and is then asked where the bread and butter are to come from: twelve people, plying as many trades, must set to work to satisfy Charles’s appetite. (The Wealth of Nations, with its famous illustration of division of labor in pin-making, had been published only the year before Charles joined the Barbauld household.) And everyone must share, as well. Given some raisins, Charles is directed to share them with Billy and Sally; in a tale about three schoolboys, each of whom receives a cake from home, the model boy is the one who shares his cake with friends, and then gives some to a beggar.

But, while being proto-Marxian in certain ways, Lessons nevertheless proposes very much a middle-class liberal idea of human

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37 Vol. 2, pp. 73–77.

38 The term “species-being” (gattungswesen) came to Marx from Ludwig Feuerbach, according to Robert C. Tucker (The Marx-Engels Reader, 2d ed. [New York: Norton, 1978]), p. 33n; for examples of Marx’s use of it, see pp. 43 (where Marx equates “species-life” with “society”) and 76 (where he identifies the collective activity of producing culture — in the very broadest sense of that word — as proof that humans are “conscious species being[s]”). Barbauld’s linking of morality with language (above) also approximates Marx, who calls language “practical consciousness” (p. 158).


41 Vol. 1, p. 32.

relations. Within the embrace of the social and natural order, creatures are assumed to have their own individual agendas. The butterfly in the garden does not answer Charles's questions, will not let us catch it, and flies off. The bee "will not sting you if you let it alone." Mother has work to do, so Charles must go away. A man on horseback is going somewhere else and does not notice us. Another man is plowing a field, going about his own business. And Charles himself gradually individuates, at first sitting on Mother's lap to read and then, as he grows older, using a little stool. One can even trace his separation from Mother in the fabric of the dialogues themselves: in Volume I of *Lessons* it is not always clear which of them is speaking, so that at times one has the impression of a merged or shared subjectivity, whereas in later volumes they are more easily distinguished. The very lessons themselves develop clearer, firmer outlines, becoming more formal and more systematic as Charles matures.

As he grows, Charles learns that external reality does not always behave as he wishes. Indeed, in the middle-class liberalism enacted by *Lessons* we can see the origins of Freud's "reality principle." "I want my dinner, I want pudding," Charles demands in one lesson, and moreover, "I want some wine." But his demand for dinner has to wait till dinner is ready, and his demand for wine must wait till he is a much bigger boy; in the meantime, "here is water." In another lesson Charles bumps into a table and gets mad at it for having hit him; to which Mother replies, "No, not naughty table, silly boy! The table did not run against Charles, Charles ran against the table." In one of the most famous lessons, Charles and Mother travel to France, where Charles, rather like an American tourist, confidently expects people to understand what he says to them in English, and thus meets a new kind of social limit to his wishes: incomprehension, inability to make others understand what he wants. Instead he is laughed at for his ignorance, and retreats home baffled.

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But reality as imagined in *Lessons* is not simply a site of stubbed egos. It is equally a site of *pleasure*, of keen enjoyment of daily sensations. Barbauld, despite a vague reputation for being grimly Presbyterian, was in fact a considerable hedonist. She engages Charles in play, hiding him under Mother’s apron while Papa looks for him, pretending that Papa’s walking stick is a horse,\(^{51}\) running out in the snow to make snowballs,\(^ {52}\) promising that he will learn to slide on the ice, to skate and to swim.\(^ {53}\) One standing topic of complaint in histories of children’s books, especially Geoffrey Summerfield’s *Fantasy and Reason*, is the alleged injunctions of the “rationalists” to guard children from servants, who supposedly corrupt them with old wives’ tales and sundry bad habits.\(^ {54}\) In *Lessons*, the servant Betty brings Charles some gifts from a local fair: a toy gun and a sword. This could have been trouble: Barbauld inclined towards pacifism. Does Mother therefore rebuff Betty’s gifts? Not at all. She thanks Betty for them and encourages Charles to “charge your gun. Now let it off. Pop!”\(^ {55}\) Here play is allowed to take precedence even over principle, or what today would be “political correctness.”

She is also alive to the pleasures of sense. Some of the finest passages in *Lessons* are those in which Mother solicits Charles’s attention to a sight or smell of the world around them — to snow (“how white it is, and how soft it is”\(^ {56}\)), to a rainbow (“O what fine colours! Pretty bright rainbow!”\(^ {57}\)), to a nosegay of flowers (“Smell! it is very sweet!”\(^ {58}\)) — but for sheer sensuousness we can choose between the one in which she offers him a strawberry:

> Do you love strawberries and cream? Let us go then and gather some strawberries. They are ripe now. Here is a very large one. It is almost too big to go into your mouth\(^ {59}\)

or the passage describing a cake made for Harry, a schoolboy:

> It was very large, and stuffed full of plums and sweetmeats, orange and citron; and it was iced all over with sugar: it was white and smooth on the top like snow.\(^ {60}\)

Even unpleasant experiences such as a cold day or “dark, dismal November” can be made into scenes of pleasure: “we will sit by the fire, and read, and tell stories.” If conditions deny pleasure now, there are also the compensations of fantasy. Thus when it is too dirty for Charles to walk outside, Mother encourages him to look ahead to the day when “he shall have breeches, and a little pair of boots, and then he shall go in the dirt.” Even when she is teaching Charles something “useful,” Mother tends to notice its aesthetic or amusement value. So, introducing him at the end of Volume I to money, observe the order in which she treats the subject. She shows him a guinea, a crown, a half crown, a shilling, and a sixpence. The next thing she does is to spin the guinea on the tabletop, that is, to play with it. Only after that does she say what money is used for: to buy food. And finally, she has Charles give some to a beggar. Thus a hierarchy is implied: play, utility, ethics.

The practical aim of Lessons is to prepare Charles to be a capable schoolboy. Lessons offers, indeed, the rudiments of an entire school curriculum, or what John Newbery called “The Circle of the Sciences.” In the course of teaching Charles to read, it introduces him to botany, zoology, numbers, change of state in chemistry (by way of melting snow), the money system, the calendar, geography, meteorology, agriculture, political economy, geology, astronomy. In keeping with her always recursive, incremental method, Mother introduces each at first just as a hint, a glance in the passing flux of Charles’s experience, and then more formally later on, when he is older. It was, to be sure, precisely the scientific-minded child that Wordsworth deplored in The Prelude, and his complaint has tarred Lessons along with the Edgeworths and other writers for children who were influenced by Barbauld’s infant pedagogy. But Wordsworth and the historians mesmerized by him should have read Lessons more attentively. Natural and social sciences are not all that it inculcates. It aims as well to foster in Charles the sensibility of a poet, and it does so by a number of means.

To begin with, the very language of Lessons has always been praised, even by commentators hostile to its program, for its lucid simplicity, for sheer idiom. So potentially poetic has it been found to be that passages from it have even been printed as poetry, as I discov-

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62 Vol. 1, p. 36.
63 Vol. 1, pp. 50–52.
ferred to my surprise some years ago on a visit to Ireland. Hanging on the wall at, of all places, William Butler Yeats’s tower, Thoor Ballylee, were two prints featuring texts from Lessons for Children arranged as free verse and illustrated by Pamela Coleman Smith. They were Nos. 9 and 12 in a series of “Broad Sheets” by one of Yeats’s publishers, Elkin Mathews of London.

I will return to the poetry of Lessons, but first let me notice some particular moves that Barbauld makes to encourage Charles to feel and to think poetically. She models sensibility when she has Mother express pleasure at the beauty of something (“O pretty rainbow!”). She prompts Charles towards thinking poetically by making Mother point out analogies between things, analogies that can become metaphors. A snail’s shell is its “house,” a lamb’s wool is its “petticoat.” The most formalized such lesson occurs when Charles and Mother go outdoors to take tea. But where is a table? Ah, a tree-stump will be a table. What to sit on? Let this turf and bank be our chairs. And we even have a carpet! Where? asks Charles; the carpet is in the house. The grass, answers Mother, “is the carpet out of doors.”

In technical terms, Mother has disposed Charles to think metaphorically by giving him both tenor and vehicle for the first two, then only the vehicle for the third (carpet). When, puzzled, he thinks of the literal (indoor) carpet, she initiates him into metaphor by explaining the likeness of grass to carpet. Barbauld’s pupil, Crabb, again describes her method: “As a figure of speech is founded upon some analogy between two objects, it will be necessary only to point out these analogies, in order to render them intelligible.”

Finally, Barbauld goes so far as to indulge in the traditional fable device of making objects and animals speak — in contradiction to her prevailing theme that only humans have language, a contradiction which vexed one of the book’s first reviewers, Thomas Bentley, business partner of Josiah Wedgewood the potter:

Why will this good Lady go contrary to Nature, and persist in making dumb creatures speak? — However innocently and usefully fabulous, allegorical, and poetic language may be applied to animate natural descriptions,

64 Vol. 1, p. 20.
67 Crabb, Order and Method, pp. 51–52.
and to enforce the lessons of wisdom when addressed to persons of riper years; we humbly conceive that as the bodies of children should be nourished with the food of nature, so their tender minds should be fed and replenished with simplicity and truth.\textsuperscript{68}

Bentley’s objections, flat-footed in their attachment to verisimilitude and even literal truth, nevertheless recognize what Barbauld is doing. She initiates Charles into the fictive, allegorical, animistic discourse often associated with poetry, and into tropes and symbols which are staples of poetry. It is in prose poetry, and very beautiful prose poetry, that \textit{Lessons} bids farewell to Charles, with two contrasting vignettes, Sun and Moon. Sun speaks first, declaring its own might and majesty, its domination and nurture of all things, describing its crown of rays and its blinding brightness, and naming the birds who associate with it in poetry, the Eagle and the Lark.\textsuperscript{69} Sun is quite clearly a male power, and is the absolute monarch that poetic figuration often makes it (cf. Louis XIV, the “Sun King”). Moon speaks last, declaring its gentleness, kindness, and quiet beauty — but let Moon say it, for she says it better than I can:

The Moon says My name is Moon; I shine to give you light in the night when the sun is set. I am very beautiful and white like silver. You may look at me always, for I am not so bright as to dazzle your eyes, and I never scorch you. I am mild and gentle. I let even the little glow-worms shine, which are quite dark by day. The stars shine all around me, but I am larger and brighter than the stars, and I look like a large pearl amongst a great many small sparkling diamonds. When you are asleep I shine through your curtains with my gentle beams, and I say Sleep on, poor little tired boy, and I will not disturb you. The nightingale sings to me, who sings better than all the birds of the air. She sits upon a thorn and sings


\textsuperscript{69} Barbauld, \textit{Lessons}, vol. 4, pp. 95–104.
melodiously all night long, while the dew lies upon the grass, and every thing is still and silent all around.⁷⁰

Moon is female, pluralist and democratic. The passage is at once political allegory and a child’s version of one of Barbauld’s own finest poems, “A Summer Evening’s Meditation,” a poem which opens with a description of the mild Moon displacing “her brother” the Sun, “the sultry tyrant of the south,” in the evening sky.⁷¹ Charles is being prepared to appreciate his mother’s art. More broadly, every middle-class child is being prepared to be a poet, at least in sensibility if not in practice.

A mother who can do all that Lessons does, who is at once a poet, a student of the sciences, a philosophical moralist; who has a wide fund of information and knows exactly at what pace to impart it to a small child; who has a proto-Wittgensteinian understanding of language, a proto-Marxian social ethics, a proto-Freudian idea of the individual’s relation to the real world: such a mother would seem to be a theoretical ideal, a Utopian figure. Well, yes, Anna Barbauld was a person of rare intellect. Her contemporaries honored her power of mind, after their fashion, by calling it “masculine.” Yet Lessons, for all the realism of its vocabulary, does have a Utopian side. Its representation of Mother is Utopian in the way that much feminist writing of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is necessarily Utopian: it represents a woman as she could be if social conditions allowed her to develop equally with men. Barbauld’s philosophical mother is simply a well-educated woman, but, because serious formal education was a thing denied to most middle-class women in Barbauld’s time, she is ipso facto a Utopian figure, what a middle-class woman could be if she were well-educated.

And yet this Mother of All Discourses is also, touchingly, a perfectly ordinary middle-class woman, one whose acts and speech sometimes seem to be sheer transcription from daily life. She is affectionate to Charles, but her affection is sometimes abrupt and impulsive: “Come and give mamma three kisses,” one lesson begins, a trifle imperiously.⁷² She exhibits what her contemporary Edward Gib-

bon would call, in one of his favorite phrases, “humane inconsistency,” though a strict rationalist might call it “self-contradiction.” Thus, having informed Charles that Butterfly won’t answer him when he speaks to it, she nevertheless indulges his innocent animism by saying “Good night” to Snail.73 Having, like a good “rational parent,” treated Charles’s fall as harmless (“Never mind it,” she tells him), she then turns around and kisses his scratched arm: “There, now it is well.”74 Having taught Charles the right way to stroke Puss’s fur, she directs him (in a lesson added to a later edition) deliberately to stroke it the wrong way, to make it throw a spark on a cold night.75 Having almost broken our hearts by her description of a hare hounded to death and torn apart by dogs, she nevertheless does not scruple to point out that the corpse can be eaten.76

Though obviously attentive and affectionate, Mother is capable of being irritable with Charles, and Barbauld is not ashamed to represent her irritability. A “showing-the-features” game between them turns peevish when Mother asks “what are legs for,” Charles answers “To walk with,” and Mother brings him up short: “Then do not make mamma carry you. Walk yourself. Here are two good legs.”77 Remembering that these lessons probably do transcribe interactions between Barbauld and her adopted son, it is worth noting that Barbauld did impress her intimates as showing, from time to time, “certain indications of temper” — as, of course, anyone does, but in late eighteenth-century social expectations about gender, women were supposed not to manifest temper.78 Likewise, Mother is allowed to show a mix of anger and alarm when Charles seems

73 Vol. 1, pp. 18, 20.  
74 Vol. 1, p. 43.  
76 Vol. 4, pp. 84–88.  
78 On Barbauld’s temper I quote Lucy Aikin, “Family History,” p. [53] (MS in the possession of Mr. Simon Martyn). Arguing against indulgence in anger, Hester Chapone, a widely-admired writer on women’s education, devotes a chapter of her Letters on the Improvement of the Mind (1773) to “the Government of the Temper”: “Gentleness, meekness, and patience, are [woman’s] peculiar distinctions; and an enraged woman is one of the most disgusting sights in nature” (The Works of Mrs. Chapone, new ed. [Edinburgh: John Thomson, 1807], p. 76); “peevishness, though not so violent . . . in its immediate effects, is still more unamiable than passion” (p. 79). Barbauld herself shocked contemporaries by displaying anger in her political pamphlet, An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts (1790): Horace Walpole condemned her as a “virago” (Correspondence, ed. W. S. Lewis et al., 48 vols. [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937–1993], vol. 11, p. 169), and William Keate, throwing
about to eat a pin: “O do not put it in your mouth, that is a very, very naughty trick,” she exclaims, without explaining, as a rational parent might be expected to do, *why* he should not eat a pin.79

And finally, Mother, like everyone else in *Lessons*, is allowed to have agendas which preclude attention to Charles. One lesson ends with a blunt dismissal: “Go away now, I am busy.”80 Another ends with Charles’s plaintive request to her to lay aside her sewing and play with him, but his request is left hanging, unanswered.81

It has been customary for feminist commentators on late eighteenth-century women’s texts to deplore their “domestication” of the female, that is, their inscription of the woman as Mother or as otherwise confined to the home.82 That Barbauld regarded mothering as an important and valuable activity is written all over *Lessons*, and in that sense *Lessons* does certainly “domesticate” the female. But if “domestic” means “narrowed,” “confined,” “restricted,” the mother in *Lessons* is none of these things. It seems to me that one of the signal achievements of *Lessons for Children* is the Utopian realism by which it is able to propose a mother who is both philosophe and ordinary woman, both Mother of All Discourses and — to borrow a phrase from current popular psychology — a “good-enough” mother.

up his hands in dismay, could only fall back on a quotation from Pope: “And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?” ([*A Free Examination of Dr. Price’s and Dr. Priestley’s Sermons* [London: J. Dodsley, 1790], p. 64]).

79 Barbauld, *Lessons*, vol. 1, p. 32. In some theories, the “rational parent” was supposed to allow the child to experience the natural consequences of its acts instead of being “prejudiced” by parental indoctrination. In a later essay “On Prejudice” ([1800]) Barbauld tests the limits of such ultra-empiricist dogma: “A child may be allowed to find out for himself that boiling water will scald his fingers, and mustard bite his tongue; but he must be prejudiced against ratsbane, because the experiment would be too costly” ([*The Works of Anna Letitia Barbauld*, ed. Lucy Aikin [London: Longman et al., 1825], vol. 2, p. 336]).


81 Vol. 1, p. 33.

82 A forceful example of the argument that eighteenth-century culture made motherhood into a trap is Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture 1680–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). In view of Rousseau’s notorious insistence in *Emile* that women resign their public amusements and “return” to their “natural” obligations as mothers (a view which, as Bowers shows, did not originate with Rousseau), it is understandable that today’s feminist commentator would distrust texts that advocated or inscribed domesticity for women. Still, domesticity was not a topic that Rousseau or anyone else owned; rather, it was a subject of contest among competing viewpoints, some of which were recognizably feminist. I’m suggesting that Barbauld’s inscription of domesticity, at least in *Lessons*, was one of its feminist treatments.
"Anecdotes from the Nursery" in Maria Edgeworth’s *Practical Education* (1798)

Learning from Children “Abroad and At Home”

BY MITZI MYERS

“Women know more about life than men, especially when it comes to the children.”

When we think about anecdotes of child talk, we’re likely to recall something like Art Linkletter’s twentieth-century classic, freshly reissued as *The New Kids Say the Darndest Things!* in 1995. Introduced by Walt Disney as “a priceless contribution to the anecdotal literature of childhood,” it reminds us, Disney rhapsodizes, that kids have it all, that growing up is loss, that, in a too-familiar quotation, “Heaven lies about us in our infancy.” Most often, though, Linkletter’s text positions his juvenile interviewees as guilelessly mirthful bombshells, spilling the beans without understanding what they’re revealing, as in Linkletter’s query, “What do your folks do for fun?‘ ‘Search me. They always lock the door.’”


3 Linkletter, *The New Kids Say the Darndest Things!* p. ix. Academic psychologists, of course, find children’s supposedly unconscious humor anything but. For one researcher, juvenile jokes are the site of Freudian guilt and sexual knowing, as in “key” exchanges like these: “‘What’s a key that’s too big to put in your pocket?’ ‘A donkey.’ ‘What is the best key to a good dinner?’ ‘A turkey.’” The first anecdote, we are told, is a “fantasy of the huge size of a penis; the second suggests oral incorporation of the desired part.” See Martha Wolfenstein, *Children’s Humor: A Psychological Analysis*, (1954; reprint Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 113. For a lively overview of Western culture’s ongoing conflict between the child as angelic domestic icon and sexually knowing eroticized object, see James R. Kincaid, *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1998).

child speaker is usually the genuine comic butt, the naif who asks inconvenient questions or who artlessly blurts out embarrassing facts that adults habitually blur. Simultaneously, however, the child is also God’s fool, telling truths that cowardly grown-ups fear to speak, as in Hans Christian Andersen’s tale, “The Emperor’s New Clothes.”

Almost a century ago, what one maternal author calls The Sayings of the Children (1918) were more univocally saccharine, in that decadent Wordsworthian Romanticism that rages like a viral nostalgia through turn-of-the-century writing for and about children. This parent, Pamela Glenconner, always refers to herself as “Mother” (with a capital “M”) and to her children not by their names, but by their ages, as “One,” “Two,” “Five,” and so on. To judge by her account, all of them were afflicted from birth with poetic diction and supernal wisdom. For example, a son who has a cold commencing reports that “I’ve got a sort of feeling in my throat as if the moon was there, the pointed moon, scratching it, or the sun sticking his beams into it.” Or take “Four” settling the matter of religious truth: “There’s never been any untrue God. Only the little idols, and nasty cruel images are untrue; all the beautiful gods are the same god.” Personally, I would be inclined to wash their mouths out with soap.

