CHILDREN AND SOCIETY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by

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Abstract

Perhaps in no other activity does society express its fundamental values more distinctly than in the socialization of children. While historians of childhood search the past for clues to link the growth of the individual to the movements of society, most overlook children's literature. Yet children's literature is specifically designed to (or does by indirection) communicate the basic elements of culture to the rising generation. In children's stories we find the artifacts of the process of socializing children in the past.

This study examines the stories written for children in late eighteenth century England. At one level these stories reflect the attitudes to children and child-rearing that evolved in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; at another, they record the response to the social situation of a small group of educated reformers. The authors consciously promote a particular system of values, but not one specifically intended to prepare youth for industrial society. Rather, they present values that serve to protect their ideal of a reformed but traditional social order.
The transitional state of eighteenth century society caused many to fear for its stability. Older problems of vice, crime, and poverty became more visible as the society became more urban and industrial. At the same time, a new class, unencumbered by the traditional social responsibilities embodied in landed property, was rising in wealth and power. Reformers sought to preserve the peace and order of society by attempting to improve the manners and morals of the lower orders and by systematically reinforcing the obligations of rich to poor.

In the service of these goals, authors of children's stories directed their attention to youth, particularly middle class youth, for it was crucial to gain the allegiance of this group to the values that upheld the social order. In their stories they constructed realistic social situations in which to demonstrate the efficacy of these values and beliefs. They erected a model of harmonious society that accorded with a rational universe wherein diligence, frugality, honesty and benevolence inevitably led to security and happiness. They drew the boundaries within which the fulfilling life may be won, justifying the existing order by providing a reward for every virtuous child.

The rock upon which their model of harmonious society rested was the family. Within the stable domestic family resides all virtue and happiness;
it is the arena for all aspects of human life; its values maintain the stability of society. The primary function of the story-book family is to transmit these values to the young, to instill in the individual child those qualities that will prepare him for life in a peaceful orderly society.

The image of the world and society that emerges from the children's stories of the late eighteenth century is not a direct reflection of actual conditions any more than the heroes and heroines of the stories represent the real behavior and experience of eighteenth century children. Nevertheless, we do see how at least part of society perceived its times, and, more important, the values thought necessary to sustain their way of life.
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I. INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Recognizing in the child a key to deciphering the relationship between individual development and the range of institutions that form a society, many historians analyse the process of socializing children and relate this process to the requirements of particular societies. Philippe Ariès, a pioneer in this field, studies the child and family as a microcosm of external society. He projects changing family structures and attitudes to children in the seventeenth to nineteenth century against the background of political, economic, and social changes in a modernizing society.

Ariès and those who follow in his wake attempt to transcend conventional analyses of changes in institutions and legislation in order to reconstruct the dynamics of socialization. In so doing, they have found it necessary to make imaginative use of sources formerly left to antiquarians. To such familiar materials as diaries, child-rearing manuals, and school histories they have added changes in costumes, toys, games, and iconography. But, curiously, they have overlooked children's literature. Yet juvenile literature is specifically designed to communicate the basic elements of contemporary society to the rising generation. Not all historians would agree with one commentator that "no better guide" can be found
to the "development of any country", but it can be maintained that children's books, "more than any class of literature . . . reflect the minds of the generation that produced them."^ Hence, they can show us in a uniquely reliable way the process whereby cultural values are formed and maintained.

While Paul Hazard's statement, "England could be entirely reconstructed from its children's books", is another exaggeration, children's literature does take us at least part of the way into the family circle. Plots are invented, but many of the details and conventions of family life, especially if they are not vital to the message, come to the surface, and, undeniably, the historian can find in these stories most useful statements about the nature of children, ideal behavior patterns, and recommended child-rearing practice. Equally important, they provide us with the justifications the writers resorted to in their attempt to initiate the young into the prevailing social order.

Historians who treat children's literature as if it were a direct reflection of the experience of children in the past are missing the true value of children's literature as a scholarly tool. Children's literature cannot tell us how children actually behave in the past or how their parents reared them. In using any work of imaginative literature as an historical source, one must
always be sensitive to the fact that it is a filter through which experience passes. If the historian who wishes to recapture the process by which children are initiated into a particular culture can master the social factors that shape the creation of cultural artifacts like children's literature and harness them to serve his goals, then the historical significance of these literary products will be enhanced immeasurably.

While there exists an inherent set of conditions that constrain all works of the imagination, there are important differences between the forces that affect the creation of adult fiction and those that shape children's stories. The historian who uses either of these sources must adjust his expectations and the nature of his inferences accordingly. First, in children's story writing, literary convention and personal expression must perform a subordinate role beside the primary purpose of introducing children to a particular system of values. The form and content of children's stories must be suitable to the needs and understanding of children, as the author conceives these to be. The value system presented by the author must correspond to this predetermined view of the child's understanding of reality. As one historian dealing with the problem argues:
it is difficult to imagine how fiction written for children could escape being both cognitive and normative - by implication if not by design.

Second, a difference in personal motivation separates the author writing for children from authors writing for adults. Literary circles generally accord a humble status to children's authors. Especially in the early years of children's publishing, authors could not expect to gain prestige or reputation by writing for children. Many of these early stories were published anonymously; most were written by women. The purpose of these writers was to fill a need they recognized in children and society.

A third factor dividing adult literature from children's literature is the influence of the market. The tastes of the consumer, defined in both spheres as the adult buyer, control: more stringently the production of books for children than books for adults. Adults may purchase for themselves books that are enlightening or amusing but do not conform altogether to their personal view of society. However, these same adults are likely to be very scrupulous in choosing books for their children. They do not trust the ability of children to reject an alternate picture of the world or society, and, therefore, take care that the values presented to their children in fiction conform to their own views.
Hence, it is reasonable to assume that the children's books that attain a significant measure of popularity and financial success reflect the aspirations, if not the actual practice, of the consuming public.

Thus, the authors of children's stories must mold their creations to suit the ideals of their customers, the limitations imposed by an immature audience, and a necessarily didactic purpose. In these respects, the factors that impinge on literary invention in children's literature do so in ways significantly different than those that may affect the production of adult literature. Juvenile fiction, in common with most fiction, reflects the ideals and values of at least part of society, but more important, it can show how these values are passed on to the next generation. In examining stories aimed at youth, we see how the adult community expected children to behave, how it assessed their capabilities, and what roles it encouraged them to perform in the future.

This is not the way that students of children's literature generally view their subject. While many children's librarians and educational historians compile useful collections and accounts of the history of juvenile literature, their emphasis is only partially historical. Primarily, they attempt to discover how suitable the children's books of previous generations are for the modern
child. Using literary or ideological criteria, they measure the lasting and universal appeal of the stories, rather than their function in a particular historical situation. Thus, F.J. Harvey Darton, whose *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life* has long been the standard reference source, gives very little attention to the social origins of the literature, despite the promise implied in his title. Darton recounts a five century battle between the "forces of light", which represent imaginative literature intended to entertain children, and "the forces of darkness", the gloomy moralizing stories meant to improve children. The imaginative forces eventually triumph in Darton's version of this battle, which is waged for an image of the child whose nature is both static and modern.

Such accounts of the history of children's literature fail to avoid the dangerous assumption that only in the present have we discovered the true and universal nature of children, and that in the past misconceptions and superstition obscured their real qualities. Given this premise, it is not surprising that these historians tend to depreciate literature which seems to embody a distinctly obsolete belief system. Yet it is the historian who should be able to appreciate the special usefulness of stories which once amused and instructed children and do so no longer. More accurately than adult
literature, books and tracts for children can demonstrate the central anxieties and aspirations of the ages in which they were written.

More interesting than the librarians' is the approach of those psychologists who attempt to use children's literature to measure the conscious or unconscious transmission of values from one generation to another. David McClelland, in *The Achieving Society*, collected children's readers from various nations and coded them for "an achievement factor", a psychological need he isolates as essential in the formation of the entrepreneurial personality. He then related these findings to economic development in subsequent periods to demonstrate that a high achievement motivation disclosed by the themes of these stories leads to future rapid economic growth.

McClelland maintains that children's stories "reflect the national aspirations of public figures" and "tend to reflect the motives and values of the culture in the way they are told or in their themes and plots." Thus, he supplies us with a new possibility for historical analysis, but it is unfortunate that he fails to extend the model he uses for investigating present day societies to his discussion of economic growth in England during the Industrial Revolution. Instead of analyzing the first significant body of literature ever
designed specifically for children, he codes the adult literature of the eighteenth century to connect the high degree of achievement imagery found in his sample to the economic take-off of the Industrial Revolution. Moreover, he does not relate directly his sample of plays, poetry, and street pamphlets to those men who became the main actors in the Industrial Revolution. Dissenters, who comprised a large proportion of early entrepreneurs, probably were not exposed to the worldly literature of the theatre and street.\(^\text{14}\)

McClelland has utilized highly original methods of quantitative research to isolate and tabulate the psychological factors found in children's readers and has used them as an index to predict the rate of economic growth. I have not attempted to adopt his methodology because of the difficulties inherent in attempting to employ it historically. A multiplicity of factors bear on the formation of an individual personality, and, therefore, it is almost impossible to isolate and measure the actual contribution of children's literature to personality development. My purpose in this paper will be, rather, to treat this literature as a medium of enculturation and to relate the values expressed to the social situation.

More recently, another group of psychologists have developed a coding system for the study of child-
rearing manuals from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Like McClelland, these psychologists examine the effect produced in subsequent generations by certain methods of child-rearing. For instance, in a recent study, they relate the prominent concerns in the child-rearing manuals of one generation to the preoccupations apparent in the "Don Juan" plays produced by the next.

Stewart, Winter, and Jones are, however, aware of the fact that these manuals do not necessarily describe how children were actually raised, but, rather:

... how the society viewed children - their virtues and vices, their needs and proper goals; their capacities and weaknesses; their place in the overall scheme of human life, society, and often "the life to come."

They designed their checklist to detect changes in these areas. While developed specifically for child-rearing manuals, many of their categories apply equally to an analysis of children's literature.

I have adopted their checklist and extended its utility for coding children's stories by adding such criteria as attitudes to work and leisure, social class, and education. The intent is to broaden the scope from a narrow family orientation to more general social concerns. These new areas should provide a fuller picture of socialization procedures as they emerge in stories for the young.

The psychological research described above has
traced the impact of child-rearing on subsequent psychological development. But children's literature can also be a rare and valuable avenue to understanding not only cultural change but cultural continuity. One of the few historians to examine children's literature from this standpoint is R.G. Kelly. In his recent study of American periodicals for children, he attempts to analyze the process whereby a small elite group (defined in his book as the American gentry class) was able to perpetuate, through its control of the children's periodical publishing industry, its system of beliefs and values in a society undergoing rapid social change in the late nineteenth century. In doing so, he has established a useful theoretical background, based on sociological research, which examines definitions of culture and socialization. I have found his application of the theories of socialization, proposed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman in _The Social Construction of Reality_, particularly enlightening.

Kelly sums up Berger and Luckman's explanation of the social construction of reality thus:

> ... the worlds inhabited by men can be conceptualized as structured systems of shared meaning, specific to a certain place and time, and consensually maintained.

The process of initiating children into this world of shared meaning is "productive both of individual identity and social continuity." In order that the belief
system ordering the life of a society or group be maintained, it must be accepted and internalized by the rising generation.

Berger and Luckman see parents as the main agents responsible for the primary socialization of the child, the process by which the child receives both his own identity and an objective view of reality:

Society, identity, and reality are subjectively crystallized in the same process of internalization. 22

The presentation of objective reality to the child is conditioned both by the position occupied by his parents within the social structure and their personal idiosyncrasies. The internalization of the objective reality, the "shared meanings" of a particular society or group, can never be complete because "the contents of socialization are determined by the social distribution of knowledge." 23 What passes for knowledge in a society is never evenly distributed throughout that society.

While the specific variations in the processes of socialization among individual families and the idiosyncratic presentation of reality are rarely recorded, children's literature does allow insight into that broader aspect of socialization, described by Berger and Luckman as determined by the social class of the parents. Children's literature is one vehicle by which the values, beliefs, and attitudes of a particular group are made available to the young. In the stories the
utility of these values and beliefs are demonstrated in "real" social situations, specially constructed for the child.

Moreover, in writing stories that justify a certain world view to the young, the author reaffirms his own loyalty to the prevailing system of values by "testing" it in fictional conflicts. He is able to construct particular situations that allow him to express these values in a relatively uncomplicated form.

Children's stories provide a unique tool to historians only if they are analyzed within the social context of the groups which create them. Because no individual in any society can be trusted to comprehend and communicate the entire system of values embraced by his culture, the historian must collect a wide sample of evidence. He must take care to select literature that best represents and expresses the values of that culture.

The amount and variety of children's books written during past centuries is extensive and ranges from non-fiction to nursery rhymes. Although historians could profitably examine many of these genres for a variety of objectives, out of this range, narrative fiction written to amuse and instruct children appears to be the most promising avenue of research for social historians who wish to reconstruct the socialization of
As Kelly says:

Stories for children . . . typically proceed from an initial problem or conflict to a satisfactory resolution, and the terms in which these are cast provide the basis for inferences about the ways in which a group defines and symbolizes the principles of order thought to structure and sustain a given way of life. 27

Furthermore, narrative fiction more sensitively reflects the vagaries of public opinion since its success or failure depends on the market. In contrast, other forms of literature may have greater longevity and, therefore, do not respond quickly to changes in public opinion. For instance, folk tales and nursery rhymes acquire a certain inertia from their timelessness, their universality, and the nostalgia they induce in the adult buyers. The very prominence of the value system presented in narrative fiction often dooms it to a short life.

Again, there exists great variety within the category of narrative fiction for children, including adventure stories, school tales, fantasies, religious stories, and historical novels. Many of the sub-categories of narrative fiction warrant independent study. For example, evangelical fiction for children has had a fascinating history. Originally intended to improve working class children, evangelical stories later became the "Sunday reading" of middle class boys and girls, and later still, the shocking pro-trayals of
poverty and degradation in these stories provided sensational entertainment for an upper class audience. However, the reliance of evangelical authors on a static formula of events and their concentration on "the other life" limits the usefulness of evangelical fiction for the historian interested in cultural change and continuity.

Historians have examined another genre of narrative fiction, the adventure tales and school stories for boys, in order to discover its nationalistic or imperialistic content. These adventure stories also provide insight into the ideal manly hero of Victorian society, but, since the hero is usually isolated in some exotic setting removed from family and society, socialization and social interaction are not prominent themes.

In contrast, the problems of socialization and social interaction are core issues in domestic fiction. Moreover, of all the fiction written for boys and girls, domestic tales most clearly reflect and develop in response to contemporary assumptions about the nature of children and their capabilities. This is particularly true of the stories produced at the end of the eighteenth century. The burst of intellectual activity in the eighteenth century that took the child as its object certainly influenced the authors of the period. They tried in their stories to demonstrate, in realistic
situations, child-rearing and pedagogical theory as it was developing. They presented in great detail models of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, modes of reward and punishment, and contemporary notions about the ideal family structure. Through their depiction of patterns of work and leisure, the respectability of various occupations, and the proper relations between classes, the authors of domestic fiction outlined the social context of the story-book families in order to define for the reader his place in the social structure. Further, they disclose, in overt references within the texts or covert omissions, points of tension in the social fabric.

