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Exploring Child Worlds: Functions of Infantilization in Eighteenth
and Nineteenth Century British Literature

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To Jonathan

*The doubts that were so plain to chase,
so dreadful to withstand—
Oh, who shall understand but you;
yea, who shall understand?*

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

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Through the 18th and 19th centuries a new concept of childhood emerged, and with it came a new genre of literature designed to educate and entertain child readers. This development culminated toward the end of the 19th century with the so-called “Golden Age” of children’s literature. The books of this era were characterized by a heightened sense of imagination and play—often portrayed through a fantasy world created uniquely for the child. Texts such as Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and J.M. Barrie’s *Peter and Wendy* (1911) illustrate what I am calling ‘Child Worlds.’ Through the uniquely child-centered settings of Wonderland and Neverland, these books set themselves apart from children’s texts written before them—even other fantasy or fairy stories. They do this by creating a space that ennobles the values and perceived weaknesses of childhood. These authors likely knew that their work

subverted traditional representations of the child, but with the knowledge afforded by distance and time, we can now see that they were simultaneously undermining a larger system of infantilization in the broader culture. The development of child worlds fits squarely within the greater conversation concerning empire. As scholars such as Peter Hulme, Jill Casid, and Mary Louise Pratt have observed, the New World filled a particular role in the British imagination during the 18th and 19th centuries; it represented the unending potential and exoticism of imagined space. Going beyond this, I will argue that the potential seen in colonial spaces is modeled on the potential that adults of the Enlightenment saw in their own unformed children. In order to truly understand the unique function of child worlds in classic works of children's literature, we must go back and first examine the simultaneous development of the new world in the British imagination, the child as a cultural figure, and the connection between the two through the rhetoric of infantilization. The purpose of this dissertation is to define and explore the system of infantilization, looking at its historical development and tracing its existence in children's literature of the 18th and 19th centuries.

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Introduction

Through the 18th and 19th centuries a new concept of childhood emerged, and with it came a new genre of literature designed to educate and entertain child readers. This development culminated toward the end of the 19th century with the so-called “Golden Age” of children’s literature. The books of this era were characterized by a heightened sense of imagination and play—often portrayed through a fantasy world created uniquely for the child. Texts such as Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and J.M. Barrie’s *Peter and Wendy* (1911)ⁱ illustrate what I am calling ‘Child Worlds.’ Through the uniquely child-centered settings of Wonderland and Neverland, these books set themselves apart from children’s texts written before them—even other fantasy or fairy stories. They do this by creating a space that ennobles the values and perceived weaknesses of childhood. These authors likely knew that their work subverted traditional representations of the child, but with the knowledge afforded by distance and time, we can now see that they were simultaneously undermining a larger system of infantilization in the broader culture. The development of child worlds fits squarely within the greater conversation concerning empire. As scholars such as Peter Hulme, Jill Casid, and Mary Louise Pratt have observed, the New World filled a particular role in the British imagination during the 18th and 19th centuries; it represented the unending potential and exoticism of imagined space.ⁱⁱ Going beyond this, I will argue that the potential seen in colonial spaces is modeled on the potential that adults of the Enlightenment saw in their own unformed children. In order to truly understand the unique function of child worlds in classic works of children’s literature,

we must go back and first examine the simultaneous development of the people and places of the new world in the British imagination, the child as a cultural figure, and the connection between the two through the rhetoric of infantilization.

Developing Concepts of “The Child”

In his influential *Centuries of Childhood*, Philippe Ariès identifies the mid-17th century as the time when childhood was “discovered.” More recently, the ‘birth’ of childhood in the British imagination has been seen and discussed as an 18th-century phenomenon, tied to the rise of Enlightenment and Romantic ideas.ⁱⁱⁱ During that era, childhood came to be seen as a time of life where individuals are unformed, needing special attention and care as they are ushered into adulthood. It is no surprise that with this development came a major cultural interest in theories of childhood education.

Discussions about childhood in the long 18th century almost always begin with John Locke. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Locke outlined his idea of the mind as a sheet of “white paper,” to be filled in by the knowledge that we accumulate through experience. He asks his reader to look carefully at a child and argues that ideas cannot possibly be already instilled into the mind of the tiny being. These theories of childhood are more explicitly discussed in *Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), published three years later: “of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education” (10). In this later essay, Locke is explicit about the importance of education in forming a person. This marked the first time these ideas had been formulated in quite this way—so explicitly and so forcefully—and they had an undeniable impact on the century that followed. Essentially,

in his statements about how the adult is constructed, Locke constructs the figure of the child: unformed and empty, waiting for the influence of education and the world around him.

It is not just the idea of educating the child that owes a debt to John Locke; he had a strong hand in setting the modes and agendas of education as well. In *Thoughts* Locke outlines the need for the child to be active and build strength, to be treated as a rational being, and to be taught morality, obedience, reading, geography, and history (among many, many other things). As Samuel Pickering states, Locke “took educational suggestions dangling loosely from many works and wove them into what the eighteenth century saw as a magic carpet” (6). Pickering describes Locke as a “popularizer,” and as Seth Lerer points out, “If his writings helped shape children’s schooling, they helped, too, to shape their literature...the governing epistemology of children’s literature has been, since the early eighteenth century, deeply Lockean” (105).

Locke’s influence can be seen later in the 18th century in the work of another significant philosopher of childhood, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In *Emile: Or, On Education* (1762) Rousseau constructs the ideal education for a young gentleman. This text, which Rousseau himself considered to be the most important of his works, emphasized the corrupting nature of society; it thus required that Emile, the subject of this education, be kept in the country and taught in isolation. Here emerges the concept of the child-as-ideal, fighting off society’s corruptive forces, which is later taken up by the Romantics. Like Locke, Rousseau required his pupil to be active and out-of-doors for much of his early education. He was to learn through experience—interacting with his

lessons rather than learning them by rote. Both Locke and Rousseau show a concern with childhood that reflects a particular relationship to notions of human perfectibility: the child illustrates and represents the potential for human progress on an individual scale.

As children become a more specific category of society, children's literature develops as a distinct and powerful market. Following the industrial revolution, the middle class expands, creating a larger population with both the money and time to allow for such a preoccupation with childhood. In *The Making of the Modern Child*, Andrew O'Malley discusses the relationship between the burgeoning middle class and the culture of childhood in the 18th and 19th centuries. Interestingly, he also argues that "children's literature became one of the crucial mechanisms for disseminating and consolidating middle-class ideology" (O'Malley 11). The number of texts written with children in mind explodes, and the genre itself becomes an influential force by the end of the 19th century. As the era progressed, Victorians passed a number of laws designed to protect, preserve, and legally define childhood.^{iv} Advocates of reform outlined rules for the employment and education of children. If the child is an unformed, innocent creature that needs to be shielded from the adult world, then perhaps, many argued, the state should step in to make that possible.

Infantilization across British Culture

Throughout the 18th century, several other major shifts were impacting British politics and culture. Concepts of the child did not evolve in a vacuum, but were intertwined with other movements that together illustrate the broad effect of

infantilization as it developed in this particular culture. The Enlightenment vocabulary utilized to discuss childhood and education was applied to a variety of people groups, as well as certain types of land and space. In my research on the rhetoric of infantilization, I have found traces of this language everywhere. It is used to critique and marginalize just about every population one could imagine. Many of the political movements of the 18th century, such as antislavery and feminism, fought against inequalities that were created and justified through a systematic process of infantilization; slaves, women, and other groups were rhetorically connected to the child and denied legal rights based on the characteristics that made up those connections. This occurred beyond the 18th century, appearing throughout the imperial texts of the Victorian and Edwardian periods but often in a more inconspicuous way; cultural conversations that were openly debated in the public sphere were now more subtle and complicated. Particularly important to this project are the infantilized groups that have a distinct relationship to empire and education—most notably colonists, native populations, slaves, and women.

The colonies were represented as children of Britannia, dependent on her for religious instruction, political stability, and education. North America presents a particularly interesting case study of infantilization. The American Revolution forced Britain to adjust its perspective of the new world: America went from being characterized as a child of promise and potential to being seen as rebellious and unruly. As Britain progressed into the 19th century, none of these issues disappeared; England continued to have a rich and complicated relationship with what she considered her prodigal offspring, the United States of America. As I will discuss in my fourth chapter, even as late as the

American Civil War, many British conservatives expected the collapse of the United States and its disgraced return to the family of the British Empire (Bellows 505).

Representations of the imperial mission to educate and civilize the world consistently produce infantilized images of the natives that missionaries, commercial developers, travel writers, and others encountered on their journeys, and of the black men and women who were exploited in the name of imperial economic gain. Colonists and travelers frequently narrate encounters with the natives of the exotic lands they visit. Even texts that avoid such meetings, such as *Swiss Family Robinson* (1812), are still full of a spectral presence that embodies the fears and fascination with which the colonist approaches the native. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) famously captured these mixed feelings in its representation of the island cannibals. This anxiety, however, is actively defused by the character of Friday, whose desire to serve, enthusiasm for education, and willingness to embrace Christianity set a model for infantilized representations of natives in the myriad adventure stories that follow.^v

The Enlightenment also saw the rise of racialized slavery in the British colonies, and the corresponding antislavery movement. Similar to representations of natives, black men and women were infantilized through their connection to education. In "The Grateful Negro" (1804), Maria Edgeworth's Ceasar and the slaves on Sir George Ellison's plantation in Sarah Scott's *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1765) exemplify the trope that depicts education and kindness as the sole requirement of the morally responsible slave holder.^{vi} In fact, Scott's novel explicitly describes this relationship between slave and master as a familial one—Ellison's slaves call him father and mourn

his absence as a child would a missed parent. As the 19th century progressed, the antislavery and abolitionist movements were eventually successful, but the issues of race and slavery remained in the public consciousness.

While the 18th century boasts an exciting and active feminist movement, it doesn't take much reading to see that women continued to be infantilized. Conduct manuals such as the sermons of James Fordyce or Thomas Gisborn are infuriatingly persistent in infantilizing women through the rules and guidelines set for them, often specifically articulating that such restrictions apply to both women and children. Over the course of the Enlightenment, women became the educators of young children; they carved out a space of prominence in the domestic sphere, thus advocating for the necessity of their own education. This work, however, influenced a continued association of the woman and the child, specifically in terms of education, and eventually contributed to the oppressive cult of domesticity for which the Victorian era is known.

Infantilization and the New World

There is a wealth of secondary work that helps to inform this connection between infantilization and the new world. One influential study of 19th-century children's literature is Jacqueline Rose's *The Case of Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. This book is especially applicable to my work, for in it Rose gives one of the first articulations of the connection between the child and the colonized other: "Childhood is seen as the place where an older form of culture is preserved (nature or oral tradition), but the effect of this in turn is that this same form of culture is *infantilized*."

At this level, children's fiction has a set of long-established links with the colonialism that identified the New World with the infantile state of man" (emphasis in the original 50). By aligning what they saw as the primitive nature of the native cultures with the 'primitive' nature of the child, British thinkers and writers forged a connection between their views of these two groups. Consequently, a native was not simply depicted as un-Christianized or less technologically advanced, but emotionally, morally, and physically immature. Rose focuses on the desire of adults to limit and define children's literature, and thus childhood, arguing that adults are preoccupied with policing the boundaries of childhood so that we can define our subjectivities against the othered child. Scholars who have followed her train of thought have focused on the metaphor of colonization, reading adult control over the child as an act of a sort of imperial power against a powerless other. For example, in "The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature" Perry Nodelman uses Edward Said's argument from *Orientalism* to structure a case for viewing the treatment of children and childhood as an imperialist endeavor. In Daphne Kutzer's *Empire's Children: Empire and Imperialism in Classic British Children's Books* the author relies on a construction of adult authority as an imperial control over children. In this text she examines several works of children's literature that "reflect imperialism and empire as a normal part of the world," arguing that these books encourage child readers to accept the values and assumptions of empire (xiii).