Maria Edgeworth (1768–1849), whose “Notes, Containing Conversations and Anecdotes of Children,” were the foundation of a revolutionary Enlightenment educational methodology, would say that sentimental parents get suckered by pseudo-sentimental youngsters who quickly learn to produce what adults steeped in late eighteenth-century sensibility expect: soppy words appropriately accompanied by tears and delicate gestures. Children (like Irish peasants and slaves), Edgeworth always emphasizes, are adept at self-protection, superb imitators who speedily digest and deliver what parents and tutors expect. Edgeworth’s 1798 manual for parents, Practical Education, specifically warns those with a taste for “ex-

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4 Hans Christian Andersen, “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” Hans Andersen’s Fairy Tales: A Selection, trans. L. W. Kingsland, intro. Naomi Lewis, in The World’s Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 113. As we all remember, no grown-up will “let anyone else see that he couldn’t see anything,” so that the ruler’s invisible garb is a stunning sartorial success, until “But Daddy, he’s got nothing on!” piped up a small child.” Then, of course, his father extols the son’s “voice of innocence,” and all are freed to shout the truth and shame illicit political authority.

aggerated expressions of tenderness” that what real children say is likely to disappoint, and in her chapter on “Books,” she particularly calls attention to the French taste for gush prevalent in the children’s tales imported from across the channel. Actual four-year-old boys, asked by mother, “Do you always love me?” are more likely to respond matter-of-factly “except when I am asleep” because “I do not think of you then” than to indulge in the Glenconner youngsters’ fluffy imagery and spiritual taxonomy.

Instead of casting youngsters as comic characters, as voices of immutable wisdom trailing clouds of immortality, or as mirrors for adult sympathy and sensibility, Maria Edgeworth and her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, and the first of her three stepmothers, Honora Sneyd Edgeworth, tried to record real children’s sayings and doings without patronizing or preconceptions, to see and hear youngsters struggling to make sense of the world, to understand how newcomers (like Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe) make a coherent world out of heterogeneous bits and pieces. In the earliest family notebooks, for example, a little girl of five “asked why she was as tall as the trees when she was far from them.” A boy of five assumes that a famous Irish giant must have “lived much longer than other men,” reasoning that “because he was so much taller,” he must have had “so much more time to grow.”

It is fitting that

Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Practical Education (London: J[oseph] Johnson, 1798), p. 297; for insightful analysis of that period’s (and our own) vogue for exhibiting children, see also pp. 138–139, 140–147. The original edition cited here is in two volumes consecutively paged. This edition was reprinted in facsimile (New York: Garland, 1974) and is also the copy text I am editing for Pickering and Chatto’s forthcoming twelve-volume Works of Maria Edgeworth. The annotations for the latter demonstrate Edgeworth’s thorough research and her very modern awareness that the construction of childhood subjectivity is pivotal to the construction of culture itself. Although Edgeworth’s Preface carefully acknowledges assistance with particular chapters from her father and others, most of the book is hers; indeed, family archives make it clear that it was the daughter who revived the registers of child observation originated by her first stepmother, Honora Sneyd Edgeworth, almost two decades before, and that the manual published as Practical Education was initially thought of as the daughter’s project. Throughout the period of actual writing, the guide promised to be, in the words of Daniel Beaufort, the father of Maria Edgeworth’s third and last stepmother, “Maria’s great work,” which she habitually referred to as “toys and tasks” until late in the game, when other family members were enlisted for help with topics like chemistry and classics. Edgeworth always assigns credit to her father, even when she did the actual writing, and in later years, more and more of the repute due the pioneering program accrued to him. The foundational role of Honora Sneyd Edgeworth, the second of Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s four wives, in the ongoing family project is outlined in both the Appendix to Practical Education and in manuscript letters of the time. The long-term educational experiment began in the mid-1770s with the birth of Honora’s children and involved adjunct publications that ran from 1780 to 1825, when the last of Maria Edgeworth’s lesson series was completed.

Practical Education, pp. 297, 741.
Defoe’s adult narrative, like Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, was among the first kidnapped by youngsters for their own and that both have so often been recast as juvenile adventures. After all, like every child, their protagonists are travelers in a strange land who don’t know the language the natives speak, seeking to survive and to figure out the way the culture works. We remember too that *Robinson Crusoe* is the only story that Émile’s notoriously anti-book tutor allows him to have, although according to Rousseau’s doctrine of delayed literacy, he wouldn’t have been able to read it before twelve.⁹ “Voyages and travels,” Edgeworth concurs, “interest young people universally.” And she remarks arrestingly that girls make wiser readers of wild adventures than boys because cultural observation early teaches them that oceanic voyaging is not on the typical female agenda, although navigating the world of sociability, the complex and implicitly political rules of the “social affections,” very much is.¹⁰ G. K. Chesterton nicely evokes *Robinson Crusoe*’s appeal from a child’s point of view, as depicting a society in miniature that demonstrates how the larger world works. Defoe “celebrates the poetry of limits, nay, even the wild romance of prudence. . . . the best thing in the book is simply the list of things saved from the wreck. The greatest of poems is an inventory” of what one needs to survive; like the miracle of life itself, “everything has been saved from a wreck” and, like every child’s universe, Crusoe’s commonwealth must be constructed de novo, reinvented by a protagonist who can think matters through and make things happen.¹¹ Unlike most grown-up histories or the sentimental stories so popular for both child and adult in the later eighteenth century, Crusoe’s narrative is enabling fiction, like the “history of realities written in an entertaining manner” that Edgeworth and most rational women writers recommend.¹² Paradoxically, because Defoe’s tale shrinks a world into understandable terms, historians and literary critics, like

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⁹ “I hate books; they only teach us to talk about things we know nothing about,” exclaims Rousseau. *Robinson Crusoe* is the exception because it provides “an education according to nature,” revealing “a state in which all man’s needs appear in such a way as to appeal to the child’s mind, a state in which the ways of providing for these needs are . . . easily developed,” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile; or, Education* (1762), trans. Barbara Foxley (1911; reprint London: Dent; New York: Dutton, Everyman’s Library, 1966), p. 147.

¹⁰ *Practical Education*, pp. 336, 287.


¹² *Practical Education*, p. 338.
young fans, grasp real-life issues of individualism and empire, class and race, more clearly because it is fiction.\(^\text{13}\)

Paradoxically, too, Edgeworth’s “anecdotes from the nursery” illuminate not just the domestic space of home and family conventionally ascribed to women and children, but also their implication in the expanding public sphere of sociability and rational public debate, the two worlds of “abroad and at home” — the original working title of Edgeworth’s adult tale of 1801, Belinda, so much admired by Jane Austen and so adept in integrating child with adult concerns, domestic plots with eventful political history.\(^\text{14}\)

When Catherine Morland in Austen’s Northanger Abbey (1818) ironically misses “history, real solemn history” because the men are “all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all — it is very tiresome,” she echoes Edgeworth’s observations on the struggling child reader.\(^\text{15}\) “History, when divested of the graces of eloquence, and of that veil which the imagination is taught to throw over antiquity, presents a disgusting, terrible list of crimes and calamities; murders, assassinations, battles, revolutions, are the memorable events of history,” Edgeworth shudders. She warns parents and preceptors against the usual practices of regurgitation and sophistical morality: When the “ingenious indignant pupil” expresses astonishment at the murders and duplicity of tradition’s luminaries, teachers “will

\(^{13}\) For a recent example of Crusoe as a foundational myth of Western culture, see Ian Watt, *Myths of Modern Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

\(^{14}\) Practical Education, p. 775. Children play central parts in most of Edgeworth’s adult tales, and their activities (like the author’s numerous literary and historical allusions) frequently make political points, as the notes to the forthcoming Pickering and Chatto edition of Belinda reveal. This edition also reproduces the “Original Sketch of Belinda: Abroad and at Home, May 10, 1800” first printed in A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth, with a Selection from Her Letters by the Late Mrs. [Frances] Edgeworth, ed. by Her Children, 3 vols. (London: Privately printed Joseph Masters and Son, 1867), vol. 3, pp. 266–276. Several years before Edgeworth sketched “Abroad and At Home,” she had already used a variant of the phrase in “The Mimic,” a witty story appealing to adult as well as child readers, published in her 1796 juvenile anthology and its expanded 1800 version, The Parent’s Assistant [1800], 6 vols. in 2, in Classics of Children’s Literature, 1621–1952 (New York and London: Garland, 1976), vol. 2, p. 41. This facsimile preserves the separate paging of the original six volumes, so that page references correspond to the 1800 Joseph Johnson edition; “The Mimic” is in the fourth volume, the first in the second Garland volume.

\(^{15}\) Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey and Persuasion, in The Novels of Jane Austen, ed. R. W. Chapman, 3rd ed., 5 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), vol. 5, Chapter 14, p. 108. Although it was not published until 1818, Austen’s Northanger Abbey dates from the Revolutionary 1790s. Like Maria Edgeworth’s juvenile tales, Austen’s novels obliquely reinsert erased women writers into the period’s political discourse. Although Austen acknowledged her debts to Edgeworth, her numerous borrowings and reworkings have never been fully documented.
BELINDA.

BY

MARIA EDG EWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"A prudence undeceived, undeceived,
That not too little, nor too much believed;
That seemed, unjurt Suspicion's coward fear,
And without weakness knew to be sincere."

Lord Lyttelton's Insincy on his Wife.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON,

S. Paul's Churchyard,

1801.

Title page from Maria Edgeworth, Belinda, 3 vols. (London: Printed for J. Johnson . . ., 1801). Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
rejoice,” and they will caution youngsters against the “national pre-
possession” rampant in textbooks as well — a telling statement from an Anglo-Irish writer witnessing not only the French Reign of Ter-
or and its aftermath, but also the barbarities of the 1790s perpe-
trated upon the Irish in the name of English superiority. “The simple 

morality of childhood is continually puzzled and shocked at the repre-
sentation of the crimes and the virtues of historic heroes,” and children should be encouraged “to question the assertions . . . in books with freedom,” she urges. An Edgeworth daughter at seven, asked what she thought of the wife of Hasdrubal in Roman history, “said she did not like her,” first because “she spoke loud” and next, because she “was unkind to her husband, and killed her children.”16

We may be amused by the little girl’s sequence, but she embodies the Edgeworth child who thinks for herself, testing what she sees and reads against her own experience, in contrast to the period’s typical fact-crammed pupil trained by rote memorization.

However different the literary kinds that they choose or the histori-
cal periods within which they write, most authors who take seri-
ously the responsibility of writing to and about children understand that childhood is about power, balancing the young person’s need for autonomy and world-knowledge (Crusoe’s and Gulliver’s will and skills to survive) and the need for home, for a haven to return to: the conflicting yet interrelated juvenile rights to individual agency and communal protection that we still struggle to resolve. They do not sentimentalize powerlessness, nor do they condescend or talk down, as do some of the anecdote-takers noticed above. They re-

16 Practical Education, pp. 351–352, 740–741. Like many of the anecdotes that Maria Edgeworth draws upon, this one, dated January 1781, goes back to the earliest child registers. In several other entries Honora Sneyd Edgeworth’s original journal interestingly aligns American Revo-
lutionary history with the Edgeworths’ projected educational revolution; indeed, her first notebook (still extant in the family archives at Oxford’s Bodleian Library) opens with a handwritten overview of Western cultural progress. The 1798 manual contains many later instances of children’s blunt observations on what counts as heroic among adult historians. For example, the wife of the Carthaginian general, Hasdrubal, disliked by Edgeworth’s younger half-sister, is conventionally seen as perishing nobly when her husband supplicates his conqueror for life: “having upbraided her husband for his cowardice, [she] slew her two sons, and threw herself, with them” into the burning ruins of the city (Charles Anthon, A Classical Dictionary: Containing an Account of the Principal Proper Names Mentioned in Ancient Authors, and Intended to Educate All the Important Points Connected with the Geography, History, Biography, My-
respect children, and they give their young readers the truth as they see it, even if it is a hard truth. John Locke, whose seminal (and often strikingly liberating) *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) is one of several key influences on the Edgeworths’ anecdotal philosophy, was neither the first nor the last to emphasize truth-telling and survival strategies: encourage children’s curiosity and answer their inquiries, he counsels. “If I misobserve not, they love to be treated as Rational Creatures sooner than is imagined. ’Tis a pride should be cherished in them.” Children “are Travellers newly arrived in a strange Country, of which they know nothing: We should therefore make Conscience not to mis-lead them” because they “are Strangers to all we are acquainted with; and all the things they meet with, are at first unknown to them, as they once were to us: And happy are they who meet with civil People, that will comply with their Ignorance, and help them to get out of it.”

It is just adult conceit that makes us “slight the Thoughts and Enquiries of Children,” Locke observes; if we were set down in Japan, we would be bursting with questions too. Locke anticipates the Edgeworths’ foundational principle in recognizing the heuristic value of child-adult dialogue:

[S]uch Conversation will not be altogether so idle and insignificant, as we are apt to imagine. The native and untaught Suggestions of inquisitive Children, do often offer things, that may set a considering Man’s Thoughts on work. And I think there is frequently more to be learn’d from the unexpected Questions of a Child, than the Discourses of Men, who talk in a road, according to the Notions they have borrowed, and the Prejudices of their Education.

Long before Rousseau, who gets too much credit for educational innovation, Locke’s aside gestures toward the revolution in pedagogy that the Edgeworths seek to effect. Although some still erro-

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17 John Locke, *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James L. Axtell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 181, 230. “Civil” in Locke’s day, of course, means much more than “polite” or “courteous”; it is shorthand for knowing how to live in society, how to be a responsible citizen of the world as well.


19 Two centuries later, best-selling parental guides for fostering juvenile critical thinking and moral intelligence echo Enlightenment patterns that the Edgeworths (and to a lesser extent Locke) embody. However different the language from our own, the parallels between
neously remark that *Practical Education* is anglicized Rousseau, it is in fact a reaction against Rousseau’s pedagogy, for Maria Edgeworth’s beloved elder brother Richard, the firstborn of Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s twenty-two children, had been brought up à la Émile and had not turned out well. Nevertheless, we can all recall resonant passages from Rousseau that also color the Edgeworth enterprise. For example, from the “Author’s Preface” to *Émile*, “We know nothing of childhood. . . . The wisest writers devote themselves to what a man ought to know, without asking what a child is capable of learning. . . . Begin thus by making a more careful study of your scholars, for it is clear that you know nothing about them”; or, “Childhood has its own ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling; nothing is more foolish than to try and substitute our ways.” One might have expected Rousseau to mention talking, but in fact his pupil’s voice is seldom heard. Indeed, Rousseau calls attention to the root meaning of *infans* as “one who cannot speak,” yet still continues to use “l’enfant” for the older child, signaling, I think, an important difference in French and English discussions of child talk and the cultural politics of childhood. And certainly Rousseau’s pleasure in the tableau of domestic happiness — “There is no more charming picture than that of family life” — is enthusiastically echoed by Maria Edgeworth, who uses private family portraits, as we shall see, to make public points about living with children that are both personally satisfying and politically regenerative.20

Thus *Practical Education* is not a book narrowly focused on bodily minutiae like breast-feeding or potty-training, as some might expect a child-care guide to be, but is instead a philosophical and psychologically grounded endeavor to re-imagine and achieve a

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reformed society. Practical Education is a remarkably insightful and candid examination of how children are initiated into cultural practices and how such acculturation can be revised. The book’s Appendix describes the origins of the family practices, and quotes from the Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid the manual’s informing theme:

If we could obtain a distinct and full history of all that hath passed in the mind of a child from the beginning of life and sensation till it grows up to the use of reason, how its infant faculties began to work, and how they brought forth and ripened all the various notions, opinions, and sentiments, which we find in ourselves when we come to be capable of reflection, this would be a treasure of natural history which would probably give more light into the human faculties, than all the systems of philosophers about them from the beginning of the world.

With characteristic professorial caution, Reid immediately remarks that of course such a project is not feasible. With equally charac-

Interestingly, however, Rousseau is as obsessed with maternal nursing as Locke is with regular elimination, despite the loftier aims of each; the Edgeworths have nothing to say about either.

Maria Edgeworth loved this passage and quotes it twice; although she gives the wrong book by Reid as the source, she breathes life into his subjunctive wish. The Thomas Reid passage is also reproduced in the “Preface, Addressed to Parents” in the revised and enlarged Parent’s Assistant of 1800 (vol. 1, p. 3), one of the most popular collections of children’s stories for well over a century, as Edgeworth herself notes. There she cites “Dr. Reid on the Intellectual Powers of Man”; the Appendix to Practical Education, p. 734, gives “Dr. Reid's Essays.” The passage is really from the Introduction to Section 2 of An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense [1764, rev. ed., 1785], The Works of Thomas Reid, ed. Sir William Hamilton, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: Maclachlan and Stewart; London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1863), vol. 1, pp. 93–211, not from Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (Edinburgh: John Bell; London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1785), as Edgeworth misremembers. Thomas Reid is still being cited today as foundational to thinking about the child mind: See Pritchard, Reasonable Children, p. 198, for the numerous references to Reid’s thought that inform the whole book. In her useful work on published and unpublished nineteenth-century child-study journals, Carolyn Steedman fails to recognize their Enlightenment origins, even when a manuscript record begun in 1812 copies from the Edgeworths the inspirational Thomas Reid passage (miscited by Steedman as “Read”); see Chapter 4, “Learning the Social World: Children’s Use of Writing,” in The Tidy House: Little Girls Writing (1982; reprint London: Virago, 1987), pp. 85–109, and also the archival references for this chapter. Similarly, the recent publication of annotated editions of Elizabeth Gaskell’s and Sophia Holland’s child observations occludes eighteenth-century origins, so much so that a reviewer can conclude by remarking that “the business of being a baby or a mother remains remarkably constant,” somehow outside historical contexts; see Fiona
teristic Enlightenment curiosity and joie de vivre, the Edgeworths set about recording that juvenile history and spinning off literary genres based on it.

The Edgeworths wanted to rethink education from the child’s level up, so to speak, rather than from the theoretician’s precepts down. Hence the title *Practical Education*, which even now continues to generate confusion in literary and educational histories (especially when commentators seem not to have read the manual in full and within its historical context). The title was not meant to suggest a rationalistic, mechanistic, unimaginative, or narrowly utilitarian educational program, although that is how many early nineteenth-century Romantics and their more recent descendants have misread the volume. The Edgeworths use “practical” in the ordinary dictionary senses of, first, concerned with the application of knowledge to useful, workable, and sensible ends, as opposed to theory and speculation; secondly, concerned with everyday activities; and, thirdly and most importantly, derived from actual practice: “We have chosen the title of Practical Education, to point out that we rely entirely upon practice and experience,” all examples and advice included being “authorized by experience.” To muddy matters more, the first two little stories of the fifty-year Edgeworth family project also bear the title of *Practical Education*. They were written by Honora Sneyd, the first of Edgeworth’s three stepmothers, and published together after her death in 1780. This tiny book was later considerably revised by Maria Edgeworth and republished as the first of the Harry and Lucy stories in a ten-part series for very young readers, the *Early Lessons* of 1801.

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Footnotes:

23 *Practical Education*, pp. v, ix.