Because they are more likely than other forms of children's fiction to be set within a family context and relate the child and family to society, the so-called "didactic tales" of the eighteenth century will be the subject here. While it may be argued that children's fiction of any age must necessarily be didactic, the stories written in the late eighteenth century are far more seriously and purposefully so than their predecessors and antecedents. For one thing, their authors lived at a time when theoreticians were generating new notions of child-rearing and child psychology. But equally important, these authors were acutely conscious that they were living through radical social and economic
transformations and determined to put their moral tales in realistic situations so as to teach practical lessons to children badly in need of guidance.

It is this stress on realism that gives this group of stories its unique value. While theorists first emphasized the importance of consciously training children, it was the social situation that defined the particulars of socialization. The authors recognized that the system of values that gave meaning to their lives would have to be energetically explained and justified if it was to be maintained in future generations. These values and the means by which the authors promoted them provide fertile ground for an investigation of cultural continuity.

These values were those of the professional and gentry classes. Nearly all of the eighteenth century children's story writers were from this background. Some of them, Hannah More for instance, directed their stories at the lower orders. But it is not with these, but with the books aimed at children of the middle class that I will be dealing. Most historians of childhood agree that the middle class exhibited a high degree of awareness of the special needs of childhood and were the first to formulate definite patterns of child-rearing. Because they commonly supplied primary education to their own children, middle class parents were most conscious
of the need for suitable teaching materials and were enthusiastic book buyers.

The middle class was specially responsive to moral and realistic fiction. The authors of this fiction were determined to use the opportunity furnished by a receptive audience to confirm and reinforce the allegiance to a particular structure of values and beliefs of those who were rising in economic and social power. If the prevailing social order were to be maintained it was vital that the rising generation of middle class children be convinced of the legitimacy of that order.

It is difficult to measure the degree of internalization of a given "social reality" by any individual or group, and no such measurement will be attempted here. Although, as Kelly states, "literary works to be understood as cultural artifacts must be understood historically . . . in the context of the groups which produced them and responded to them", the response to particular works is rarely available to the historian. However, because the audience is an important component of literature's "social milieu", the historian must attempt to define the audience in order to clarify the historical significance of the literature he studies.

Since the price and distribution of early children's books limited them to the urban upper and middle classes, the social background of the audience
is readily discernible. The age group of the audience is less apparent. Age-grading was less distinct in the eighteenth century than in the nineteenth, though some authors wrote primers for very young children. Moreover, books for children were still comparatively rare, so that any children's books a family may have possessed would have had to serve all literate children of both sexes. As a nineteenth century children's author, describing the scarcity of books in her youth, recounts:

> Not only had no children many books, but everywhere children had the same. There was seldom any use in little friends lending to each other, for it was always the same thing over again: Evenings at Home, Sandford and Merton, Ornaments Discovered and so on.

Thus, the literate children of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century read and re-read many times the didactic tales and provided a receptive audience for their message.

This paper deals with the attempt to socialize middle class children through literature aimed specifically at them during a crucial period of modernization in English society. I hope to demonstrate the means by which these authors, within the context of contemporary attitudes to children and a dynamic social situation, attempted to perpetuate a particular value system.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


2 Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I (Con't)


A.S.W. Rosenbach is quoted in James Fraser, "Children's Literature as a Scholarly Resource: The Need for a National Plan," Library Journal 28 (1965): 4490-1. Both Rosenbach and Fraser were concerned that librarians re-evaluate their criteria for collecting children's literature and include "the total children's literature, good, bad, and in its various forms," rather than concentrate on "the quality children's book."


Kelly, Introduction to Mother was a Lady, p. xiv.

The most detailed accounts of the history of children's literature include F.J. Harvey Darton, Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958);
NOTES TO CHAPTER I (Con't)


11 Kelly, in "American Children's Literature: An Historiographical Review," notes that Darton is unable to define why the literature he cherishes developed as it did and why there was increased interest in childhood in nineteenth century Anglo-American society.


13 Ibid., pp. 71, 79.


McClelland is aware, however, of the important role played by nonconformists in the Industrial Revolution. He suggests that a comparison of the 'n Achievement' levels in nonconformist sermons with that of Anglican sermons might demonstrate that achievement motivation was stronger in the former. Nevertheless, he stresses that the more personal relationship of man to God in nonconformist sects significantly influenced the achievement needs of Dissenters. See: The Achieving Society, pp. 145-249.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I (Con't)


18 Kelly, Mother was a Lady.


20 Kelly, Introduction to Mother was a Lady, p. xiv.

21 Ibid.


23 Ibid., p. 134.

24 "By creating fictional order, children's authors not only direct the attention of their young readers to specific concepts, but they may also renew their own commitment to certain principles of social order - for example, shaping their fictional response, in part, to meet threats posed by alternative belief systems." Kelly, Mother was a Lady, p. xvii.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I (Con't)


27. Kelly, *Introduction to Mother was a Lady*, p. xvi.


30. Thomas Day and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, in particular, took Rousseau's theories about children very seriously. Edgeworth attempted to raise his son after the example of Rousseau's *Emile* and Day adopted an orphan girl and tried to mold her into an ideal Rousseauist heroine.

31. Because of their pointedly moral purpose, historians of children's literature christened the children's stories written in the late eighteenth century the "didactic tales".
NOTES TO CHAPTER I (Con't)

32 John Rowe Townsend argues that literature is only labelled 'didactic' when the values it conveys are no longer current. See his article entitled "Didacticism in Modern Dress" in Only Connect: Readings on Children's Literature, ed. Sheila T. Egoff, G.T. Stubbs, and L.F Ashley (Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 33-40.

33 Aries in Centuries of Childhood asserts that the middle classes were the first to withdraw from the world of "gay familiarity" and form small, intimate child-centred families. J.H. Plumb in "The New World of Children in Eighteenth Century England," Past and Present 67 (May 1975): 69-93 shows how the middle classes hoped to raise the status of their families through their children.

34 Kelly, "Literature and the Historian" p.149.

35 Stories for very young children were written either in monosyllables or, more commonly, long words were separated into their component syllables. Nevertheless, the content and style of such stories did not differ significantly from that of stories for older children.

36 Mrs. Molesworth is quoted in Marion Lochhead, Their First Ten Years: Victorian Childhood (London: John Murray,1956), p. 48.
In the mid-eighteenth century a new industry entered the literary world. For the first time publishers began to produce on a large scale and widely distribute books designed specifically for children. This new industry was born in the heat of debate about the value of literacy and the purpose of literature. All sectors of the publishing industry were affected by the growth of literacy and, consequently, the expansion of the literary market. Whether this growth was a blessing or a blight for the quality of literature and the safety of the social order was an issue that seriously concerned educated men. The first publishers and authors of children's literature proposed a new function for literature. They were among those who welcomed increasing literacy in the middle classes and were determined to serve this group.

The genesis of an industry for publishing children's literature is indicative of a growing awareness of the special needs of children and the desire to separate the world of the child from the world of the adult. The form and content of the eighteenth century juvenile books reflect contemporary theories about the nature and rearing of children. Also, these books illustrate the assumptions held by certain groups within society who shared definite and particular ideas about the proper form society should
take. One of the early contributors to children's literature, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, stated that the purpose of this group of writers was:

... to construct stories suited to the early years of youth, and, at the same time, conformable to the complicated relationships of modern society. 1

Since that was the purpose, it will first be necessary to delineate the evolution of attitudes to children and then to define "the complicated relationships of modern society" as these were perceived by the authors, in order to interpret the historical significance of late eighteenth century children's stories.

The very existence of literature designed specifically for the young is, in itself, evidence of the changing attitudes to children that formed during the eighteenth century. In this period there emerged a conception of the child's nature closer to the modern one than had ever before existed. No distinct concept of childhood was present in the medieval world, due, in part, to the smaller scale of living and working space. Young and old, rich and poor tended to mix more freely than in an urban industrial society.

The long duration of childhood as it appeared in the common idiom was due to the indifference with which strictly biological phenomena were regarded at the time: nobody would have thought of seeing the end of childhood in puberty. 2

This is not to suggest that early modern society was entirely bereft of notions defining childhood and youth. Youth groups, common throughout early modern Europe,
provide evidence that such concepts did in fact exist. However, the criteria by which the various age-groups were distinguished were based on notions of relative dependency.\(^3\) Childhood, corresponding to a period of complete dependence, ended when the family sent its son or daughter, usually at the age of seven or eight, to serve in another household. Youth was a stage of semi-dependence when boys and girls lived away from home and associated in peer groups. Marriage, usually in the mid- or late twenties, officially ended the stage of youth. Thus, the distinguishing criteria for age-grading in early modern Europe were social rather than biological determinants.\(^4\) Moreover, these stages of life commonly overlapped and were notoriously indistinct.\(^5\)

A more clear-cut concept of the child formed as the middle classes began to withdraw from what has been called the traditional world of "gay familiarity". Since this group of parents chose to keep their children with them for longer periods, they began to formulate ideas about children and child-rearing that opposed older attitudes and patterns, much longer adhered to within the aristocracy and lower orders.

In England, Puritanism distinguished this group from the rest of society. It provided a world view with a special place in it for childhood. Puritanism established a concrete definition of the child's nature, expressed in such terms as "Brands of Hell" or "by Nature, Children of
Wrath". It held that it was the obligation of the parent to guide the willful and sinful nature to salvation, an obligation that fostered tremendous concern for and attention to the child. No indifference could be tolerated. Thus, it is not surprising that one of the earliest recorded examples of extreme grief at the death of a young child was expressed in the diary of the Puritan preacher, Ralph Josselin.

Puritans trained their sons and daughters to work not merely for subsistence and independence but to gain knowledge in their calling the better to serve God. The repugnance they felt at the idle, dissipated, unruly society of the sixteenth century caused them painstakingly to suppress similar tendencies in their own children. Discipline, the central concern in their comprehensive child-rearing system, was not simply a means of checking evil behavior, but a moral force in its own right. So deeply did this attitude penetrate into "the orthodox thinking of educated society" that it survived long after Puritanism ceased to be official doctrine. This emphasis on the need for systematic rearing of the young, so characteristic of middle class mores, was one of the more significant Puritan bequests to the eighteenth century and into our own time.

But by the eighteenth century, that concern expressed itself in a more benevolent form. If Tawney is correct, the Puritan stress on salvation softened as
men were drawn into the worldly life of urban commerce. Whatever the cause, there was a noticeable shift in emphasis from concern with the child's immortal soul to concern with the development of his reasoning powers. The Augustan spirit applied to child-rearing was expressed in Samuel Johnson's essay on "The Tyranny of Parents":

To see helpless infancy stretching out her hands and pouring out her cries in testimony of dependance without any powers to alarm jealousy or any guilt to alienate the affections, must surely awake tenderness in any human mind...

He was revolted that

... capricious injunction, partial decisions, unequal allotments, distribution of rewards not be degree of the offense but by the humour of the judge, is too frequent where no power is known but that of the father. 10

Although Johnson refuted the Puritan insistence on the pervasiveness of original sin in the child's nature, neither he nor contemporaries of his persuasion wanted to relax the rigour of child-rearing. The ideas of Locke and Rousseau expressed this new concept of the child's nature. Locke, in particular, believed the child had potential for both good and evil. In his view, there was no inherent tendency towards goodness; moral principles must be taught. 11 Instead of advising parents to break the will of the child, writers of advice on enlightened parenthood in the eighteenth century encouraged mothers and fathers carefully to manouevre their charges, to select appropriate experiences for them, in order to
inculcate the orderly, reasoning habits suited to life in a peaceful society. Children came to be viewed as vehicles of "social emulation". The social attitudes of parents became the "moral imperatives" of childhood.  

Parental tyranny, the object of Johnson's criticism, tended to decrease in the eighteenth-century as the mother came increasingly to become the primary child-rearer. From an analysis of eighteenth-century child-rearing manuals, Stewart, Winter, and Jones find that this shift of responsibility was perceived but not affirmatively stated. Thus, the manuals avoided the question of which parent held the ultimate authority. Instead, they encouraged both parents to spend a great deal of time with their children, to punish and reward them rationally and fairly, and to introduce them to habits of industry, frugality, and orderliness.

Although many of the new child-rearing practices seemed to be appropriate to the needs of industrializing society, it would be incorrect to assume that the adjustment was planned or programmed. Factory managers did require workers who responded to factory discipline, but only the exceptional one recognized the need to systematize a process of socialization through schools and domestic arrangements. It does not follow that because institutions for children became time rather than task oriented or their routines more regimented, that sponsors
and directors deliberately aimed to produce docile, regular factory workers. Also, child-rearing practices conformed to other, non-economic developments in religious and intellectual principles. The qualities encouraged in children by their eighteenth-century parents were intended to conform to a vision of society in which the stable domestic family was the basic unit and peace and order the most important ingredients. Of the complementary values, efficiency and order, the latter probably came higher in the priorities of most concerned citizens during the troubled years of the early industrial period.

It is interesting and not altogether coincidental that the groups who most clearly articulated and conscientiously practiced systematic child-rearing were, at the same time, most concerned with reforming the manners and morals of the society as a whole. This was true of the Puritans and continued to be true of particular groups in eighteenth-century society. In both cases, the most active participants were middle class. Both evangelical and rationalizing reformers among this class were determined to apply social control (a term that implies conscious manipulation of one group in the interests of another), but wished to exercise it primarily to the end of producing an improved, orderly populace rather than an efficient, industrial, urban populace.
Although the process of delineating the child as a special category within the social whole was well advanced in the eighteenth century, nevertheless some of the older association of the traits of childhood and the traits of the lower orders remained. In intellectual thought the child symbolized the primitive aspects of man's nature.\textsuperscript{[15]} Just as childhood was the most irrational stage in the development of the individual, the lower orders were thought to be the most primitive element in the social hierarchy. The association of the child with the lower orders in seventeenth and eighteenth century thought explains the congruence of groups involved in reforming the behavior of the lower orders and those concerned with the systematic rearing of children. Children and members of the lower orders shared characteristics of weakness and dependency, unruliness, unrestrained appetites, and lack of self-discipline. In addition, both groups became the repositories of traditional culture, increasingly abandoned by adults of the bourgeoisie and aristocracy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Traditional games, folk tales, even costumes identified children and the rural poor in a common culture.\textsuperscript{[16]} The violence that characterized lower class life in the eighteenth century was exhibited by children as well. Riots and mutinies in public schools were still common as late as the early decades of the nineteenth century.
In 1818 the army was summoned to suppress a rebellion at Winchester.17

Thus, the child-rearing practices, designed to domesticate the child, that developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were part of a conscious effort of the "superior" classes to civilize the lower orders. Fear of crime, vice, and rebellion led to attempts to reform the behavior of the lower orders. To argue that reformed behavior was essential to the smooth working of a market economy was a convenient and sincere supporting argument in that effort.