While I see the value in this metaphor, I agree with Alan Richardson who argues in *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* that children's literature scholars need to be a bit more careful when making such

comparisons between colonial oppression of people groups and the education and restrictions designed for children, who actually are less mature and developed than those who hold power over them. While the child and the other were both culturally constructed figures, they were not constructed in the same way, or with the same outcome. This is the reason why I am invested in examining other forms of infantilization in British culture and British children's culture. The danger of an overly simple application of this metaphor is real, and it is important to avoid reinscripting, at the critical level, the imperial and racist values I seek to expose. However, a fully realized analysis of infantilization and its use to establish and maintain power would add a great deal to the existing critical conversations about childhood, colonialism and oppression. In order to achieve this more complete analysis, I will draw on scholarship that focuses on the oppression of women, slaves, and native peoples in the 18th century.

In her text, *Torrid Zones*, Felicity Nussbaum is explicitly invested in the connection between women in England and women on the fringes of empire. She states that her desire is to explore universal forms of oppression like patriarchy, but she is careful to acknowledge the importance of maintaining an awareness of the colonial structure—continually recognizing the realities of domination and exploitation. Within her central metaphor of torrid zones, she discusses the many connections between climate/geography and assumptions about temperament/sexuality as they relate to women both at the center and on the fringes of empire. In many ways, Nussbaum's text is a model for my work, as she juggles the complicated power structures in cultural depictions of both colonial space and women in England. I would like to add the figure of the child

into the mix—not as an equally oppressed other, but as a way to further illuminate the existing function of power. Most critical works that discuss race or gender in the 18th and 19th centuries utilize an implied conception of infantilization. Many will even use the term to describe the treatment of the less powerful members of the British Empire. While scholars regularly access the child/adult relationship to discuss power dynamics, they do so without closely examining what that relationship was in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The final critical contexts necessary to understanding infantilization center on notions of geography in the 18th and 19th centuries. While *Torrid Zones* certainly addresses the structures and spaces of empire, there are several useful texts that more specifically configure Britain's power over its colonies in physical terms. In *Sowing Empire*, Jill Casid narrates the process by which the landscapers of Jamaica created a “virtual tabula rasa,” by clearing the island of its vegetation and re-sowing the island with plants that were “most symbolically associated with the ‘tropics’... precisely those plants by which the British grafted one idea of island paradise onto another” (7). This text illustrates and theorizes the ways in which imperial space became one of imagined potential; it later moves its discussion back to Britain arguing that landscape was used to naturalize the possession and control of such faraway lands. Several texts have formulated this mindset in different ways: in *The Geographic Revolution in Early America*, Martin Brückner describes the early British maps of the American colonies. As one might expect, the American West was left unfinished until the late 18th century; neither the features of the land nor the coastline could be filled in. That space was unknowable, open, full of potential. More surprisingly, Brückner discusses how maps of

the known spaces, the colonies on the East Coast, were often just as incorrect.

Specifically, the individual colonies were often depicted as islands—disconnected, and thus more manageable for a distant, outside island power.

The theoretical work of Michel Foucault helps me conceptualize and develop discussions of power. For example, his famous discussion of panopticism illustrates the function of discipline more widely than just its effect on prisoners. From educational systems that utilize peer observation, to the calculated exposure of the people utilized in managing the plague, and finally in Jeremy Bentham's panopticon as the "architectural figure" of panopticism, Foucault illustrates the wide use of strategies of surveillance (195-201). The effect of this prison system, "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power," can easily be re-applied to systems of educating and disciplining children (Foucault 201). I will discuss in chapter three how children were taught to regulate each other and eventually themselves through the belief that a greater power—a parent, teacher, etc.—is always able to watch them. Eventually, the older child becomes the stand-in for the parent, watching the younger children and only bringing in the parent when necessary. These developments can be traced in children's literature at the end the 18th century, and the beginning of the 19th century. Just as the panopticon controls prisoners with the possibility of surveillance, children's literature makes the gaze of the parent implicit.

Rather than accumulating and discussing examples of Child Worlds, I am interested in articulating a history that starts with Enlightenment education and the New World, and ends with the emergence of a new form of literature that challenges the ideas

and cultural values that inspired it. By placing the emergence of the child and children's literature into their larger cultural and political contexts, each of my chapters will advance a small piece of that larger history, illuminating not only the innovative features, but also the importance of literary Child Worlds.

In the first chapter of my dissertation I will examine the connections between figurations of the child and those of oppressed groups such as slaves and women. I will look at the vocabulary and terms used to characterize the child in influential texts such as John Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government* (1689) and examine how that vocabulary reappears in the centuries that follow. For example, I will discuss Locke's description of the child's initiation into adulthood as the moment when he masters reason. Subsequently, education texts for women and literary texts describing slaves specifically depict a lack of reason in these groups, using that lack to justify their oppressive circumstances. In order to help to solidify a view of infantilization in the 18th and early 19th century, I will examine the rhetorical connection that is forged between children, women, slaves, and native peoples—a connection which helps to construct, legitimize and maintain power imbalances that justify treating entire groups of adults as if they were children.

Through the discussion in chapter one, I come to a more specific definition of infantilization. It relies on a specific relationship between the British or European child, and the infantilized other. While they are both described as childlike, the British child is expected to grow and develop, while the infantilized adult is portrayed as static, unable to move beyond the childish characteristics they are given. The rest of the dissertation will

focus on another parent/child configuration in British culture: that between Britain and her colonies. Many texts of children's literature are self-conscious about the ways that they simultaneously represent the child and the empire, and a close examination of the connections that are forged between the two will help to reveal both the methods and consequences of infantilizing colonial space.

Interestingly, this infantilization is often accomplished in a narrative by placing the child and the other in relationship; in these situations, the latter is used to help the child grow, but does not engage in that growth himself; he is instead dismissed or discarded by the text once the service to the British child has been done. In order to explain, illustrate, and refine this definition, my second and third chapters will discuss a number of texts that model this pattern. Chapter two will examine the relationship between the child and literary depictions of 'the savage'—the native populations encountered throughout the empire. Through examining Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul and Virginia* (1787), Barbara Hoole Hofland's *The Stolen Boy* (1828, 1830) and Frederick Marryat's *The Little Savage* (1848), we see how the child and the native peoples were rhetorically aligned. However, European writers quickly became uneasy with that connection and worked to problematize this association in the same texts in which they created it. The result is the distinction I outlined above: the growing, maturing child & static other. Chapter three looks specifically at the British child raised in the empire, examining the way his or her time away from England is seen as dangerous and corrupting. Both Mary Martha Sherwood's *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer* (1816) and Hofland's *The Barbadoes Girl* (1816) shed new light on the use of

infantilization through their portrayal of a British child's relationship with both the imperial space in which they were raised and a particular slave who represents the influence of that space.

In chapter four I will draw a connection between texts such as those in chapters two and three that explicitly deal with imperial space, and works of fantasy for children written in the 19th century. I will examine a series of books that illustrate this transition: the anonymously published *An Evening in Autumn; or, the Useful Amusement Intended for Children* (1821), Johann David Wyss' *Swiss Family Robinson* (1812), and Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy* (1869). As I discuss the connections between the colonies as imaginative space and these actual imagined fantasy worlds, I show how the continuing pattern of infantilization reveals the same arguments for imperialism, and the same treatment of the other in both realistic and fantasy texts. This connection is perfectly illustrated in Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863), which makes overt connections between some of the figures that live in his fantasy world and the people of the United States. While such fantasy texts create new worlds, I will argue that they maintain the same power structures that exist in the overtly imperial texts discussed in earlier chapters. Their continued distinction between the adult, British world and the childish, new world replicates the dichotomy between the powerful and the infantilized, and thus continues to legitimize those power differences.

Finally, in my conclusion, I will discuss a unique group of texts within the imaginative cannon of 19th-century children's literature. I take as an example Carroll's *Alice*, where the imaginative world is different than those discussed in chapter four. I call

these fantasy creations child worlds, for they attempt to specifically prioritize the thinking and desires of children over those of adults. Their imagined worlds are often still based on imperial tropes and images, and scholars such as Catherine Robson have discussed how these authors are still influenced by cultural images of childhood.^{vii} These authors have not escaped the cultural and political discourses of their day. However, they do create a unique and special place where the vocabulary and terms discussed in the first chapter of my dissertation are empowered and valued; you can only survive and thrive in these worlds if you defy rationality and subvert common sense.

While many critics have argued for the subversive power of children's literature, they often do so without truly considering why it is important to empower children. It is usually a given that power is good, and the more someone—even a child—has of it, the better. The amount of power a child needs is a discussion for another place, but I do believe it is important to identify and evaluate the specific rhetoric used to infantilize children, not because children necessarily need more power and autonomy, but because the same rhetoric is used to oppress other groups. Because of this connection, subversive children's literature is significant because it exposes those rhetorical structures and often illustrates methods that might effectively undermine the larger discourse of infantilization.

Endnotes

- i Because my greatest interest is in the child's novel of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, I will be focusing on Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* rather than the earlier dramatic version of the tale, *Peter Pan; or, the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* (1904).
- ii See, among other texts, Peter Hulme's *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797*, Jill Casid's *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization*, Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, Srinivas Aravamudan's *Tropicopolitans*, and Felicity Nussbaum's *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives*.
- iii For more on this topic, see Peter Coveney's *The Image of Childhood*, Andrew O'Malley's *The Making of the Modern Child*, J.H. Plumb's "The New World of Children in Eighteenth Century England," or Alan Richardson's *Literature, Education, and Romanticism*.
- iv These movements and laws are specifically articulated in Thomas Edward Jordan's *Victorian Childhood: Themes and Variations*.
- v Examples in children's literature include Barbara Hofland's *The Young Crusoe* (1829) R.M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858), Captain Frederick Marryat's *The Little Savage* (1849), *Settlers of Canada* (1844) and many others. Dennis Butts' "The Birth of the Boys' Story and the Transition from the Robinsonnades to the Adventure Story" is a helpful summary of *Crusoe's* influence.
- vi For more on this subject, see George Boulukos' *The Grateful Slave: The Emergence of Race in Eighteenth-Century British and American Culture*.
- vii Specifically, in *Men in Wonderland, The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman*, Robson argues that to authors such as Carroll, "little girls represent not just the true essence of childhood, but an adult male's best opportunity of reconnecting with his own lost self" (3). The image of the girl is intimately linked to their own masculinity, and a "male myth of feminized origin."

Chapter 1
The Perpetual Child:
Defining Infantilization in the Long 18th Century

In this opening chapter, I would like to lay the groundwork for a detailed discussion of infantilization that will continue to evolve throughout my work as I examine texts from the 18th and 19th centuries. While this term has been widely used in studies of race, gender, and class, it is treated as self-explanatory and is, with rare exception, written without clarification or explanation.ⁱ However, as I explained in my introduction, the 18th and 19th centuries were a crucial time for the development of childhood as we now know it. The terms infant and child were evolving, and so the implications of being infantilized were complicated and often varied by author. Casual references to infantilization, where it is used interchangeably with terms such as feminization or animalization, miss the nuances that can emerge when we examine the particular place of the child in enlightenment conversation. Also, such general uses fail to clearly indicate the consistent, essential meanings of the term that we will identify as we closely examine writings on the child from the long 18th century.