Honora Sneyd Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education; or, The History of Harry and Lucy*, vol. 2 (Lichfield: J. Jackson; London: J[oseph] Johnson, 1780). No copies of other volumes have been found, although correspondence mentions a third volume as well. Manuscript letters from Richard Lovell Edgeworth to Joseph Priestley and to Anna Letitia Barbauld name the wife as author, although Edgeworth himself later took over the author-function, so describing himself on some surviving copies. Only a few were printed; although Johnson evidently stocked the book, those extant have a family origin. The paternal preface (pp. iii–v) outlines the ambitious scope of the book as the initial “part of a work, the object of which is to unfold in a simple and gradual manner such of the leading principles of human knowledge, as can be easily taught to children from four to ten years of age; to inculcate the plain precepts of morality, not by eloquent harangues, but by such pictures of real life, as may make a Child wish to put himself in the place of the characters intended
dier still, the credit for the project, the methodology, and the tales themselves migrate over time from Honora Sneyd and Maria Edgeworth to Richard Lovell Edgeworth alone, although the manuscript and early published evidence is clear on who did what — but that is another tale and not my present topic.25

The family project began in the late 1770s, when Maria Edgeworth herself was a little girl, and the original thin registers, which still exist, record some comments on her, too. It concluded with the last of her Harry and Lucy stories in 1825. As Maria describes the origins of the Edgeworths’ instructional innovation, Honora Sneyd, the second of Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s four wives, found herself a mother with some ill-behaved stepchildren (including Maria) and two young ones of her own. Formidably bright and rather austere as well as beautiful, she, along with her new husband, read all the educational treatises and juvenile literature available. They were not much impressed, except by Mrs. Anna Letitia Barbauld’s Lessons and the philosopher-scientist Joseph Priestley’s popularization of associational psychology, which seemed to offer insights into why the family youngsters behaved as they did. Honora, as her stepdaughter puts it many years later, felt that the “art of education should be considered as an experimental science,” and that most educators had followed theory instead of practice — to put it more bluntly, that they never bothered to notice how children really did learn. What Maria calls Honora’s “plan of keeping a register of the remarks of children” was resumed by her stepdaughter in the early 1790s, and the published manual continually recurs to real life in the “hope that from these trifling, but genuine conversations of children and parents,” the reader will grasp the distinction between “practical and theoretic education.” Reid’s Utopian “full history of the infant mind,” she believes, might eventually become reality “if able preceptors and parents would pursue a similar plan.”

to excite his emulation, to give by the assistance of Glossaries clear and accurate ideas of every word, which is in the least difficult, and as much as possible to lead the understanding from known to unknown problems and propositions.” Like Maria Edgeworth’s later juvenile tales, it was tried out on a real child audience. After the second Mrs. Edgeworth’s early death, the project languished until Maria reactivated it in the 1790s. When she revised the 1780 story to include it as the first of the ten-part 1801 Early Lessons, she made a number of interesting changes, including holding Harry responsible for making his own bed instead of letting Lucy do it for him, as in the original. See Early Lessons, 10 parts [London: J[oseph] Johnson, 1801]. UCLA possesses the only complete first edition so far as I know.

25 See note 6 above.
resolving likewise “to write notes from day to day of all the trifling things which mark the progress of the mind in childhood.”

What is most striking about the Edgeworths’ cultural narration is how their child-centered response differs from, say, Kant’s answer to “What Is Enlightenment?” Positioning “Enlightenment” and “Tutelage” as definitional binaries and erasing the process that effects a transition between those two states of being, Kant pronounces in 1784:

Enlightenment is man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man’s inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. . . . “Have courage to use your own reason!” — that is the motto of enlightenment.

What the Edgeworths were most concerned about was how learners get from the one to the other and how they do so not theoretically but in the little matters of daily life:

It is probable, that if children are not early taught by rote words which they cannot understand, they will think for themselves; and, however strange their incipient theories may appear, there is hope for the improvement of children as long as their minds are active.

Here is an example of the thinking child mind, one of dozens scattered throughout Practical Education. It concerns Maria’s half-brother Sneyd, who is introduced at the age of nine standing without any book in his hand, and seemingly idle; he was amusing himself with looking at what he

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26 Practical Education, pp. 734–735. For those academic readers who theorize educational practices as matters of regulatory discipline and panoptic surveillance, I should stress that the Edgeworths did not advocate following children around notebook in hand. They repeatedly warned against letting children know that what they said was recorded. Children are necessarily objectified by the parental gaze to some extent, but the Edgeworths recognize that a child’s knowledge that he or she is performing contaminates the information, centralizing parental objectification within the child’s own developing subjectivity.


28 Practical Education, p. 760.
called a rainbow upon the floor: he begged his sister to look at it; then he said he wondered what could make it; how it came there. The sun shone bright through the window; the boy moved several things in the room, so as to place them sometimes between the light and the colours which he saw upon the floor, and sometimes in a corner of the room where the sun did not shine. As he moved the things he said, “This is not it;” “Nor this;” “This hasn’t any thing to do with it.” At last he found, that when he moved a tumbler of water out of the place where it stood, his rainbow vanished. Some violets were in the tumbler; S---- thought they might be the cause of the colours which he saw upon the floor, or, as he expressed it, “Perhaps these may be the thing.” He took the violets out of the water; the colours remained upon the floor. He then thought that “it might be the water.” He emptied the glass; the colours remained, but they were fainter. S---- immediately observed, that it was the water and glass together that made the rainbow. “But,” said he, “there is no glass in the sky, yet there is a rainbow, so that I think the water alone would do, if we could but hold it together without the glass. Oh I know how I can manage.” He poured the water slowly out of the tumbler into a basin, which he placed where the sun shone, and he saw the colours on the floor twinkling behind the water as it fell: this delighted him much; but he asked why it would not do when the sun did not shine. The sun went behind a cloud whilst he was trying his experiments: “There was light,” said he, “though there was no sunshine.” He then said he thought that the different thickness of the glass was the cause of the variety of colours: afterwards he said he thought that the clearness or muddiness of the different drops of water was the cause of the different colours.

A rigid preceptor, who thinks that every boy must be idle who has not a Latin book constantly in his hand, would perhaps have reprimanded him for wasting his time
at play, and would have summoned him from his rainbow to his task.²⁹

Yet he was, Edgeworth notes, unknowingly emulating Descartes and Buffon: “he was reasoning, he was trying experiments.”³⁰

But of course children’s understandings do not always function so handily as synecdoches of the Enlightenment, as the anecdotes, with their sometimes cheeky children, not always right or rational, also record. Advocating prostitution, for example, the six-year-old son of a lady of quality addresses the following to his mother’s female visitor: “I wish you could find somebody, when you go to London, who would keep you. It’s a very good thing to be kept. Lady. What do you mean, my dear? Boy. Why it’s when — you know, when a person’s kept, they have every thing found for them; their friend saves them all trouble, you know. They have a carriage and diamonds, and every thing they want. I wish somebody would keep you. Lady, laughing: But I’m afraid nobody would. Do you think any body would? Boy, after a pause. Why yes, I think Sir ----, naming a gentleman whose name had at this time been much talked of in a public [criminal conversation or seduction] trial, would be as likely as any body,” he chirps, having had an earful from the servants’ gossip.³¹ Or take these anecdotes from the 1780s of Honora Edgeworth’s firstborn daughter and namesake at about five, who “meddling with a fly, said, ‘she did not hurt it.’ ‘Were you ever a fly?’ said her mother. ‘Not that I know of,’ answered the child.” At the same age, asked by her mother, “Will you give me some of your fat cheeks?’ Z----. ‘No, I cannot, it would hurt me.’ Mother. ‘But if it would not hurt you, would you give me some?’ Z----. ‘No, it would make two holes in my cheeks that would be disagreeable.”³²

²⁹ This particular sample, with much other material on Edgeworth, was enthusiastically reprinted by the Froebel organ, Child Life, early in this century.
³⁰ Practical Education, pp. 55–57.
³¹ There are no quotation marks in the original dialogue, Practical Education, pp. 120–122. Servants as a dangerous influence figure in the period’s educational discourse very much like trashy television does in today’s guides. For the proliferation of juicy “crim con” or adultery cases in this period, see Lawrence Stone, Road to Divorce, England 1530–1987, (1990; reprint Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), Chapter 9: “The Action for Criminal Conversation.”
³² Practical Education, pp. 738–739, quotation marks as in original.
Detailed entries like these based on the family’s youngsters (Richard Lovell Edgeworth ultimately had twenty-two children) punctuate the text. The Edgeworths’ record of child-talk started a fad for parent diaries in nineteenth-century England and America; Elizabeth Gaskell’s, Bronson Alcott’s, and Charles Darwin’s are among the more famous examples. Because *Practical Education*’s method stresses interaction and reciprocity and records the real words of children, its discourse is not monologic but a dialogic space foregrounding “the simple language of childhood.” It is also a space where a woman author can be seen negotiating a duality of positions and voices, identifying with both “authority” and the children who are its subject. The work is thus of great gender as well as generational interest.

This vividly anecdotal parent handbook has been repeatedly praised for its innovative ideas and methodology by the educational historians who have noticed it, but it has no place in the popular mind comparable to, say, Pestalozzi’s, Froebel’s, or Montessori’s work, though it antedated them all and evolved a whole tradition of Anglo-American mother-teachers much taken with its interactive strategies. They, like the books that shaped their practice, have been largely erased from standard histories of instruction, which privilege institutions at the expense of household education.

Yet, far from being dry-as-dust works divorced from cultural politics, educational genres are deeply imbricated therein. In the period that might be called the efflorescence of the educative family — from the later eighteenth century through the first few decades of the nineteenth — many women writers like Maria Edgeworth were busy producing tales tailored for newly literate children and adult texts for the mothers, educators, and philanthropists who sought to produce in their turn varying models of cultural literacy. Although it has a great deal to tell us about its sociocultural milieu, its users, and its authors, this largely bourgeois, largely female literary production has long been undervalued and underutilized, mostly because it is middle-class, domestic women’s work. The Edgeworths’ pioneering example illustrates the cultural resonance of domestic pedagogy. Appearing in a politically charged moment and advocating revolutionary changes in educational strategies, the Edgeworths’ manual for enlightened parents demonstrates how instructional genres

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33 *Practical Education*, p. 735.
can encode political messages that would be dangerous to disseminate in other forms: teaching children, especially girls, to think, judge, and act for themselves in a savagely reactionary period took considerable courage and literary tact.

In Maria Edgeworth’s work, the family romance of education is both referential and predictive, now gesturing toward real-life detail, domestic and documentable, now seducing the reader into a promissory pact that will transform household pastoral idyll into actual cultural narrative. The “Notes, Containing Conversations and Anecdotes of Children” on which Practical Education is based enlist parental readers, especially mothers, to keep similar juvenile registers and thus to join in calling into being an alternative society. The Edgeworth anecdotes are proleptic, anticipatory, and most importantly performative: a script. They recruit readers as participants in the transmission of the text’s pedagogical lesson, adding to what has been learned through one family’s working with real children and thus helping to produce a different world. Disclaiming “Utopian ideas of perfection,” the guide does not “speak theoretically of what may be done” but “of what has been done” via “the uniform example of truth and integrity.”

The author engages the adult audience to dignify child study and to understand reformist pedagogy as the basis of a revisionary cultural narrative, thus making the domestic idyll of participatory openness that the manual records into a national political reality, a strikingly ambitious project in the climate of conservative reaction that the bloody French Revolutionary decades induced. “Education looks to the future,” Edgeworth emphasizes. To say that “We should never force any system upon the belief of children; but wait till they can understand all the arguments on each side of the question,” is, within this context, radical indeed. Child study may seem at first glance innocuous, yet the long-term changes it can generate are nevertheless revolutionary — and unstained by the guillotine’s gore.

Much recent scholarship in revisionist women’s social and political history and in feminist literary history and cultural studies now constructs alternative narratives that recuperate the historical pres-

ence of the female.³⁶ Whereas earlier historians tended to limit Georgian and Victorian women to the domestic enclave and to slight their educational, economic, and political contributions, more recent archival scholarship shows a richer, more nuanced participation in public life, an engagement in activities that destabilize the supposed boundaries between public and private spheres.³⁷ When Maria Edgeworth published the revised and expanded Parent’s Assistant of 1800, her extraordinarily successful and long-lived collection of children’s tales, she added an indicative epigraph from Aristotle: “All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced, that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.” The early translation leaves room for the domestic curriculum that Edgeworth and many other women writers favor, but more modern versions occlude the original revisionist thrust: “No one would dispute that it is the lawgiver most of all who should attend to the education of the young, for if this is not done in states, their governments are harmed.”³⁸

If Austen’s “real solemn history” is being rewritten as something other than what Christina Crosby calls “man’s truth,” an effacement of women and other marginalized groups from academic knowledge production, it is still a long way from counting in children

³⁶ To what extent the eighteenth century’s burgeoning print culture and the structural transformation of the public sphere theorized by the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas and others welcomed women has generated a large literature.


³⁸ It comes from the Politics 8, section 1, but so far I have not been able to identify the exact translation that Edgeworth cites; it can be found in some older quotation compendiums in this form, but without reference to the edition. This early translation is more aggressively worded than all the later versions I have seen, including authoritative modern editions like that cited in the text, Aristotle’s Politics, trans. with Commentaries and Glossary by Hippocrates G. Apostle and Lloyd P. Gerson (Grinnell, Iowa: Peripatetic Press, 1986), Book 8, section 1, p. 222.
and the literatures that concern them. Like Edgeworth’s, my paper’s epigraph is intentionally provocative to call attention to the educating mothers absent from Émile and to the private sphere seldom noticed in histories of instruction, an overstatement that ignores men of the past and present sensitive to child talk: Arnaud Berquin (whose juvenile tales and plays much influenced eighteenth-century children’s literature); Richard Lovell Edgeworth; his Lunar Society friends Erasmus Darwin, Thomas Day, and Josiah Wedgwood II (son of the famous potter and also a parental diary keeper); Mrs. Barbauld’s brother and co-author for children, John Aikin; William Godwin (after his tutelage by Mary Wollstonecraft); and Charles Darwin (grandson of Erasmus and often mistaken in pedagogical discourse as the founder of the child register), not to mention historical experts institutionalized in educational overviews — and modern mentors like D. W. Winnicott and Dr. Benjamin Spock or book collectors like Lloyd E. Cotsen. An epigraph more indicative for my argument would highlight the connection between juvenile pedagogy and national governance, as does Jeremy Bentham, whose stodgy style Maria Edgeworth deplored, but whose vision of a reformed and accountable government apparatus and whose central principle of the greatest secular happiness for the greatest number of citizens she found appealing.

Crosby remarks that post-Enlightenment British thought produces history as “man’s truth, the truth of a necessarily historical Humanity, which in turn requires that ‘women’ be outside history. . . . ‘Women’ are the unhistorical other of history”: The Ends of History, Victorians and “The Woman Question” (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p. 1.


Right now, when Bentham has a bad academic press as the evil genius of universal surveillance and discipline, a sort of Michel Foucault avant la lettre, we have to work to imagine ourselves back into the heady days when terms like “Enlightenment” and “rational philosophical reform” promised a just society for all. For example, in the 1776 Preface to the first edition of A Fragment on Government; or, A Comment on the Commentaries (a scathing critique of Blackstone on English law), Bentham proclaims that the “age we live in is a busy age . . . in which knowledge is rapidly advancing towards perfection. In the natural world, in particular, every thing teems with discovery and with improvement . . . Correspondent to discovery and improvement in the natural world is reformation in the moral,” in The Works of Jeremy Bentham, ed. John Bowring, (1839–1843; reprint New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), vol. 1, p. 227.
In *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham explores the “Limits between Private Ethics and the Art of Legislation”:

Now human creatures, considered with respect to the maturity of their faculties, are either in an adult, or in a non-adult state. The art of government, in as far as it concerns the direction of the actions of persons in a non-adult state, may be termed the art of education. In so far as this business is entrusted with those who, in virtue of some private relationship, are in the main the best disposed to take upon them, and the best able to discharge, this office, it may be termed the art of private education: in as far as it is exercised by those whose province it is to superintend the conduct of the whole community, it may be termed the art of public education.42

Underlining this interplay between domestic education and national governance, a few years later Richard Lovell Edgeworth wrote to his and Maria’s good friend, Étienne Dumont, Bentham’s translator and popularizer, “We were much gratified by finding that our miniature system of morals in Practical Education is built on the same firm basis on which your enlarged system of Legislation rests — Utility, — and the greatest possible happiness of the whole.”43

This essay, then, contextualizes notions of national happiness to be achieved through an intellectually informed and emotionally engaged living with children: observing children, listening to children, playing with children, learning from children, and teaching

42 Bentham’s *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* has much to say about education throughout, but this key quotation does not appear in all editions of the work. See Chapter 16, “Limits between Private Ethics and the Art of Legislation,” section 5, in *Works of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. 1, p. 143.

43 In section 2 of his Introduction, Bentham spells out the guiding principle of his philosophy and life’s work: “Ethics at large may be defined, the art of directing men’s actions to the production of the greatest possible quantity of happiness, on the part of those whose interest is in view,” *Works of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. 1, p. 142. I am grateful to the Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Geneva, for permission to quote from Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s letter of 18 September 1866. A few of Maria Edgeworth’s many letters to Dumont, who remained a friend long after her father’s death, were printed in much-garbled form by Rowland Grey, “Maria Edgeworth and Étienne Dumont,” *Dublin Review* 145 (1909): 239–265. Grey sought to discover a nonexistent romance, but the archive’s importance is its delineation of how a woman writer thinks politically, of how a daughter and an author connects her domestic affections with her clear-sighted analysis of public events.
children, sometimes from books, but most often from talk, the ques-
tions, answers, and chitchat of ordinary everyday conversation. Edgeworth’s chapter titles like “Toys,” “Tasks,” “Attention,” and “Books” simultaneously signify the down-to-earth (a child’s task, of course, is what we would call homework, specifically, here, learning to read) and a sophisticated rethinking of the taken-for-granted: from streamlining reading pedagogy to understanding children’s play as their developmental work. These key chapters name for Edgeworth interrelated ways for understanding how the culture operates. Together, they function as a synecdoche for Practical Education’s holistic pedagogy. In investigating household lessons between children and adults as conducted via dialogic interchange within a particular historical context, in discussing one ambitious educational manual and the remarkable family whose pioneering pedagogical project spanned a half-century, I am also arguing for the larger importance of writing for and about children within culture. Instead of inhabiting a shabby ghetto in the university curriculum or a few footnotes in standard “grown-up” literary histories, the study of writing for and about children should be, I suggest, at the heart of both curricular revision and cultural studies, for, as the Edgeworths emphasize repeatedly, children and their socialization are foundational, constitutive not just of individual youngsters, but of culture itself. Because observations of developing children and stories of growing up are tales of gaining power (whatever survival and coping skills are needed to be at home in a particular culture), I am stressing the link between juvenile pedagogy and national politics, between child-watching and cultural studies.

As all reformers have noted from at least the Puritans on, if one wants to change things, one has to start with the malleable young, whether the aim is Enlightened liberation or repressive indoctrination. Thus pedagogy, as Edgeworth’s work shows, is inherently political and implicitly public. Because it concerns power, the construction of subjectivities, and the reconstruction of the state and its institutions, pedagogy cannot be confined within the “private sphere” of the simplistic public/private bifurcation that has resulted in so many misreadings of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary and cultural history. Now that social life is increasingly understood as much more complex than was possible with the old

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44 See Practical Education, p. 714.
cubby-holes of public man versus private woman and child, it seems a propitious moment to rethink pedagogy, to consider educational practices and child observation not as the homely province of Dr. Spock's past and present, but as documents of more global importance, as in manifold ways, instances of "cross-writing" (fictions with dual readerships, authors with dual audiences). Here I am borrowing and even expanding a useful term for thinking about the complicated interchanges between child and adult that are the topic of the 1997 *Children's Literature*, the annual for the Children's Literature Association of the Modern Language Association. In the introduction to that theme volume on cross-writing, my co-editor, Professor U. C. Knoepflmacher, and I outline some ways that children's literature and other child-study genres transgressively negotiate boundaries and occupy multiple sites.\(^4\) In Edgeworth's case, cross-writing applies to more than the problematic traffic between child and adult, although that is of course central in *Practical Education*, with its dozens of real child anecdotes punctuating the pages of advice to grown-ups. Cross-writing also names the nexus between pedagogy and politics, between public and private. Importantly too, it gestures toward the striking intertextuality between Edgeworth's writings for children and adults, an intertextuality that also applies to her everyday life and her fictional art.