One of the more important organizations involved in that conscious effort was the Society for the Reformation of Manners, established at the end of the seventeenth century. The purpose of this society was to enforce the Puritan vice laws that had lapsed since the Restoration. Since their activities were seldom popular, even among those presumed to have a special interest in order and sobriety, most members of the society preferred to remain anonymous. However, most seem to have come from the urban middle classes.18 Although their actions were largely ineffective, they won sympathy from some educated men and provoked a number of parsons, magistrates and members of parliament to raise the issue and press for enforcement and strengthening of the law. These activities made the reform of manners a prominent public issue.
There were, of course, more substantial reasons why popular morality became a more visible problem in the eighteenth century than it had been in the past. As the population increased and enclosures drove rural families off the land, itinerant labourers became permanent vagrants. Factory workers and urban artisans, having left traditional controls of the rural villages behind them, were more unruly. Educated citizens urgently sought solutions.

Having awakened the public conscience, the reformers, who had always been inclined to confuse manners and morals, determined not only to suppress various flagrant and recognized vices, but to prohibit many traditional forms of amusement and to introduce strict standards of decorum. Circumstances favoured their cause and within a surprisingly short time they had succeeded in creating public opinion in support of their strict beliefs. 19

Crusaders against vice were seldom popular and excessive zeal provoked resistance, yet, people of education and property generally supported the proposition that wakes and fairs, paroxysms of work and dissipation were deleterious and needed to be controlled. The Evangelical movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was actively involved in the attempt to suppress traditional customs and holidays. While businessmen calculated the loss of £200,000 to the nation with each holiday, the Evangelicals pointed to the immorality and corruption of youth attending these festivities. 20
At the same time, the reforming men of the eighteenth century exhibited a more sympathetic, if more meddling, attitude to the poor. They saw the need to clarify the often vague distinction in the public mind between labourer, vagrant, or thief. The mercantilist idea that the worker must be forced by necessity to labour and the Puritan suspicion that poverty was the result of sin and idleness were altered as new economic, religious, and intellectual theories highlighted the plight of the working man. Wesley, in particular, welcomed the poor to his group and never treated them with condescension. As more workers became solely dependent on very low wages, they became more dependent on upper class benevolence. Thus, charity was a necessity for worker and pauper alike. Certain men, like Shaftesbury, argued that benevolence, not self-interest, was the lubricant of a smoothly running society.

However, the old principle of paternal benevolence was infused with a new impulse. Desire to improve the lot of the poor combined with a desire to encourage habits of frugality and industry. Indiscriminant charity was dangerous to the peace and order of society. The deserving must be clearly distinguished from the undeserving poor: the former allowed "a comfortable subsistence appropriate to their station in life"; the latter left to their fate. These reformers were especially concerned that the traditional liberty of "freeborn Englishmen", so treasured by
the working man, be transferred into feelings of respect and obedience:

The labouring people should never think themselves independent of their superiors: for, if a proper subordination is not kept up, riot and confusion will take the place of sobriety and order. 25

Some intellectuals of the eighteenth century took the program to reform popular morality a step farther. The Society for the Reformation of Manners was criticized for ignoring the immorality within its own ranks. Defoe attacked them for isolating the poor as the most vicious class and Swift satirized the moral laxity of men in responsible positions.26 Believing the poor to be motivated by a "spirit of emulation", they advocated improvement in the behavior of the upper classes in order to improve that of the poor.27 Hannah More blamed the upper classes for failing to promote piety in their servants and neglecting the religious instruction of their children.28 The upper classes were advised to set a worthy example and actively to participate in programs of reform, if the order of society was to be preserved.

Education, to many, became the most important vehicle of reform. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was founded on the principle that vice was caused by ignorance. Adam Smith also believed that educating the people would greatly benefit the nation:
The more they are instructed, the less liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition which, among ignorant nations, frequently occasion the most dreadful disorders. An instructed and intelligent people, besides, are always more decent and orderly than an uninstructed one. 29

The charity schools established by the S.P.C.K. attempted to mend the disorderliness and the idleness of the poor by teaching religious and moral principles along with simple skills such as sewing, knitting, and spinning. 30

Modest as this training appears to be, the charity school movement encountered severe opposition. Mandeville argued that education would not reform the lower orders, for the educated classes were rife with vice. Education of the poor would only encourage discontent. 31 Farmers also resented the schools, not only because they feared educated labourers might be unfit for agricultural work, but because they felt their own literacy distinguished them as a class above the labourers. However, their fears were unjustified. Social mobility was definitely not among the aims of the promoters of charity schools. Isaac Watts insisted that the charity schools would reinforce the social order:

I would persuade myself that the masters and mistresses of these schools among us teach the children of the poor which are under their care to know what their station in life is, how mean their circumstances, how necessary 'tis for them to be diligent, labourious, honest, and faithful, humble and submissive, what duties they owe the rest of mankind and particularly to their superiors. 32
The fear that, once literate, the poor would begin to read revolutionary literature also hindered the expansion of charity schools. The spread of seditious literature alarmed traditional elites during the eighteenth century. In 1787 King George issued a proclamation to suppress dangerous literature and punish printers and merchants who distributed it. The Evangelicals attempted to assuage these fears by producing simple, cheap, and pious books for the poor to read. Wesley introduced techniques of writing and distributing that revolutionized publishing. Others who wished to reach a mass audience borrowed these techniques. Wesley followed a common practice of rewriting and expurgating or otherwise adapting original texts to serve his readers. Hannah More continued Wesley's work and broadened the appeal of moral literature for the poor by mixing instruction with entertainment. Her Cheap Repository tracts, published between 1795 and 1798, had an unprecedented distribution of two million.

The example of these Evangelicals gave literature a new function. At best, it was hoped that literature could attract the allegiance of the poor to the values, held by the upper classes, of the status quo. At the very least, literature would provide peaceful and rational recreation for the lower orders and replace the unruly, immoral pastimes previously enjoyed.
In spite of the optimism of its promoters and sympathizers, the charity school movement was largely ineffective in increasing the literacy of the lower classes. Historians have found a decline in literacy among children of the working class in the industrial towns of the north during the eighteenth century. The few charity schools established could not absorb the rapidly expanding urban population. Literacy did not have any particular advantage for this migratory group:

Social and economic advancement did not appear to be and in fact was not related to educational achievement at the elementary level.

The small group of reformers intent on improving manners and morals of the poor during the late eighteenth century failed in that attempt. Their efforts and programs were too limited to counteract the devastating effect of the early industrial revolution on the labouring community. The values they presented in their literature for the poor ceased to have meaning for this group, torn from its rural roots and subjected to new, unfamiliar patterns of work and a restriction of leisure.

However, these reformers were more successful in their efforts to reach middle class children. Their attempts to domesticate children met a sympathetic response
from middle-class parents who had internalized new attitudes to children and found the values held by the reformers to be resonant with the lifestyle they envisioned for their children.

In addition, the literacy and educational level of the middle classes advanced rapidly during this period. Private institutions for middle-class children expanded and multiplied. These academies offered technical and practical training as an alternative to the classical education of the older grammar schools, for the commercial middle classes of the eighteenth century desired the skills of accounting, book keeping, modern languages, and applied science to prepare their children for the business world. The education of middle-class children allowed parents to realize their social aspirations through their children and they were willing to spend their time and money to achieve social mobility. Since these educational institutions assumed that their pupils were already literate, parents were expected to teach their children to read at home and needed educational tools to assist them.³⁹ Thus, it was in this newly literate and ambitious group that the benefits of cheap, simple, and moral literature chiefly accrued.⁴⁰

It is not surprising that, in this period of changing attitudes to child-rearing and the development of a literate commercial bourgeoisie, there appeared
the first literature designed to amuse and instruct children. Children had become an important element in the market for amusement and publishers were eager to exploit this market. Previous to the mid-eighteenth century, the only literature available for children was the Puritan "good godly books" and the crude popular chapbooks.

"Good godly books" were directed solely at the improvement and instruction of the child, ultimately intended to save him from damnation. A popular Puritan theme described the child dying young in the glow of salvation, having converted all the wayward adults nearby. Very little attention was paid to the business of the world. The tenor of the "good godly books" informed the Evangelical stories throughout the nineteenth century.

Chapbooks were the most widely distributed and read works in the eighteenth century. Cheaply produced, costing only one or two pence, pedlars called "chapmen" carried them through the country. Their wares contained sixteen page condensations of medieval romances, Guy of Warwick, The Bevis of Southampton, folk tales, Jack Hickathrift, Robin Goodfellow, Jack the Giant Killer, and piracies of popular novels, such as Gulliver's Travels and Robinson Crusoe, mercilessly abridged. Perpetually reissuing old favourites and borrowing new,
chapbooks were the only available literature for children and the rural lower classes until the Evangelicals brought piety to the rural reader. Chapbooks were another instance of traditional culture drifting down to settle in the company of children and the lower orders.\textsuperscript{42}

John Newbery, the first successful publisher of children's books, adapted and upgraded the format of the chapbook. The small size and woodblock illustrations of chapbooks were ideally suited to small hands and young minds. Though drawing on the talents of contemporaries like Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, and Christopher Smart, Newbery performed all roles—writer, printer, publisher, and advertiser—himself, to produce literature that would amuse children.

The relatively high cost of Newbery's books, ranging from sixpence to a shilling, and problems of distribution, limited them to the urban middle class. Though lighthearted, his stories aimed to inculcate the virtues of moderation, industry, and benevolence. The child who acquired these virtues and the especially important attribute of literacy was promised virtually unlimited good fortune. Margery Meanwell, heroine of \textit{Little Goody Two-Shoes}, was introduced with these lines:

\begin{quote}
Who from a State of Rags and Care
And having Shoes but Half a Pair
Their Fortune and their Fame would fix,
And gallop in a Coach and Six. \textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}
Newbery was inspired to his vocation partly by a sharp entrepreneurial appreciation of a ready market and partly by his admiration for the theories of John Locke. He particularly noted Locke's regret that suitable books for children to read were in short supply. Following Locke's advice that "children may be cozen'd into a knowledge of their letters", Newbery made reading a game, devising playbooks to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Optimism infused Newbery's work. Inherent in his work was a confidence that virtue would inevitably lead to commercial success, evidently the best success of all. A general chorus of "Trade and Plumb-Cake Forever! Huzzah!", ending one of Newbery's stories, expressed the pride of a commercial nation and the self-congratulation of the urban middle class.

Newbery maintained primacy in the field of children's literature for twenty years and his firm at the Bible and Sun, St. Paul's Churchyard was successful well into the nineteenth century. By the 1780's, however, new firms entered the field. John Marshall, established in 1783 and later joined by Stockdale of Picadilly, Darton and Harvey, Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, Dean and Mundy, and Vernor and Hood, introduced a new spirit to children's book publishing. Children's literature became more purposeful, moral, and didactic than it had been in Newbery's day. The function of
literature as an agent of civilization was applied more rigorously by the new publishers.

John Marshall was strongly opposed to works of fantasy and he assured parents that his books were "entirely divested of the Prejudicial Nonsense of Tales of Hobgoblins, Witches, and Fairies." Educators and parents shared his views, fearing that fairy tale adventures might make children "tired of home, impatient of restraint, indifferent to simple pleasures, and averse to sacred institutions." The "two rather muddy streams of children's literature: the didactic and the commercial" that characterized publishing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seemed to merge in this period. Didactic literature suited the mood of the commercial market since concerned parents wanted moral and realistic stories for their children. Though unquestionably moral in content, the literature of the late eighteenth century differed from the earlier Puritan works. In the eighteenth-century stories salvation in heaven took second place to order and harmony on earth.

Another characteristic of the post-Newbery period was that women authors predominated. Very few men contributed to the creation of literature comprised of practical lessons set in realistic social situations. There were several reasons why women assumed control of this field. Women traditionally educated very young children, either
at home or in the dame and petty schools and, therefore, they were most conscious of the lack of suitable literature with which to teach children to read. Most of the women writing in this period were involved in the education of children. Mrs. Barbauld established and taught in a Dissenting elementary school; Mary Wollstonecraft had been a governess; Maria Edgeworth educated her twelve brothers and sisters according to the radical theories of her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, and wrote a treatise on education. Mrs. Trimmer was one of the most ardent supporters of Sunday schools and won much notice for her outspoken condemnation of the Lancastrian schools.

Education for women expanded and improved during the eighteenth century. While the curriculum of etiquette, dancing, and deportment that was offered in the boarding schools for girls may have been unsuitable for their middle-class clients, the proliferation of these schools after mid-century did serve to raise literacy among women. The "improved" moral tone and suppression of vulgar themes, evident in late eighteenth-century fiction, may be due to the infiltration of women as readers and authors into literary circles. The women who wrote moral tales for children were undeniably well-educated, for they showed familiarity with the contemporary intellectual thought and possessed a sophisticated style of
writing.

The poor status accorded writers of children's literature was another reason for the dominance of women. Thomas Day, one of the few male children's authors and the creator of *Sandford and Merton*, looked forward to "the innumerable pleasantries and sneers to which an attempt like this might be exposed", and would have suppressed the work if his reputation as an author was all that he had in mind. His only consolation was the expected "applause of children." Samuel Johnson praised Isacc Watts, whose *Divine and Moral Songs* were among the earliest poetry for children, in the following terms:

For children he condescended to lay aside the philosopher, the scholar, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason to its gradation of advance in the morning of life... . . A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson which humility can teach. 54

As few men seemed willing to join Watts in his exercise in humility, a small group of well-educated, socially concerned women filled the need for realistic and moral literature in the growing population of literate middle-class children.

The social origin of the didactic authors was middle class and gentry. Maria Edgeworth was the daughter of an Irish gentleman; Mrs. Barbauld, daughter of a school master, married a Dissenting minister. Mrs.
Trimmer was the daughter of a prominent engraver. The professional class and the gentry were very important in forming public opinion in the eighteenth century. Straddled between what they perceived to be an unruly populace and a decadent aristocracy, this group set out to improve the morality and manners of their society.

The primary motive in writing for children was the recognition of the "want of proper books to be put into their hands while they are taught the elements of reading." This need had long existed, but not until the eighteenth century was there a ready publishing industry and a large public of children wanting to read and parents willing to buy.