While my particular interest in the connections between the development of childhood and other circulating discourses may be unique, I am certainly not the first to take a look at the intersections between such cultural conversations.ⁱⁱ There is a good reason that the idea of infantilization has been so frequently grouped with other notions of oppressed groups; as we will see through this chapter, its history and meaning are intimately connected with circulating conversations about race, gender, and class—not only in current academic study, but also during the 18th and 19th centuries. My goal is

not to examine the history of childhood in order to track its development and growing importance through Enlightenment and Romanticism, for many scholars before me have accomplished that task.ⁱⁱⁱ Instead, I would like to note the markers and identifiers of childhood in this period, examining how particular terms and ideas characterized the child—and then how those terms were expanded to identify the childlike. I will locate key concepts of childhood that quickly became translated and re-applied to groups of adults and discuss the possible consequences of such applications. We must first look at some of the conversations found in the culture and literature of the long 18th century that intersected with these evolving concepts of the child, conversations about development and degeneration, about education, empire, and nature. Of course, I cannot fully engage any of these topics in such a short space, but the inquiry begun here will be sustained and refined through the next four chapters. To begin, I will be specifically looking at thinking and writing on childhood that intersects with discourse on women, slaves, and native populations. Because of this, I will pay specific attention to the writings of John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau—two influential enlightenment philosophers who are also deliberately thinking about childhood, and instrumental in the birth of these concepts of the child. I will also examine texts influenced by and reacting to these writers, looking at the ways in which their conceptions of the child reappear in discussions of women, slaves, and native populations.

John Locke, Reason, and the Child(like)

In talking about the place of the child in Enlightenment thinking, it makes sense to begin with one of the most crucial concepts to this century of thought: reason. As rationality became a more important, increasingly valued attribute of humanity, different groups were rhetorically classified as rational, pre-rational, or irrational. My introduction summarizes some of the ways in which Locke's writings were essential to defining the child as vacant and teachable, but that is only the very beginning of Locke's influence on Enlightenment thinking about childhood. Couched within Locke's discussion of political power in *The Second Treatise of Government* (1690) we find a discussion of the relationship between parent and child. By examining this section of the treatise, we quickly see that Locke's views of childhood are even broader than discussed in my introduction; for here we find more nuanced theories about the nature and duration of childhood. It is also immediately evident that discussions about childhood, and specifically in this case, about reason and the child, are inherently discussions about power—ones that can shed light on other power dynamics in play throughout the British empire.

Locke opens his discussion of childhood in this text with a definition reminiscent of statements in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: all are “born infants, weak and helpless, without knowledge or understanding” (*Second Treatise* 32). He defines the role of parents, as “supply[ing] the defects of this imperfect state” until the child reaches maturity. The key, for Locke, to maturity is reason, and the role of the parent changes drastically once the child is able to understand and employ reason in his or her own life.^{iv}

It is important to note that he sees the child as a pre-rational figure. By this I mean that the child is always discussed as a figure that has not yet, but certainly will obtain the use of reason. Later in the text, Locke summarizes, “paternal or parental power is nothing but that which parents have over their children to govern them for the children’s good till they come to the use of reason” (96). We see here that reason is more than a valued quality of an active citizen—it is an essential requirement for any free, autonomous individual, and it marks this transition from a pre-rational to a rational being. We also see, though, that the power of the parent is temporary, for future mastery over reason is assumed in this discussion of childhood.

The title given to this section of the treatise, “Of Paternal Power,” is indicated within that last quote. This highlights a relatively simple thought that must not be forgotten. For Locke, a discussion of reason and the child—a discussion of the parent’s role, and of the duration of childhood—is necessarily a conversation about power. The image Locke uses is of a bound infant, and there is no doubt of the child’s vulnerability: “bonds of this subjection are like swaddling clothes they are wrapped up in and supported by in the weakness of their infancy; age and reason, as they grow, loosen them” (31-2). While Locke is talking about the benefit of these bonds, the image remains disturbing, and becomes more so as Locke continues to clarify his point. Throughout this passage as he elaborates on theories about different levels and types of power, and who wields them, Locke’s attempts to explain these distinctions repeatedly break down and overlap. In the end, while he outlines essential differences in the nature of these categories of power, he also establishes the impossibility of effectively separating these categories.

Although Locke affirms a father's natural authority, he does place deliberate limits on the power of a father over his child.^v The father's "command over his children is but temporary and reaches not their life or property" (37). It is repeatedly described as an aid to the weakness of childhood. However, those limits seem less profound next to the control that is granted. For, while a child is "in an estate wherein he [has] not understanding," he can not be allowed to "direct his own will" (33). Therefore, "he is not to have any will of his own to follow; he that understands for him must will for him too; he must prescribe his will and regulate his actions" (33). So, while Locke technically preserves the property and life of an individual in childhood, he confers upon the father absolute control over the child's will and actions. What emerges here is a powerful space for interpretation, confusion, and inconsistency. In the end, the boundaries of parental power are both specifically outlined, and completely impossible to pin down. It is in spaces such as this that we will see these theories exploited and expanded, allowing them to be used to force rational adults to live in a dependent state.

These passages have clearly shown that Locke considers the child to be a pre-rational individual. He explains that as children gain the ability to think and act rationally, the father must relinquish his demand for obedience and satisfy himself with the more permanent, but lesser power of the honored elder. However, even this progression is blurred in the text. At the end of the section Locke gives a caveat that explains how many fathers hold on to the power over their child's actions and thoughts: a father has power over the distribution of his possessions, "according as the behavior of this or that child has comported with his will and humor. This is no small tie on the obedience of children"

(41). So, the father's possessions allow him to extend his power over even his grown children. Or, as Locke puts it, persuades them to award him "monarchical power" while they remain financially reliant on him. Locke seems to recognize the contradiction in this principle, for in this passage he describes this power as freely given by the child to the father. In the very next paragraph, however, he describes the child's "tacit and scarce avoidable consent" which allows for the father's government over his adult children. Locke illustrates here the difficulty of pinning down these power relationships. Because the child is a figure who, necessarily, will grow and change, it makes sense that this relationship should change and develop as well. However, Locke indicates in this paragraph that paternal power is often a static structure that changes very little throughout the life of the father. He indicates one of the dangers of such enlightenment discussions of the relationship between reason and power: once power has been assigned to one figure, or category of persons, it cannot be easily redistributed. Children who are "accustomed in their childhood to follow [a father's] direction" will often make "no distinction betwixt minority and full age" and choose to live the entirety of their lives under "the rule of a father" (43). If power over free, rational men extends this far, then what chance does a person who is dubbed irrational have in making a case for her ability to manage her own decisions, thoughts, and property?

In this same section, there is a short passage that identifies a specific exception to Locke's rubric of reason and power: the permanently irrational.

If, through defects that may happen to be out of the ordinary course of nature, anyone comes not to such a degree of reason wherein he might be supposed capable of knowing the law and so living within the rules of it, he is never capable of being a free man, he is never let loose to the

disposure of his own will (because he knows no bounds to it, has not understanding, in proper guide), but is continued under the tuition and government of others all the time his own understanding is incapable of that charge. And so lunatics and idiots are never set free from the government of their parents. (34)

Note the order of this argument. First, Locke presents the idea that there is an exception—that there are those who, even as they move beyond childhood, never attain an acceptable use of reason to be allowed freedom and independence. Then, once this is established, he gives the examples of “lunatics and idiots.” This crucial order allows these two categories to function, not as the sole exception to the rule of childhood development, but as examples of a larger principle. By placing this category of permanently irrational individuals into this discussion of parental power, Locke creates a class of perpetual children: those who never attain the full use reason and are “incapable” of being free. This moment in the text marks a unique aspect of infantilization. Infantilized adults are suspended, because unlike a child they will not grow out of their othered state. Such individuals are depicted with all the limitations of being a child, but without the potential for growth and progress embodied in the enlightenment representation of childhood. This differs from the permanent and defining irrationality of animals, and, of course, from the implied rationality of those in power. “Lunatics and idiots” may be the two examples Locke gives, but he leaves a space for many others to be placed into this group, and constructs the argument that will be used to justify forcing a dependent state upon such individuals.

Constructing the Irrational Being

While Locke has been used by many feminists in their efforts—he does, after all, award parental rights to *both* the mother and the father—this use of reason as the line between immaturity and independence has been used just as often in the construction of both gender and racial bias.^{vi} By depicting them as another group that will never attain a full use of reason, many 18th century authors asserted that women should remain dependent upon men throughout their lives. Through its association with the rhetoric of childhood, this oppressive relationship was reasoned to be just as natural as the power of a parent over his offspring. Thus, arguments that women are less reasonable or without reason form a bedrock of gender oppression, and one of the first tasks of early feminists was to deconstruct such depictions. Therefore, I would like to discuss some of the widely read education texts that asserted the image of women as without (or with less) reason, most notably, James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1766).

In the 18th century, numerous conduct books were written to articulate the best methods of education to be used in raising or becoming a young lady who will win the approval of society and her future husband. These books outline a system of education for girls that is very different than that for boys—often removing the study of the classics, or the sciences—in an attempt to prepare the woman for her ‘proper’ place in the household. James Fordyce, one of the most infuriating authors in this group, advocates in his *Sermons* for strict modesty, reserve, and piety. One of the most well known of this genre, Fordyce's sermons have been condemned by name in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), and mocked by Jane Austen, who in *Pride*

and Prejudice (1813) has the contemptible Mr. Collins praise the uses of the “so advantageous...instruction” given in this text (47).

Authors like Fordyce take advantage of the specific gaps in Locke’s discussion to construct a view of woman as a being with less access to reason than her male counterparts. In his seventh sermon, “On Female Virtue, with Intellectual Accomplishments,” his priority is immediately clear: virtue is the highest goal, and intellect is but a possible accompaniment. The Biblical quotation he uses advocates the value of wisdom and understanding, but Fordyce quickly explains that this refers to religious understanding, for “religion...is certainly the highest exercise of our rational powers” (Fordyce, Vol. I, 270). This is typical for this chapter, in which Fordyce repeatedly wavers back and forth, claiming that women should be better educated than they are, but refusing to advocate for any significant improvements. In fact, immediately after recommending that women read more, he brackets off a list of subjects and topics as the province of men: “war, commerce, politics, exercises of strength and dexterity, abstract philosophy, and all the abstruser sciences” (272). In a later sermon, Fordyce instructs women to avoid “masculine intellects” and instead cultivate those that “depend not on a nice chain of reasoning” (Vol. II, 61). This is an inconsistency typical of the rhetoric of infantilization, which often posits the potential for growth and change but, in reality, denies the subject the means for such advances. Such approaches allow infantilization to be tacit; those in power are vocal about wanting to help the other grow and develop, but in reality have forced her into a static position.