One children's literature critic has recently claimed that "mainstream adult literature" does not have much to say about childhood, even now. He suggests that one way to distinguish grown-up narratives from those for the young is to chart the occasions when parent and child "talk and listen to one another, directly and comfortably, as equals, seeking to understand," and he challenges the reader to summon a few episodes in adult fiction "in which parent and child are convincingly portrayed — without irony — talking and listening to one another, affectionately, and taking each other seriously as equals in mutual and loving respect."\(^5\) It is a question worth pondering, but Maria Edgeworth's work for adults is a notable exception, as demonstrated in both *Practical Education* and her


adult novel *Belinda*, wherein the verbal cross-writing and the visual portrayals of home education and domestic happiness echo both the manual and the author’s life, as I will show in closing. Whether in handbooks for parents or quasi-magic moral tales for the young, whether in juvenile literature or fictions for grown-ups, children in Edgeworth’s works are strikingly visible, and their ubiquity and importance, the openness and liveliness of the interchanges between child and adult, need to be recognized as making a political point, at once critiquing the hierarchical power structures of the time and performatively enacting an alternative. Edgeworth’s stories do not demonstrate or “didactically” exemplify the points that *Practical Education* makes, a reductive description still often made by those who come to children’s works of the past with the notion that youngsters and materials for them are somehow out of history, always and everywhere the same. Less useful than asking how her tales reflect or reproduce her manual is thinking about both as intertextually related but different Utopian cultural narratives, interdependent fictions about how culture works that are founded on fact and appeal to fact. Purporting to describe the real and to make what is emergent become real, they validate themselves by appealing to reality, what Everyparent “knows” and can agree with. They enact or model a superior reality to encourage readers out there to do likewise in the real world and to make the ideal become true.

With its ready supply of children, the Edgeworth household provided both a domestic laboratory for educational experiment and an always-eager audience. Like many writers of children’s books, Maria Edgeworth began writing for children whom she knew, telling her siblings the stories orally from a slate and producing finished text only when the child auditors approved. It is important to notice too that the Edgeworth children heard the reading aloud of adult novels and pronounced critical judgment on what their sister had written for grown-ups as well; they did not occupy a separate nursery world but, just as in the Edgeworths’ published educational ideology, lived in actual fact in the midst of the family. The daughter’s writing, the estate business, and the children’s lessons and play were

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47 That actual parents did see and use the guide very much as the Edgeworths intended is evident in the author’s correspondence and conversations published and unpublished, examples too numerous to cite here. Maria Edgeworth also corresponded with lots of children, and many youngsters thought of her as the real-life mother of the fictional protagonists in her juvenile tales.
conducted in the family library, as many visitors and the family letters and observational records note. It is this cross-generational representational space that makes the Edgeworths so fascinating to work with. The household exemplified in itself what I have called “cross-writing”: authors and works that transgress the usual demarcations separating children’s from adult’s literature, juvenile from adult worlds. Maria Edgeworth’s tales for children and adults are notable examples of cross-writing, because adults read her children’s stories (“Simple Susan” was a particular favorite of Sir Walter Scott and others), and children play pivotal parts in her grown-up tales as well as in the juvenile narratives. The tales constitute cross-writing politically, too, for they imagine children’s “private” domestic activities in relationship to a “public” political world.

The migration of a real family portrait into a popular novel, Belinda, and the movement of the drawing in that tale from “A Family Party” to a national exhibition illustrate the point. Although dated 1787 in Marilyn Butler’s standard literary biography of Edgeworth, in selections from Edgeworth letters, and in catalogues of Irish portraits, Adam Buck’s oval watercolor on paper thirteen by eighteen inches was really done in 1789. The year on the back looks like 1787, but is revealed as 1789 with a magnifying glass, the single date that matches the configuration of children. Buck’s is the only authentic representation of Maria Edgeworth, except for a few photographs showing her in extreme old age. Several apocryphal portraits exist, including the one in the Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland, but Edgeworth was always adamant about not having her likeness taken. She grew up thinking herself ugly as well as unloved and always said that she wanted people to take her likeness from what she wrote.

This emblematic family watercolor is fascinating for multiple reasons besides its being unique as a portrait of the author and the educative family about whom she so often writes. It is the picture behind the picture not only for Practical Education, the 1798 manual for par-

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48 Mrs. Christina Colvin, Edgeworth’s descendant, kindly checked the dates on the two family-owned versions for me in 1992.

ents, but also for numerous adult novels, such as *Belinda*, Edgeworth’s second grown-up tale, in which visual and verbal portraits of family openness abound. The Buck portrait illuminates the new child and the Enlightened educational process as well as the background and productions of one major early nineteenth-century woman writer.

Literally a conversation piece and a representative space, the educational process pictured here is that originated by Edgeworth’s second wife, Honora Sneyd, founder of the family methodology and probably the prototype for educative mothers like Lady Anne Percival in *Belinda*. Similarly, the real watercolor is the prototype for the fictional drawing in the novel that emblematizes the Percival family, a picture of “Domestic Happiness” displayed at a Royal Academy exhibition and thus neatly traversing the permeable boundary between public and private spheres. The colors in the Buck original are quite pale and fresh, with much pastel blue, including young Maria’s hat ribbons. Far from being ugly or plain as she so often termed herself, Maria is distinctly attractive, and one recalls that Byron (surely no mean judge) found her looks pleasing. At the right is a large geographical globe, the faces in profile as is frequent with Buck’s pastels. Richard, the eldest son, ruined by his father’s early flirtation with Rousseau and much beloved by Maria,
was still alive when Buck visited Edgeworthstown, but the heir is an absent presence. Smart, strong, charming, and insubordinate, he would not settle to anything, went to sea, deserted, wound up in America, was disinherited by his father, and died young. The central figures at the table conferring over the writing are Maria, born in 1768, the eldest daughter, and her father. In profile next to Maria is Emmeline, her next sister, standing. The little boy staring raptly up at Maria is Henry (born 1782), the eldest son of the third marriage; he was Maria’s special pupil, trained to be a doctor, but died early. The blond curls next to Henry belong to Charlotte (born 1783), Henry’s pretty and artistically talented little sister and a great favorite with her father; she died of consumption in 1807. The boy facing left with his arm extended is Lovell (born 1775), the eldest son of the second marriage and the heir. He was the family chemist and founded a nondenominational school that daringly educated Catholic with Protestant children, but was trapped in France as a prisoner of war for over a decade. Returning with a taste for drink, he almost ruined the estate till Maria took over the management for him.

Barely visible under Lovell’s arm is Sneyd (born 1786), even then interested in everything and eager to participate. He turns up in various guises in Maria’s writing; he is the protagonist in numerous child dialogues in Practical Education besides the rainbow experiment, and the prototype for one of the Percival children in Belinda. The father, Richard Lovell, sitting opposite Maria, is characteristically pictured with his mouth open in mid-sentence and his hands disposed in tutorial gesture. Behind him — and paying him no mind — is Anna (born 1773), who married the physician Thomas Beddoes, lived in Bristol, and became the mother of the Romantic poet Thomas Lovell Beddoes. It is her reminiscences of the first Edgeworth family which probably lie behind one of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s often-quoted letters about the unhappy children of the educating Edgeworths. The first marriage was unsuccessful, but the education of that union’s children (including Maria) was not what the picture and the family methodology depict. The woman with the child, her head ranged above her husband’s, is Elizabeth Sneyd, the sister of Edgeworth’s second wife Honora, who had died early after founding the family methodology and, just before she died, had told her grieving husband to marry her sister. He did, and
Elizabeth is holding the infant William (1788–1790) — there was a second William a bit later. The small figure in front of her is Bessy, Elizabeth Sneyd’s oldest daughter, born in 1781; she died in 1800, and her mother died in 1797, more victims of the family curse of consumption. The tall girl behind her, who frames one side of the picture as Maria does the other, is the second Honora, born in 1774 and dead the year after this watercolor. Brilliant, beautiful, a scientific whiz who also wrote stories, she was the oldest daughter of the wife the father had adored, and she was very openly her father’s favorite while she lived: she is the “Z” of the early notebooks. Five of the ten pictured children predeceased their father, and in 1798 Elizabeth Sneyd was replaced by Frances Beaufort, the last of Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s four wives. Nevertheless, through the partnership of the father and the daughter (who won love as well as fame through her writings), the idea of the family that this group represents was reconstituted within this family as well as reproduced within those of many readers. This portrait was often reprinted in educational journals around the turn of the century, including the Froebel periodical, *Child Life*.

What does this picture of teaching — what might be called a primal scene of pedagogy — teach us? First of all, it literalizes the meaning of “conversation piece” as well as the Edgeworth educational process; that is, it represents a living and talking with others, the back-and-forthness between adult and child worlds that I have called cross-writing. Conversation is the Edgeworths’ favored teaching method; Maria always satirizes rote learning and formal lessons separated from lived experience. The Edgeworths did not think much of the totally classical education that dominated the major universities at that time, although they were always pragmatists who did not expect everything to change tomorrow. Educational discourse is a means of power and social intervention; education in their lexicon can do literally anything, but it works gradually through language, narrative, and children’s learning. Second, the educational process is part of the representational space of everyday life. In contrast to Rousseau’s artificially isolated learner and tricky methodology, in which the tutor is always contriving deceits to hoodwink the pupil into what purports to be “natural” learning (Émile’s ubiquitous teacher pioneered surveillance), holistic education is part of daily life. It casually arises out of what happens as the young-
sters and adults go through ordinary domestic routines. There is not a separate lesson room; this table is in the family library, everybody is there, listening or not as they choose. Incidentally and indicatively, the scrolls on the table (so the back of the family miniature says) are not a formal lesson, but plans from the father’s long-ago engineering feats in trying to redirect a French river. He is telling a story, no doubt full of the anecdotes the family adored, about people and the places he has been.

Like the common room that the family inhabits and the narrative storytelling that is the method, the relationships among the pupils and teachers teach us about Enlightenment teaching at the same time that the children are taught. The figures are crowded, even jostling together, the restless children dispersing the viewer’s attention from the father, who is not positioned hierarchically as is almost universally the case in other contemporary family portraits. It is a revealingly informal scene, which is also unpredictable. Tiny children can be absorbed. Some of the older ones openly detach themselves. It is casual and informal to a surprising degree. Family legend says that Buck worked partly through individual sketches, and he deserves high credit for capturing so precisely the family’s circuits of affection, power, and disinterest so strikingly. The portrait is predictive as well as mimetic. In 1789, Maria Edgeworth had long been a writer, but was not yet published; yet the father-daughter axis is clear, although Buck avoids all positionings that suggest a hierarchy of roles. The family preceptor is within the family, not above it. The viewer’s position is much like that registered in the consciousness of the fictional Belinda (who has fled the intrigues of an aristocratic household for family warmth), and the politically attuned reader must recognize this paper’s argument in what the heroine observes of the Percivals’ “union” and “openness”:

Rousseau’s frank reveling in the tutor’s absolute power over his pupil is especially startling in the midst of Book 2’s many paeans to happy, natural childhood: “Let him always think he is master while you are really master. There is no subjection so complete as that which preserves the forms of freedom; it is thus that the will is taken captive. Is not this poor child, without knowledge, strength, or wisdom, entirely at your mercy? Are you not master of his whole environment so far as it affects him? Cannot you make of him what you please? His work and play, his pleasure and pain, are they not, unknown to him, under your control? No doubt he ought only to do what he wants, but he ought to want to do nothing but what you want him to do. He should never take a step you have not foreseen, nor utter a word you could not foretell.” Émilie, trans. Foxley, pp. 84–85.
In conversation, every person expressed without constraint their wishes and opinions; and wherever these differed, reason and the general good were the standards to which they appealed. The elder and younger part of the family were not separated from each other; even the youngest child in the house seemed to form part of the society, to have some share and interest in the general occupations or amusements. The children were treated neither as slaves nor as playthings, but as reasonable creatures. . . . the taste for knowledge, and the habits of application, were induced by example, and confirmed by sympathy.\textsuperscript{51}

To take the juvenile and the pedagogic seriously, to extrapolate large national concerns from small domestic matters: these late Georgian cultural moves signal genuine shifts in sensibility, as historians of everything from childhood and the family to education, consumption, and the French Revolution agree, however profoundly their explanatory paradigms may differ. It is not my purpose here to recapitulate the variant genealogies that purport to account for this new way of reading society. What I want to emphasize is how, in a very literal sense, this new kind of story people began to tell about their society locates the kind of culture that is my topic at the heart of cultural narrative itself. As Raymond Williams’ classic Keywords reminds us, “culture” is remarkably multivalent, “one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language,” yet from nominative to verbal through national ranges of meaning, notions of tending, of development, of what Norbert Elias calls the “civilizing process” inhere in the social meanings of “culture.”\textsuperscript{52} Whether we think about cultures polite, popular, global, national, folk, sub-, or fill-in-your-own-blank, we also need to consider the processes which brought them into being, including pedagogies both formal and informal.

Yet, ironically, during the same period that culture expanded its meanings and educational technologies, their social centrality, the

\textsuperscript{51} Belinda (London: Pandora Press, 1986), p. 196. The section in Chapter 16 of Belinda, entitled “Domestic Happiness,” is too long to quote in full; how the artist’s drawing of this scene circulates through the story, and how the tale interplays with the manual are likewise much more intricate than space here allows.

\textsuperscript{52} See Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 76–82.
concurrent development of specialized academic culture, of “Literature” with a capital L, relegated to primary classrooms and noncanonical peripheries those everyday, ordinary matters of how children acquire linguistic, literary, and cultural literacy. Teaching, writing about teaching, writing about teachers teaching, writing about children reading: these did not matter as much as elite analysis of what was agreed to be elite art. Only recently have the ideologies, certainties, and generic hierarchies that sustained this marginalization been called into question, and more prestige still accrues to analyzing continental literary theory than local classrooms. Nevertheless, the contemporary dismantling of traditional generic categories, the lively interest in historicism and reading practices, and the marketing of “cultural literacy” make this a timely moment to consider the production, reproduction, and consumption of historical educational genres. Instructional manuals for parents, for example, are not works that have conventionally been considered as “literature,” although, as this essay suggests, they are remarkably illuminating for a variety of disciplines and purposes. In them we can read everything from how a culture constituted subjectivity through language to how it assessed and passed on what Pierre Bourdieu has usefully termed its “cultural capital.” As a modern exponent of the Edgeworthian principle of “The Child As Teacher” remarks, “To look closely at child mind is to take it seriously. Children are small; their minds are not.”


“Make it a Pleasure and Not a Task”
Educational Games for Children in Georgian England

BY JILL SHEFRIN

In 1787 an English edition of The Elements of Geography, Short and Plain “designed as an easy introduction to the system of geography in verse, by Robert Davidson” was published “for the use of schools.” The dedicatory letter included the following passage, which seems to me to summarize the values of the English middle class in the second half of the eighteenth century:

How can a boy or a man know the excellence and glory of his own country . . . without some knowledge of geography? . . . Throw open [this book], read one page a day, with a sixpenny map of the globe before you: then go on to a small map of Europe of the same price: make it a pleasure and not a task, the knowledge will come as easy as singing to a nest of young birds in May. Persuade your parents to reward your diligence with a dissected map of England, which you may put together in five minutes, and learn its principal manufacturing towns and counties in one week.¹

The importance of learning through play, the perceived importance of travel, exploration, and imperial expansion, and the spirit of entrepreneurship are all here.

That spirit of entrepreneurship was critical to the development of educational games and pastimes. Publishers like John Newbery realized the potential market created by the popular application of John Locke’s theory of learning through play, as propounded in Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693). Eighteenth-century children’s

book publishers marketed their wares aggressively, not only through advertisements and publisher’s puffs within the text of stories, but with an inventiveness in the creation and marketing of spin-offs rivalling that of publishers of the late twentieth century. Popular stories — or portions of them — reappeared as dissected puzzles, writing sheets or table games, in abridged, pictorial, hieroglyphic or emblematic form. An identical plate might be sold (at different prices) mounted on linen and folded into a slipcase as a table game, or mounted on wood and cut into pieces as a dissected puzzle, or “pasted on boards” “for hanging up in nurseries.” The illustrations on the wall frieze or dissected puzzle were almost certainly the same pictures which illustrated the book, perhaps a single plate enlarged, perhaps the complete set of illustrations re-ordered to suit a different format.

Dissected puzzles, paper dolls, card games, table games, movable books, alphabets, and a wealth of other attractive items were created and sold by book publishers. These games and pastimes were often beautiful pieces of craftsmanship — engraved, hand-colored, carefully mounted, folded, cut or otherwise assembled — and very expensive. The wooden boxes for the puzzles were made from mahogany or cedar, and the puzzles themselves backed with thin mahogany board. By the 1830s they were mostly of softwoods — a trend that began around 1815 — but still relatively expensive. In Mansfield Park (1815), Jane Austen nicely delineates the level of affluence required to possess such pastimes. She describes the contempt the heroine’s more affluent cousins feel for her when she first arrives to live with them:

[They] found her ignorant of many things with which they had been long familiar, they thought her prodigiously stupid, and for the first two or three weeks were continually bringing some fresh report of it into the drawing room. “Dear Mama, only think, my cousin cannot put the map of Europe together.”

The content of the games was as varied as their appearance. In table games alone, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, vir-

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tually every genre of children’s literature and every subject of the curriculum were available. There were games to teach geography, history, religion, science, arithmetic, music, art, reading, grammar, languages, astronomy, mythology, morals, and codes of conduct. There were games and puzzles based on fairy tales, poems and stories, as well as on current events. New techniques in engraving, the development of the jigsaw (which allowed for easy production of the new dissected puzzles), and the increasing use of hand-coloring beginning in the 1780s all contributed to the quality of the finished product in a competitive market. Similar trends evolved across Europe. The Comtesse de Genlis, in her education of the children of the Duc d’Orleans, made use of such novelties as part of her “modern” program of education. In France and Germany the toy industry was expanding rapidly.

Although Locke’s ideas were not new, his words carried weight. He argued for changes in the principles guiding the upbringing and education of children. Children were *tabula rasa*, molded by their environment. With this went the assumption that children were innocent rather than sinful, clearing the way for an increase in secular works for the young. Locke’s most influential argument was his claim that “the chief art is to make all that they [children] have to do, sport and play too.” He argued for the institution of a system of rewards rather than punishments. His endorsement of educational, and specifically instructional, play, in conjunction with the expansion in education and publishing, spawned a whole industry and encouraged the modification of teaching methods. As well, eighteenth-century rationalism applied to the education of children demanded the inculcation of rational and moral behavior in conjunction with any and all academic subjects. Education itself began to be perceived as a science requiring the application of observation and experimentation to determine the greatest good.

The Abbé Gaultier, a French educator who fled to London during the Revolution, founding a school there for the children of other French émigrés, published a number of books of games for children, in both French and English, designed to teach geography, reading, grammar, history, foreign languages, and morals. He instructed the teacher to

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carefully remember that he is playing, while teaching; that the magisterial tone, menaces, and reprimands, are incompatible with the idea of this game; and that he has gained his point, when he has once instilled into the minds of children the desire of learning, by the certain hope of amusement. [He] thus become[s] the friend and companion of his pupils.⁴

According to Gaultier, who claimed precedents for his work in the writings of Plato, Locke, and Montaigne,

The custom of Games . . . offers four considerable advantages.

1. By rendering instruction amusing it prevents discouragement, the natural consequence which attends the dryness of the subjects . . .

2. It prevents [children] associating the idea of study with that of fatigue, (fatal association!) . . .

3. The method of Games is most analogous to the feeble organization of children. At that age, what can we expect from an intense application of the mind? A forced application, in some measure, obstructs the progress of reason, and is prejudicial to the unfolding of the moral and physical faculties.

4. In short, it tends, according to Plato, to instill good principles into the minds of children, and to render them of a good disposition; which may be looked upon as the first step towards moral perfection.⁵

Although his geographical games appear to offer little opportunity for play, merely introducing a little novelty into the pupil-teacher dialogue, in the Rational and Moral Game Gaultier encouraged children to think for themselves and learn to exercise their judgement, reflecting a gradual move to more creative teaching and a greater sense of interactive learning.