In addition to the production of primary teaching materials, these writers were determined to supplant the books already being read by children. According to Richard Lovell Edgeworth, "Mr. Newbery's little books" were inadequate. These authors regarded the chapbooks, with their crude woodcuts and inelegant language, with positive aversion. It was judged a social necessity to provide children with books that would "interest their minds without corrupting them." For fanciful tales of feudal romance and picaresque folk tales, these authors intended to substitute contemporary stories whose situations would correspond to the child's experience of reality, and, thus, firmly implant the moral lesson
presented into his vision of the world. The stories were always set in the present and, as Maria Edgeworth explained in her preface to the Parent's Assistant, "such situations only are described as children can easily imagine." 57

Their popularity attested to a sympathetic response from parents. The famous Sandford and Merton required twenty-two editions to meet popular demand between its publication in 1783 and 1833. Its popularity continued throughout the nineteenth century. Mrs. Barbauld's Evenings at Home went through fourteen editions between 1792 and 1826 and Mrs. Trimmer's History of Robins had thirteen in the years immediately following its publication in 1786. Maria Edgeworth's books enjoyed less spectacular success, but their popularity was constant and steady up to the early twentieth century. 58

Not all the stories written in the late eighteenth century achieved such longevity, but all those chosen here for analysis were reprinted at least five times. The average size of edition has been estimated at between 1,500 and 2,000 books. 59 A comparison of these figures with the popularity of eighteenth century best-sellers might serve to clarify their significance:

...single editions of the novels of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett seldom exceeded 4,000 copies, and four or five editions, totaling less than 9,000 copies, were all the market could absorb of even the most talked-of novel in a single year. 60
The book-buying public was still very small in the eighteenth century. The popularity of the children's books described above compared favourably to that of most successful novels of the same period. Often reprinted stories must have reached a fair proportion of the book-buying urban middle classes.

The books were beyond the scope of the working class both in price, one to three shillings, and in content. Maria Edgeworth defined her audience in her statement that:

Children that live with people who converse with elegance will not be contented with a style inferior to what they hear from every body near them. 61

The sophisticated language of these stories required a high level of reading comprehension. Working class children were left to the Evangelicals who trained them to religion and submission in stories intended to guard them from sedition. The small group of authors of the didactic tales concentrated on training the mind of the middle-class child to principles of discipline and order, instructed him in behavior appropriate to his station in life.

These authors shared Richard Lovell Edgeworth's aim to:

... construct stories suited to the early years of youth and, at the same time, conformable to the complicated relationships of modern society. 62

They also embraced a common understanding of the needs of youth and the complexity of modern society. Although,
as part of the small group of reformers intent upon improving the moral tone of society, they had failed to reform the intractable lower classes, they continued their work undaunted. They were determined to use the medium of literature to impress their particular world view upon the rising generation. In the late eighteenth century, reading was one of the few respectable leisure activities remaining to a class that shunned the traditional recreation of fairs, holidays, and blood sports. For the youth of this class, whose childhood was prolonged by education and whose leisure time was increasingly confined to the home, reading became the major source of amusement. The moral authors were determined to exploit their captive audience by blending instruction and entertainment in their recipe for realistic fiction. By their relentless presentation of their own attitudes as reality, these authors attempted to induct middle-class children into the ranks of the moral citizenry of the future. Thus would their aims, resisted in their own time, be continued in succeeding generations. These writers constructed a view of reality which demonstrated a rational system of managing "the complicated relationships of modern society", and, as an antidote to the increasing complexity of modern life, they exalted the peaceful domestic family.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II


3 Ariès's assertion, based on linguistic evidence, that separate categories of childhood and youth did not exist in Europe before the eighteenth century has been challenged by historians who study youth groups in early modern society. See, for example, John Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present (New York: Academic Press, 1974) and Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reason of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth Century France," Past and Present 50: 41-75.

4 Davis finds that the members of youth groups in early modern France were initiated at puberty which suggests that biological criteria were sometimes used to separate age groups. However, since participation ended with marriage and unmarried men as old as thirty continued to belong to youth groups, it would seem that social as well as biological determinants distinguished age groups.

5 "The definition and composition of village and corporate youth groups varied widely and there was no uniform age of entry, even in schools and universities. This meant that universal age distinctions, such as those imposed in our society by schooling, were lacking in preindustrial Europe." Gillis, Youth and History, p. 4.


NOTES TO CHAPTER II (Con't)


9. R.H. Tawney describes the gradual divorce of economic life from ethical considerations. Earlier attitudes condemning economic practices such as usury and inflated prices softened, yet, at the same time, the religion reinforced economic success. Commercial success was integrated into the Puritan world view as "social vices emerged as economic virtues." Moreover, the individual was encouraged to direct his attention to worldly matters for, "in winning the world, he wins the salvation of his own soul as well." See, e.g., his chapter entitled "The Puritan Movement: The Triumph of Economic Virtues" in Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1926: reprint ed., New York: New American Library, Mentor Books, 1961), pp. 189-210.


14. Sidney Pollard describes some of the methods used by factory managers to impose disciplined work habits upon their employees, but notes that: "The code of ethics on which employers concentrated was... rather limited. It was left to the Evangelical Movement and to other forces outside industry
to develop out of the needs of the bourgeoisie a momentum of its own, and to direct and absorb the spiritual energy of the working classes which was largely untouched by the new work discipline."

He cites Reisman who noticed that: "although 'there was much talk of the need for discipline, sobriety, and integrity' employers were more preoccupied with the administration of things that the administration of men. The 'human mood of the work force was not yet felt to be a problem':" See The Genesis of Modern Management: A Study of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), pp. 193-6.


17. Ibid., p. 318. Interestingly enough, Maria Edgeworth, in the Parent's Assistant (London: 1796), includes a story entitled "The Barring Out," that recounts a public school mutiny. She infers that such rebellions were an aristocratic habit, and in her school, where a young gentleman has incited the insurrection, the affair ends more quietly than was usually the case in the great public schools.


20. Malcolmson, Popular Recreation in English Society, P. 100.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II (Con't)


25 This remark, made by the anonymous author of the "Essay on Trade and Commerce" (1770), is quoted in Malcolmson, Popular Recreation, p. 96.

26 Quinlan, Victorian Prelude, p. 16.

27 Coats, "Economic Thought," p. 44.

28 Quinlan, Victorian Prelude, p. 57.


30 Quinlan, Victorian Prelude, p. 20.

31 Ibid., p. 21. Other arguments against educating the lower orders are described by Lawrence Stone, "Literacy and Education in England, 1640-1900," Past and Present 42 (1969): 69-139.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II (Con't)

33 Ibid., p. 30.


36 Ibid., p. 59.

37 The decline in the educational level of workers in the northern industrial towns is discussed by Michael Sanderson, "Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England," Past and Present 56 (1972): 75-104; and Stone, "Literacy and Education."


40 Altick, The English Common Reader, pp. 75, 108. Hannah More's Cheap Repository tracts were often printed on high quality paper and bound to suit middle and upper class buyers who wished to give them to their children.

41 Plumb, "The New World of Children," pp. 80, 90.

42 Fairy tales had a similar history. After enjoying a brief period of popularity among fashionable elites in eighteenth century France, fairy tales were printed in the Bibliotèque Bleue in France and chapbooks in England and were read by children and rural folk.

43 The opening lines to Newbery's Little Goody Two-Shoes are quoted in Darton, Children's Books in England, p. 131. Some authors attribute Little Goody Two-Shoes to Oliver Goldsmith who often wrote for Newbery.
**NOTES TO CHAPTER II (Con't)**


49. Dame schools were common in the eighteenth century villages in England. They were supervised usually by widows or spinsters and curriculum varied according to the educational level of the teacher. Petty schools were designed for the very youngest members of the grammar school class. These schools are described in Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 286, F. Gordon Roe, *The Victorian Child* (London: Phoenix House, 1959), p. 107.

50. Lancaster was a Quaker who established schools for the poor. He based these schools on the monitorial system devised by Andrew Bell in India. Mrs. Trimmer objected to Lancaster's schools because there was no religious instruction offered in them. Looking to the revolution in France, she feared too rapid an education of the poor would cause discontent and that the monitors would become "a ready instrument of sedition and rebellion." She supported Charity and Sunday Schools. The controversy between Trimmer and Lancaster is discussed in Darton, *Children's Books in England*, pp. 162-164.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II (Con't)

51 Quinlan, *Victorian Prelude*, pp. 61, 62.

52 Ibid.


55 Day, Preface to *Sandford and Merton*, p. 3.

56 Ibid.

57 Edgeworth, Preface to *The Parent's Assistant*, p. 2.

58 British Museum Catalogue lists all editions published in England. However, many more editions were published in America.


60 Altick, *The English Common Reader*, p. 50.

61 Edgeworth, Preface to *The Parent's Assistant*, p. 2.

III  THE IMAGINED WORLD

Late eighteenth century juvenile fiction sacrifices escapism, fancy, and humour to social realism. In the hands of determined didactic authors realistic fiction becomes more than a mirror reflecting the existing condition of society; it becomes a tool for promoting the social goals of the authors through the presentation of an ideal model of society. But, outside their model of a harmonious social order, the authors perceive and show their child-readers a threatening world filled with poverty, crime, vice, and death. On the narrow stage of children's fiction all manner of men, branded with a stamp of good or evil, parade before the reader.

However, the authors do not expose the danger and brutality of contemporary society simply for the sake of sensational appeal. The dangerous elements in the stories serve to define the boundaries of the formula for safety. Stable family life, rigid self-discipline, and allegiance to the given social order prevent and cure society's ills.
The moral stories are set in the domestic circle; the primary environment of the child and the basic cell of society. Forcing reality to serve their social goals, the authors present family types that represent the range of social life. Out of this range, the authors accentuate for the edification of their readers, those models that best serve as guides to ideal behavior and family life and the proper relationships between social groups. However, because the authors' focus is on life style, they are not particularly rigorous in identifying models worthy of emulation simply by class analysis. Indeed, the concept of a class society was not mature until the nineteenth century. Thus, while a majority of their readers belong to an urban middle class, the authors pose the rural gentry family as ideal, for it is the values of this group that the authors wish to promote and preserve in an increasingly commercial society. This is not to suggest that the authors intend to encourage their readers to aspire to the gentry but that they wish them to assimilate the gentry world view.

Conversely, these eighteenth-century authors react to the fashionable aristocratic family with undiluted distaste. The lives of these families appear
barren, superficial, and devitalized, poisoned by overabundance. Their way of life provides an unworthy example for both their own children and the inferior ranks of society. The aristocratic family structure, as illustrated in children's fiction, features an aloof, preoccupied father, a foolish, indulgent mother and one spoiled, unhealthy child whose loneliness subtly underlines the overall impression of sterility. This basic family enclave is encrusted with legions of decadent servants, relatives and houseguests. Such is the situation of Tommy Merton, the hero of Thomas Day's Sandford and Merto, who becomes so unhealthy and unruly that his father finally resolves to send him to live with a strict country parson. In accounts of middle class families who foolishly imitate the aristocratic life style, the authors are even more bluntly critical. Maria Edgeworth, in Simple Susan, offers no optimistic solution to the plight of her character, Lawyer Case. A widower, he neglects his children and concentrates on enlarging his fortune and raising his status. When, as retribution for his crimes against the villagers he is driven from his home, he has only his hopelessly ruined children to comfort him.

The obvious antagonism to the aristocratic way of life apparent in these stories echoes reformers' opposition to the patterns of child-rearing common to
the late eighteenth century European aristocracy. As interest in the child increased during the century, the aristocratic child became a plaything, an amusing pet to be indulged or ignored according to the fancy of its parents. For the most part, fashionable parents assigned the major tasks of child-rearing to their servants. Children's authors were entirely unsympathetic to the fashion of trusting servants to raise children. They construct the characters of the servants in their stories to serve as examples of immoral behavior to their readers. Fictional servants commonly lie and steal and are often idle and intoxicated. The authors were convinced that a child whose early experiences were dominated by servants would absorb harmful impressions of adult behavior. Maria Edgeworth interrupts the flow of action in *The Birthday Present* to warn parents of the habits early acquired by children abandoned to the company of servants:

> We hope that both children and parents will here pause for a moment to reflect. The habits of meanness, tyranny, and falsehood which children acquire from living with bad servants are scarcely ever conquered in the whole course of their future lives. 5

Understandably, writers of stories for children are reluctant to criticize adults. Nevertheless, as representatives of a decadent life style alien to the authors' model of harmonious society, aristocrats and servants become the villains and buffoons of eighteenth
century children's stories. The victims of their erratic style of child-rearing are redeemed only by rigorous discipline in an environment far removed from fashionable society.

The attitudes of the didactic authors to the habits of the aristocracy are transparent in their heavy-handed descriptions of the frivolous and dissipated life of the wealthy. Conversely, since their treatment of poor families is more sensitive, their attitude to the poor is implied and more subtle. Where poor parents appear well-intentioned and virtuous and poor children are models of health, happiness, and industry, the fact of their destitution must be explained to the middle class reader. In the typical poor family whose economic misfortunes provide the foundation for dramatization, the father is dead. By removing so central an element from an otherwise model family structure, the authors evade the difficulty of accounting for the indigence of the hardworking, ingenious, frugal, but poor families. The child hero of such a family must share the economic roles of adults to resolve conflicts arising from poverty and to provide for his numerous brothers and sisters. Thus, the authors are able, without undermining the social order, to present poor heroes and heroines as ideal types. Accidents of birth, fortune, and social origins are given factors in these stories; conduct within the given situation is the variable.
Without exception, the rural family in the middle ranks of society represents the preferred way of life. The family structure is balanced at two parents and two children. Neither overabundance nor scarcity disrupts the daily routine of the family. The model family assumes all functions necessary to the health and, particularly, the education of the child. Schools, hospitals, factories, and even the church, institutions that were supposedly robbing the family of numerous functions during the period of modernization, appear rarely in the stories. Both parents in the ideal family constantly attend to the needs of their children. Through these wise and patient paragons, the authors interpret, for the edification of their readers, the fictional experiences of their child characters. The child becomes, within the family, an individual and a functioning member of society.

The theory and practice of education was the major intellectual preoccupation of all serious children's authors in the late eighteenth century. Hence, education becomes the central function of their story-book families. In the ideal systems presented, the process of education encompasses the whole life of the developing child. All aspects of work and leisure contribute to his understanding, with the wise parent ever present to guide and explain. The parent/educators portrayed appreciate the level of comprehension of their children and design their lessons
to suit the child's understanding and to instill habits of order and reason. The ideal education involves the whole personality of the child: nurturing his reason through practical instruction, suppressing his irrationality by example, and relating his youthful experiences to the social context.

The rural situation of these families is essential to the ideal educational system their creators propose. In rural walks parents introduce children to the natural world as a reasonable, orderly creation whose mysteries science can explain. Such fictional excursions provide the authors with an opportunity to interject all manner of scientific information into the text. Further, the processes of industry that contribute to society are revealed to the child characters and, thus, the readers. For example, in Richard Lovell and Maria Edgeworth's *Early Lessons*, a dramatization of their treatise on education, *Practical Education*, Harry and Lucy observe butter making, brick baking, flour milling and other rural industries. A majority of child characters are allowed small gardens in which to practically apply their knowledge of natural history.

The eighteenth-century fascination with scientific instruments infiltrates the stories as well. Children are shown microscopes, barometers, air pumps, electrifying machines and balloons. However, these contraptions are presented as toys rather than as exploitable machines, and
the exhibitions typically occur in domestic drawing rooms, rather than in factories.

Thus, the ideal system of education prompted by the didactic authors introduces children to a wide range of contemporary knowledge, demonstrated by practical experience. In this regard, it is noteworthy that boys and girls in the literature appear to enjoy an identical curriculum. Probably, this lack of sexual distinction is due less to a conception of equality between the sexes than to the authors' insistence that all children learn together at home, under the patient care of their parents.