When we examine Fordyce's explicit use of the term child, we find a similar inconsistency. Fordyce often describes certain attributes or behaviors as "childish" in order to persuade women to avoid them. For example, he describes "female vanity" as "trite and childish" (Vol. II, 17), a woman's love for a man of her choice as a "juvenile desire" (192), and "peevishness" as "the infirmity of a child" (246). In his argument for meekness, he speaks of women who disagree with their husbands and thus face possible violence saying, "such behavior is in you childish"—arguing, instead, that "fearfulness to a certain degree becomes you" (224). Obviously, the metaphor of the child is already a cultural pejorative, and Fordyce's use of it in these moments implies that women should and could expect to be better than children. It is interesting to observe, though, that in almost the same breath (sometimes the same sermon), Fordyce employs the same metaphor to describe the expected role and mindset of women. In an extensive passage on the qualities of the ideal wife, he says that his "first counsel" to a friend is to judge a woman by her deference and attention to her parents, because such attributes will be "transferred to the married state" and will "render her a mild and obliging companion" (194). So, her role as an actual child is the model for her role as a wife. Similarly, women are supposed to approach religious study with "child-like simplicity" (154). As I will discuss below, such contradictions, while evident enough now, seemed unproblematic to readers until feminist writers, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, made a point of identifying and deconstructing them.

The bulk of Fordyce's actual discussion of education is comprised of a list of the types of books that are acceptable reading. Specifically, he lists history, biography and

travel narratives—the latter of which he recommends on the basis of their importance to “Mr. Locke” (Vol. I, 274-5). However, the ultimate purpose of this reading is something altogether different. When Fordyce argues that women have a different educational calling than men, he says that a woman “does not require reasoning and accuracy, so much as observation and discernment. Your business chiefly is to read Men, in order to make yourselves agreeable and useful” (273). The books that women may read are not intended to sharpen their reason or intellect, but to serve as practice—to help them better *read* men for needs and desires they may fill. Fordyce barely manages to make any specific recommendations for educating women, and those he does make are entirely made to better equip a woman for pleasing her husband. He places women in the position of the child, who may never chose his or her own education, but must rely on the judgment of others until growth has given him/her reason to use in making these decisions. But, of course, for Fordyce there is no growth beyond this stage for women; they are suspended in this childlike dependence.

It is certainly no mistake that the verses Fordyce chooses from Proverbs 4 for his sermon do not include verse 13, “Hold on to instruction; do not let it go: guard it well. for it is your life” (The NIV Study Bible, Prov. 4.13). The persuasive vehemence of this verse conflicts directly with the careful way in which he only just barely recommends a better education for women. Fordyce simultaneously places strict limits on that education, arguing that they should not “push their application so far as to hurt their more tender health, to hinder those family duties for which the sex are chiefly intended, or to impair those softer graces that give them their highest luster” (283). This warning is

certainly a different message than what is found in Proverbs 4:11—instruction as life itself. Beyond the obvious limits put in place by the stipulation that learning must not injure health or family duties, Fordyce's third category is both broad, and indefinable. Learning that could "impair those softer graces" is a completely subjective category—one that allows each man to decide what "graces" shine for him in a wife or daughter, and make sure that they are not educated away. Throughout this sermon Fordyce tries to straddle a line, depicting women as both pre-rational and irrational. The former designates her as childlike (and thus able to mature); the later indicates the developing discursive possibility of infantilization, placing her—like Locke's lunatics and idiots—into the category of humans who are perpetually unable to fully harness the use of reason. Fordyce paradoxically argues that women should not and can not have access to certain types of understanding, and that women should and can be educated, if it is done properly. However, his limitations on education are ultimately so broadly and vaguely defined that they can be specified and customized according to each man's desire.

Fordyce begins his sermon with a disclaimer: "The degree of those Intellectual Accomplishments which your sex should aim at, I pretend not to determine" (271). The irony, of course, is that this is just the topic he intends to discuss—and he does so at length. When speaking of women's capacity for intellect, he says, "I scruple not to declare my opinion that Nature appears to have formed the faculties of your sex for the most part with less vigour than those of ours" (271-2). Fordyce makes all this seem natural. Notice his substitution here of the capitalized "Nature" in for "God." If there is any reason to omit his acknowledged creator in this moment, it is to remove the idea of

intention, and replace it with a feeling that the difference he claims between men and women is inherent. In discussions of power and leadership, God has been too closely aligned with the father and husband, so to credit him in this moment for *making* women with less intellectual capacity would be to beg the question if they could be *re-made* differently. Instead, he credits nature, which is a disinterested force—one that can't be petitioned in prayer or asked to change the system put into place. So, like the child, the position of woman is described as completely natural, but unlike the child, she is supposed to stay in that position. His next line furthers his argument, claiming that he is “observing the same distinction here, as in the more delicate frame of your bodies” (Vol. I, 272). Even in the quotes in the previous paragraph, he brings up men's strength and women's health—repeatedly including biology to solidify the idea that the distinctions he identifies are natural and unavoidable.

Not only does Fordyce portray woman as childishly limited in her access to reason, but he employs metaphors of growth, or rather stagnation, that fix her in that childlike state. In one particularly condescending passage, Fordyce speculates about the inner response of a female listener.

But perhaps my little friend is afraid, lest the men should suspect her of being what the world styles in derision a Learned Lady. Indeed? Is this then a character so very easily acquired, that you are in danger of it the moment you emerge from the depth of ignorance, and begin to think and speak like a reasonable being? You are over hasty in your apprehension. A Learned Lady is by no means a creature that we run the risk of being often shocked with. For my own part, I have never seen such a one. (297)

Notice the way that Fordyce both projects growth through his description of “emerg[ing] from the depth of ignorance,” and fixes the listening woman in her childlike state. The

pejorative “little friend” makes his view clear. What learning she may acquire is actually no progress at all, and the learned woman is a being that he ultimately claims is non-existent.

Fordyce extends his discussion of nature to condemn what, for him, is the most unnatural thing of all: the “masculine woman.” A spectre throughout all fourteen of his sermons, she is defined by her desire to obtain and display knowledge. In passages like the one above, it seems she does not really exist. However, over and over again he rails against such woman, who have exchanged the “softer graces” (283) to become “female furies,” and who refuse to show the proper humility and instead vulgarly display their knowledge for the world to see. He describes “a being who neither reason can convince, not patience win, nor anything conquer but main force” (254). Notice the lack of reason in this “obstinate” woman, and the assertion of physical power over her. Emphasizing her un-naturalness, Fordyce argues that such a woman misunderstands her own sex. “I am sure that those masculine women, that would plead for your sharing any part of this province equally with us, do not understand your true interests” (272). According to Fordyce, her desire for knowledge and education—to become a rational being—makes such a woman not just masculine, but unable to understand the true needs and desires of her sex.

Woman is supposed to inspire man with her virtue, and he is to protect and educate her, forming her into the being that will most-please himself. “Nothing can be more certain than that your sex is, on every account, entitled to the shelter of ours” (Vol II, 74). He argues that a woman’s “softness, weakness, timidity, and tender reliance on

man; [her] helpless condition in [herself]” are the proof of the roles he has assigned (74). Obviously, these roles are dangerously close to those of the child and parent—the one filling the place of the inspiring innocent, and the other educating and caring for the weaker being.

While Fordyce’s descriptions of women may be among the most extreme, there are many education texts in the later half of the 18th century that follow the pattern he set. Though John Gregory’s text, *A Father’s Legacy to His Daughters* (1774), possesses a humility and sincerity that makes it more pleasant to read, he still advises his daughters to take refuge from their difficult lives in religion, what one critic describes as “a religion which is a matter of sentiment rather than reason” (Gisborn xviii). In *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1773), even Hester Chapone—a woman advocating for female education—warns against girls developing “the severity and preciseness of a scholar” if she were too “remarkable for learning” (175). This separation of woman from reason becomes ingrained in the cultural imagination, and one reason it stuck so firmly is because of the connections to the paradoxical infantilization of women as both irrational and pre-rational. Because these authors still speak of women as pre-rational individuals who should be educated, most were able to ignore the simultaneous categorization of them as irrational beings who could never actually change and develop.

In order to combat this type of infantilization, 18th century feminist writers had to specifically deconstruct the myth of the irrational woman; in this effort, they became the first to identify the rhetoric of infantilization as such. Two examples of such work are Catherine Macaulay’s *Letters on Education* (1790) and Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A*

Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792). Macaulay argued that what was viewed as weaknesses in women—their rhetorical connections with the child such as physical weakness and lack of reason—were not natural, but the product of mis-education. She argues that girls should engage in physical activity to gain strength, and that boys and girls should have the same education. This does more than redefine feminine expectations, it breaks the overt rhetorical connections between the woman and the child, asserting that the current weaknesses in women are not *natural* or *permanent*. In arguing that she wants women to be able to “act a rational part in the world” (Macaulay 138), she argues that the proper education will make them just as able to do so as men.

Like Macaulay, Wollstonecraft blames education for women’s faults. In fact, she condemns the entire genre of education texts for women: “I must declare what I firmly believe, that all the writers who have written on the subject of female education and manners...have contributed to render women more artificial, weak characters than they would otherwise have been” (*Rights of Woman* 24-5). The title of Chapter V reveals her plans to specifically address such authors: “Animadversions on some of the writers who have rendered women objects of pity, bordering on contempt” (83). She not only cites Fordyce, but dedicates an entire section of this chapter to him, directly challenging his arguments as she makes her case for viewing women as reason-able humans.

Wollstonecraft specifically addresses “exclamations against masculine women,” by Fordyce and other writers, saying, “the word masculine is only a bugbear” (13). She argues that there is little chance that women will acquire too much of the characteristics that she considers truly masculine—for she believes the physical strength of men does

give them an advantage in developing attributes such as courage and fortitude. However, she also states that the use of the term masculine has been too broad. Stating that she is sure this word is not used to designate an “ardour in hunting, shooting and gaming” she shames authors for limiting to men “the attainment of those talents and virtues the exercise of which ennobles the human character” (11). Introducing an argument that she makes in several different ways throughout the text, Wollstonecraft advocates for an equality of virtue, stating that the standards for what is noble and right do not change from person to person, and thus should remain the same across genders as well (11, 29).

In fact, virtue is at the core of Wollstonecraft’s argument. Where Fordyce discusses piety, and argues for a faith that is based in sentiment, Wollstonecraft argues for a direct connection between moral virtue and reason. She states, “it is a farce to call any being virtuous whose virtues do not result from the exercise of its own reason” (24). For, she argues, without understanding and choice, one’s actions cannot actually reflect her moral state. “Women are not allowed to have sufficient strength of mind to acquire what really deserves the name of virtue,” and so Wollstonecraft argues for a new system of education that would give them that strength. She rails against the culture of sentiment, describing the “sickly delicacy” that forms in women that indulge such “false sentiments and overstretched feelings” (12).

In her polemic Wollstonecraft becomes one of the first to identify and name the rhetoric of infantilization, addressing its use in oppressing women. She says that men “try to secure the good conduct of women by attempting to keep them always in a state of childhood” (22). In this moment she critiques the infantilization of women, bringing it

into the discourse on gender and equality. Through a lack of education, women have been frozen in a pre-rational state. She recognizes the particular danger of placing an adult in such a category. “Children” she says, “should be innocent; but when the epithet is applied to men, or women, it is but a civil term for weakness” (23). The rhetoric of innocence is used to argue that a state of weakness—of dependence—is natural for certain people. In her *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), Wollstonecraft identifies this same danger in the cultural construct of beauty. She denounces the way in which “littleness and weakness” are portrayed as “the very essence of beauty” because that means that people begin to believe that “the Supreme Being, in giving women beauty . . . seemed to command them, but the powerful voice of Nature, not to cultivate the moral virtues” (*Rights of Men* 262). Her concern over both innocence and beauty stems from her understanding of the ways in which women are treated and thought of as childlike, and how, unlike a child, they can not simply grow out of this state and claim their place as a rational adult.