Throughout the Georgian period and afterwards there were different kinds of games for children at different levels of development:

⁵ Gaultier, Rational and Moral Game, p. 3–4.
alphabet and reading games, often dependent on the involvement of a parent or teacher; dissected puzzles; table games, usually for older children and focusing on specific areas of instruction; and card games, although for a large part of the period these were out of fashion due to their association with adult gambling (a development which reflected, in part, the increasing influence of the Anglican evangelical movement; dice were eliminated from table games for the same reason). *The New Game of Human Life*, published by John Wallis and Elizabeth Newbery in 1790, in a note on “The Utility and Moral Tendency of this Game,” offered an alternative which became the standard practice: “to avoid introducing a dice box into private families, each player must spin a [totum] twice which will answer the same purpose.”

A totum, or teetotum, was a spinning top with flat sides which operated on the same principle as a die but without the associations. Commonly made of ivory or bone, the earliest totums had four sides, each with an initial representing a Latin word. These later came to represent English words — “T for Take-all . . .  H for half . . . N for nothing; and a P for put down.” Some teetotums had the numbers or letters carved and painted on the ivory, others had printed paper labels bearing the numbers pasted on, and the instructions for one game read “A teetotum must be provided, and numbered on its several sides with pen and ink.”

This rejection of the forms of gambling was far from universal. In his *Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools*, published in 1797, Erasmus Darwin recommended “the early initiation of most children into cardplaying” as an easy method for mastering simple arithmetic. He qualified this with the caveat that cards were “not proper to be used in schools, where [their] effects on the passions [could] not be sufficiently watched and counteracted.”

And in 1804, in a review of *The New Game of Emulation* in her *Guardian of Education*, Mrs. Sarah Trimmer sought to reassure her readers that, in playing such games, children were safe from the dangers of gambling. “[T]hings of this kind,” she wrote,

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6 Totum = the whole; Aufer = to take away; Depone = to set down, deposit; Nihil = nothing. Teetotum appears spelled correctly either with one “e” or with two.


8 *Every Man to His Station* (London: Edward Wallis, ca. 1830).

are made engines of corruption in some degree, [and] whoever endeavours to make them instrumental to the culture of good morals, performs a service to the rising generation, which should not be passed over without its share of praise, and we are ready to give our sanction to this innocent toy.\footnote{Sarah Trimmer, \textit{The Guardian of Education IV} (London: J. Hatchard, 1804), p. 77.}

As gambling became less popular with adults, cards and dice reappeared in children’s games.

Playing cards were used pedagogically long before the concept of children as a definable separate market developed in the second half of the eighteenth century. Two types existed: regular packs of cards incidentally displaying geographical, historical, or other information on their faces, and packs in which the instructional component substantially modified the faces and rules, as for example, flash cards. There are a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century
German, French, and English examples of card games teaching grammar, arithmetic, geography, heraldry, and other subjects, and there is still a great deal of work to be done to establish what role these games did play in the formal education of children. In 1644, at the suggestion of Cardinal Mazarin, four packs were designed to teach the young King Louis XIV: the Kings of France; the Queens of France and other famous women; fables and gods and goddesses; and a fourth, geographical, set. French military cadets learned battle maneuvers and the construction of fortresses from packs of cards.

The first examples of the transformation of gambling into educational games for a juvenile audience appear to have been those developed for Louis XIV. Besides the cards commissioned by Mazarin, in 1645 the King’s Geographer, Pierre du Val, published Le Jeu du Monde, a game designed to teach geography to youth and ladies. He used the board from The Game of the Goose, replacing the goose squares with maps. In 1652 he also published Le Jeu de France pour les Dames, which was based on a draughts board; the white squares
Dilettevolle Gioco del Ocha [The Delightful Game of the Goose] (Italy, ca. 1700). Cotsen Children’s Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
remained white but the black squares were replaced by maps of the regions of France.

*The Game of the Goose* was the gambling game that served as the model for educational table games. The first recorded reference to it is from sixteenth-century Florence. Francesco dei Medici reputedly sent a copy as a gift to Philip II of Spain, and a version was entered in the Stationers’ Register in London in June of 1597. Played on the principle of *Snakes and Ladders*, it was a race game based on a system of random forfeits and rewards which followed a snail-shell racetrack and was played using dice. It continued to be played on the Continent as a gambling game for adults throughout the nineteenth century.  

The earliest English juvenile table games were geographical, as were the first dissected puzzles, and the earliest imprints — Robert Sayer, Carington Bowles, Laurie & Whittle and John Wallis — are those of publishers who were also map engravers and map sellers (not surprising in the eighteenth century, when John Newbery sold Dr. James’s Fever Powders, a cure-all remedy, and George Riley advertised the wares available at his “patent sliding, black lead, and coloured pencil crayon warehouse”). The first juvenile table game was designed by John Jefferys, a writing master and geographer living in Westminster. It was called *A Journey Through Europe; or, The Play of Geography* and was published by Carington Bowles in 1759. Its format was to become typical of the geographical games. The rules were based on *The Game of the Goose*, but the board was a map rather than a track. These games, whether of Great Britain, Europe, or the world, invariably ended in London, where the game was won. Games of Europe generally followed the routes for the Grand Tour, and several geographical games make reference to

"Table games were fashionable with adults in France throughout the eighteenth century. There were allegorical games (usually romantic rather than religious) and political games, the latter often celebrating contemporary events such as French military victories. One interesting example is the *Jeu de la Révolution Française*, modelled on *The Game of the Goose* and published in 1791. The game opens with the fall of the Bastille and proceeds through the abolition of hereditary titles to the Assemblée Nationale. Milestones include the standardization of weights and measures and the granting of military pensions after thirty years of service. The goose squares, which traditionally allow the player another turn, are represented by the different regional parlements.

the most popular guide book, Thomas Nugent’s *Grand Tour; or, A Journey Through the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and France*, first published in 1749.

The design of the table games was based on the travelling maps of the period: a hand-colored, engraved sheet — initially copper-plate, later steel-engraved or lithographed — was cut into rectangles, mounted on linen, folded into squares, and enclosed in a slipcase with an engraved paper label. The rules were engraved or printed along the sides of the sheet or printed separately and enclosed in the slipcase.

Dissected puzzles were probably invented by John Spilsbury, although there are tantalizing references to other possible puzzle-makers in the early 1760s. Spilsbury, who died in 1769, was an engraver and mapmaker who had been apprenticed to Thomas Jefferys, Cartographer and Geographer to the King. By 1762 he was already publishing dissected puzzles, and in 1763 he described himself as an “Engraver and map dissectioner in wood, in order to facilitate the teaching of geography.” His puzzles were sold in square oak boxes with sliding lids or, more economically, in chip boxes — without the oceans. The country or countries were cut along political borders, but the sea was cut randomly.

The puzzles quickly became popular. In a letter to her sister Emily in 1762, Caroline Fox, Lady Holland, wrote that she was raising her son Harry (aged 7) according to the plan of M. Rousseau — a reference to the recent publication of *Émile* — but that he also “reads fairy-tales and learns geography on the Beaumont wooden maps.” In 1765 a pupil at William Gilpin’s progressive school at Cheam wrote to his parents that he had “lost Flintshire” and asked, “do you think I can get another?”

John Wallis’s imprint and advertisements often included a reference to his Map Warehouse in Ludgate Street, and by 1812 he was describing himself as the Original Manufacturer of dissected maps.

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13 Although there are examples of both English and Dutch puzzles cut from maps which predate Spilsbury’s first recorded puzzle of 1762, there is currently no evidence as to whether these were mounted and cut at the time of printing or at some later date.
14 *Mortimer’s Universal Director* (1763).
For almost sixty years, he and his son Edward were responsible for many of the elegant games increasingly available to children. William Darton also developed a significant list of games. In 1787, in conjunction with Charles Dilly, he engraved and published the earliest surviving historical dissected puzzle: *Engravings for Teaching the Elements of English History and Chronology after the Manner of Dissected Maps for Teaching Geography.* The concept originated with John Hewlett, a biblical scholar and educationist. The puzzle consisted of rectangles, each with a medallion portrait of one of the thirty-two monarchs represented (up to George II) and facts about each printed below. The completed puzzle displays the monarchs in historical succession. Wallis, who had a good nose for marketable ideas, was publishing historical puzzles within the year. Classical and biblical history appeared in the same format, and in about 1795 George Riley published a variation on this chronological-biographical theme. His *New Geographical Tablets* displayed the national costumes of a number of countries above a selection of facts. Puzzles teaching historical or biblical figures were often also sold as sets of cards. *Scripture Biography, Exhibiting the History of the Bible* (ca. 1800) was sold by Wallis as a puzzle, as cards, and as a book.

By 1800 games based on maps of England and Wales, Scotland, Europe, other continents, and the world were available. Wallis’s *Tour of Europe* (1794) was designed for up to six players: the player pieces were travellers, and the counters assigned to each player were their servants, nicely defining the market audience for such pastimes. The winner is the first to reach London, “the first city in Europe.” Players must have felt like true tourists. At Oporto (no. 58), “the traveller having been tempted to drink too freely here, must as a punishment go back to Abo, (no. 14) and stay there one turn.” At Athens (no. 85), on the other hand, no time is to be wasted: “once the seat of the polite arts, [Athens is] now a place of little consequence, and subject to the Turks.” Topical references are everywhere: the traveller who lands on St. Malo (no. 52), is “taken up for a spy, and must therefore stay three turns before he can be set at liberty.” Wallis’s *Complete Voyage Round the World* (1796)

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17 The Norfolk Museums Service holds a dissected puzzle, *Sovereigns William I to George III*, to which they have assigned a publication date of ca. 1775, although it is lacking any imprint.

18 Again, Norfolk holds an alphabetical dissected puzzle of the *Inhabitants of the World*, also lacking an imprint, to which they have assigned a date of ca. 1790.
offered a wealth of contemporary incident: the convicts in Botany Bay; the Black Hole of Calcutta [1757]; Hudson’s Bay, where the player must “stay one turn to trade with the natives for beaver and other rich skins and furs”; and a lament on European slave traffic in Senegal, a prominent issue in the House of Commons in the 1790s. There were even pictorial maps, illustrating the products of different regions, and iconographic representations of foreign cultures, as in Darton’s *Noble Game of Elephant and Castle; or, Travelling in Asia* (1822) in which the pictorial squares of the game are contained within the outline of an elephant bearing a howdah.

Games for younger children taught the three R’s, especially the alphabet. A number of examples of eighteenth-century alphabet, reading, and spelling games for young children have surfaced in recent years, some of them substantially earlier than the geographical

In fact, I recently discovered a 1662 advertisement of the London publisher Thomas
games of the 1760s. Many of them, like the *Set of Squares* (1743?) published by Benjamin Collins and John Newbery here in the Cotsen Collection, or Lady Fenn’s *Set of Toys* — the *Spelling- Figure- [and] Grammar-Box[es]* — first published by John Marshall around 1780, were designed for a mother to use with her children. *The Child’s New Play-Thing*, published in 1742 by Thomas Cooper, taught both reading and spelling. Included with the book was an extra copy of the alphabet squares printed with a letter of the alphabet on one side and an illustration of a word beginning with that letter on the reverse. *The Child’s New Play-Thing* was intended to remedy “the tenderness of Parents [which] generally prevents them sending their children to school so soon as they have a capacity for learning.” Its preface offered suggestions for making learning the alphabet an attractive pastime. The *Set of Squares* was declared to be “upon the plan of Mr. Locke,” and a 1760 advertisement for *The Little Lottery Book for Children*, in John Newbery’s collection of Aesop’s fables, described it as “containing a new method of playing [children] into a knowledge of the Letters, Figures, &c.” By the beginning of the nineteenth century there were dozens of alphabet toys. Bone or ivory letters were sold in the same finely crafted boxes as the dissected puzzles, and pictorial alphabets printed on cards were often hand-colored, with an illustration on one side and a letter on the reverse. Some were thematic, displaying birds, beasts, or London street criers.

Lady Ellenor Fenn was another author-educationist eager to share her knowledge and ideas. In her introduction to *The Art of Teaching in Sport*, the companion volume to the *Set of Toys*, she wrote:

> Toys should tend to some useful purpose . . . Let [them] be such, as will serve to convey instruction, and the precious hours of childhood are improved to good purpose. . . . Letters ought to be the most attractive toys; the study of them, the most sprightly play that can be invented. . . . *reading must not be a task — No! it must be a lively amusement.*

— Jenner for “. . . A New sort of Cards, teaching Children to spell and read and play with; a small Book of direction to it,” in the Map Library of the British Museum.  
In these games, mothers are encouraged to teach and play with their young children. Fenn stressed the symbolic importance of motherhood. She viewed the “mother as mistress of the revels among her little people”\textsuperscript{21} and emphasized the importance of spending time with children both at home and outside, warning, like Locke and Rousseau, of the irreparable harm done by leaving children to the care of a nursery maid. She urged mothers to overcome their insecurities in the role of teacher and, like the author of *The Child’s New Play-Thing* a generation earlier, offered tips to assist less creative parents, particularly encouraging improvisation:

> It has been hinted to me, that young ladies, who are not yet accustomed to teaching, may be at a loss how to communicate to children the knowledge of grammar in a playful manner . . . a youthful mother may be glad of a hint how to improve her child in sporting with it.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} Fenn, *Art of Teaching in Sport*, p. 6.  \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 37.
In another echo of Locke, the author (probably Elizabeth Rowse) of A Grammatical Game, in Rhyme declared: “any study is most attractive to [children] in the form of an amusement.” Each square of the board describes a part of speech or punctuation. The final, winning, square illustrates three children, one of whom has just won the game. The accompanying text answers the query, “What is an interjection?”

An interjection you will find,
Denotes some passion of the mind;
As, when you indolently sigh,
Ah me! I never can apply;
Or, when delighted, you exclaim,
O! now I understand the Game!

First published in 1802 by Darton and Harvey, it was sold for 10s.6d., “with requisites for playing the game.”

Having learned to read, children could play with games and puzzles based on familiar stories. Popular adult and juvenile works reappeared in this form. William Cowper’s popular ballad, The Diverting History of John Gilpin, was published by Wallis as a dissected puzzle in 1785, the same year the poem first appeared, and this seems to have been the first pictorial dissected puzzle. Ann Taylor Gilbert’s “My Mother” (which first appeared in 1804 in Original Poems for Infant Minds and became a nineteenth-century classic) was published by William Darton in 1811 as a dissected puzzle, using the illustrations from the separate edition of the poem. The poem was so popular that not only were numerous imitations (“My Father,” “My Sister,” “My Pony,” “My Bible,” and so on) written and published within a few years, these too were sold as broadsides and dissected puzzles.

William Roscoe’s poem for his young son, The Butterfly’s Ball (1806 in the Ladies Monthly Museum and the Gentleman’s Magazine) also spawned numerous imitations, one of which, the poem The Peacock “At Home” (1807) by Catherine Ann Dorset, was even more popular than the original. In the 1830s the publisher Nichols offered for sale The Peacock at Home, a card game for children. Each player holds pictorial cards illustrating the invitees, which are surrendered as the dealer turns up the invitation card for that bird. The first player to
have all her guests invited wins the game. The first edition of the poem was illustrated with engravings after William Mulready, and the game’s illustrations are based on his drawings.

The importance of Protestant religious values in the seventeenth century had meant that parents placed enormous stress on the salvation of their children, even when this resulted in harsher treatment of them in this life. The more secular society of the eighteenth century maintained a belief in inculcating moral and social values, ensuring a continued didactic element in children’s literature and pastimes. French allegorical games (for adults) dealt with love or matrimony; English allegorical games were moral and religious. John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* first appeared as a dissected puzzle in 1790 (John Wallis) and in 1789 Carington Bowles published a puzzle, *Dissected Emblems*. The completed puzzle displayed two trees bearing, respectively, the fruits of evil and the fruits of goodness.

In the games, moral instruction could be allegorical, emblematical, or biographical. *The New Game of Emulation* (John Harris, 1804) was designed “to instil into the minds of young people... the virtues of obedience, truth, honesty, gentleness, industry, frugality, forgiveness, carefulness, mercy, and humility; and to [teach them to] view in their real colours the opposite vices of obstinacy, falsehood [represented by a weeping crocodile], robbery, passion, sloth, intemperance, malice, neglect, cruelty, and pride.” The player who landed on no. 42, Impiety, “loses the Game and forfeits all his counters to the pool.” In 1810 William Darton published Thomas Newton’s *Mansion of Bliss.* According to the advertisement, it was intended “to inculcate in the minds of youth the most necessary virtues, and to recommend the immediate paths to happiness, by choosing the good and avoiding the evil, which will purchase to themselves peace here, and the hopes of a brighter reward hereafter.”

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23 Newton’s equally moralistic *New Game of Virtue Rewarded and Vice Punished* (1810), also published by Darton, was illustrated with engravings by George Cruikshank (Cohn #594), who later in his career wrote and illustrated temperance stories based on traditional fairy tales. But the involvement of major illustrators like Cruikshank and Thomas Bewick (*The New and Elegant Game of Birds and Beasts* [London: William Darton, 1824]) also demonstrates the status of children’s book publishing by this date.
Some moral games relied on historical events or biographical anecdotes to illustrate their lessons. Published by Edward Wallis in 1811, *The Mirror of Truth* exhibits “a variety of biographical anecdotes and moral essays. Calculated to inspire a love of virtue and abhorrence of vice.” The winner is the first to reach the “Temple of Happiness” where she is greeted by the “Genius of Biography.” The engraved sheet displays game squares illustrating scenes from the lives of various notables, including Maria Elizabeth Buck, who “was attacked by symptoms of consumption, which terminated in her dissolution, August 18, 1809, aged eight years and six months.” An ardent evangelical, when she was asked if she thought she should live, she replied, “I think I shall die rather; if I were to live I might grow up to be naughty.” The biographical squares are interspersed with those labelled with vices such as Levity, Intemperance, Passion, or Ingratitude, harking back to the games of Abbé Gaultier. His *Rational and Moral Game* was designed “to form the disposition of Youth” and “to accustom them to have on all occasions a presence of mind.” Based on question and answer, the game offered a very progressive model. The child drew from a bag a ball on which,

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24 Gaultier, *Rational and Moral Game*, p. 11.
for example, the word “Indulgence” was inscribed, the teacher then related a “remarkable Event of History” questioning them on “what they would have done or said were they in the like circumstances; or, the reason why they approve or disapprove of a maxim or action proposed by the instructor.”

A number of the table games included historical or contemporary references, incorporated into the game as lessons in politics or public ethics. The rhymes dictating the progress of the players in *Every Man to His Station* (Edward Wallis, ca. 1830) contain four references to the evils of smuggling: the Customs House Officer (No. 10), the Smuggler (No. 12), the Excisemen (No. 22), and Contraband Goods (No. 32). In *The Road to the Temple of Honour and Fame*, published by John Harris in 1811, the player who lands on No. 37 is modestly instructed to travel to France as an ambassador “for the purpose of receiving from Buonaparte such concessions as will enable your country to make peace for the benefit of the world.”

Historical example also provided moral lessons in *The Royal Genealogical Pastime of the Sovereigns of England* (1791), a chronological race-game of the monarchs of England “from the dissolution of the Saxon heptarchy to the reign of His Present Majesty George the Third.” Of Henry VIII, players were taught: “He died in 1547; and as the treatment of his queens was so unjustifiable, the player must go back to No. 1.” Of course, morals were incorporated into other subjects, and many games contain strictures regarding fair play. William Darton’s *New and Elegant Game of Birds and Beasts* (1821) opens with a “Caution” or “Friendly Hint” that includes the following advice:

I trust all around me are friends,  
And will take what I say in good part;  
Should a word of my Caution offend,  
It would grieve me indeed to the heart.  
But I wish to put all on their guard,  
Against certain tricks I have seen;  
And think not my censure too hard,  
When I call them both cunning and mean

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26 “The Contraband Goods”: All your counters, good sir, / Must be seized as booty, / Paid into the store, / And secure’d for the duty.
I observe even those whom I love,
If they like not the number they spin,
Will the counter, or tee-totum move,
In hope by such cheating to win.