Just as the ideal family-centred education appears to absorb the whole life of the child as he matures and to become a major factor in prolonging the childhood of the fictional boys and girls, it necessarily tends to encompass the whole life of the parents as well. The authors see education as the crucial function of the family and, hence, other functions, significantly the economic roles of the parents, rarely intrude into stories about ideal domestic life. The authors' stress on full-time child-rearing in a rural setting limits their range of examples of model domesticity to families of the gentry and professional classes. The educational activities of story-book families are consistent with the setting and duties of their station. However, in Thomas Day's Sandford and Merton, which poses as a day-by-day account of the education
of two boys, the clergymen hero, Mr. Barlow, is remarkably unencumbered by obligations to his profession. Given the authors' insistence on an industrious, independent way of life in a rural setting, it is curious that they rarely feature the respectable farmer as an ideal child-rearer. Again, the prominence assigned to the educational function of the ideal family may explain the authors' tendency to disregard the farmer. Farmer Sandford, of Day's *Sandford and Merton*, must send his son to the local parson for education. Farmer Grey, in Edgeworth's *Forgive and Forget*, ably fulfills all the requirements of child-rearing, but plainly he is exceptional. Educated in Scotland, he methodically applies current scientific techniques culled from agricultural journals to prosper in his occupation. His illiterate neighbour, Farmer Oakely, can only wonder at and resent his success. Most likely, the authors observed too few Farmer Greys and too many Farmer Oakelys in the eighteenth-century rural world. Although the eighteenth-century enclosures transformed the rural social order and the status of the farmer began to change, in the eyes of these writers, the farmer is still too rude to qualify as a story-book hero.

Clearly, the ideal education of children within the family is not a model easily emulated by all groups in society. Though the authors realize that their ideal
cannot be approached by many they are not daunted by this inequality, for the reasons Maria Edgeworth expresses:

At present it is necessary that the education of different ranks should in some respect be different. They have few ideas, few habits in common, their peculiar vices and virtues do not arise from the same causes and their ambition is to be directed to different objects. But justice, truth, and humanity are confined to no particular rank and should be enforced with equal care and energy upon the minds of young people of every station.  

Their family's economic situation obliges the poor hero or heroine to cut short their education in order to assume adult roles. Notwithstanding their shortened term of study, model boys and girls of the lower orders invariably exhibit basic literacy, a pattern that was by no means typical in eighteenth-century society. As the relevance of basic skills of literacy to the working lives of these characters is often obscure, the author's insistence on the universal acquisition of reading and writing might be explained by an optimism that the discipline involved in learning to read is the basis of an orderly mind. For instance, in Edgeworth's *Forgive and Forget*, Farmer Oakely, "a plain unlearned Englishman, bred and born", is superstitious, ignorant and unable to control his temper, while his neighbour, Farmer Grey, is orderly, rational, and patient, even in provoking circumstances. The connection between illiteracy and unruliness, while not specifically drawn, is, nonetheless, the implicit message.
The aristocratic prejudice against clerical skills was still thought to be current in the eighteenth century, and the didactic authors battle illiteracy at the highest social strata as well as the lowest. In Sandford and Merton, to overcome the patrician Tommy's reluctance to learn to read or write, Mr. Barlow tells him a tale of a young aristocrat who was tricked and humiliated by a horsedealer. Ignorant of mathematics, the young man agrees to pay an outrageous sum, the total of a simple arithmetic calculation, for a horse. In characteristic fashion, Day subtly connects the decadent pursuits of the aristocracy with the absence of practical skills. Again, he underlines the importance of learning these skills in a moral environment so that the child will be both intellectually and morally armed against the deception of dishonest knaves like horsedealers.

The establishment of education within the confines of the family is a principle logically derived from contemporary assumptions of the nature of child development. In the didactic tales, no child is inherently good or evil. The authors carefully assemble details of the family life of their protagonist, irrefutably to demonstrate that in all cases the good or bad behavior of the children is a direct result of their upbringing. They stress that the virtues of their heroes and heroines are the consequence of patient teaching and a good example set by the parents.
Evil qualities in children, conversely, arise from neglect and association with insidious influences. The behavioral dramas constructed by these authors indicate that blind obedience and memorization of lessons are not the object of their child-rearing methodology. Education and morality are inseparable and complementary. Hence, education of children must be carried on in the moral environment of the family, where the practical application of all lessons is most apparent. Story-book boys and girls act out the lessons and values of their creators to demonstrate the function of certain knowledge and the consequences of certain behavior in a context with which the reader can readily identify. The goal of ideal child-rearing is not mere obedience but understanding and judgment, not imposed discipline but self-discipline. The child becomes an autonomous individual who has internalized the elements of morality.

Delayed gratification of natural impulses is an integral part of teaching the child self-discipline, and thus, the plots of the majority of didactic stories hinge on the ability or failure of a child to control himself. The children who prosper in such stories control their immediate desires, often with a higher end in mind. Gluttony, providing a conspicuous example of self-indulgence, one easily understood by and applied to children, becomes a common theme in eighteenth-century
children's literature. Not only is over-eating wasteful and unhealthy; it is an alarming indication that the child may have unrestrained appetites. As examples of the sorrows attending this sin, Thomas Day's *The Remarkable Cure of the Gout*, describes a man paralyzed as a result of his overfondness for rich food. Hal, in Edgeworth's *Waste Not Want Not*, spends his last penny on cakes, is made ill by their sweetness, and throws many away. Characters who overindulge are unable to profit from simple pleasures and are compelled to seek out new stimulants to spark jaded appetites. Unbridled passions are destructive both to the child himself and the social order, and must be suppressed if the child is to grow into reasoning adulthood and society is to remain stable.

The accent the didactic authors place on delayed gratification corresponds to the Evangelical concern with self-control and suspicion of all natural impulses. In these stories, the children who obey their instincts, choosing the immediate pleasure over the distant, often abstract benefits of the future are made to suffer. The children who delay their rewards, either with a concrete end in mind or out of rational impulse control, usually obtain their goals. Thus, the stories are oriented to the future, with the actions of the present leading to predictable consequences.

The enlightened eighteenth-century image of reality
includes an orderly universe that functions predictably according to scientific laws. The future presented in children's stories is equally rational and controllable and, hence, has in it no place for magic, luck or superstition. The authors wish to convince the child that the future logically unfolds from the conditions of the present. They exhibit a suspicion of entrepreneurial risk-taking, typically illustrated by Day's story *The Two Brothers.* Two Spanish brothers set off for South America. One intends to search for gold in the mountains; the other decides to continue farming, exactly as he has done at home. After both have laboured for a period of several months, the gold-seeking brother returns from the mountains ill and tired but laden with treasure. The other brother has steadily prospered on his farm. He is comfortable but not wealthy. However, the rich brother's fortune is soon transferred to him in return for food and shelter. Thus, conservative habits of diligence in a traditional occupation win out over adventurous enterprises.

Elements of magic, prophesy, and luck must be actively exorcised from a rational, predictable universe presented to children, especially as folklore tended to become nursery-lore. The children's story writers point to the barrenness of passively trusting to luck and the utility of transforming destiny by individual effort. For the child born into a class where such mastery of
fate was in some measure possible, these lessons could have a practical application unavailable to those less fortunate. The attack on luck and magic is also part of the attempt to isolate children from the traditional culture of the lower orders in which charms, prophesies, and pagan rituals were still prominent. Maria Edgeworth, of all the didactic authors, battles the concept of luck most aggressively. In her story, *The Orphans*, a foolish old woman, Goody Grope, reduces herself to penury by spending all her time searching for a pot of gold in response to an ancient prophesy. She becomes dependent on "the charity of those who trusted more to industry than to luck". A more dramatic example occurs in *Waste Not Want Not*, when Hal appeals to luck as he attempts his last shot at the archery target.

But just as he pronounced the word luck and as he bent his bow, the string broke in two and the bow fell from his hands.

Paradoxically, Edgeworth is not above employing a little magic to emphasize her point. Children who depend on luck invariably are denied it, while industrious children usually experience remarkably good fortune. For many of these authors, as well as for Puritans and Dissenters from the sixteenth century onwards, the idea of Providence replaced older notions of luck. However, Providence is not a blind god-like Fortune. Providence rewards the virtuous and industrious and punishes the idle and sinful.
Thus, the working of fate in these stories is not random but in harmony with a well-ordered universe.

A clear definition of the child's nature and the wish to separate the child from the traditional culture of the lower orders, inspired these authors to construct models of the ideal family and individual that closely corresponded to a particular way of life embraced by a small group of reformers in the eighteenth century.

While these authors shared an appreciation of the special needs of childhood, the object of their child-rearing dramas was to carefully train the youth from childish ways to orderly, reasoning adult behavior. The child heroes succeed despite their youth, not because of it. Thus, while the authors recognize the importance of childhood as a stage of human development, they do not cherish childhood, either for its charm or its innocence. What they do emphasize is the development of self-discipline as the prerequisite for model adulthood. Hence, the authors concentrate primarily on those qualities of the child that ultimately contribute to his future adult character in order to produce a personality type that conforms to their concept of a rational universe and a harmonious social order.

The World Outside

Even while energetically promoting their conception of the ideal individual and family, the didactic authors of
the period wished to do more than merely set forth examples of virtue. They took pains to create character and circumstance as they believed them to be, not as they may have wished them to be, because their intention was to teach the readers to cope with conditions in an often raw and even potentially dangerous society. Children were to see the world as it was, to accept its general character, and then to adjust their expectations to real possibilities. Moreover, the frightening aspects of contemporary life serve as a warning to the youth, tempted to stray from the protected family circle in search of fame or fortune.

These eighteenth-century writers used their stories to fulfill a dual function. On one hand, the tales project an image of the ideal way of life within the family. On the other, the stories give the reader a firm sense of his place within the social order and the proper way of managing social relationships from his place in society. Their effort to communicate to children the basic tenets of contemporary society introduces an additional order of complexity to an analysis of these stories. At a time when urbanization was increasing and traditional village behavior codes were breaking down, poverty, vice, and crime became more visible problems. During this period of transition, it was not always clear to committed reformers which aspects of contemporary society were to blame.
The juvenile fiction of the period reflects the contradictory forces of a transitional society. Their authors attempt to simplify for young readers their society's complexity, but are not always consistent. They condemn certain elements of traditional society while retaining many; they welcome some aspects of the modern world yet reject others. Although such a distinction was not made by these authors themselves, it is possible for us to separate, for the purpose of analysis, their attitudes to traditional and modern life.

These writers reject those aspects of traditional society which undermine the self-discipline of the individual and the stable domestic family. Striving to diagnose the cause of apparently rampant crime and vice, the authors focus an accusing eye on the same folkways that Puritans, Sabbatarians, and Dissenters had battled since the sixteenth century. At the same time that they are attempting to remove notions of luck, fate, and magic from the child's vision of the future, these authors are seeking to instill an apprehension of time based on a series of evenly measured days, and to substitute this measured apprehension for the seasonal holidays and celebrations in which children took an active part. The Puritans abhored communal festivities and insisted on the equal weight of days. These emotions still echo in these late eighteenth-century secular lessons for children. Thus, in *The Birthday Present*,

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Rosamund's father gently derides his wealthy relatives who celebrate their daughter's birthday with extravagant presents and luxurious food:

And can Bell eat any more upon that day than any other? he asks his envious daughter.  

Traditional country fairs are accorded particular disfavour. Honest Tom, Mrs. Sherwood's Errand Boy, in his sinful days, attends the town races in the company of the "light people of the lower orders". In the course of the riotous activities of the holiday, a bully whips him, a horse tramples him and, as a result, he is too ill to work for an entire season. The consequences of sin, even sin confined to one day, reach into the future. In contrast, Jem, the protagonist of Edgeworth's Lazy Lawrence, has no need to go to the great Bristol Fair, "the merriest day of the year", for he is merry every day due to his orderly routine of work and play.  

Educated contemporaries of the didactic authors shared their distaste for pleasure fairs, wakes, and parish feasts, and increasingly sought government control of large public gatherings. The attempt by a group of middle class reformers to break down the customary calendar comprised of traditional holidays and festivities celebrating the birthdays, marriages, and funerals of the local aristocracy is consonant with the message conveyed in narrative fiction for children. In these stories,
customary days of idleness encourage drunkenness, fighting, and, thus, morally and physically endanger all who participate. The moral tales extoll a more even tenor of life. The advice given to the young robins as they leave the nest (allegorically equivalent to the quiet domestic home) illustrates the author's proposed alternative to communal recreation:

To the gay scenes of levity and dissipation, prefer a calm retirement. 27

Life lived in public is sinful and disorderly. In the private life of the family resides all virtue and happiness.

The image of traditional culture that emerges in children's fiction is testimony of the author's determination to steer children away from the unruliness of public festivities and the company of the lower orders. A further motivation is the desire to substitute regular work patterns for the "feast and starve" motif of traditional agricultural life. The employer of Jem in *Lazy Lawrence* warns him that

there is a great deal of difference between picking up a few stones, and working steadily every day, all day long. 28

Punctuality assumes almost unreasonable importance. For instance, in *Simple Susan*, the squire's sisters gently chastize Susan for being a few minutes late for their appointment, although her only time-piece is the length of shadows. 29 However, it remains clear from the general trend of the moral lessons in these eighteenth-century stories that the author's purpose in stressing
precision in time measurement is to create an orderly mind in the child and not to indoctrinate him to factory discipline.

Idleness is the supreme sin dramatized in these tales. While work and leisure activities of these children are not sharply divided, middle and upper class children enjoy lessons in the form of games and their excursions are infused with instruction; idleness is firmly set apart from innocent and useful pursuits. Idleness leads Lazy Lawrence into vice and crime. Gambling to pass his vacant hours, he is forced to steal and subsequently finds himself in Bristol jail. Mrs. Sherwood’s Honest Tom, The Errand Boy, lethargically flounders in poverty, wasting the small sums he earns playing "chuck farthing". It follows that leisure is legitimate only if routinized; work is the best vaccination against vice and crime. At least in this period, didactic authors do not attempt to demonstrate that a childhood of effort and order is the first step to successful entrepreneurship. Honest Tom, thoroughly reformed and admirably industrious, chooses to remain a gardener on a local estate rather than join a trading firm. Work is a virtue and an end in itself.

Story writers recognized that animal characters could be excellent vehicles for communicating their message. Children would readily empathize with the suffering of defenseless creatures and, through them, be enlisted on
the side of civilization and humane behavior. The more gruesome the torture, the stronger the message. With surprising violence, puerile villains throw cats off roofs, shoot birds, rob nests and pluck live chickens. To strengthen the reader's identification, the animal characters are personified as the persecuted protagonist. We feel the indignation of the faithful Keeper, hero of Augustus Kendall's *Keeper's Travels in Search of his Master*, as heedless boys and rowdy village folk pursue him with stones and an idle watchman shoots at him for sport. Only adults of the gentry and professional classes treat him kindly. Idleness and lack of self-discipline are the root causes of such barbarous behavior.