While Wollstonecraft certainly addresses Fordyce, there is one writer whose name arises in her criticism with even more regularity: Jean Jacques Rousseau. In fact the first and largest section of her Chapter V is dedicated to discussing and combating his representation of women in *Emile*, specifically Sophie, who is created in the text to be the ideal mate for Emile.^{vii} These two men are contemporaries, with Rousseau’s treatise on education appearing in its English translation only 4 years before the collection and publication of Fordyce’s sermons (1762 and 1766, respectively). Wollstonecraft

identifies parallels between the arguments of Rousseau and Fordyce. Women, in both, are formed to please men, and the purpose of education is to prepare them to do so.

Wollstonecraft quotes a long passage from *Emile*, which reminds the reader of Fordyce's call to women to "read" the men in their lives. "All the ideas of women, which have not the immediate tendency to points of duty, should be directed to the study of men, and to the attainment of those agreeable accomplishments which have taste for their object" (*Rights of Woman*, quoted on 43). Surrounding this passage, Rousseau clearly states the connection that Fordyce only implies. Women should "read men" because they cannot be trusted to read and understand the world around them. Rousseau gives an even larger list of areas that he believes are beyond a woman's capability and then summarizes: "In short, it belongs to those who have the strongest powers, and who exercise them most, to judge of the relations between sensible beings and the laws of nature" (43). He contrasts these stronger beings, men, with women whose weakness reflects and impacts her ability to understand the laws of nature. He says, "their studies should be relative to points of practice; it belongs to them to apply those principles which men have discovered" (43). Essentially, he draws the same distinction we have seen elsewhere between women and reason: "Women have most wit, men have most genius; women observe, men reason" (43). As in Fordyce, the education of women is limited to what allows them to best observe the desires of men and fulfill them. In this specific way, we see both these authors filling in the space left in Locke's treatise to place women into that category of the unchanging, un-reasonable creature—childlike in her lack of understanding and knowledge, but different in her inability to develop beyond that lack.

Rousseau states, “reason in women is a practical reason, capacitating them artfully to discover the means of attaining a known end, but which would never enable them to discover that end itself” (qtd on 92). Here Rousseau again asserts that women should follow the direction of the men in their lives. They have enough reason to accomplish an order set before them, but not enough to determine for themselves if a given action is necessary or right. Obviously, Wollstonecraft deconstructs this portrayal in both authors, saying “Rousseau exerts himself to prove that all *was* right originally: a crowds of authors that all *is* right now: and I, that all will *be* right” (emphasis in original 17). While Rousseau asserts that the inequalities between man and women are natural, stemming from physical difference, Wollstonecraft continues to make a case for education’s role in both creating and correcting inequalities.

Sensibility, Reason, and the Infantilized Slave

One of the foundations of Wollstonecraft’s argument is the condemnation of a certain strain of sensibility. She says, “modesty, temperance, and self-denial are the sober offspring of reason; but when sensibility is nurtured at the expense of the understanding, such weak beings must be restrained by arbitrary means” (88). Notice the dichotomy here between reason and sensibility. This description by Wollstonecraft identifies, again, the infantilization implicit in discussions of women. The first group of attributes—those connected to reason—are desirable in a woman; they are what authors of conduct manuals such as Fordyce ask of her. But in her portrayal of sensibility without reason, she describes a child, and argues that a woman remains as such until she is able to use

reason in her life. She says, “people of Sensibility have seldom good tempers. The formation of the temper is the cool work of reason” (89). Again, she describes the influence of sensibility as what makes a person childish, contrasting it with reason, which she argues is the very core of adult thinking and feeling.

Wollstonecraft is not the only author to note this opposition between reason and sensibility—or as it is more commonly known, between sense and sensibility. In his foundational text on *The Culture of Sensibility*, C.J. Barker-Benfield describes “the widespread existence of conflict within women ... between a sensibility governed by reason and a sensibility dangerously given over to fantasy and the pursuit of pleasure” (361). He even argues that Wollstonecraft distinguishes between these two and spends her career as a writer arguing for the former. So, while there was certainly a strain of sensibility that was compatible with reason and the educated woman, much of the cult of sensibility—in fetishizing expressions of feeling that made her frail and senseless—participated in the infantilization of women. It separated her from reason, and made her the “weak being” Wollstonecraft describes above.

Women were not the only group infantilized by the rhetoric of sensibility. In his book, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility*, Brycchan Carey examines the complex relationship between the “three discourses of sensibility, abolition, and rhetoric” to make his argument that sentimental rhetoric was uniquely and repeatedly “deployed in the abolition debate” (1-2).^{viii} In his discussion of sentimental argument, he describes it as dependent “on ideas of common feeling and mutual sympathy” and notes that such arguments “sometimes entirely replace reason with emotional and substitute evidence

with intuition” (2). So, when it was used as a tool in the abolitionist movement, sentimental rhetoric invokes moments of identification and sympathy in the reader, calling on the plight of the slave as a part of—the very worst of—the plight of mankind. For example, in Hannah More’s “The Black Slave Trade” (also titled “Slavery, A Poem”) this dichotomy between sentiment and reason is seen again:

Plead not, in reason's palpable abuse,
Their sense of * feeling callous and obtuse:
From heads to hearts lies Nature's plain appeal,
Tho' few can reason, all mankind can feel. (147-150)

It is More’s own footnote in the middle of line 148 that is especially interesting: “Nothing is more frequent than this cruel and stupid argument, that they do not feel the miseries inflicted on them as Europeans would do” (474). The rhetoric of sentiment—the importance of feeling and its opposition to reason—is obvious here. Notice too how reason remains exclusive; few have access to it, especially the slaves for whom More advocates. While More is working for the freedom of the black men and women who are the subjects of her poem, she simultaneously infantilizes them by denying them capability to reason. Like women in Fordyce, slaves have been slipped into the space left by Locke to designate certain people of incapable of growing into reason as the child does upon reaching maturity.

A similar argument about the dangers of sentimental rhetoric is made by George Boulukos in his book *The Grateful Slave*. He describes the titular trope as one which portrays a “sentimental planter or overseer” who, through reforms of the harshest elements of slavery, invokes the gratitude and love of the affected slaves. He states, “examples of this trope have been analyzed...as part of (or as foreshadowing) the anti-

slavery movement, because they begin with sentimental attention to the suffering slaves” (Boulukos 3). However, he points out that the success of this trope depends on the continuation of slavery in its cruelest form elsewhere—on plantations other than those highlighted in a given story—and the assertion that “Africans can be induced not just to accept slavery, but to embrace it” (3). This acceptance, Boulukos notes, is completely without reason. The trope of the grateful slave, while often discussed as a part of abolitionism, is an example of the type of infantilization we have discussed.

The portrayal of slavery in Sarah Scott’s *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766) is a good example of this trope at work. Ellison is a good man whose kindness is repeatedly emphasized in this text. Fulfilling a common characteristic of grateful slave narratives, Ellison controls his slaves not through the threat of the whip, but through the threat of separation from his own fatherly control and influence. The text tells us that he “look(s) on them all as his children” and the slaves call him their father, stating that not all fathers are as kind as he is (Scott 31). Notice how the rhetoric of childhood overtly intersects with this conversation about slavery. Discussing this text, Carey argues that even though the call for abolition may not be overt, Ellison’s politics and theology, along with his kindness to his slaves, tend directly toward that end. On the other hand, Boulukos argues that the ameliorative argument in Scott’s story is dangerous, as it allows for the continuation of slavery, just under better circumstances.

Interestingly, Scott’s above description of the master/slave relationship is immediately followed by a passage narrating Ellison’s difficulties in raising his actual son—a child who has been spoiled by his mother and set against his father. This

connection of these two passages further highlights the metaphor of the slave as child. Just as Ellison's son is disposed to extremes—violent tempers, unconquerable passions—the emotions of the slaves are powerful. Carey argues that the extremity of their gratitude and their sorrow in this particular moment, assures the reader that slaves are “irrational and unable to control their own emotions” (5) Notice, again, how rationality is a key aspect of the argument. Like the child who has yet to mature and the woman in the conduct book, the slave is without reason, permanently inhabiting the category that the child will pass through and leave behind.

This representation of black men and women did not go unchallenged. In *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789), the author named in the title contests the infantilized representation of slaves by highlighting his own reason, which is often surprising to the white men he encounters (and sometimes superior to their own reason). Equiano's text—written as a response to an abolitionist call for slaves to record their experiences—is recognized as a foundational and influential early example of the slave narrative genre (Equiano, and Costanzo 9-10). This narrative intentionally takes up the abolitionist cause and engages with the rhetoric of the day, making it especially useful in our current conversation. Equiano not only shows himself to be a reason-able man, but also undermines the tradition and rhetoric of infantilization through the basic structure of his text.

There are moments in the text when Equiano seems, in some ways, to be addressing the specific trope of the grateful slave. He was owned by several men in his life, who exhibited varying levels of cruelty, kindness, and fairness in their treatment of

Equiano and their other slaves. On this list is one in particular whose description could have been taken directly from Scott's text: "he possessed a most amiable disposition and temper, and was very charitable and humane. If any of his slaves behaved amiss he did not beat or use them ill, but parted with them" (Equiano 116). This is exactly the temper and policy that is described by advocates of amelioration who pen descriptions of the slave's gratitude for such treatment. While this treatment does elicit gratitude from Equiano, it is not the extreme, emotional response represented elsewhere. More importantly, it in no way tempers his desire for or efforts toward freedom. He says, "my mind was therefore hourly replete with inventions and thoughts of being freed, and, if possible, by honest and honourable means" (135). Notice how freedom is the priority here, not an illogical allegiance to a man who claims ownership over another man. In the end, it is the hope and possibility of earning his freedom that adds to Equiano's loyalty, leading him to pass up an opportunity for escape in favor of working to earn the sum his master set as the price he must pay for his freedom.

Interestingly, Equiano does not completely eliminate portrayals of the childlike, unreasonable slave. Instead, he strategically relegates that representation to the beginning of his narrative, when he is actually a child. Many of the descriptions from the early chapters of the text read like typical descriptions of European encounters with native cultures. Equiano narrates fear and awe of white men and their technologies and emphasizes his own inability to understand the new objects and customs he encountered. He describes his fear of "be[ing] eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair" and states, "as every object was new to me every thing I saw filled me

with surprise...and indeed I thought these people were full of nothing but magical arts” (70, 75). In one passage, where he is left alone in the captain’s quarters, he is surprised to hear the ticking of a watch in the room: “[I] was afraid it would tell the gentleman anything I might do amiss: and when I immediately after observed a picture hanging in the room, which appeared constantly to look at me, I was still more affrighted, having never seen such things before” (78). This passage illustrates the way in which these descriptions simultaneously call up Equiano’s ignorance and his status as a child, for his constant fear and concern with being ‘told on’ are more a reflection of childhood than of any particular racial representation. Interestingly, these passages are only included in the early part of the narrative, when Equiano is actually a child—when failure to comprehend the world around you is normal and acceptable. By including these passages, he draws a connection between his text and the typical representations of European encounters with the other, giving his reader a familiar and accepted representation. However, by including them only in the beginning of the text, he undermines the discourse of infantilization, showing a black man who lives the normal progression from childhood ignorance to adult reason and understanding.