Improvement with mirth is design’d;
And the least we can do for such care,
While the moral sinks deep in the mind,
Is to play its rules open and fair.

Progress through the game is determined by the qualities assigned to various birds and beasts. For example, because magpie talks too much, the player landing on that square loses a turn, and the fox, a creature with no redeeming qualities, requires the player to “stop two turns, and let the Fox get the start of you: we cannot too soon get rid of bad company.”

Moral lessons appeared as emblems, rebuses, and hieroglyphics. In 1821 the well-known miniaturist, William Grimaldi, then in his seventies, designed a pastime to entertain a private house party. Using items from a lady’s dressing table as emblems, he assigned to each an appropriate virtue. The result was a form of pop-up book of verbal and visual emblems: the top flap shows a toilet item, the virtue is displayed underneath, and the whole is accompanied by an emblematic riddle. Thus, “rouge superieur” equals modesty, “best white paint,” innocence, and a looking glass, “Humility.”

Word-plays on any subject were popular. Wallis, near the head of the pack as usual, published *The Enigmatical Alphabet* in about 1790. It offered a series of verse puzzles; the answer to each is a different letter of the alphabet. The cards were sold in a slipcase with a key card. The riddles are quite elaborate, and clearly intended for children who already know how to spell. The letter “A,” for example is rendered as follows:

In wars and in battles I have ever been,
Yet where there is fighting I never am seen,
Nor do I in tumults or riots appear,
But if there’s a rabble I’m sure to be there.
Although the rhymes appear to be on a subject, the trick is actually in the stress on words in which the relevant letter appears.

Hieroglyphic books for children grew out of the European Renaissance fashion for emblem books which used abstruse symbols for intellectual and aesthetic ideas. Published hieroglyphic letters were popular with adults in the eighteenth century, but the earliest use for children was in Bibles. The first hieroglyphic Bibles were German, published in about 1690, and the first English hieroglyphic Bible was published in 1783. Religious pastimes incorporated hieroglyphics at about the same time. In 1790 Champante & Whitrow published a dissected puzzle of the Creed as a rebus. It was entitled Religious Amusements: The Belief in Hieroglyphics. And in about 1815, in yet another instance of the clever spin-offs beloved of early children’s book publishers, Wallis published Hieroglyphic Lessons, from Mrs. Barbauld, twelve hand-colored cards with passages from her Hymns in Prose (1781). Wallis published several sets of rebus cards: in 1791 a set of twelve cards entitled Hieroglyphic Amusements on the Following Subjects: Education, Modesty, Reputation, Vanity, Elegance, Religion, Knowledge, Curiosity, Applause, Reflection, Insinuation, [and] Complacency. Represented on Twelve Cards beautifully Engraved & Colour’d offered maxims largely based on Proverbs. The passage on Education recalls Locke:

As the young plant groweth as it is bent, . . . so is a young child in the hands of the mother. — Trust not a man-servant with the education of thy son, nor a maid-servant with the tuition of thy daughter.

There were also geographical rebus cards, and both Wallis and Harris published several sets of these. For example, a ram + a gate signified Ramsgate.

Although the design of the early games was mostly based on either travelling maps or packs of cards, there were other models. In 1793 Wallis published The Game of Musical Domino. It consisted of thirty-five dominos made of printed sheets pasted on wooden pieces. Music games were quite common and often extremely sophisticated. One of them was particularly recommended to “young harpsichord practitioners, who are often at a loss to know how many notes of the left-hand they are to play to a note or notes of the right-hand,
and so on the contrary way.” Goodban’s Game of Musical Characters (1818) was designed by Thomas Goodban and “to be had at all the principal musical shops in town and country.” It offered a comprehensive introduction to the subject, teaching “a ready and correct knowledge of time, the names of the notes in the base and treble clefs, the nature of intervals, and formation of the signatures in the major and minor keys, with the use and meaning of other marks and characters commonly used in the science of music.” Maintaining the tradition of borrowing from gambling games, a “connection and interest is endeavoured to be kept up from the beginning to the end, by introducing Fines and Rewards upon particular Characters, to prevent, as much as possible, its becoming tedious or insipid.”

The Dextrous Painter (ca. 1780), which worked on the same principle as a compass, taught children both art appreciation and science — specifically the use of magnets. It consisted of a wooden box pasted over on the upper face with a hand-colored engraving of an artist at his easel, and four magnetized wooden tablets, each with a different picture on the upper and lower face. The easel on the box is cut out to reveal a disc, which rotates to line up with the magnetic pull from the tablet placed under it. When they are lined up the same picture appears on the artist’s easel as on the upper face of the tablet. Although Mr. Blissatt, a “Turner & Toyman,” offered a commercial version, a child could also make this pastime at home. William Hooper’s Rational Recreations, published in 1774, provided detailed instructions on how to construct a copy. Hooper’s book was one of many offering instruction for children in the principles of scientific experimentation, although this is the only example I know of in which detailed instructions for the construction of a pastime identical to one available commercially are offered.

Another pastime originating in France was the Tableau Polyoptique, devised by the French children’s author Jean-Pierre Brès. The English publisher, Samuel Leigh, dismissed it as having “the imperfections incident to all first attempts. The views [he claimed] were contracted in their style, and very limited in their power of creating variety.” Leigh modestly described his own production, the Myriorama by John Heaviside Clark, a well-known landscape artist and drawing master, as

\[ W. \text{ Hooper, } \textit{Rational Recreations}, 4 \text{ vols. (London: L. Davis et al., 1774), } \text{v. 3, p. 147–148; plate 8.} \]
a moveable Picture, capable of forming an almost endless variety of Picturesque Scenery, and admirably adapted to excite amongst young Persons a Taste for Drawing, to furnish them with excellent Subjects for Imitation, and to supply an inexhaustible Source of Amusement. It . . . consists of Sixteen Sections or Fragments of Landscape on Cards, neatly coloured. These are so ingeniously contrived that any two or more placed together will form a pleasing View.

This was a pastime which also encouraged mathematical skills. The hand-colored aquatint cards, which form a continuous picture if placed in any order with their vertical edges matching, can be arranged to form a total of 20 trillion, 922 billion, 789 million, 888 thousand arrangements. Although myrioramas never achieved the same popularity in England as on the Continent, the concept was successful enough for two other publishers to bring out their own versions in the same year and for Leigh to offer his public a second series, also by Clark, in the following year.

The Dextrous Painter was not the only toy that could be made at home by the child possessing sufficient application and manual dexterity. Bernhard Heinrich Blasche’s Papyro-Plastics; or, The Art of Modelling in Paper was “calculated to introduce children to the most common and practical applications of geometry, in a way which occupies their hands, and thus enforces their attention, without any particular effort of their thinking powers.” The required tools included a bookbinder’s knife, a flat and an angular rule, a rule of scale, two sorts of compasses, “glue, gum arabic, paste, or wafers,” paints and “strong, stiff, and very smooth” paper. The objects to be assembled from paper or pasteboard include a chair, table, chest of drawers and other common items. Although published in England in 1824 when more frivolous pastimes were beginning to appear, Blasche’s didacticism was on an ambitious scale:

[I]ndependently of the mathematical studies for which it prepares the youthful mind, Papyroplastics . . . has the additional advantage of teaching manual dexterity, the knowledge of proportions, a taste for the arts of design,
and, above all, affording a salutary antidote to that listless indolence, that pernicious love of cards, or that rage of reading any book at random.²⁸

A second work, *The Art of Working in Pasteboard, upon Scientific Principles*, included an appendix of “directions for constructing architectural models.”

Paper dolls originated in France around 1700 in the form of “pantins.” A pantin was an articulated paper jumping jack. They were sold in engraved sheets and hand-colored. The purchaser cut out the parts of the body, pasted them onto thin board, and assembled them at the joints with thread and beads. Their popularity with fashionable Parisian society reached its height in the 1740s. But paper dolls as we think of them today, a single figure with multiple costume changes, were an English invention. The first English paper dolls developed as a modification of the fashion doll. Fashion dolls were sent out from Paris to England and other European countries annually beginning in the fifteenth century. They were originally life-size mannequins clothed in the newest fashions from their underclothing to their hairstyles. In the eighteenth century these dolls were reduced in size and by the 1790s English dressmakers had introduced eight-inch paper dolls as an economical alternative. A figure with six wardrobe changes, again including underclothing and accessories, initially sold for 3s., although the price dropped rapidly. Additional wardrobes could be ordered and, as fashions changed, the paper doll was still available as a child’s plaything.

*The History of Little Fanny*, the rhyming text of which has been attributed to Amelia Troward, was published by S. & J. Fuller at the “Temple of Fancy” in 1810, the first of their series of paper-doll books. These were mostly moral tales; the exceptions were *Cinderella*, and *Young Albert, the Roscius*. The latter, taking advantage of the success of a contemporary child actor, illustrates scenes from seven plays, six of them by Shakespeare. Judging by the amateur and published imitations, and even by the number of copies which have survived, it was an extremely popular series. The books sold at between 5s. and 8s. and were still in print in 1830; there were

American, French, and other European imitations. Unlike modern paper dolls, in the Fuller dolls the head alone moves from figure to figure. *Fanny* has seven changes based on her changes in fortune. The poem is a variation on the theme of the rule of obedience to one’s parents, and her costumes reflect the consequences of her bad behavior.

This is only a sampling of some of the most popular forms of educational pastimes of the Georgian period. “Popular” is a relative term, since the majority of these pastimes, although commercially produced, would have had a very small audience. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, bringing new mechanical processes to the
manufacture of games and toys and increasing the size of the consumer market as the middling level of society expanded, these pre-Victorian games — finely crafted luxury goods — represented a decreasing share of the market. By the middle of the nineteenth century there had not only been a substantial increase in the quantity of non-didactic games manufactured, but, as the toy industry began to take over, those produced by children’s book publishers represented a much smaller section of the market. By the 1880s the first of the large, modern London toy stores were opening their doors.

There has recently been much reassessment of the historical development of children’s literature, of the chronologically straightforward move from didactic to imaginative. Examples of books and games that predate Newbery, or are at least contemporary with him, however, suggest that children of the educated classes had access to a greater variety of both form and content much earlier than we have thought.
A FRAGMENT OF AN UNKNOWN MS OF THE ROMAN DE LA ROSE

A fragment in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of the Princeton University Library is the sole surviving witness to a lost illustrated manuscript of the *Roman de la Rose*. Though it might seem to be merely an antiquarian oddity, this single mutilated leaf, now known as Princeton MS 132.43, is both a tool for the teaching of medieval palaeography at the University and a crucial piece of evidence for reconstructing the characteristics of the lost manuscript from which it was removed.

Called a “Mirror for Lovers” (*Miroër aus Amoreus*) by Jean de Meun, its second author, the *Roman de la Rose* is one of the most celebrated vernacular texts of the Middle Ages. At least 315 *Roman de la Rose* manuscripts and fragments are extant, and these reflect the evolution of book production and patronage from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth century. Moreover, the *Rose* text and its manuscript paintings influenced the work of many writers,¹ and representations of its episodes and characters decorated medieval walls, tapestries, and other art objects.²

¹I am grateful to Jean Preston, former Curator of Manuscripts at the Princeton University Library, and Jeanne Krochalis, Professor of English at the Pennsylvania State University, who drew my attention to this fragment. I thank Willene B. Clark, Professor Emerita of Art History, Marlboro College, for her most helpful reading of a draft of this essay.

²Noteworthy medieval and Renaissance authors influenced by the *Roman de la Rose* include Geoffrey Chaucer, John Lydgate, Christine de Pizan, Dante, Guillaume de Machaut, Guillaume de Deguileville, and François Villon.


In 1387 Philippe the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, gave a tapestry with scenes from the *Roman de la Rose* to his brother Jean, Duke of Berry, and Philippe’s own estate inventory lists a *Roman de la Rose* tapestry among the seventy-five that he owned. Jules Guiffrey, *Histoire de la tapisserie depuis le moyen age jusqu’à nos jours* (Tours: Alfred Mame, 1886), pp. 39, 52.
The continuing popularity of illustrated Roman de la Rose manuscripts after the era of their production is demonstrated by their presence in the collections of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century bibliophiles, many of them royal and noble collectors. Rose manuscripts were owned by such well-known figures as Madame de Pompadour, Napoleon, Sir Thomas Phillipps, William Morris, John Ruskin, J. Pierpont Morgan, William Waldorf Astor, Henry E. Huntington, William Stetson, Jr. (the hat manufacturing heir), Hermann Goering, and J. Paul Getty, Jr. Manuscripts of the Rose, sometimes previously unrecorded copies, still appear from time to time in auctions and booksellers’ sale catalogues. Illustrated Rose manuscripts may now be found in public and private collections in fifteen countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the Vatican, The Netherlands, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (with examples in England, Scotland and Wales), and the United States (in eleven states from coast to coast), though the majority are still to be found in France.

Borso d’Este paid 9,000 gold ducats for five Flemish velvet hangings embroidered with “la istoria de Romanzo de la ruosa,” which hung in his grand hall in Castello, Ferrara, and are recorded in inventories dated 1476 and 1529. These large tapestries measured 5 meters high x 12.3-14 meters long. Nello Forti Grazzini, L’arazzo ferrarese (Milan: Electa, 1982), pp. 39, 48 n. 98.

Sir Richard Wallace owned two tapestries (4 x 4.2 and 4 x 4 m, respectively) showing scenes from the Roman de la Rose, made at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Displayed in 1876 at the Musée Retrospectif in Paris, they are briefly described as numbers 268 and 269 in the exhibition catalogue (Paris: F. Debons, n. d.) and mentioned by Guiffrey, Histoire de la tapisserie, p. 157.

The battle for the Castle of Love, made popular by the Roman de la Rose, is a common motif in small domestic objects, such as the ivory box and mirror backs reproduced in Raimond van Marle, Iconographie de l’art profane au moyen-age et à la renaissance, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1931; repr. New York: Hacker, 1971), vol. 2, p. 142, Fig. 128, and 419–423, Figs. 447–451.

3 I have located thirty-one Roman de la Rose manuscripts and fragments in American public and private collections. Twenty-six of these have illustrations or blank spaces for which illustrations were planned.

4 The most detailed description of the corpus of Rose manuscripts and the authoritative classification its texts is still Ernest Langlois, Les manuscrits du Roman de la Rose: Description et classement (Lille: Tallandier, and Paris: Champion, 1910), supplemented by the notes in his edition of the poem, Ernest Langlois, ed. Le Roman de la Rose, 5 vols., Société des Anciens Textes Français 47 (Paris: S.A.T.F., 1914–1924). Primarily interested in the establishment of the text, Langlois wrote only cursory remarks on the illustrations. In the years since Langlois completed his work, numerous changes of ownership, the discovery of previously unknown manuscripts, as well as losses by theft, fire, and war have significantly altered the manuscript situation. Langlois’ survey has been partially updated by several recent studies of individual manuscripts and repositories, but no up-to-date survey of all the manuscripts is available. I plan to provide such an updated survey in my forthcoming description of all the illustrated Rose manuscripts.
The poem was begun in the 1220s or early 1230s by Guillaume de Lorris for a woman “who is so precious and so worthy to be loved that she should be called Rose.” After writing 4,058 lines, Guillaume died, leaving the plot unresolved. About forty years later Jean de Meun, then a middle-aged scholar, completed the poem and enlarged it to five times its original length, adding 17,722 more lines.\(^5\)

The central story is an allegorized seduction, or perhaps a rape, in which the violence of the action often contrasts with the beauty of the language and illustrations. The poet Guillaume de Lorris, writing in the first person, says that he is describing a dream that he had five years earlier, when he was twenty years old. In his dream he wakes on a beautiful morning in May, dresses, and goes walking in the woods until he comes to the wall of an enclosed garden, on the outside of which are painted pictures of the vices: Hatred, Felony, Villainy, Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, Sadness, Old Age, Sanctimony (Hypocrisy), and Poverty. An elegant young woman named Idleness invites the narrator into the garden, where he meets a company of handsome, well-dressed young people who are singing, dancing, and enjoying themselves. He eventually tires of their diversions and wanders off to explore the garden. There he finds a fountain with the ominous inscription, “This is where Narcissus died.” He gazes into the water and sees two crystals which reflect the entire garden. His attention is then drawn to an inner

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rose garden, and he immediately falls in love with a particular rosebud which he sees there. When he approaches the rose, he is stalked and then attacked by the God of Love, who wounds him with his arrows and captures him. After the narrator, now called the Lover, swears his allegiance to the God of Love, the god instructs him in the ways of love and gives him his commandments. The God of Love then departs, and the Lover encounters a series of allegorical figures that alternately support and oppose his pursuit of the rose. Fair Welcome guides the Lover to his flower, but they are driven away by the gardener Dangier (sometimes translated as “Resistance”). The Lover seeks the advice of his Friend, and he debates the meaning of love with Lady Reason. At the end of Guillaume’s poem, Fair Welcome has been locked up in the Castle of Jealousy and the Lover despairs of ever consummating his passion.

Jean de Meun continues the story at this point. In a series of learned discourses and debates, Lady Reason, Friend, and the Old Woman who acts as Fair Welcome’s jailer, discuss the pros and cons of sexual love, elaborating their remarks with stories drawn from the Bible and the classics, especially Ovid’s *Ars amatoria* and *Metamorphoses*. The God of Love returns and, after confirming that the Lover has kept his commandments, he first sends False Seeming (or Deception) and Forced Abstinence, dressed as mendicant religious pilgrims, to Evil Tongue who guards the back door of the Castle. They trick Evil Tongue, kill him, and then bribe the Old Woman, who shows the Lover how to enter the Castle to resume his conversation with Fair Welcome. However, the other guardians soon attack the Lover and expel him, whereupon the God of Love sends his army to rescue the Lover and they mount an assault.

The defenders resist the assault successfully until the God of Love enlists the help of his mother Venus, who inflames the Castle with a burning “brand.” The defenders flee, the walls are breached, and the Lover succeeds in plucking the rose. The sexual nature of this victory is emphasized by the parallel narrative of Pygmalion and Galatea and their unfortunate progeny, and by a confession of the author’s own purported sexual exploits. The poem concludes abruptly when the Dreamer awakes.

The striking differences between the two parts of the poem in tone, imagery, and narrative structure have intrigued and exasperated scholars at least since the first years of the fifteenth century,
when a famous epistolary debate among representatives of the academic, clerical, and court elite of Paris, including Jean de Montreuil, Christine de Pizan, Jean Gerson, and Pierre and Gontier Col, produced some of the earliest literary and ethical criticism of the *Rose.*

Scholarly assessments of the meaning and influence of the poem have ranged widely. On the one hand, we have Félix Lecoy’s admiring judgment that “Guillaume is, in fact, one of the most resolute champions of that ‘courtesy’ which sought to give a new form to personal relationships and, more particularly, to the life of the feelings, in medieval society. His work proposes above all to show us in action the power of two fundamental points of this new code: unqualified, virtually religious respect for women, and love as the principal or essential condition of all true worth and perfection.” On the other hand, scholars such as John V. Fleming have seen in it the condemnation of the foolish Lover who rejects the counsels of Lady Reason.

Some readers may be tempted to agree with Dean Spruill Fansler that the poem is “an amazing jumble of heathen deities, allegorical vices and virtues, realistic duennas and hypocrites — so confusing that one well-nigh loses his way in the bewildering labyrinth.” For Maxwell Luria, however, the path is straight: “The *Roman* is, of course, all about sex.”

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MANUSCRIPT FRAGMENTS**

What, then, of the Princeton fragment and its place in the corpus of *Rose* manuscripts and fragments? As William Chester Jordan has observed, access to medieval manuscripts is “mind-expanding.”

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11 I distinguish between “fragments” which consist of only a few leaves and “incomplete manuscripts” which lack some leaves but contain more than half of the text.