In the animal stories, along with the other genres of eighteenth century children's fiction, it is possible to discern from the author's attitudes an implicit connection between the behavior of undisciplined children and that of the unruly lower orders. The impulse that inspired children's authors to discourage savage behavior toward animals also prompted eighteenth-century reformers to combat the popular "blood sports" of the countryside. Beyond simple humanitarian motives, attacks on cock fighting, bull running and bear baiting, still common in the rural world, complement the attempt to suppress traditional festivities so instrumental in provoking rowdiness and disorder. The goal cherished by both children's authors and reformers was that, if kind treatment to animals were
encouraged, then general decorum might improve as well. Animal story writers forcefully press their point by devising cruel or painful ends for children who mistreat animals,

    Like Jack who got a Fractured Skull
    From roaring at a furious Bull.36

Children who are kind to animals grow into benevolent and rational adults, loved by the society of men and animals alike. The rewards and punishments accorded stem directly from the actions.

    The didactic authors consider carefully what
    system of incentives and sanctions should be applied.

    It is not easy to give rewards to children which shall
    not indirectly do them harm by fostering some hurtful
taste or passion. In the story of Lazy Lawrence, where
the object was to excite a spirit of industry, care
has been taken to proportion the reward to the exertion,
and to demonstrate that people feel cheerful and happy
whilst they are employed. The reward of our industrious
boy, though it be money, is only money considered as
the means of gratifying a benevolent wish. In a
commercial nation it is especially necessary to separate
as much as possible, the spirit of industry and avarice,
and to beware lest we introduce Vice in the form of
Virtue.37

Edgeworth is concerned that the qualities admired in the stories be resonant with the social order. Neither she nor her contemporaries have their juvenile heroes accumulate capital; they always work towards concrete and acceptable goals: Jem, in Lazy Lawrence, to save his horse, Simple Susan, to free her father from military service, Mary, in The Orphans, to find her family a home. There is no suggestion
of expanding the requirements of the children, rich or poor, beyond comfortable sufficiency. Nowhere are new comforts introduced into the poor children's lives. Wealthier children are rewarded by books or educational excursions rather than luxuries. The function of the reward in the didactic tales marks a shift from the Newbery stories, in which good children were liberally rewarded with riches. The authors of the moral tales take care to reveal that the pleasure which comes from virtuous action is, like work, a reward in itself.

The system of punishment advocated in these stories also distinguishes them from their predecessors. Children are not beaten for their sins: they must learn from experience. Probably quite consciously the writers are reflecting the best theoretical dicta of their time. Contemporary child-rearing manuals advised a restriction of corporal punishment. Locke maintained that children whose reason was developing should never be beaten. Following his advice, Edgeworth and her contemporaries often employ a psychological rather than a physical style of punishment. For instance, Mary Wollstonecraft's model tutor, Mrs. Mason, gently withdraws her affection from the girls when they misbehave. More commonly, the authors manipulate the events of their stories to prove that punishment arises naturally from the crime. Thus, over-eating causes illness, extravagance leads to poverty, cruelty
to animals provokes injury or even death.

The rational world that orders the events of the didactic tales is a world of justice. Too great an insistence on immediate justice strains the authors' claim to realism, and the more skillfull authors often delay the consequences of childhood sins to adulthood. Although the lessons of most of the moral tales are pointedly secular, implicit in many stories is a hint of the Puritan theme of constant vigilance, the fatality of one error. The conclusion of Keeper's Travels in Search of His Master explains how the whole string of misfortunes experienced by the dog arose from one lapse of duty:

One error, one dereliction from the path of right, one moment's inattention to, or abandonment of virtue, though trivial and harmless in itself, may expose us to the whole train of vices and sorrows. 39

Such warnings seem only a worldly version of the inscription on a Puritan sundial,

Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell
On Each Moment depends
Eternity, Eternity, Eternity...

The shift is from everlasting perdition to misfortune in this world, but for the child, the peace of whose adult life is threatened by the repercussions of a fleeting childish sin, the lesson might seem little different. Adult life was another life for him.

Rewards and punishments are tailored to fit the action of the child to what was perceived to be a realistic
social situation and, in the eighteenth century, in the second period of children's literature that followed Newbery's time, that reality more distinctly included the dangers that accompany commercial society. Rewards must provide an incentive to virtuous behavior without endangering the status quo. Maria Edgeworth describes the subtle balance aimed at in her work:

To prevent the precepts of morality from tiring the ear and mind, it was necessary to make the stories in which they are introduced in some measure dramatic, to keep alive hope and fear and curiosity by some degree of intricacy. At the same time, care has been taken to avoid inflaming the imagination, or exciting a restless spirit of adventure, by exhibiting false views of life, and creating hopes which, in the ordinary course of things, cannot be realized.

In confronting the problems of incentives and rewards, the attention of these late eighteenth-century story writers shifts away from the threat of folkways to the family virtues and towards the dangers to the social order from the rapid growth of cities and abstract money relationships. In order to combat the social disintegration they attribute to urban commercial society, they reaffirm their allegiance to the status quo by presenting as reality a harmonious but hierarchical social order. In addition, the increasing visibility of poverty in late eighteenth-century society may have inspired them to educate a newly affluent middle class to the social responsibilities that should accompany wealth.

The commitment of these authors to a hierarchical
structure caused them to discourage in their stories any notion of social mobility. Notably absent is the dramatic social ascent of Giles Gingerbread, a typical Newbery hero of the earlier period, whose father tells him that:

A poor man or boy may get a coach if he will endeavor to deserve it. 41

Newbery's Little Goody Two-Shoes, Mrs. Trimmer warned, was a dangerous encouragement to the social aspirations of young women. 42 The writers of Mrs. Trimmer's period, at the turn of the century, gave their heroes and heroines impressive virtues, but did not have them ride off at the end in a coach and six, nor did they marry them off to a prince or princess. In fairy tales, innate qualities are rewarded by fame and fortune. In the didactic tales, honesty, diligence, industry and ingenuity, acquired through experience, are rewarded by a respectable position within the class of origin.

The few examples of rapid rise in social status are negative. Mary Wollstonecraft's character, Lady Sly, who acquired her fortune by treachery and deceit, lives a barren life, devoid of friends and simple pleasures. 43 Lawyer Case, in Edgeworth's Simple Susan, who accumulates a massive fortune by legal trickery and cheating the common people of their customary lands, is eventually ousted from the village by the kind and learned squire. 44

Those who foolishly ape their betters receive the same treatment. Mr. Lofty, another Wollstonecraft
creation, reduces himself to poverty in trying to equal the life style of the aristocracy and finally kills himself. Lawyer Case's daughter, Babs, is exposed as an ignorant fool when she assumes the airs of a grown woman and a fine lady.

Those who never attempt to appear what they are not — those who do not in their manners pretend to any thing unsuited to their habits and situation in life, are never in danger of being laughed at by sensible, well-bred people of any rank; but affectation is the constant and just object of ridicule.

Although these authors of fiction for middle class boys and girls had, like the Evangelicals, a fear of social mobility, they emphasize different things and teach different lessons. The Evangelicals preached submission to those accidents of birth which were the will of God. Edgeworth, Wollstonecraft, and their school show how adversity can be overcome. They teach that a happy and fulfilling life is possible, regardless of the class of origin, and, indeed, that such a life is more easily realized within that class than without. Middle class children, especially, are taught to be proud of their class, though perhaps not in so ecstatic terms as Newbery's "Trade and Plum-cake" chorus. Hence, the disapproval evident in many tales of the aristocratic life style not only discourages wasteful and frivolous habits but also dampens enthusiasm for social mobility. Accordingly, Farmer Sandford, in Day's Sandford and Merton, refuses an offered fortune because he is reluctant to exchange his happy, industrious life for a more prestigious but less rewarding existence.
Although the authors impose the creed of their own social group upon all ranks of society, they guarantee a rewarding and fulfilling life to all, regardless of social standing, who adopt their models. For fictional poor families, who in every way live up to the standards of behavior these authors espouse, they must honor their guarantee without upsetting the status quo. In stories that dramatize the problems of poverty, patronage is invariably the solution. The function of patronage completes the model of an interdependent, harmonious society by providing a solution to the problems of the poor and an outlet for the excess wealth of the rich. In this manner the social order is justified and preserved.

The formula that dominates stories about poor children typically begins with some calamity that precipitates the family from comfortable subsistence into destitution. The hero, usually the eldest child, independently sets about to repair the family's economic situation, and invariably attracts the attention of a benevolent gentleman or lady. The conflict is resolved when the child, having proved his worth to his patron, is established in a useful trade. Thus, Mary, in *The Orphans*, wins the admiration of the two daughters of the vicar for her unusual industry and honesty. They provide her with flax for spinning, employ her skill for plain work, and encourage her business of sandal-making. Later when she conscientiously turns in
a pot of gold coins found near the derelict castle she inhabits to the absentee landlord, she receives a small cottage for herself and her two sisters. Jem, in Lazy Lawrence, by virtue of his ingenuity and skill in making heath mats, earns the money necessary to save his horse with the help of a kind gentlewoman. Even the lonely hero of Mrs. Barbauld's Perseverance Against Fortune, who Job-like, dauntlessly battles a sequence of disasters, reaches his final deserved prosperity through the help of a sympathetic estate steward.

Despite the outstanding qualities attributed to these heroes not one reaches his deserved position through self-help alone. In the rural setting in which all these dramas unfold, there is no hint of a fluid market economy in which all men, if industrious, can independently realize their market value. Cooperation, in a society based on respect and patronage, is the basis for a just and stable social order. Edgeworth's stories, in particular, offer many examples of children who independently discover a marketable product and acquire the skills necessary to manufacture it, sometimes recruiting extra labour, as Mary does with her sandal-making enterprise in The Orphans. Though these are the very attributes that characterize the entrepreneur, none of Edgeworth's heroes succeeds by his independent efforts alone. Once worth is established, paternal benevolence enters to gently guide the hero to his proper place in society.
The many stories about poor virtuous children appear, at first glance, to be models erected for the improvement of the lower orders. Bearing in mind that the audience of these stories was middle class, it is more likely that the authors created these young paragons as models of behavior for middle-class children, even while they hoped that their creed would be embraced by all classes in society. However, a closer inspection of the content of these stories reveals the more important function of their lessons: to teach children of the rich or moderately well-to-do primary lessons in the practice of benevolence. First, the authors carefully differentiate the deserving from the undeserving poor to show their middle and upper class readers how to distinguish the proper objects of charity. The deserving poor are self-reliant, neat, frugal, and untiringly industrious. The undeserving poor are untidy, improvident and idle. Having outlined the characteristic features of both groups, the authors must then teach children the best way of administering aid to the deserving. Edgeworth systematically applies her theory of charity to resolve conflicts in her stories. A gift of some means of livelihood is the most common reward given her poor but industrious characters. For instance, a poor child in *The Birthday Present* receives a weaving pillow for lace making. Gifts of food or clothing are given in preference
to money. Thus, two children in *The Basket Woman* win a blanket for their grandmother when they honestly return a gold sovereign to a gentleman.\(^{53}\)

The gift must also suit the needs and station of the recipient, as Tommy Merton of Day's *Sandford and Merton* learns when he impulsively gives his own elegant coat to a poor ragged boy, with the result that the poor child's peers beat and ridicule him.\(^{54}\) Tommy learns to exercise benevolence rationally and his next gift of food and clothing for the boy's family is more gratefully received.

Mary Wollstonecraft's Mrs. Mason, in a less systematic way, instructs her two charges in the practice of charity:

> I do not wish you to relieve every beggar that you casually meet, yet should any one attract your attention, obey the impulse of your heart, which will lead you to pay them for exercising your compassion and do not suffer the whispers of selfishness that they may be imposters to deter you. However, I would have you give but a trifle when you are not sure the distress is real and reckon it given for pleasure.\(^{55}\)

Other authors display more caution in delineating the proper relationship between the rich and poor and advocate a thorough appraisal of the characters of poor individuals before rendering assistance.

The changing attitude to the poor that affected certain educated people in the late eighteenth century clearly influenced children's story writers. They impress on their readers that it is the primary responsibility
of the wealthy to care for those less fortunate, but that this duty must be exercised selectively and not merely impulsively. The qualities of economy and charity are complementary in the middle class system of benevolence and are to be substituted for the old, aristocratic pattern of spontaneous alms-giving.

In the *Original Stories* of Mary Wollstonecraft, only Mary has the means to relieve an abysmally poor family, for her sister, Caroline, heedlessly spent all her money on toys. In Edgeworth's *Waste Not, Want Not*, the industrious middle class Benjamin is able to aid a poor family because of his frugal habits, while his aristocratic cousin, sick from too many cakes, is unable to fulfill his duty of paternal benevolence. "Generous" Rosamund, in *The Birthday Present*, wastes her money on an extravagant gift for her wealthy cousin, while "miserly" Laura uses her money to replace a poor girl's weaving pillow. In *Waste Not, Want Not*, Mr. Gresham, a successful merchant, explains the philosophy of charity to his nephews:

> I have always believed that economy and generosity are the best friends, instead of being enemies, as some foolish extravagant people would have us think them.

Thus, the virtues of the middle class fit them to carry out most efficiently the traditional responsibilities of the rich to the poor. The poor are not left to shift for themselves, but they must prove their worth to their bourgeois patrons.
Once again, the animal story provides an excellent vehicle for instructing children in the proper management of social relationships, and does so in terms suited to the understanding and experience of young readers. The relation of man to animals, his responsibility towards them, and the community of mutual service that unites them, corresponds to the social hierarchy. Mrs. Trimmer's description of how "Providence ordains the ordering of the species" in nature, applies to the ordering of human beings in society. Trimmer and Wollstonecraft explain to their readers that kindness to animals is the only act of charity that children can accomplish. Helping brute creation in childhood will instill habits in an individual that will enable him to help his fellow man in maturity.

Lest the children in Mrs. Trimmer's History of Robins be arrested at this primary stage of benevolence, their mother, Mrs. Benson, reminds them that their first duty is to poor people and that the robins must not be fed with food suitable for human consumption. To illustrate this lesson, she brings Frederick and Harriet to visit the home of a woman whose attention is so completely absorbed by her pets that she neglects her children, mistreats her servants, and allows a poor labouring family to starve while her pets eat chicken and rabbits.  

Protection of the social order demands that benevolence be a duty, not an indulgence. The wealthy must
restrain their impulses and give only as much as the poor truly need, so as not to discourage their industry and frugality. The adult characters, who provide examples of the rational exercise of benevolence in many moral tales, spend more time than money on the objects of their charity. Before bestowing any substantial gift upon a poor child, these gentlemen and ladies are careful to be well acquainted with them. Again, this practice contrasts with the older pattern of benevolence in which money is given freely and indiscriminately to an unknown beggar.