These narratives of fascination and fear at the world around him disappear as Equiano ages. He longs for chances to show his bravery—for battle—and he becomes a cosmopolitan citizen of the enlightenment. His abolitionist arguments take many forms, including narratives designed to encourage sympathy with the plight of the slave. Most consistent throughout this text, however, are Equiano’s attempts to portray his own intelligence and reason. He narrates his education, speaking of an intense desire to learn,

and he demonstrates his good use of that education on several occasions. He describes how his mind was a particular asset to his owners—something that they saw fit to invest in further, “as I understood something of the rules of arithmetic, when we got there he would put me to school, and fit me for a clerk” (116). The account of how he gains the money to buy his freedom is one of his own inventiveness and resourcefulness. In fact, in the story of a ship wreck in the West Indies, he describes his ability to maintain his reason in a crisis as unique, even among the white men on board the ship, “not one of the white men did any thing to preserve their lives...I warned the people who were drinking and entreated them to embrace the moment of deliverance, nevertheless they persisted, as if not possessed of the least spark of reason” (168-9). They later recover as they thank and praise Equiano for his efforts to save their lives.

This is not the only moment where Equiano emphasizes his own reason above that of others. Many of his direct abolitionist arguments are, in fact, leveled at the logic of those who support slavery. Addressing their arguments one by one, he argues against the reason they have used. For example, he deconstructs the arguments about the worth of slaves by calculating their value based on the wages they earn for their masters—pointing out the inconsistency of men’s simultaneous claims that a slave never earns back his cost and calls for the slave trade to be continued. He laments, “so much are men blinded, and to such inconsistent arguments are they driven by mistaken interest!” (120). He describes the “injustice and *insanity*” of slave owners “that would shock the morality and common sense of a Samaide or a Hottentot” (emphasis in the original, 125). Notice the correlation of the two phrasings, the insanity of the white slave owner contrasted with the common

sense of the enslaved other, inverting the common claim of the white man to superior reason.

Nature and Corruption in Jean-Jacques Rousseau

In an earlier section, I discussed Rousseau as he fits into the conversation started by Locke about childhood and reason. However, Rousseau was, himself, an influential thinker who discusses childhood at length, and in a way, he started his own unique strand of infantilization. Examining his work provides a slightly different representation of what it is to be childlike, and thus, further nuances our examination of infantilization in this period.

Even in the above discussion on women, there are some key passages that set Rousseau apart. It is not just woman's inability to access reason that limits her appropriate education; it is her natural susceptibility to corruption: "Girls are from their infancy fond of dress" (*Emile* 85). He describes the lengths girls and women go to in order to be thought pretty, and depicts them as shallowly obsessed with what others think of them. In fact, Rousseau recommends appealing to what others may think in order to govern a young girl (85). Girls, he says, "are fonder of things of show and ornament; such as mirrors, trinkets, and dolls" (86). In fact, these tendencies and methods of play in young girls are closely connected to the strategies Rousseau believes they must employ as adults. He recommends allowing girls dolls to dress and fuss over as a way to prepare them for their need to make themselves attractive to men throughout life. Rousseau argues that nature, making her physically weak, has instead "furnish[ed] woman with a

greater facility to excite desires than [nature] has given man to satisfy them” (84). He says women should use this imbalance strategically, arguing that women have “a right to be feeble when they think it expedient” (84). In fact, he says, “I should not be displeased at her being permitted to use some art, not to elude punishment in case of disobedience, but to exempt herself from the necessity of obeying” (90). This is a strange passage, where he seems to be encouraging a kind of deceit and manipulation in Sophie. But notice the final injunction; she may not use this art to actually disobey any orders, but only to try and influence and adapt orders being given.

It is important to note that, for Rousseau, this concern over appearance and need for “subtlety” and “art” is not learned; it is innate. “Subtilty is talent natural to the sex; and, as I am persuaded, all our natural inclinations are right and good in themselves, I am of opinion this should be cultivated as well as the others” (90). So, he openly encourages manipulation as women’s ‘natural’ way to access power, and seems to imply that women are naturally more closely associated with corrupt modes of being, and more susceptible to the frivolous finery available to them. Wollstonecraft specifically condemns such descriptions, saying that “in educating women, these fundamental principles lead to a system of cunning and lasciviousness” (*Rights of Woman* 84) She not only denounces this system, but also attributes such qualities to education and argues against the fact that such tendencies are natural. It is this term, natural, and Rousseau’s writing and thinking on it that complicate, for us, our larger portrait of infantilization.

While *Emile* is certainly Rousseau’s most famous text on childhood, I would like to focus, instead, on examining *A Discourse on Inequality* (1755). This text contains

interesting points of intersection that allow us to move beyond Rousseau's portrayal of the infant to discuss infantilization more broadly. Hidden in Rousseau's quote in the above paragraph is a reference to one of his most famous philosophies—the goodness of mankind's “*natural* inclinations.” Rousseau spends a great deal of time discussing the “natural state of man,” and the above reference to woman's “natural” tendency for manipulation is a hint at the hierarchy that emerges through that discussion. In his *Confessions*, Rousseau discusses the thinking that led to his *Discourse*: “I compared man-made man with natural man, and I discovered that his supposed improvement had generated all his miseries” (*A Discourse*, qtd on 29). This quotation outlines a philosophy that sets Rousseau apart from his enlightenment contemporaries: he believed that society was a corruptive force. In many ways, he animalizes the nature of man, and while he doesn't believe that mankind can go back to the wild and survive, he, in many ways, admires and defends the “savage” against Europeans; they have retained the “qualities which your culture and your habits have been able to corrupt, but not able to destroy” (79). Rousseau's belief in society's harmful influence is also famously illustrated in his desire to raise Emile in an isolated country location away from the urban centers of culture.

This philosophy has obvious ramifications on the portrayal of childhood. In Rousseau's thinking, the child is not the symbol of man's potential progress, but instead the image of nature's pure beginning. His rapid growth illustrates, for Rousseau, the process of *perfectibilité* and represents the development of mankind on a small scale. Here we see how the child symbolizes uncorrupted man, before “culture and habits” have

removed him from his natural state. But Rousseau laments that as a child grows, he will be inevitably influenced by the culture in which he is raised. As one might guess from the above passages on Sophie, this corrupted state is feminized by Rousseau. It is the decadence and softness of European society that disgust Rousseau, and these are both traits that he specifically associates with women. Earlier translations of “man-made man,” from above, describe him instead as the “man of art” (523). After the passages from above which discuss women’s proclivity toward such arts, it should be no surprise that Rousseau argues that “domesticated men, like domesticated animals...become effeminate” (31).^{ix} So infantilization, in Rousseau’s hands, becomes much more complicated. It is not just about reason, and it can’t be simply equated with feminization. In fact, in Rousseau’s system of thought, the woman and the child are, in many ways, opposites. While the child is the closest to a natural state, women are the other extreme—described as particularly susceptible to society’s corruptive influence.

Rousseau believes that one of the major differences between man and beasts is *perfectabilité*, but he makes a distinction between this “self-betterment” and actual progress toward “perfection” (30). While man may better his situation, Rousseau still believes that the ways in which he has done so—developing a sense of personal property and reliance on others—have corrupted man, created great inequalities, and offended “the noblest of man’s faculties,” freedom (127). The child is the closest the European man ever becomes to his natural beginnings, for as he grows so does society’s influence over him.

Natural Man, Natives, and Infantilization

Like Locke, Rousseau has a short discussion of parental authority in his discourse; he argues against those who use a father's complete authority to justify "absolute government and all society" (126). So, also like Locke, he limits the father's authority, for he "is master of the child only for such time as his help is necessary to him" and "beyond this state the two are equals" (126). Reason is certainly a part of Rousseau's concept of independence. However, because of his concern with man's natural state, he emphasizes physical strength and ability as well. He says, "man is weak when he is dependent, and is set free before he is robust" (99). In other words, a major factor in the child gaining his independence is not just his intellectual, but his physical strength.

In Rousseau's text, physical strength is important as it is one of the main attributes of the idealized "man of nature" he discusses in this discourse. Because "self preservation is the savage's only concern," his body is strong and his senses—particularly sight, sound, and smell—are "in a most subtle form" (87). Rousseau cites a contemporary example here: "the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope see ships on the high seas with their naked eye from the same distance that the Dutch see with their telescopes, or the American savages scent Spaniards on the trail as well as do the best dogs" (87). So, not only does the child have a unique relationship to natural man, but so do the natives who European travelers encounter. Notice the direct relationship of each of these native groups to Europeans. Rousseau wants the contrast to remain in his reader's mind; even though the second example doesn't directly compare the Spaniard's ability to track scents to the Native American's, that relationship is implicit. This relationship

between “natural man” and European views of natives is summarized by Sankar Muthu, who observes that “this temporal claim, that the New World was new not only to European explorers, but new to the development of social and political life itself, and that it represented the earliest stages of human history that civilized societies themselves once inhabited, became a key feature of many interpretive accounts of New World peoples” (22).^x It is Rousseau’s discussion of strength, dependence, and reason—and how they all emerge in discussions of natural man, children, and natives—that can help us gain an understanding of the definitions of infantilization that emerge from Rousseau’s influence.

While he means to defend their way of life against European influences, and praises the fact that relatively few inequalities emerge in their societies, Rousseau also infantilizes the native populations in the world.^{xi} Rousseau describes man “in a state of nature” or, as he often put it, “that savage man” as passing from generation to generation with neither “education nor progress.” There was an entire era where “man remained eternally a child” (105). Here Rousseau’s dual use of the word savage is important, for he uses it both to describe the original development of man, and to identify contemporary native populations. The slippage of this term certainly reflects an important connection—providing a metonymic relationship between the contemporary native and the original savage man. While *perfectibilité* seems to have pushed natives slightly beyond their original state—they are, after all, social beings—Rousseau believes that the process has been somehow arrested. Like the child, natural man is without education, and has little worry beyond day-to-day survival. “The savage man,” he says, “deprived of any sort of enlightenment, experiences passions only of this last kind” (89). He responds only to the

most “simple impulsion of nature” and “his desires do not go beyond his physical needs” (89). The power imbalances are not only legitimized, but naturalized as they are framed in the context of Rousseau’s discussion of essential human nature. Rousseau goes on to connect a given population’s level of development with the difficulty of their land and climate—with nature and its influences. According to him, those with more challenges have evolved more.

In a crucial discussion of Hobbes, Rousseau considers the statement that “wicked man...is a robust child” and questions whether “man in a state of nature is this robust child” (98-9). He seems to concede the assumption that a man who has the strength and abilities to live independently but does not, will resort to any “kind of excess” available to him and is therefore wicked (99). However, in the end he argues that the savage is not wicked “precisely because they do not know what it is to be good” (99). On Rousseau’s scale of human development, they haven’t yet developed the passions that incite evil in the human heart, so they are “ignorant of vice” and thus avoid wickedness. So, while Rousseau does not condemn men in a state of nature for refusing to properly utilize their strength and abilities, he does this by claiming their ignorance. In the end, the man of nature is even more of a “robust child” than before; now instead of choosing to act like a child when he shouldn’t, he is represented as having no other choice, for he simply *is* as a child. He is independent enough to live in his own world, but according to Rousseau the savage lacks the passions of men and thus the reason those passions develop. So, like the representation of adult groups suspended in the pre-rational state, Rousseau portrays natives as suspended in this stage of early development. According to him they seem to

be pre-rational, but they are also without an additional list of desires and passions that Rousseau believes only a more developed population could experience—for example, a fear of death. He specifically states that “the savage man” fears only “pain and hunger: I say pain and not death, because an animal will never know what death is” (89). He goes on to explain that since the savage man has not left his animal condition, he can not have any understanding of the abstract fears and desires that haunt the rest of mankind.