Physical descriptions of medieval manuscripts — even of fragments — can aid our interpretation of medieval literature, culture, and history by supplying some of the material and social context for the works they contain, helping us to understand who created and read these works, when they did so, and in some cases why. Information about owners, patrons, and producers may be discovered in the manuscripts themselves in coats of arms, bookplates, notae, signatures, incipits, and explicits. Additional evidence of the interpretations of the text and its illustrations appear in annotations and drawings by scribes, illustrators, and workshop production planners who made the manuscripts. Comments added in the margins in later hands document the reactions of subsequent readers.

Roman de la Rose manuscripts were produced throughout an important 250-year period, beginning in the last quarter of the thirteenth century at the time of the flowering of vernacular medieval manuscript production, continuing through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and culminating in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, long after the introduction of printing. So many Rose manuscripts were produced that F. W. Bourdillon is able to assert in his seminal study of the early printed editions of the Rose that more Rose manuscripts have come down to us than early printed copies.

In a provocative essay on “Cutting Up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit,” Christopher de Hamel, Sotheby’s expert on medieval manuscripts, declared, “It is a truism first expressed by Sydney Cockerell that you expect all medieval manuscripts to be imperfect. Certainly very many illuminated manuscripts show at least some losses of what must have been decorated pages or have holes from the cutting-out of initials or borders.” Cutouts of text and pictures from a manuscript demonstrate the removal and preservation elsewhere of material considered relatively more valuable than the rest of the manuscript. The preservation of illustrated fragments from vanished manuscripts demonstrates the continuing appeal of their art and decoration when their texts have become

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unfashionable or their language or script unintelligible. Conversely, the re-use of parchment from old books as guard leaves, pastedowns, or as stiffening in the bindings of later texts, discovered when such books are repaired or rebound, shows that manuscript materials were recycled after their contents lost their value to later generations of readers. In “manuscript archaeology,” as in all scholarly investigation, individual artifacts are most meaningful, and revealing, when seen in the context of related objects of the society that produced them. Even for such a well-attested work as the Roman de la Rose, the close study of fragments in relation to more complete manuscripts can contribute valuable information for understanding the visual and textual traditions of the work. Fragments are important as survivals of otherwise lost manuscripts. In many cases they contain evidence for the construction of textual stemmata, used by scholars in their attempts to get closer to authors’ lost original compositions. In the case of a medieval text that survives in as many manuscripts as does the Rose, and thus for which we can with greater confidence speak of norms, we are able to assess the position of any fragmentary manuscript witness within the tradition of other Rose manuscripts, and to identify the unique or variant elements that it may contain.

ILLUSTRATED ROMAN DE LA ROSE MANUSCRIPTS AND FRAGMENTS

In addition to what they can tell us about the text of the poem, the Roman de la Rose manuscripts and fragments are an especially rich resource for the study of manuscript production and decoration. Not only do we have more illustrated manuscripts of the Rose than of any other vernacular medieval work except Dante’s Commedia, 

but the *Rose* illustrations are more richly varied and more innovative than those in the other works, including those of Dante. Rose manuscripts thus comprise a large body of evidence for the identification of artists and of style groups.

Most other illustrated medieval vernacular works that have been preserved in multiple manuscripts show relatively strict adherence to one or a small number of early models, with only occasional variation in the selection of subject matter. However, unlike the manuscripts of those other works, no two *Rose* manuscripts with more than a single illustration share the same program of illustrations. While the *Rose* manuscript planners and illustrators often included scenes selected from a group of favorite subjects which occur repeatedly in many manuscripts, they felt free to introduce new scenes and they varied their treatments of composition, iconography, and costume. Consequently, there are no easy or obvious solutions to questions concerning the evolution of the programs of illustration.

The *Rose* was illustrated, if not in Jean de Meun’s original manuscript, then soon after he completed it in the 1270s. Of the 315 extant *Rose* manuscripts and fragments, 243 (77 percent), including eleven fragments, are illustrated with miniatures or historiated initials, have blank spaces for illustrations, or have holes or missing leaves where illustrations have been cut out. In all, the extant *Rose* corpus contains more than 9,000 actual or planned illustrations. Eighteen *Rose* manuscripts have one hundred or more illustrations each. Most of the surviving fragments of the *Roman de la Rose*, as

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18 The earliest surviving datable illustrated manuscript of the *Roman de la Rose* appears to be Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana MS Urb. lat. 376, dated by Eberhard König to within ten years of Jean’s completion of the poem (“nicht nach 1283”), *Die Liebe im Zeichen der Rose: Die Handschriften des Rosenromans in der Vatikanischen Bibliothek* (Stuttgart and Zürich: Belser Verlag, 1991), p. 63. It contains ninety-three miniatures and one historiated initial. The earliest explicitly dated illustrated manuscript of the *Roman de la Rose* is Cologny-Geneva, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana MS 79 (dated 1308 by its scribe), which contains twenty-two miniatures.

19 These counts include only those *Rose* manuscripts and fragments which appear to have been originally intended to contain the complete text of the poem. Such manuscripts as Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson MS D 913, which are scrapbooks assembled from bits and pieces of earlier manuscripts, are treated as collections of separate fragments. Manuscripts such as Princeton University Library MS 153, which never contained more than brief excerpts from the *Roman de la Rose*, are excluded.
well as two-thirds of the complete Rose manuscripts, date from the fourteenth century.

We might have expected a large number of illustrated examples among the fragments because cutting out and preserving illustrations has been a frequent practice of collectors, connoisseurs, and dealers since the eighteenth century. More than three-fourths of the complete or nearly complete Rose manuscripts are illustrated. However, thirty-five of the forty-six known fragments are not illustrated, though some of these unillustrated fragments may have come from illustrated manuscripts. The surprising paucity of illustrated fragments may result in part from the fact that many fragments owe their preservation to their use as binding stiffeners in other books. This would seem to be a use for less valuable pages than those with attractive paintings, though there is at least one binding fragment with completed illustrations. It seems likely that some of the cut-out illustrations from Rose manuscripts may yet be discovered in uncatalogued public and private collections, but most of them, separated from the bound volumes that originally protected them, have probably not survived.

Even where Rose illustrations have not been executed or have been cut out, it is often possible to reconstruct the planned subjects (though not, of course, their particular iconography) by using captions, marginal notes to the illustrators, placement of the blank spaces or cutouts within the poetic text, and what can be determined by comparison with more complete manuscripts.

PRINCETON MS 132.43

Princeton MS 132 is a collection of fragments of medieval and Renaissance calligraphy comprising eighty-nine separate leaves and documents. It was presented in 1962 to the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections by Robert H. Taylor, Class of 1930, who intended it to be used as a resource for students learning palaeography.
Fragment number 43 in this collection is a single parchment leaf measuring 227 x 312 mm, from which two areas have been cut away and are now missing. (See photographs of the recto and verso of Princeton MS 132.43 in Figs. 1 and 2; see the Appendix for my transcription and reconstruction of the text in the fragment.) The language, from what can be judged in so small a sample, shows no strongly marked dialectal features and appears to be the common Northern French literary dialect. The text is written in double columns of thirty-eight lines in a bookhand of the second half of the fourteenth century. The recto and verso as marked have been incorrectly identified in modern pencil in the upper right corners. There is a tiny remnant of gold leaf from the frame of an illustration or other decoration in column a of the verso. One gold capital M (Mais) with red and blue background and white detailing remains in column a of the verso.

Based on my examination of the corpus of Roman de la Rose manuscripts, I can state positively that the Princeton fragment is not from any manuscript in a collection open to the public, nor does it belong to any of the manuscripts that I have examined in private collections. Thus, it represents a previously unknown and undocumented Rose manuscript.

RECONSTRUCTING THE ORIGINAL LEAF

Reconstruction of the missing portions of the original leaf requires some logical detective work. The two cut-away portions of the fragment probably contained two decorated initials and one miniature. Excision of the smaller cutout removed the beginning words of the last nine lines of recto column a (lines 10830–10838) and the ending words of each of the last nine lines of verso column b (lines 10932–10940). Because no signs of decoration are present in the margin above the cutout, it is probable that the smaller piece was cut out to remove something on the recto. A glance at what remains of recto column a reveals that no full-column-width miniature could have been present there because the remains of the lines of partially removed text (lines 10830–10838) are continuous with those that follow in column b (line 10839 etc.). Moreover, the missing beginnings of the lines would have taken up most of the cut-

24 Line numbers follow the edition of Félix Lecoy.
Figure 1: Princeton MS 132.43 recto. Manuscripts Division, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Figure 2: Princeton MS 132.43 verso. Manuscripts Division, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
away width of the column. Even a small miniature as narrow as one-third the width of the column would not fit the available space.

Having ruled out a miniature, we are left with the possibility of a decorated or historiated initial. Many *Roman de la Rose* manuscripts, including Lecoy’s base manuscript, have a verse paragraph beginning with a large initial *P* (*Poure*) in line 10835. Some large decorated initials in manuscripts of this period and style have flourishes extending from the initial letter into the margin. (See, for example, Figs. 3 and 4.) Removal of such a decorated initial, together with the flourishes above and below it in the left margin, would explain the smaller cutout.

Decorated initials were often cut out of old books and manuscripts and then sometimes mounted in frames or pasted into scrapbooks. An extreme instance of such removal was carried out by the children of an early nineteenth-century English book collector, who reduced a beautifully illustrated fourteenth-century *missal* manuscript to five artistically assembled scrapbooks full of cut-out initial letters — plain, decorated, and historiated — and strips of decorated margins. The children signed their work with their names and initials, composed of decorated letters cut from the manuscript. Working from the remaining fragments, Margaret Rickert painstakingly reconstructed part of the original *missal*. Perhaps the miniature and initials cut from the Princeton fragment suffered a similar fate.

The larger cutout from Princeton MS 132.43 is an L-shaped section which would have included on recto column *b* the beginnings of lines 10854–10863, whose endings are still present, followed by eleven more lines (10864–10874), opposite the eleven lines still partially present on recto column *a* (see Fig. 1 and the Appendix). The fact that verso column *a* begins with line 10875, thus continuing the text without a break, confirms this reasoning.

On the other side of this large cutout, verso column *a* would have ended with line 10903, because verso column *b* begins with line 10904 (Fig. 2 and Appendix). We can see at the top of this cutout area that verso column *a* lacks the last part of each line for lines 10890–10900; in the lower portion it is missing three whole

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25 Christopher de Hamel surveys this practice in his lecture “Cutting Up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit.”


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lines of text (10901–10903). Visible below “Viengne aua ...,” the start of line 10900, is a rubricated line that begins “Comment.” Note that in the area where the recto is missing eleven lines of text, the verso lacks only three, leaving a space eight lines high to be accounted for.

Just as for the smaller cutout at the inner edge of the leaf, removal of the upper portion of the larger cutout is not explained by what we can see on the verso. However, a large decorated or historiated initial on the recto in the area of lines 10854–10863 could explain the loss. The probable letter here would have been a large S (Sire) in line 10857 at the beginning of a verse paragraph. Again, we cannot be certain about the height of the lost initial, but the fact that a two-line high initial M (Mais) in line 10889 was not removed suggests that the removed letters may have been larger or more elaborately decorated.

As we have seen, the large L-shaped cutout would have been filled on the recto with eleven lines of text (10854–10864). “Comment” in verso column a is on the same ruling as “Et men porroient faire anuy” (line 10929) in verso column b, so by counting down in column b, we can see that there is enough ruled space for eleven more lines in column a on the same rulings as for column b lines 10930–10940. However, column a of the verso lacks only three lines of the poem (10901–10903). What would have occupied the eight lines of extra space on the verso? As we have noted, the rubricated line that is still partly legible immediately above this extra space begins “Comment.” This word is frequently used in Rose manuscripts and others of the period to introduce a caption identifying an illustration. The vestige of a gold leaf tendril, which may have decorated the frame of such a lost miniature, is visible next to the vertical cut left of the third line from the bottom of verso column b, supporting this explanation. These facts suggest that in column a below the caption there was a miniature painting followed by lines 10901–10903 of the text.

THE LOST MINIATURE AND ITS RUBRICATED CAPTION

What was the subject of this missing miniature? The text of the fragment begins: “Encore vous veil ie iurer” (recto column a, line 10801) and ends: “Qui les repreist de [leur guile]” (verso column b,
Figure 3: Forced Abstinence asks the God of Love to receive False Seeming. Garrett MS 126, fol. 74v. Manuscripts Division, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
line 10940). In the passage of the poem just before these lines, Forced Abstinence has led her companion False Seeming to the assembly of the God of Love and his barons as they prepare to aid the Lover by attacking the Castle of Jealousy. At first the God of Love is reluctant to admit False Seeming, but the barons plead with their lord to enlist the trickster and his deceitful methods into their army. In the lines preserved on the Princeton fragment, the God of Love agrees to follow the advice of his barons, and he appoints False Seeming his Roi des Ribaus (“king of the camp followers” in Charles Dahlberg’s translation, or “Lord of Low Life” in that of Frances Horgan).27 Obeying the God of Love’s command, False Seeming begins to recount examples of his trickery and to extol the uses of deception and guile in the pursuit of love. In the passage which follows that on the fragment, False Seeming and Forced Abstinence, disguised as pilgrims, travel to the Castle of Jealousy where they meet and kill Evil Tongue, one of the guardians of the imprisoned Fair Welcome.

Planners and painters of illustrated Roman de la Rose manuscripts often chose to depict one or more scenes from this episode. The most frequently represented scene at this point shows the God of Love, sometimes accompanied by his barons or servants, talking with False Seeming and/or Forced Abstinence.28 Other manuscripts illustrate this passage with the God of Love accepting False Seeming as his vassal,29 the God of Love crowning False Seeming his King of Ribalds,30 or the “pilgrims” False Seeming and Forced Abstinence visiting Evil Tongue.31

In addition to Princeton MS 132.43, the Princeton University Library owns a complete illustrated copy of the Rose, MS Garrett 126,
also made in the mid- to late-fourteenth century, with thirty-six miniatures, thirty-five of them illustrating the *Rose* and the last the *Testament* of Jean de Meun. Its *mise-en-page* is similar to that of Princeton MS 132.43, with two columns of thirty-seven lines each. MS Garrett 126 includes two of the scenes with False Seeming which we have identified as possible illustrations for Princeton MS 132.43. At line 10447 Forced Abstinence and False Seeming approach the God of Love (Fig. 3) and at line 10901 the God of Love places a crown on the head of the kneeling False Seeming (Fig. 4).

Although a large proportion of the illustrated *Rose* manuscripts contain one or more illustrations in this passage, only a few have the illustration at line 10901, exactly the same place where the miniature was cut out of Princeton MS 132.43. As indicated above and in the reconstructed text in the Appendix, the cut-out text immediately below the miniature would have been “Faus Semblant, par tel covenant . . .” (line 10901 etc.) probably beginning with a large decorated initial letter *F*. (See, for example, Princeton MS Garrett 126 in Fig. 4.) The manuscripts that do have a miniature at this position just before line 10901 show the scene in several different ways. In some of them False Seeming, alone or accompanied by Forced Abstinence, stands before the God of Love. In others, False Seeming kneels before the God of Love, who gestures toward him, as if to make him his vassal. A similar treatment shows the God of Love placing a crown on the head of the kneeling False Seeming.

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32 John V. Fleming briefly describes and situates MS Garrett 126 in its fourteenth-century context in *Sixty Bokes Olde and Newe: Manuscripts and Early Printed Books from Libraries In and Near Philadelphia* Illustrating Chaucer’s Sources, His Works, and Their Influence, ed. David Anderson (Knoxville, Tennessee: The New Chaucer Society, 1985), pp. 47–49. Lori Walters, “A Parisian Manuscript of the *Romance of the Rose,*” *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 51, no. 1 (1990): 37–55, analyzes its four-compartment frontispiece (fol. 1r) and author portrait (fol. 29v) in more detail, comparing them with their counterparts in similar manuscripts, including Paris, BnF MS fr. 1565 and fr. 24388, and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.324. A catalogue of the medieval manuscripts in the Princeton University Library is being prepared which will provide a complete description of MS Garrett 126. My own forthcoming catalogue of the illustrated manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose* will survey the entire corpus of *Rose* manuscripts and fragments, including those at Princeton.

33 Montpellier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire, Section Médecine MS H 246, fol. 78v; Paris, BnF MS fr. 1367, fol. 80r; Cape Town, South African Library MS G 4112, fol. 69v; New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library MS 418, fol. 150v; and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.324, fol. 74r.

34 Tournai, Bibliothèque de la Ville MS 101, fol. 90v; and Grenoble, Bibl. Mun. MS 608, fol. 90v.

35 Montpellier, Bibl. Interuniv. MS H 245, fol. 69v; Geneva, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire MS 170, fol. 82r; London, Gray’s Inn Library MS 10, fol. 67v; Philadelphia,
Figure 4: The God of Love crowns False Seeming his King of Ribalds. Garrett MS 126, fol. 77v. Manuscripts Division, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Figure 5: The God of Love crowns False Seeming his King of Ribalds.
Geneva, Bibliotheque Publique et Universitaire, MS 178, fol. 82r
Photo and permission Geneva, Bibliotheque Publique et Universitaire.
One manuscript shows False Seeming already wearing a crown as he talks with the God of Love.36

We can thus narrow the range of probable depictions in the lost miniature to three or four compositions, all of which occur at the same point in comparable complete Rose manuscripts. The illustrations which occur in these other manuscripts at line 10901 are all appropriate to the text here, and any one of them might have been used here by the artist of Princeton MS 132.43. The treatment with False Seeming kneeling to receive a crown is the most frequent, and it is perhaps the one most explicitly suited to the God of Love’s words in the lines immediately after the miniature: “False Seeming, by such an agreement you are now mine. You will aid our friends and never give them any trouble; rather you will think of how to raise them and to give trouble to our enemies. Let yours be the power of surveillance. You will be my king of the camp followers . . .” (lines 10901–10908; for the Old French, see Fig. 2 and the Appendix).37

Now, what of the rubricated caption for this picture? Several manuscripts which contain a miniature or have space reserved for a miniature at line 10901 have no caption at all,38 and a few others have captions which simply identify the character False Seeming by name.39 But the caption which occurs most often in manuscripts with a miniature at line 10901 begins with the word “Comment,” like the rubric in Princeton MS 132.43, and continues: “Comment Amors recoit Faus Semblant et le fait Roy des Ribaus de sa court” (How the God of Love received False Seeming and made him King of Ribalds at his court).40 Whichever composition occurred in the

Museum of Art MS Collins ’45-65-3, fol. 79r; and Princeton University Library MS Garrett 126, fol. 77v. A nearly identical composition occurs in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 2592, fol. 75v, in which the God of Love holds the crown in one hand toward the kneeling False Seeming but does not actually place it on his head.

36 Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal MS 5209, fol. 74v.


38 With blank spaces: Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Institut MS Godefroy 209, fol. 70r; Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS 5012E, fol. 56r; and the former Sir Thomas Phillipps MS 129, fol. 77v. With miniatures: Paris, BnF MS fr. 1567, fol. 80r; Cape Town, South African Library MS G 4012, fol. 66v; and New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library MS 418, fol. 156v.

39 For example, Paris, BnF MS fr. 803, fol. 78v, with a blank space for a miniature.

40 This caption occurs, for example, at line 10901 in Montpellier, Bibl. Interuniv. MS H 245, fol. 69v (total 41 Rose miniatures); Paris, Arsenal MS 5209, fol. 74v (70 Rose mins.); Geneva MS 178, fol. 82r (41 Rose mins.); London, Gray’s Inn Library MS 10, fol. 67v (34 Rose mins.).
lost miniature, it seems very likely that this was the caption in Princeton MS 132.43, and because this caption is so long that it would have filled two lines, we can surmise that the illustration itself was probably only seven lines high.

Other examples of the scene at line 10901 reinforce these claims concerning the lost miniature and its caption. Princeton MS Garrett 126 (Fig. 4) and several other related fourteenth-century manuscripts including Geneva, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire MS 178 (Fig. 5) and London, Gray’s Inn Library MS 10, have miniatures at line 10901 with the same caption and the same scene. Based on the similarities of these examples to each other and to what we can tell of Princeton MS 132.43, it would be reasonable to suppose that the lost manuscript represented by the Princeton fragment looked much like one of these.