The fundamental importance of benevolence in maintaining a just social order allows these authors to view the pitifully small sums earned by young children without regret. No liberal apologies for the early labour of children need be made, for working children were not a new phenomenon. Though children were in fact emerging as an independent labour force at the time these stories were written, there seems to be little consciousness that the separation of children from their parents and subjecting them to factory discipline would endanger the social order and the family. In these stories, working children engage in traditional rural handicrafts within their own homes. In the sample surveyed for this study, only one example of children entering a factory occurs. Poor children should consider themselves fortunate to be able to earn. If they are industrious, sooner or later a
patron will come to their assistance. Patronage, like salvation, must not be expected. Thus, Mary, in *The Orphans*, continues her policy of self-reliance, despite the concern of the vicar's daughter for her welfare. 62

Although the authors seem to expect their poor heroes and heroines to mature even more quickly than their middle class characters, they exhibit considerable sympathy and respect for the integrity of the deserving poor. Those who are worthy of charity have every right to be proud of their group and are not demeaned by their need for benevolence. Edgeworth, in *Waste Not, Want Not*, describes the manner in which an industrious poor boy receives Benjamin's gift:

The boy bowed, without any cringing civility, but with an open decent freedom in his manner. 63

In *Simple Susan*, Edgeworth suggests that the receiver may possess dignity equal to that of the patron.

There is a certain manner of accepting a favour, which shows true generosity of mind. Many know how to give, but few know how to accept a gift properly. 64

Benevolence has a permanent and vital function in maintaining the harmonious social model envisioned by these authors. While they insist that even very young children must work if their family's economic situation demands it, they insist equally that poor families are entitled to help from the wealthy. Their lessons attempt to cultivate independence and autonomy of the individual, but do not favour independence and autonomy of social classes. Their model of society is based on mutual aid, not self-interest.
Furthermore, while the didactic story writers focus on the future of the individual, with the child's adult characters always in view, they do not apply the same process of reasoning to the future of society. The stories do not attempt to prepare the child for a future extrapolated from contemporary industrial trends. The function of realism in these stories prepares the child for life in society as the authors had themselves experienced it. The dangers of life, included to convince the reader of the necessity of adhering to a moral code, pertain to a traditional rural society, not an industrial one.

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasize that if many of the lessons taught by the didactic authors of the late eighteenth century were applicable to industrializing society, there is little evidence that this was the authors' conscious purpose. The practical system of education advocated for middle class children might suit them for future roles as engineers, accountants or industrial managers, but many of the qualities important in the entrepreneurial personality were discouraged. Delayed gratification was strongly recommended, but accumulation of resources was not, charity being the acceptable channel for excess wealth. There was no attempt by these authors to encourage ambition in terms of social mobility or increased consumer demands. The qualities of industry, punctuality, and diligence were intended to foster a
well-ordered, rational mind in the child. The adult role models held up for emulation serve in occupations common to earlier periods; the landlord, merchant, doctor, and lawyer, rather than the industrialist or entrepreneur. The traditional holidays and pastimes that were criticized in these stories do not disrupt work routine so much as engender cruelty, vice and unruliness.

The image of life that emerges in eighteenth century stories for children revealed the world of men as a perilous environment in which peace and prosperity can only be realized by adherence to a strict system of self-discipline. With the protected circle of a close domestic family the ever-present dangers outside that circle might be overcome. The consciously expressed attitudes of these authors reflect the prominent concerns shared by reformers throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries rather than the immediate needs of a rapidly industrializing society. While the authors promote middle-class virtues at the expense of traditional aristocratic and lower-class customs, they were dedicated to preserving a relatively static, stratified social order. The aim of their stories was to induct their middle class readers into the ranks of reformers, to develop the whole personality of the child so that he might fulfill his responsibilities to society within the status quo.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III


6 David Hunt in Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France (New York: Basic Books, 1970) criticizes Ariès for not recognizing that the modernization of the family and society removed many of the functions performed by the medieval family from its modern counterpart. Tamara K. Harevin in "The Family as an Interdisciplinary Field," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 2 (1971): also notes that "the history of the family has been the story of the loss of its functions as a school, church, correctional institute, hospital and workshop."

NOTES TO CHAPTER III (Con't)

8 Day, Sandford and Merton.

9 Ibid.


13 Edgeworth, "Forgive and Forget."

14 Perhaps the idea that the aristocracy was contemptuous of learning was a middle class prejudice, invented to justify the middle class claim to superiority. J.H. Hexter refutes the notion that aristocrats were ignorant and interested only in pleasure. He shows that from the Renaissance onwards, the nobility in England dominated the institutions of higher learning in order to fit themselves for "service in the princely commonwealth." See his chapter "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance," Reappraisals in History: New Views on History and Society in Early Modern Europe (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), pp. 45-70.

15 Day, Sandford and Merton, pp. 165-166.


17 Edgeworth, "Waste Not, Want Not; or, Two Strings to Your Bow," Parent's Assistant, pp. 231-256.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III (Con't)


21 Edgeworth, "Waste Not, Want Not."


23 Edgeworth, "The Birthday Present."


26 Malcolmson, Popular Recreation, pp. 118-138.


29 "Miss Somers, I am afraid, will be waiting for us", said Susan, "You know she said she would call at six; and by the length of our shadows I'm sure it is late." Edgeworth, "Simple Susan," p. 111.

30 Edgeworth, "Lazy Lawrence."

31 Sherwood, The Errand Boy. John Newbery, in contrast, celebrated the game of chuck farthing with the following rhyme:
Chuck Farthing like Trade
Requires great Care,
The more you observe,
The better you'll fare.

John Newbery, A Pretty Little Pocket Book, ed. Mary Thwaite

That this game was seen as a first step into
vice and crime by later authors marks the shift in
attitudes towards commercial society. The entrepreneurial
appreciation of risk was not shared by the didactic
authors.

32 Sherwood, The Errand Boy.

33 Augustus Kendall, Keeper's Travels in Search
of His Master (London: E. Newbery, 1798).

34 Malcolmson, Popular Recreation, pp. 118-138.

35 According to Brian Harrison, the R.S.P.C.A.
was founded for similar reasons. It was hoped that
if men were encouraged to behave kindly to animals
then the whole moral tone of society would improve.
For a discussion of the social function of the
R.S.P.C.A. and other reform movements in the nineteenth
century see his article "Religion and Recreation in
98-125.

36 Elizabeth Turner's Poem, "Jack was a Cruel
Boy", quoted in F.J. Harvey Darton, Children's Books
In England: Five Centuries of Social Life (Cambridge:

37 Edgeworth, Preface Addressed to Parents,
The Parent's Assistant, p. 3.

38 Stewart, Winter and Jones, "Coding Categories
for the Study of Child-Rearing from Historical Sources,"
Journal of Interdisciplinary History 4, Appendix III,
p. 701.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III (Con't)

39 Kendall, Keeper's Travels, pp. 189-190.

40 Edgeworth, Preface Addressed to Parents, Parent's Assistant, p. 4.


42 Mrs. Trimmer felt the same distaste for Robinson Crusoe, whose story would encourage "an early taste for a rambling life, and a desire of adventures", cited in Darton, Children's Books in England, p. 97.

43 Mary Wollstonecraft, "Mrs. Trueman and Lady Sly" in Original Stories from Real Life, with Conversations Calculated to Regulate the Affections and Form the Mind to Truth and Good (London: J. Johnson, 1788: reprint ed. H. Frowde, 1906), pp. 18-25.

44 Edgeworth, "Simple Susan."

45 Wollstonecraft, "Mr. Lofty," Original Stories pp. 64-67.


48 Edgeworth, "The Orphans."

NOTES TO CHAPTER III (Con't)

50 Edgeworth, "The Orphans."

51 Edgeworth explains that although "... it is necessary that the education of different ranks should, in some respects, be different. ... justice, truth and humanity are confined to no particular rank, and should be enforced with equal care and energy upon the minds of young people of every station ..." Preface Addressed to Parents, Parent's Assistant, p. 2.

52 Edgeworth, "The Birthday Present."


54 Day, Sandford and Merton, pp. 46-47.

55 Wollstonecraft, Original Stories, p. 81.

56 Ibid., p. 85.

57 Edgeworth, "Waste Not, Want Not."

58 Edgeworth, "The Birthday Present."


60 Sarah Trimmer, Fabulous Histories, pp. 115-130.

61 In Edgeworth's story "The Orphans", Mary's two younger sisters occasionally sort rags in a paper mill nearby.

62 Ibid.


IV. CONCLUSION

In characteristically long-winded style, Thomas Day described the situation that provoked him and his eighteenth century colleagues to write for children:

All who have been conversant in the education of very young children, have complained of the total want of proper books to be put into their hands, while they are taught the elements of reading. I have felt this want in common with others, and have been very much embarrassed how to supply it. The only method I could invent, was to select such passages of different books as were most adapted to their experience and understanding. The least exceptionable that I could find for this purpose, were Plutarch's Lives and Xenophon's History of the Institution of Cyprus, in English translations: with some part of Robinson Crusoe, and a few passages in the first volume of Mr. Brook's Fool of Quality. Nor can I help expressing my regret, that the very ingenious author of that novel has not deigned to apply his great knowledge of the human heart to this particular purpose. He would, by these means, have produced a work more calculated to promote the good of his fellow creatures, though not his own fame, than a hundred volumes of sentimental novels, or modern history.

One notices how conscious he is of performing a vital social service; a service that would bring him no personal reknown, but that would be more valuable to his society than the more prestigious occupation of writing for adults. The urgency and seriousness with which writers like Day undertook their task implies a common purpose more momentous than the provision
of simple, suitable reading materials. Day and the other eighteenth century children's authors were very conscious of promoting a particular value system that would give meaning and order to a turbulent society:

My ideas of morals and of human life will be sufficiently evident to those who take the trouble of reading the book: ... such as they are, they are the result of all my reasoning, and of all my experience. Whether they are adapted to the present age, will best appear by the fate of the work itself. 2

Day displayed a confidence that he was fitted by his education and experience to lead the rising generation, that his lessons would be acceptable to the literate classes and, thus, was content to let his destiny rest with the public. The astonishing popularity of *Sandford and Merton* could only confirm his conviction.

The middle class book buyers, to whom the authors directed their works and in whom they invested their aspirations for the future, provided the most fertile ground for such attention. During this period, the middle class was just beginning to feel a sense of identity and a pride in its special role in society. 3 Hence, they were particularly responsive to a value system that articulated and ordered their place in the social whole. Moreover, they were the most solicitous child-rearers and had definite ambitions and expectations for their children.
The authors of stories for middle-class children cultivated middle-class pride, but did so in such a way as to place this group securely within the social order. In the late eighteenth century, this order seemed to many to be in danger of disintegrating. Although the rise of factory industry contributed to the dissolution of the old order, most reformers concentrated on the increasingly visible problems of crime, vice, and poverty that preceded industrialization. Their attempts to reform society often echoed steps taken in earlier periods. The authors of children's fiction were among those who wished to protect the social order, and the values they promoted in their stories formed a defensive stance against social disintegration.

Thus, the authors of children's fiction used the medium of literature to promote their social goals. In pursuing these goals it was crucial to gain the sympathy and allegiance of a group rising in wealth and power and whose peculiar attributes, if not directed, could possibly undermine social equilibrium. For instance, individualism was an important characteristic of the middle class. Writers of juvenile tales did not attempt to discourage independence and individualism, but took care to direct these qualities to socially acceptable paths. They stressed that the individual
was part of a larger order and must cooperate, not compete, with the interests of society. Only by acquiring the qualities of self-discipline and responsibility could the individual effectively serve either his own self-interest or his society.

The view of reality that emerges from eighteenth-century children's stories integrated the individual with a harmonious social order which accorded with a stable cosmic order. The natural world appeared as an orderly rational creation in which all elements were interdependent. The social order, if it was to be as stable, must reflect the interdependence of the natural world. Each individual in society must know his particular place and function within the order and must adjust his behavior to flow with the social stream.

The hierarchical eighteenth-century society was based on "chains of connection" between various ranks:

It implied that every man had his place within an order, but that order allowed for declensions of status as well as bold contrasts. 4

While social mobility and rigorous individualism were discouraged in these stories for children, the authors demonstrated that a rewarding, useful life could be achieved by all, regardless of social origin, and that dignity or baseness could be found at all levels.
In a harmonious society, each group must recognize and respect the position and function of other ranks. Conversely, those who do not fulfill the duties of their station deserve criticism and censure. The rural yokels who disturb the peace of society with their riotous festivities, the gentleman who squanders his riches on luxury and neglects his responsibility to the poor, the businessman or professional who abuses his position for narrow self-interest were all potential sources of disruption that must be suppressed.

Although the authors implied a correspondence between the natural world and the social order, they did not assume that the individual would adjust to his environment "naturally". Contemporary conceptions of the child's nature did not include a guarantee that the qualities which best suited an individual for social life were inborn. These qualities had to be taught to the individual in an environment which would demonstrate their efficacy through experience. Thus, the child was seen as an incomplete social being whose character should be developed and completed as quickly as possible. The adult role models were created to serve as guides in the passage from childhood to adulthood. Child-rearing within the family should be a total education, transmitting values to the young in an environment that would enable the child to understand
the world and society and his place it it.

. . . he that undertakes the education of a child, undertakes the most important duty in society. . . 5

The story-book family's central and only visible function was the education of children. In performing this most vital of all social roles, the family became the keystone of the whole social network, for that network depended on the cooperation of every individual. The authors protected, in their stories, this crucial social cell from all customs, traditional or modern, that might impair the performance of the family's duty. On these grounds, traditional communalism was rejected as firmly as individualism.

The rural situation of the model family created the perfect environment in which to demonstrate the laws that order the world and society. The child who understands the natural world then can apply the same process of reasoning to society. The stability of the family preceded the equilibrium of society; the latter is consequent upon and impossible without the former.

The juvenile stories written during the late eighteenth century demonstrated and reaffirmed in practical "realistic" situations, the efficacy of a value system that proposed the peaceful domestic family as a basis for a reformed harmonious society. As cultural documents, these stories reveal in a uniquely conspicuous
form, the ways in which certain concerned citizens responded to the social situation of their time. In appealing to the rising generation the authors disclosed the values, aspirations and anxieties they held for their society and its future.

It has been the purpose of this paper to examine the way in which a particular value system, thought to order and sustain a certain way of life, was presented to children living in a society undergoing rapid social change. In addition, it was hoped that this paper would highlight the significance of children's literature for reconstructing processes of socialization in the past. Since this process was so rarely recorded, in order to elucidate "the link between individual character and the dominant values of a culture", one must make efficient use of the few available sources. If children's literature is to be a basis for such inquiries, it must be demonstrated that stories written for juveniles respond sensitively to the social milieu; that they reflect both changing attitudes to children and changing social situations. One possible way of testing this hypothesis would be to compare the stories of one period to those of another, in order to pinpoint changing attitudes to children and society.

Hence, a brief look at the children's books written during the mid-Victorian period and a tentative comparison
of the Victorian world view presented to children with
that of the late eighteenth century might help to
illustrate how peculiarly "time-bound" such stories
are and, consequently, how valuable they are as historical
sources. However, it is not my intention to undertake
a serious comparison, but merely to suggest some points
that an investigation seems likely to make.