In the end, infantilization can be used in various ways, depending on both the author and the subject. I would argue, though, that there is a common thread. Infantilization does not mean weak, without reason, or even dependent, although it can indicate one or several of these attributes. Instead, it is a contradictory representation that utilizes idealizations of childhood, such as intellectual potential or natural innocence, but actually refuses its subject the one inevitable reality of childhood—that of change and development. Infantilized adults are rhetorically suspended as childlike, and depicted as unable to change and improve in the expected and acceptable ways for human beings. Women and slaves are infantilized when they are categorized as unable to develop reason and become independent adults; and natives are infantilized when they are described as paralyzed in an early stage of human development, without the continued influence of *perfectibilité*. Humans who are capable of progress are depicted as incapable of such change, fixed in a childlike state. In the next several chapters, I will further this investigation by examining specific instances of infantilization in children’s literature. Through these discussions, one additional aspect of infantilization is made clear; in each of these narratives, we find the stasis of the infantilized other is specifically contrasted

with that of the British or European child. In fact, the other is purposely used to aid in the growth of that child—growth which he or she is denied—and once this purpose has been served, the infantilized is forgotten or even explicitly dismissed by the text.

I will continue to encounter and discuss representations of reason throughout this project. However, it is Rousseau's image of childhood that comes to dominate late 18th and 19th-century portrayals of the child. So in the next chapter, as we begin to examine children's literature that engages the British culture of empire and look at the way Imperial space is infantilized, we will have a chance to elaborate on and sharpen our understanding of Rousseau's representation of childhood and its use in literary depictions of the infantilized other.

Endnotes

i The term infantilization is often used more technically in the fields of psychology and social work. In the humanities, however, there are few exceptions to this vague use I'm describing. One exception of note, though, is found in a text of political science that examines the subjection of Native Americans: Michael Paul Rogin's *Fathers and Children*. He relies heavily on Freudian theory to discuss the central position of the family in personal experience, and speculates on the implication of forcing someone (in his case, Native Americans) into the role of the child. He describes the many contexts in which infantilization has been studied, "slave societies; total institutions such as insane asylums, old people's homes, and prisons; environments of isolation and sensory deprivation; schizophrenic families; housewives in suburban homes; and efforts to manipulate mass publics for political purposes" to name just a few (Rogin 208). The wide variety of these uses illustrates the usefulness of this term, but it also illustrates the lack of precision that is utilized in its use. Rogin goes on to describe the process of infantilization as one that "breaks the social relations, cultural norms, and normal expectations of those subjected to [it]" and "destroy the victim's connection to his previously validated self" (208). While this is more precise than other uses, I still feel the need to look back at the developing definition of the child to locate the term historically. Also, this definition problematically assumes a previously existing "validated self" which is unlikely for many of the subaltern subjects who were being systematically infantilized in the early modern period. I would like to try and formulate an idea of infantilization that doesn't rely on such notions of the self.

ii One of the best of such texts is Felicity Nussbaum's *Torrid Zones*, which examines intersections between women of the British Empire—at home, abroad, native and slave. Laura Brown's *Ends of Empire* illustrates a similar goal; as she says, "I seek out dialectical relationships among positions of oppression" (11). Peter Hulme's *Colonial Encounters* looks at issues of race, gender and class as they relate to Imperial expansion, as does an earlier collection edited by Hulme and Russell MacDougall, *Writing, Travel, and Empire*. Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa's *Postcolonial Enlightenment* contains several essays which also show an interest in examining and troubling our notions of oppressed groups in the long 18th century.

iii See Section I of Introduction

iv While it would be naïve to assume girls are automatically included in this discussion, Locke is careful about his pronouns in this passage. He opens with an extensive discussion of his use of the term parental rather than paternal as a deliberate inclusion of the mother, and he specifically excludes the mother in other moments of this discussion. Therefore, I don't believe it is unreasonable to assume that his use of the gender-neutral 'child' rather than 'son' is intentional. For a summary of some of the debates surrounding gender and Locke's pronoun usage, see Jeremy Waldron's essay, "'The Mother Too Hath Her Title': John Locke on Motherhood and Equality." (New York University Public Law and Legal Theory Working Papers. Paper 233, 2010: http://lsr.nellco.org/nyu_plltwp/233)

v The power of a mother is even trickier, and her absence in the discussion that follows is conspicuous. Locke continues to speak of the father's authority to exact obedience from his children and only later, when he distinguished between types of parental power (right to obedience versus a right to honor and respect) does the mother return. So while one may be able to argue that Locke intends to include the mother in the earlier discussion, he does not actually do so, and she continues to, in reality, wield very little power over her child. For an argument that prioritizes Locke's statements of the mother's power over the argument I highlight here, see Waldron's "The Mother too..."

vi In fact, a 2005 text, *Feminist Interpretations of John Locke* contains essays on both sides. Some that discuss ways to read Locke as advancing gender equality, and some that instead examine ways in which his works de-valued women. It observes the way Locke's classic texts "inscribe the nature of women...delineating her proper role, her abilities and inabilities, her desires (ix). The editors, Nancy J. Hirschmann and Kirstie Morna McClure introduce Locke as a figure who "whether as a target or as a resource for feminist critique...soon became an important touchstone for such analyses, and was the subject

of some of the earliest articles published in the field of feminist political thought” (2). This is an excellent collection of voices on the subject and includes many of the influential scholars who started the contemporary feminist intervention into Lockean studies in the late 1970s. The Afterward for this text is written by Melissa A. Butler, whose 1978 article, “Early Liberal Roots of Feminism: John Locke and the Attack on Patriarchy” is one of the earliest feminist contributions to contemporary Lockean studies.

vii For a short summary of *Emile*, see chapter 2 of this dissertation.

viii You will notice that I move back and forth between sensibility and sentiment. For this discussion, I will be using Carey’s definition of the relationship between the two. He describes one text as “engaging with the fashionable literary discourse of his day, sensibility, to produce a recognizably sentimental discourse” (1). He describes the former as “a discourse which celebrated the passions over the intellect” (4) and uses the words of Raymond Williams to define the latter, “a conscious openness to feelings” (quoted on 5). In other words, sentiment was invoked and utilized extensively in the rhetoric of sensibility.

ix See, “Thus a robust or a delicate temperament, together with the strength or weakness attaching to it, often derives from the manly or the effeminate manner in which one has been raised rather than from the original constitution of the body.” (Rousseau 105)

x Interestingly, Muthu observes this while specifically discussing the words of Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, who had a great influence on Rousseau.

xi This is precisely the use of the term infantilization in Muthu’s text, which says “the infantilization of New World peoples by noble savage writers was meant primarily as an attack upon the decrepitude of European civilization, which they generally viewed as well past its prime, and not as an attempt to lower the status of ‘new’ peoples” (23).

Chapter 2

The Savage Child: Infantilization and the Native in Early Children's Literature

In my first chapter, I discussed the development of the rhetoric of infantilization in the 18th century. I was able to examine rhetoric that specifically relegated several groups of adults to a category of stasis and dependence, and some contemporary responses that challenged this representation. As I move toward the end of the 18th and into the 19th century, I want to begin a close examination of how infantilization appears in several literary texts.

Locke's "blank page" set the stage for an idealized view of the child as an unformed, moldable being, ready and waiting for the influence of education. He was defined by his potential, and this was one of the characteristics that is carried over into the rhetoric of infantilization. As I discussed, infantilization fixes the adult subject permanently in the status of a child, often while it is simultaneously employing a vocabulary of change and development. If infantilization is defined by stasis, why is there so much language of growth—and what might this contradiction reveal about these texts? This discrepancy is most conspicuous in texts that are consciously discussing childhood, education and growth. In such texts, the infantilized other often exists unseen as a contrast to the growing, changing and developing child. The next two chapters will investigate this paradoxical representation in such texts—examining the simultaneous imaginings of the child and the other in order to better understand the nature and function of infantilization in late 18th and 19th-century literature. In this chapter, I will focus on texts that elucidate the relationship between depictions of the native and the child, first

looking at Rousseau's noble savage applied to the figure of the child and then examining the ways in which later authors try to re-create distance between the two figures. In Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul and Virginia* (1788)ⁱ, I will examine three portrayals of infantilization.

Considering these three instances side-by-side helps to reveal how it is not enough to simply observe and highlight periodic allusions to childhood; a useful articulation of infantilization must place it within a larger pattern of thought. As we move beyond *Paul and Virginia* in the latter portion of this chapter, this is precisely what I will do. In *The Stolen Boy* (1828, 1830) by Barbara Hoole Hofland and *The Little Savage* (1848) by Frederick Marryat we see a pattern emerge, one that reflects—and will help us to define—infantilizing representations of the other in British culture.

The Noble Savage and the Child: The Case of *Paul and Virginia*

As I mentioned in my introduction, *Emile* is one of the most influential texts in the development of education and childhood studies. When it comes to the discussion of other books, however, there is one text that Rousseau places above all others in importance to Emile's education: "Is it Aristotle? Pliny? Buffon? No; it is Robinson Crusoe" (332). This passage from *Emile* displays not just the text's importance, but the humor with which Rousseau presents this suggestion; this recommendation is understood to be surprising and perhaps even a bit outrageous. For the modern critic, however, the choice of *Robinson Crusoe* is less shocking, for we are by now familiar with the wide

influence of this text—an influence that is currently being examined and discussed in many new and exciting ways in current academic circles.ⁱⁱ

There are a couple reasons why *Crusoe* is the ideal model for Emile. Seth Lerer speculates that perhaps Rousseau thought a child would gain “a sense of independence, or a lesson in mechanics, or a vision of the feeling person in a state of nature” (134). The man learns to live on his island through direct interaction with the world around him—learning by experience just as Rousseau would have for his pupil. However, even more important seems to be the isolation modeled by *Crusoe*: “This state is not that of a social man; but it is by means of it that he ought to appraise all the others” (*Emile* 114-5). So, even though Emile’s isolation is not sustainable, his ability to consider the state of isolation is crucial for his ability to exist in society without corruption.

However, it is precisely this issue of sustainability that becomes essential: what is the place and value of natural man, and his relationship to society? In his article “Rousseau’s *Crusoe*,” Brian McGrath discusses what the author’s choice of this novel reveals about the relationship of natural man to civil society: “If Rousseau celebrated a mere return to nature, then the choice of *Robinson Crusoe* would be an odd one, for this book tells the story of a man who is shipwrecked alone on an island for many years but returns to society to tell the tale of what he learned on the island” (124). So, according to McGrath, the key of *Crusoe*’s importance to Emile is not how he models life on the island, but how he models a return to society after that life. “The success of his education” is determined by whether the child can eventually exist in the world without being corrupted—whether he can become independent, able to recall his isolated state

and remember the lessons he learned there (124). Speaking more directly about education, McGrath writes, “If Rousseau’s goal were to set natural pedagogy in opposition to society; then the success of Emile’s education would free him from the influence of society but simultaneously doom him to solitude” (123). This quote is particularly telling, not only for our discussion of Rousseau but when considering one of his friends and colleagues. In *Paul and Virginia* Bernardin examines just this problem. Unlike Rousseau, Bernardin would like to set natural pedagogy in opposition to society, and because of this, his text repeatedly struggles with the inevitability and necessity of isolation.