RECONSTRUCTING THE REST OF THE PROGRAM

All the fourteenth-century Rose manuscripts that contain at least one miniature with False Seeming have extensive programs of illustrations, and each of those that remain complete has at least twenty-one miniatures. Thus, we can reasonably claim that the lost manuscript from which Princeton MS 132.43 was removed probably also had twenty-one miniatures or more. Because ten particular miniatures are present in all these comparable manuscripts, it is likely that these ten miniatures were originally included in the manu-

extant Rose mins. plus 5 mins. reconstructible on missing leaves); Philadelphia, Museum of Art MS Collins ’45-65-3, fol. 79r (75 mins.); and Princeton MS Garrett 126, fol. 77v (35 Rose mins.). All of these manuscripts are known to belong to Ernest Langlois’ text family N except Collins ’45-65-3, whose text has not been classified.

* London, Gray’s Inn Library MS 10, fol. 67v. Manuscripts in this group vary in their use of quatrefoil frames, which occur in all the miniatures of the Geneva manuscript, but only in the frontispieces of Gray’s Inn MS 10 and Princeton MS Garrett 126. Although the Gray’s Inn frontispiece has been cut out of the manuscript, its offset remains on the flyleaf, clearly showing the outline of a quatrefoil frame around a four-compartment miniature.

* These manuscripts are Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I° MS 4782 (21 Rose miniatures); Arras, Bibl. Mun. MS 897 (45); Châlons-sur-Marne, Bibl. Mun. MS 270 (29); Chantilly, Musée Condé MSS XIV H27 (49) and XIV H28 (31); Lyon, Bibl. Mun. MS 763 (22); Montpellier, Bibl. Interuniv. MS H 246 (74 mins., 1 blank); Paris, Arsenal MS 5209 (70); Paris, Bibl. Assemblée Nationale MS 1230 (24); Paris, BnF MSS fr. 802 (35), fr. 1565 (44), fr. 1567 (79), fr. 24388 (44), fr. 25523 (38), fr. 25526 (51); Florence, Bibl. Medicea-Laurenziana MS Acquisti e Doni 153 (89); Rome, Bibl. Corsini MS Coll. 55, K4 (31); Vatican, BAV MS Urb. lat. 376 (93 mins., 1 historiated initial); Madrid, Bibl. Nacional MS Vitrina 24-11 (31); Geneva, Bibl. Pub. et Univ. MS 178 (41); London, British Library MSS Royal 19 B. xiii (26), Royal 20 A. xvi (43), and Stowe 947 (23), New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MSS M. 48 (32) and M.324 (51); and Princeton, MS Garrett 126 (35).
script from which the Princeton fragment was removed. The shared illustrations are (1) a frontispiece miniature illustrating the Dreamer in bed, (2–7) portraits of six of the vices (Hatred, Covetousness, Envy, Sadness, Sanctimony, and Poverty), (8) Idleness Welcoming the Lover to the Garden, (9) the dancers of The Carol, and (10) the God of Love shooting the Lover with an arrow. Other illustrations are present in some but not all of the comparable manuscripts, so we cannot tell from them which other illustrations originally might have accompanied the Princeton fragment.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare the final illustrations in comparable manuscripts for clues to the intended emphasis of the illustrations. Six manuscripts agree most closely with the Princeton fragment in having an illustration at line 10901 with a caption beginning, “Comment.” Three of these end with illustrations of the military conquest of the castle, while the other three end with the love story of Pygmalion and Galatea.\(^2\) If we examine the larger group of thirty comparable manuscripts discussed above, we observe the following choices of final miniatures: ten manuscripts end with a miniature showing Venus inflaming the Castle of Jealousy; eight with the story of Pygmalion; four with the combat of Openness (Franchise) and Dangier; three with the defeated defenders escaping from the burning castle; three with the Lover plucking the rose or awaking from his dream; one with False Seeming and Forced Abstinence visiting Malebouche; and one with Genius preaching to the army of the God of Love.\(^3\)


\(^3\) Venus inflames the castle: Chantilly, Musée Condé MSS XIV H27 and XIV H28; Montpellier, Bibl. Interuniv. MS H 246; Paris, Arsenal MS 5209; Paris, BnF MSS fr. 1567 and fr. 25323; Rome, Bibl. Corsini MS Coll. 55, K4; Madrid, Bibl. Nac. MS Vitrina 24-11; London, BL MSS Royal 19 B. xiii; and New York, Morgan MS M.324.


\(^6\) Defenders flee: Geneva, Bibl. Publ. et Univ. MS 178; New York, Morgan, MS M.48; and Princeton, MS Garrett 126.

\(^7\) Lover plucks the rose and awakes: Arras, Bibl. Mun. MS 897; and Florence, Laurenziana MS Acquisti & Doni 153; Vatican, BAV MS Urb. lat. 376.

\(^8\) False Seeming and Forced Abstinence with Evil Tongue: Brussels, Bibl. Roy. MS 4782.

\(^9\) Genius preaches: Paris, BnF MS fr. 1566 (blank).
This variety of final miniatures in comparable Rose manuscripts reminds us that no two have the same program of illustrations, except for those with only a single miniature. Consequently, even if we were to discover another manuscript with exactly the same page layout and decorative style as that of the Princeton fragment, the two manuscripts would not necessarily have identical programs of illustrations.

CONCLUSION

In Princeton MS 132.43 we have identified a previously unknown manuscript of the Roman de la Rose. By comparing the Princeton fragment with similar Rose manuscripts, we have reconstructed much more about the lost manuscript than we might at first have anticipated. The description and transcription of Princeton MS 132.43 support our reconstruction of its missing text and decoration, suggest the probable caption, subject, and composition of its missing miniature, and help us to place it in the context of similar Rose manuscripts. We can even reconstruct a large portion of its probable program of illustrations. The fact that several complete illustrated manuscripts have informative similarities to the Princeton Rose fragment enables us to carry our conjectural reconstruction of the fragment and its manuscript matrix farther than we could have done had there been fewer comparable manuscripts to guide and correct the analysis, thus reaffirming the importance of looking at the whole corpus of Rose manuscripts and not just selected examples.

What we know of Princeton MS 132.43 and what we can plausibly conjecture about the manuscript from which it was removed will help us to identify any additional fragments of the same original manuscript that may be discovered. If and when such discoveries occur, the additional information that they reveal will enable us to expand our analysis of the Princeton fragment still further. Considered in its proper codicological context, even a single manuscript leaf like Princeton MS 132.43 can not only be an aid to teaching but also an important piece of evidence for reconstructing an otherwise unattested part of our literary and cultural heritage.
APPENDIX

In this transcription, manuscript abbreviations have been expanded. The word division of the manuscript has been respected, except in a few cases where it might cause confusion. The medieval punctuation mark punctus elevatus is indicated in the notes, but not included in the transcription. No attempt has been made to insert modern punctuation, but the cut-out portions of the text with word division, expansions, and punctuation have been supplied from the Lecoy edition.

Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 132.43:
Roman de la Rose, lines 10801–10940

[RECTO COLUMN A]

Encore vous veill ie iurer
Pour miex la chose asseurer
Par la foy que doi[t]¹ touz mes freres

10804 Dont nuls ne scet nommer les peres
Tant sont diuers² tant en y a
Que touz ma mere a soy lia
Encore uous iur et enioing

10808 Le palu denfer a tesmoing
Que ie ne beurai de piment
Deuant .j. an se ie ne ment
Car des diex saues la coutume

10812 Qui a iurer les a coutume
Nen boit tant que len soit passes
Or en ai ie iure asses
Malbailli sui se men pariur

10816 Mais ia ne men verres pariur
Puis que richesce ci me faut
Chier li cuit vendre cest defaut
Ele le compara sel ne sarme

10820 Au mains despee ou de gisarme
Puis quelle ne mot hui chier
Des lors quel sot que trebuchier
La forteresce et la tour dui

¹ The letter t has been expuncted by the scribe.
² A punctus elevatus mark occurs here in the manuscript.
Mal uit aiourner le iour dui
Se ie puis riche homme baillier
Vous le me verres si taillier
Quil naura ici tant mars ne liures
Quil ne n soit en brief temps delivre[s]
Faillir ³ li ferai ses deniers
[S'il ne li sord]ent en greniers⁴
[Si le plumer]ont nos puceles
[Qu'il li faud]ra plumes noueules
[Et le metront] a terre vendre
[S'il ne s'en set] moul[lt bien desfendre
[Povre home] ont fait de moy leur m[estre]
[Tout ne m'a]ient il de quoy pestre
[Ne les ai je p]as en despit
[N'est pas pre]udons qui les despit

Moult est richesce enfrume et gloute
Qui les viltoie et chace et boute
Miex aiment que ne font li riche
Li auer li tenant li chiche
Et sont foy que doi mon ael
Plus seruisable et plus lael
Si me sousfist a grant plen[t]e
Leur bon⁵ cuer et leur volente
Mis ont en moy tout leur penser
A force mestuet deulz penser
Touz les meisse en granz hatesces
Se je fusse diex des richesces
Aussi con ie sui diex damours
Tel pitie me font leur clamours
Si couuient que cestui sequeure
[Qui tant en moi] seruir labeure
[Car s'il des maus] damer mourait

³ Bottom portion of word cut off.
⁴ The cut-out portions of the text have been supplied from the Lecoy edition.
⁵ A punctus elevatus mark occurs here in the manuscript.
[N’apert qu’en moi poin]t damour ait
[ ... ] sponnent⁶

[Sire font il, c’est ve]rites
[Trestout que quan que v]ous reciptes
[Bien rest li seremenz ten]ables
[Con bons et fins et] conuenables
[Que fet avez des ri]ches hommes
[Ainsinc iert il certains] en sommes
[Se riche home vos font] homm[age]

Il ne feront mie que sage,
Car ja ne vos en parjurrez,
Ja la paine n’en endurrez
Que pigment en lessiez a boivre.

Dames leur braieront tel poivre,
S’il peuent en leur laz choai,
Qu’il leur en devra meschoair;
Dames si cortoises seront

Que bien vos en aquiteront,
Ja n’i querrez autres vicaires,
Car tant des blanches et des noires]

[verso column A]

Leur diront ne uous esmaies

Que uous entendres apaies
Ia ne uous en melles seur elles
Tant leur conteront de nouuelles
Et tant leur feront de requestes

Par flateries deshonnestes
Et leur doigront si graus colees
De baiseries et dacolees
Sil les croient certaignement

Ne leur demourra tenemment
Qui ne veille le mueble ensuiure
Dont il seront primes deliure
Or commandes ce que voudrois

⁶ Speech rubric.
Nont le ferons soit tors soit drois
Mais faux samblant de ceste chose
Pour vous c[ntremetre ne s’ose]
Car il dit que [vos le haez]

Ne scet sa ho[n]ir le baez
Si uous pri[ns] trestuit biau sire
Que vous li p[ard]on[niez vostre ire]
Et soit de uo[stre] [baronie]

Auec abstin[ence s’amie]
Ceste nostre acor[t c’est nostre otroie]
Par foy dist a[mors je l’otrai]
Des or veil que [il soit a ma cort]

Viengne au[n]t et cil acort

Faus Semblant, par tel covenant
Seras a moi tout maintenant
Que touz nos amis aideras

[VERS COL. B]

Et que nul nen engingneras
Ainz penseras deulz esleuer
Et de nos anemis greuer
Tiens soit li pouoirs et li baus

Que tu seras roy des ribaus
Quainsi le ueut nostre chapitre
Sans faille tu es mal traite
Et lierres trop desmesures

‘C·m fois tes pariures
Mais toutes fois en audience
Pour nos gens ostes de doutance
Comment ie que tu leur enseignes

7 Lecoy: Dont
8 Two-line initial.
9 The last three words of this line are partly cut away but legible.
10 Rubric above cut-out miniature.
Au mains par généraus enseignes
En quel lieu il te trouueront
Quant du mestier trouuer auront
Et comment len te connoistra

Car grant sens en toy connoistre a
Di nous en quel lieu tu converses
ffaus semblant. 11
Sire iai mansions diverses
Que ia ne vous quier reciter

Sil vous plest a men respiter
Avoir y puis domage et honte
Se tout le uoir vous en raconte
Se mi compagnon le sauoient

Sachies de uoir il men harroient
Et men porroient faire anuy
Sonques leur cruaute connuy
Car il veulent en tous lieus ta[ire]

Verite12 qui leur [est contraire,]
Ia ne la querroient [oîr.]
Trop emporroie [mal joîr]
Se ie disoie deulz [parole]

Qui ne leur fust p[lesant et mole,]
Car la parole qui l[es point]
Ne leur abelist on[ques point]
Se ce estoit leuangle[ile]

Qui les repreist de [leur guile]

— MERADITH T. MCMUNN
Rhode Island College

11 Speech rubric.
12 A punctus elevatus mark occurs here in the manuscript.
A special meeting of the Council of the Friends of the Princeton University Library was called to order by the Chairman, Claire R. Jacobus, at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 1 July 1998.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council of 26 April 1998 were approved by a voice vote.

Ben Primer, University Archivist, Curator of Public Policy Papers, and Chairman of the Friends Fellowship Program, solicited questions regarding his annual report of the Fellowship Program for 1998–1999, already received by Council members. Mr. Primer noted that a major problem facing the fellowship recipients was short-term housing. It appears that there are difficulties with the University Housing Office both during the school year and the summer, when one would assume that housing would be more accessible. Still, eventually the fellows do find housing. Mary N. Spence felt there should be more publicity about the problem. Chairman Jacobus suggested that someone should speak to the Housing Office to see if the problem could be eliminated or at least alleviated. William H. Scheide asked how many fellows are in residence now, but Mr. Primer was not sure, as they come and go. He stated that it is difficult to determine when their research is completed, for they may just leave when their work is done. Karin A. Trainer offered the fellows access to e-mail and fax facilities, but Mr. Primer stated that every desk will soon have e-mail capabilities and that faxing is not a problem; it is done regularly at Mudd. On behalf of the Council, Chairman Jacobus voiced her appreciation and thanked Mr. Primer for his report.

Elisabeth Morgan, Chairman of the Program Committee, reported
on a very successful year. She especially noted the holiday dinner in December, the three Small Talks (thanking those who gave their houses, as well as the professors who spoke), and the Book Collectors’ Group, chaired by Mrs. Spence. Mrs. Morgan announced that the Program Committee welcomes suggestions for future events.

Membership chairman P. Randolph Hill reported that the number of members has gone down this year from 843 to 780 while the amount of money received from membership in the Friends has gone up from $62,000 to $69,500. This is a result of more people joining at higher levels. He announced that an untapped source of membership is the Adler Prize applicants, approximately 138 people since 1947. He is hopeful that this group will yield more members. Also, he announced a membership campaign focusing either on the faculty alone or on both the faculty and staff. According to the Office of Printing and Mailing, a mailing would include a letter, a card, and a return envelope. The fee for faculty alone (1,100 people) would be approximately $444, while if we included the staff in the mailing (4,700 people), the price would be about $917. Mrs. Spence suggested that perhaps we could offer membership to some staff at a lower rate, but Mr. Hill noted that the fee for staff is already $35. Patricia H. Marks recommended that a brochure format be used for the mailing and that the copy should focus on the Friends and not the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. She agreed to work on the project. Also volunteering to assist her were Mr. Hill and Henry Reath. Mr. Reath asked if we solicit alumni/ae for membership, while Terry Seymour questioned whether graduates in the immediate area have been solicited for membership. Mr. Hill replied that both these approaches were tried several times in the past. Ruta Smithson stated that when the Princeton Art Museum solicited members of the faculty and staff, it had a good response. It was also suggested that pilot programs could be introduced which would target a particular class. Such an approach, if done in a personal way, could be a productive source of new members.

There was a brief discussion regarding Freshman Week in September. It was noted that our lack of readiness last year resulted in the omission of a listing in the schedule for the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, and especially our exhibitions. It was pointed out that both students and their parents might be an additional source of future members. We should be sure to correct
this omission early enough this year so that we are listed in the 1998 schedule.

David A. Robertson, Jr., delivered a memorial for Frederic “Fritz” Rosengarten, Jr., ’38, ’40 (1916–1998). Mr. Robertson especially noted Mr. Rosengarten’s army service as an intelligence officer during World War II, his authorship of two books, and his participation in the reforestation of Guatemala’s highlands. Mr. Rosengarten was honored by Guatemala for his work and dedication over the years. He was devoted to Princeton University and the library, and served on the Council since 1982.

The final business of the meeting was the introduction of new Council members Anthony Grafton, Dodge Professor of History, Princeton University, since 1975; Paul Needham, librarian of the Scheide Library; Henry T. Reath ’69, publisher of Collectors Reprints; Terry I. Seymour ’66, president of AVS Financial Inc.; Patricia H. Marks ’72, retired editor of the Princeton University Library Chronicle; and William L. Joyce, Associate University Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections. Chairman Jacobus welcomed them, while they expressed their thanks and pleasure on being selected to serve on the Council.

The Chairman thanked Ruta Smithson, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, as well as members Wanda Gunning, Elisabeth Morgan, Mary Spence, and William P. Stoneman for their fine work and congratulated them on the outstanding slate of new Council members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith H. Golden
Secretary
Almost four thousand years ago, a Sumerian school child held a wooden or reed stylus over a crudely-formed lump of wet clay measuring less than two inches square and painstakingly incised the wedge-shaped syllabic sign “en.” The writing exercise was repeated until the teacher was satisfied, with the clay being reworked a number of times and eventually discarded, reappearing at the end of another millennium in the Cotsen Children’s Collection and on the cover of this issue of the Chronicle. With exercises like this, young students in scribe schools attached to temples mastered the vertical, horizontal, and oblique strokes necessary to write in the script scholars call cuneiform, a term derived from the Latin word for wedge, *cuneus*. Cuneiform was used for some three thousand years to write words and numbers in Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and other languages of the ancient Near East. Dating from the Third Dynasty of Ur or the Old Babylonian Period (2112–2004 B.C. or 2004–1595 B.C., in accord with the “Middle Chronology”), this and other Mesopotamian school exercises were ephemeral materials whose fortuitous survival helps document the beginnings of formal education at the dawn of recorded history.

The collection of children’s literature assembled by Lloyd E. Cotsen, Class of 1950, includes seventy examples of cuneiform writing on clay tablets of various shapes. In addition to simple writing exercises like this one, there are more advanced clay tablets from the school curriculum, including dictation exercises, practice documents and letters, and lexical, literary, and mathematical texts. Scholastic exercises and texts represent a relatively small portion of the hun-

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1 The drawing of the clay exercise tablet on the cover was done by Russell E. Marks, Jr., Class of 1954.
dreds of thousands of cuneiform tablets (chiefly accounting records and other economic documents from temple archives) preserved in libraries, museums, and private collections worldwide.

The Manuscripts Division of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections is fortunate to have its own collection of clay tablets, comprising approximately 1,350 baked and unbaked clay tablets and tablet cases, as well as some clay cylinders and nail-shaped cones. The bulk of the tablets are documentary, roughly contemporary with the school tablets in the Cotsen Children’s Collection. Most of Princeton’s clay tablets are from Telloh, Jokha, and Drehem (modern place-names for the ruins of ancient Girsu, Uma, and Puzrish-Dagan in southern Mesopotamia). They were donated by Moses Taylor Pyne, Class of 1877; Professor Rudolph Brünnow, Department of Near Eastern Studies; and other friends and alumni of Princeton University. In addition, there are 244 stone seals that were used to make impressions in clay tablets and their envelopes, from the collections of Moses Taylor Pyne; Robert Garrett, Class of 1897; and Edward D. Balken, Class of 1897. Other clay tablets and stone seals are to be found in the Scheide Library and The Art Museum at the University. The Princeton Theological Seminary also owns a substantial collection of clay tablets.

— DON C. SKEMER

Curator, Manuscripts Division
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