There are, of course, some difficulties in
making such a comparison. The new does not replace
the old but develops along side it. Moreover, attitudes
to children change slowly and are integrated into public
thinking very gradually. The children's literature of
the late eighteenth century responded both to theories
about children that crystallized during the eighteenth
century and to what was thought to be a precarious
social situation. Thus, it was particularly expressive
of the aspirations and anxieties of its era. Nevertheless,
because this literature was also among the first of its
kind, the rules and conventions set by its authors
were followed by their antecedents throughout the
early nineteenth century. This endurance of the didactic
style in children's fiction was frequently regretted.
Writers like Charles Lamb condemned its humourlessness
and rigidity. In a letter to Coleridge he bemoaned the
current state of children's books:
"Goody Two-Shoes" is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld’s stuff, has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newbery’s hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs. B’s and Mrs. Trimmer’s nonsense lay in piles about. . . . Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would be now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history.

Damn them! --- I mean that cursed Barbauld Crew, those Blights and Blasts of all that is Human in man and child. 7

Madame de Stael dismissed Edgeworth’s stories as "rationelle et morne." 8

The Romantics, men like Lamb, Coleridge, Blake, and Wordsworth, formulated a new conception of the child’s nature and the child’s role in society. The child became a symbol of innocence. In contrast to the eighteenth-century concept of the child who was seen as somehow incomplete and whose perspective on life was limited by inexperience, the Romantics appreciated the child’s special vision as valuable, even superior to the understanding of adults:

Childhood has ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling peculiar to itself; nothing can be more foolish than to substitute our ways for them. 9

Although certain didactic authors, particularly the Edgeworths, were labelled "Rousseauists", it is evident that they absorbed Rousseau’s vision of the child imperfectly. 10 Their purpose was precisely
opposite to his; they insisted upon training the child out of his irrational state into reasoning adulthood as quickly as possible. Similarly, the ideas of the Romantics were very gradually and imperfectly received by children's authors, and it was not until the 1860's that the effect of their ideas became apparent in children's stories.

Nevertheless, an early contribution of the Romantic movement to children's reading was the revival of the fairy tale. As scholars began to compile collections of old tales, volumes of folk and fairy tales began to appear on nursery shelves. The Victorians found a moral value in the fairy tale that increased its acceptability:

There is . . . a sort of wild fairy interest in them which makes me think them fully better adapted to awaken the imagination and soften the heart of childhood than the good-boy stories which have been in later years composed for them.

Moreover, the domestic spirit and sympathetic portrayal of children in fairy tales accorded with many Victorian ideals.

Along with the fairy tales, Victorian society gradually accepted and internalized the Romantic vision of the child, but in such a way as to change its central message. While the Romantics saw the symbol of the child as a dynamic force in reaction against a materialistic self-seeking society, the Victorians concentrated on
nostalgic regret for lost childhood. The innocence of the child became something to be shielded and protected from the harsh reality of modern industrial life. The Victorian belief in the child's innate sympathy with nature further impelled the withdrawal of the child from society. Thus, in contrast to the eighteenth century thinkers, the Victorians worshipped childhood innocence and, consequently, despised precocity. Childhood should be protected and extended as long as possible.

This new concept of the child had important implications for the ideal Victorian family. Since its central function was protection, the Victorian family became inward looking, "child centred at the expense of sociability." Although the ideal image of family life appeared to be similar to the eighteenth century model, its role in society was significantly different. In the eighteenth century, the family was the central social cell, representing all facets of human activity. Its values were thought to represent those of the social whole and its duty was to transmit these values to the young. In the Victorian era, the ideal family opposed the values that operated in the outer world. The family was a symbol of withdrawal, a shelter for values too fragile to survive in modern society. Rather than initiating the child into society, the
Victorian family defended the child from the corrupting influence of the world.

At the same time as the family, in its ideal form, ceased to perform the function of initiation, institutions outside the family began to parallel the family's child-rearing duties. It is not surprising that child-related institutions such as schools assumed prominence in a society that was particularly conscious of the special needs of children. However, it is not clear that the family's importance as educator necessarily declined because schools and churches also educated children. Nevertheless, the psychological, protective role of the family became more intense in Victorian society. Yet, within this intimate, emotionally charged setting, certain thinkers warned against methods of child-rearing which were too intrusive:

If people would but leave children to themselves; if teachers would cease to bully them; if parents would not insist upon directing their thoughts, and dominating their feelings - those feelings and thoughts which are a mystery to us all . . . . if, I say, parents and masters would leave their children alone a little more, small harm would accrue. 20

Whether or not the Victorian family lost its earlier functions, it is clear that the importance of the Victorian family was in no way diminished. Numerous children whose youth was prolonged by increasingly lengthy education forced middle class adults to spend a great amount of time and money on their family to maintain
its status, and, in the mid-nineteenth century, this status included servants to help in raising children. Moreover, increasing social stratification caused the family to look inward. The boundaries defining status were ambiguous enough to provoke anxiety, forcing individuals to turn to their own family for association and recreation.

Given these changing attitudes to children and society, one would expect that the literature written for children during this period would reflect these ideals, aspirations, and anxieties. It must be stressed that the ideal of childhood in Victorian society was far removed from the real conditions of children. Since children's literature reflects the ideals of a society more accurately than the reality and, in the Victorian period, the ideals emphasized protecting the child's innocence, in examining the Victorian children's literature, one must infer as much from what is omitted as from what is included. A comprehensive analysis of Victorian children's stories is not within the scope of this paper. However, even a brief and tentative outline of some of the themes of the more prominent children's stories might highlight important differences between the value system presented to children in the Victorian age and that of the late eighteenth century.
Most historians of children's literature see a turning point in the mid-1860's.\textsuperscript{23} Writers began to concentrate more on amusement and less on instruction: partly because instruction was ably provided by other forms of literature, partly because the earlier fear of change and disintegration subsided and was replaced by a confidence in evolutionary progress, and partly because the function of literature changed. Stories for children in this period were designed to nourish the child's imagination and encourage qualities of selflessness, so threatened by individualistic modern life. Fairies, magic, and other exotic realms, banished from the eighteenth-century child's mind, again played an important part in children's stories. Moreover, there was an increasing tendency for authors to attempt to relate their stories through a child character's eyes. The use of the first person increased the sense of immediate identification.

Nostalgia and regret, associated with childhood in the adult mind, strongly infiltrates these stories. It was very popular to place a story back in time, perhaps to the author's own rose-tinted recollections of youth. The childhood experience of the authors is, perhaps, also responsible for the idyllic rural setting of most stories. The rural setting of the Victorian tales performed a different function than that of the
eighteenth-century stories. Rather than teaching the child to understand the natural world and to apply its laws to himself and society, the Victorian writers celebrated the child's mystical appreciation of nature. Nature was no longer something to dissect and know; it was a benign, but mysterious creation. Furthermore, while in the eighteenth century, England was predominantly rural and lessons about rural life still had practical application for many, England of the mid-Victorian period was urban. The insistence of Victorian authors on a rural childhood suggests that they were incapable of formulating or even imagining child-rearing in an urban industrial environment. The image of the child and the city seemed to be mutually exclusive.  

The special association of the child with nature led to a change in the leisure activities of story-book boys and girls. The rural walks with parents that were so opportune for teaching natural history to the eighteenth century child readers are gone. Instead, the child's play is unsupervised, his enjoyment of nature unsullied by instruction. In leisure, children are separated from their parents, whose guidance and knowledge are no longer necessary. The child's appreciation of nature is intuitive. In addition, games and toys of children frequently appear, described in detail, indicating a greater parental indulgence of children than would have been tolerated by eighteenth-century
The creation of a separate and special world of childhood is taken even further in some Victorian stories. The child's world is confined to the nursery, with the nanny presiding over all daily routine. The servant as child-rearer, so despised by the Edgeworths, becomes a recognized institution in later tales. The parents appear remote, god-like; their ways are not understood by their children, but are treated with reverence. As a consequence of this separation from the adult world, children in stories become extremely childish. The authors often dwell fondly on baby talk, innocent childish sins and graces. Thus, the nursery world is complete in itself and the absence of one or both parents does not disrupt routine.

This closed, autonomous nursery world has no place in the outer world of an industrialized England. Cities and factories, workers and paupers rarely intrude. Even the father's occupation, unless he is a clergyman, often remains obscure. Perhaps these omissions reflect the institutionalization of social functions such as benevolence. The acts of charity that do occur in these stories are channeled through the church. Maybe the increasing social stratification and consequent withdrawal of the family is the cause. In any case, children were not educated
through literature to their social responsibilities as thoroughly as were eighteenth-century children.

The domestic tales of the Victorian period, briefly surveyed for the purpose of comparison with their eighteenth-century counterparts, seem to demonstrate a fundamental change in values transmitted to children. However, the child-centred Victorian society was more concerned to differentiate between sexes and more sensitive to varying stages of development than eighteenth-century society. Consequently, different stories were written for different sexes and age groups. The domestic stories were intended either for very young children or for girls. Thus, the tentative suggestions gathered from a small sample of domestic tales must be tested in a fuller survey before any significant conclusions can be drawn.

Nevertheless, important problems in Victorian society and child-rearing emerge from even so brief a glance. For instance, there is an evident conflict between the ideal of protecting the child from society and the necessity of introducing the child to it. Furthermore, a contradiction exists between the worship of childhood innocence and the reality of conditions for the majority of children. The middle class seemed to have distinctly different criteria for judging their own children as opposed to working class youth.28
Even so, within the middle class, the gap between the myth and the reality of childhood was significant. The history of childhood holds great promise for historians wishing to grasp the link between individual character and cultural values. It is hoped that analysis of literature designed to initiate children into the dominant value system of their culture will contribute significantly to this endeavor.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV


2 Ibid., p. 5.


4 Ibid., p. 45.

5 Day, The History of Sandford and Merton, p. 32.

6 Tamara K. Hareven, in her article "The Family as an Interdisciplinary Field," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 2 (1971), emphasizes that the object of family history and the history of childhood should be directed toward discovering this relationship.


9 Rousseau is quoted by Coveney in Poor Monkey, p. 7.

10 Coveney recounts how Richard Lovell Edgeworth raised his son according to the method proposed by Rousseau in Emile. However, as his son's adult character disappointed his father's expectations, Edgeworth declared the system to be "erroneous." Poor Monkey, p. 10.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV (Con't)

11 The revival of the fairy tale in England is described in Kotzin, "The Rise of the Fairy Tale in England."

12 It might be interesting to consider whether the fairy tale was brought back to the nursery by scholars or by rural-nannies who became increasingly prominent child-rearers in middle and upper class households after mid-century. For a discussion of the nanny's contribution to the history of childhood see: Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972).


14 Coveney discusses the transformation of the Romantic concept of childhood innocence into Victorian nostalgia in his chapter "Reduction to Absurdity," Poor Monkey, pp. 136-149.


16 Harevin, "The Family as an Interdisciplinary Field", p.


NOTES TO CHAPTER IV (Con't)


21 The growing acceptance of servants as childrearers is described by Gathorne Hardy, The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny.

22 The effects of social stratification on family life are discussed by Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, Kern, "Explosive Intimacy," and Lasch, "The Emotions of Family Life."

23 The publication of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland in 1865 marks this turning point.


25 Mrs. Molesworth is most guilty of cherishing childishness. In her story, Carrots (1876), the childish vernacular of a six year old boy is used throughout the book.

26 It is very common in Victorian stories for the mother to be convalescing away from her family or the father to be travelling.

27 In the stories of Charlotte Yonge, the church is the centre of all activity.

28 The difference between the middle class conception of their own children and that of working class children is described by Margaret May, "Innocence and Experience: The Evolution of the Concept of
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV (Con't)


29 The harsh upbringing of many middle class Victorian children is described by Kern in "Explosive Intimacy."
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources
Sample of Eighteenth Century Children's Books


Sample of Nineteenth-Century Children's Books


II. Secondary Sources.


Kingsbury, Mary E. "Socialization for Work and Leisure: Cultural Values Reflected in Children's Literature" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1973.)


Appendix I: Coding System for Children's Stories

I. General Characteristics
Setting: rural
   urban
   past
   present
Action is confined to domestic world
Story involves interaction with outer world
Realism is stressed
Fantasy is important
Story is related in the first person
   " third person
Audience: all children
   specified age-group
   boys
   girls

II. Family Structure and Child-Rearing
Father and mother are co-rearers
Mother is primary child-rearer
Fathers rarely participate in child-rearing
Servants are approved child-rearers
Servants are not approved child-rearers
Mother is dead
Father is dead
Relatives take active part in child-rearing
Number of children two or less
   " three or more

III. Admired Virtues
Independence and self-reliance
Self-control
Good work habits (perseverance, punctuality, etc.)
Honesty
Frugality
Obedience
Innocence
Ingenuity and initiative
Adult-like behavior
Honour, valour, courage
Docility
Politeness
Cleverness
Kindness and benevolence
Desired qualities are achieved
   " innate
Appendix I (Con't)

IV. Condemned Vices

Idleness
Dishonesty
Extravagance
Selfishness
Ambition
Pride or vanity
Precocity
Childishness
Rudeness
Cruelty
Disobedience
Cowardice
Lack of self-control
Ignorance
Children's sins are distinguished from adults'
Children's sins are not distinguished

V. Methods of Reward and Punishment

Rewards are material
" psychological
Corporal punishment used to correct behavior
Reasoning used to correct behavior
Punishment derives from action

VI. Education

Children are educated by parents
" tutor, governess
" school
Boys are sent to school, girls educated at home
Boys and girls are educated together
Curriculum: classical
religious
scientific
technical
arts (drawing, music, dancing etc.)

VII. Work

Work is done in the home
Work separated from family life
Children participate in family's economic role
Children do not participate in economic roles
Economic activity is not mentioned

VIII. Leisure

Leisure activities are largely educational
" distinct from education
Traditional leisure activities are discouraged
Sports and set games are described
Children play under adult supervision
Children's leisure is unsupervised
IX. **Class and Society**

- Hero or heroine is upper class
- " middle class
- " lower class

- Story involves positive class interaction
- Classes do not interact in the story
- Social mobility is encouraged
- " discouraged
- There is no social mobility

- Wealthy characters give charity indiscriminantly
- Wealthy characters give to deserving poor only
- Children are trained to social responsibility
- Children are not trained to social responsibility
- Attitude to foreigners is positive
- " negative

**Role Models:**
- aristocrats
gentry
manufacturers
merchants
professionals
tradesmen
military
farmers
servants
workers

**Villains:**
- aristocrats
gentry
manufacturers
merchants
professionals
tradesmen
military
farmers
servants
workers

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1 The categories in this table that relate to child-rearing and family structure are based on the checklist developed by Stewart, Winter, and Jones in "Coding Categories for the Study of Child-Rearing from Historical Sources," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (1975): 687-701. See particularly: Appendix 1: Coding System for Child-Rearing Manuals, pp. 694-695. Because child-rearing manuals offer advice while children's stories usually present models, I have adapted these categories accordingly. Moreover, I have added categories relating to education, work, leisure and social class.