Robinson Crusoe serves as a lynchpin to the ideas circulating in the 18th and 19th centuries, depicting and addressing conceptions of British masculinity, slavery, native populations, empire, nature, travel, and education all in one place. Just as Rousseau emphasizes this book’s importance in *Emile*, Bernardin narrates the role of Crusoe in his own life:

Robinson [Crusoe] especially delighted me. I went to bed with him every evening in a pleasant solitude, clearing land, planting peas, reading the Bible, and defending my woods and my hollow of a rock against an army of savages. And I passed delicious nights in the middle of the sad days of my education. (Quoted in Cook 115)ⁱⁱⁱ

When Bernardin’s godmother gave him his first copy of *Robinson Crusoe*, she not only supplied him a source of peace and escape, but she gave him his first, and perhaps greatest literary influence. *Paul and Virginia* is, in many ways, Bernardin’s attempt to re-write Crusoe’s journey; however while the characters and the setting undoubtedly reflect their predecessor, the message of the novel is very different—one that speaks of the

hopelessness of natural man and the impossibility of such ideals in the corruption of society.

Bernardin and Rousseau met ten years before the publication of *Paul and Virginia*, and the two became intimate friends, sharing their love for *Robinson Crusoe* and a number of philosophical ideas about nature, society, and family. However, Rousseau's influence over his younger colleague was not absolute. Bernardin explicitly stated that he did not fully ascribe to his friend's doctrines, but instead chose "judiciously among Rousseau's ideas and writings" (Donovan 21). John Donovan observes that their divergence in thought seems to be isolated among issues of faith and religion, the but above discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* indicates another point of difference; it seems that at the heart of *Paul and Virginia* lies an anxiety about the impossibility of implementing Rousseau's philosophies into the real world. Through the text's anxieties about both degeneration and maturation, Bernardin shows that natural man can only remain an ideal if he is suspended in a childlike state of potential; he is fixed outside the possibilities of reality, and the minute he begins to mature the corrupt influences of the world threaten to destroy him. Not only is it impossible for natural man to live in society, but Bernardin shows that there is no permanent place for him outside society either, that corruption—from either the old world of Europe or the new economies of empire—will find even the most isolated of people. The text's representations of nature, an ideal society, and the natural man, reveal Bernardin's desire to depict the colonies as a place where one may find a peaceful existence away from the world's corruption; however, the spectral force

of slavery in this text is a constant reminder of how colonial space is actually used—the haunting reality that calls attention to the impossible nature of Bernardin’s ideal.

Paul and Virginia and the Natural Man

While I am generally discussing British culture and empire, the influence and popularity of books such as Bernardin’s *Paul and Virginia* makes their contribution to this discussion important. Within a year of its publication, this book was reprinted in five editions, “along with an anonymous English translation entitled *Paul and Mary*, probably by Daniel Malthus, Rousseau’s English disciple” (Hardin 84).^{iv} *Paul and Virginia* was famously translated by the English poet, Helen Maria Williams while she was living in France “amidst the horrors of Robespierre’s tyranny” (*Paul and Virginia*, tr. Williams iii). She added a series of her own sonnets to the text, which was completed in 1795 and published the next year (Kennedy 123-125). John Donovan’s introduction to his translation of *Paul and Virginia* observes a “conservative estimate” that the text went through “sixty printings before 1900 in England” and gives the anecdote of a French bookseller who “told Bernardin in 1803 that sales of *Paul and Virginia* alone had enabled him to live comfortably in exile” in London (Donovan 9). There were a total recorded 207 editions of the text by 1914 (Berman 200). Even when this book’s popularity began to fade, its influence and iconic status remained: it was featured in Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1856) as the favorite novel of his title character, representing the romantic notions she idealizes; Charles Dickens uses the book in *Little Dorrit* (1857) as Flora recalls her past relationship with Arthur Clennam; and it was read by Thomas

Hardy's Phillotson (*Jude the Obscure*, 1895) who aligns Jude and Sue with Bernardin's protagonists.^v

It is not just the text's influential status that joins it with the rest of Europe, but also its setting. The *Île de France*—or as it is currently known, Mauritius—was located by the Portuguese, and then first controlled by the Dutch, then the French, and then—by the time most British men and women would have been reading this book—the British. As I will discuss in more detail later, it is famously spoken of as one of the few islands colonized that had no native population upon discovery. After a British invasion in late November, 1810 (retribution for the battle of Grand Port, August 23, 1810) the French governor quickly offered capitulation, and the island remained under British control until English Sovereignty was formally recognized in the 1814 Treaty of Paris. At this point, its name was officially returned to Mauritius, as it was originally designated by the Dutch (Selvon 25). Nineteenth century references to the island consist mainly of the narratives of visiting soldiers, unanimously narrating details of the greatest tourist destination on the island, the tomb of Paul and Virginia: “Junior lieutenants and midshipmen, and others of the age of romance, all make it a point to visit these tombs as soon as possible after their arrival: if they can only get on shore for a few hours, they hire or borrow horses, and proceed with all haste to the interesting scene” (“Tomb of Paul and Virginia”). Like Rousseau's work, Bernardin's became iconic and influential on either side of the English Channel.

Looking at the novel, Rousseau's influence is evident throughout; one of his philosophies which most obviously affects *Paul and Virginia* is this theory of natural

man, in which the ideal human is isolated, unthinking, and concerned only with the most basic physical needs—and consequently free from the burdens and anxieties of modern life.^{vi} In fact, in his preface to the 1788 edition, Bernardin describes his goal in this story as an effort to “join the beauty of Nature between the tropics [and] the moral beauty of a little society,” exhibiting what, to the author, is one of the great truths: “our happiness consists in living according to Nature and virtue” (*Paul and Virginia*, trans. Donovan 37). This little society—made up of two women, their two children, and two servants—models Bernardin’s social ideal and echoes Rousseau’s statement that “the family then may be called the first model of political societies;” to him, families are like little nations (15). My first chapter concludes with a discussion of Rousseau’s infantilization of natives through the descriptions in *A Discourse on Inequality*. Bernardin picks up that thread, meditating through his text on the complicated relationship between the European, the native and natural man. As he describes the “enchanted descriptions of several islands of the southern ocean” that other authors have written, he also pinpoints their flaw: “the manners of their inhabitants, and still more those of the Europeans who land there, are often a blot on the landscape” (37).^{vii} While we may speculate about the extent to which Rousseau idealizes or genuinely admires native populations, it is apparent that Bernardin finds that both natives and Europeans fall short of the natural man.

That being said, Bernardin does choose two French women and their children as the subjects of his philosophical experiment, and he chooses one of the few colonial settings that is known for being uninhabited when first located by European explorers, the Île de France. As Megan Vaughan observes, “This was an island without natives, and its

unique fauna and flora attest to its long historical isolation . . . Without natives, the island's beginnings were necessarily the product of no one thing or people, but of man, more or less foreign, more or less 'naturalized'" (2). There is no indigenous population to represent natural man, so Bernardin removes his subjects from French society so that they may become his ideal. He argues, "Solitude, far from having made them barbarous, had made them more humane" (58). It is interesting to see how even in this move backward away from society, the European man and woman progress. However, there is an anxiety in this text about that progression—about natural man's ability to live in the real world. The closer Paul and Virginia come to inhabiting that ideal state, the closer they come to their own destruction; both the forces of the outside world and anxiety about their own corruption indicate that a sustained existence as natural man is impossible.

Bernardin is obviously inspired by Rousseau's description of man's ideal society in the natural state, a loose association "all the better united because mutual affection and liberty were its only bonds" (112). In the French, they use the same words, *petites sociétés*, to describe this "little society."^{viii} Yet even in this text that so admires the natural life, infantilization appears in the description of this family; Paul is described as "another Adam, having the stature of a man and the simplicity of a child" (Bernardin 71). The structure of this sentence makes these descriptions a result of his filling the role of Adam; he must become—or rather, remain—the child to do this properly. Also, if Paul is Adam, we must conclude that Virginia is Eve—a designation that brings forth issues of infantilization and gender that are unavoidable in this text; Virginia represents the world

in its nascent state and a deep connection between humans and the rest of nature, but as I will discuss below, she is also haunted by the corruptibility of her gender.

From early in this narrative, the frailty of their community is evident. The opening paragraph of the novel sets the narrative in the past, beginning with a wanderer who notices “the remains of two small cabins” in a valley of the Isle de France (39). When he questions a local on the story of these small homes, the man begins his narrative: “twenty years ago these tumbledown dwellings and this unploughed land were a place of happiness” (40). Although this is a statement about the happiness of this place, the use of the past tense and the current dilapidated state of the homes stand out to a reader. In reality, the story of Paul and Virginia begins by revealing its own tragic ending; for even if the reader could not anticipate Virginia’s death and Paul’s sorrow, we are assured of what, to Bernardin, is the most tragic ending of all—the inevitable failure of the small, natural community that is isolated and independent from the corruption of the world.

Even in their happiest moments, there are short passages inserted into the text that indicate the unsustainability of the community’s lifestyle. As they sit happily in the evenings, the mothers tell frightening tales of the outside world to their children: “stories of travelers who had lost their way by night in the thief-infested woods of Europe, or of the wreck of some vessel driven upon the rocks of a desert island by the tempest” (64). In these two examples, we see that Europe and sea voyages are the boogeymen of their natural existence. The former represents their history and the corruption of the old world, and the latter the risks and greed of the imperial endeavor. They both, however, represent

the dangers of travel—a warning against anything that would take the children away from their happy, isolated existence.

In the same paragraph that tells of the beauty and abundance of their surroundings, we are also reminded of the cost of their chosen natural life, “so unfurnished were they with the goods of civilization that they went barefoot about the settlements” (45). This is a cost that particularly weighed on Madame de la Tour, who was wealthy in France. Early in the text she panics, facing the reality of passing her poverty on to her daughter and asking, “what would become of Virginia if I were to die and leave her without fortune?” (49). While the community dismisses her fears in this moment, it is the inevitability of aging that leads to the final crisis in the text.

In chapter one I discussed how Rousseau’s view of women complicates our typical view of infantilization; women, being more susceptible to the appeals of society, are more corruptible, farther from nature, and thus farther from the ideal of the infant. We see this aspect of Rousseau’s philosophies in Bernardin’s Virginia, for her maturation catapults the text into its tragic spiral. As Madame de la Tour “watched her daughter develop with so many charms,” she began to think on the possibility of Virginia’s awakening sexuality (49). Although Paul’s love for Virginia is great, she is the one who experiences sexual desire; the textual descriptions of the island heat, Virginia’s fever, and her love for Paul exemplify a common trope used in representing sexuality. In her book, *Torrid Zones*, Felicity Nussbaum describes this trope as it relates to her project:

I take as a central metaphor for the consideration of maternity and sexuality the concept of torrid zones, both the geographical torrid zones of the territory between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, and the torrid zone mapped onto the human body, especially the female

body...the contrasts among the torrid, temperate, and frigid zones of the globe were formative in imagining that a sexualized woman of empire was distinct from domestic English womanhood. These distinctions among peoples based on climatic variation appeared in the natural histories that began to be written in the eighteenth century. (7)

Bernadin's narrative illustrates how representations of sexuality are often mixed with depictions of heat and fever: "Yet for some time Virginia had been troubled by a strange ailment. Her skin took on a yellow tint . . . at the sight of Paul, she would run playfully toward him; then, having nearly reached her goal, she would stop, seized with a sudden embarrassment; her pale cheeks would flush deeply" (72). Notice how the descriptions of sickness are integrated with the descriptions of desire. The flush of fever is combined with the blush of embarrassment.

In a later description, Virginia wakes during a "burning night" and "[feels] all the symptoms of the malady return with redoubled force" (87). In her stupor, she wanders outside to a bathing pool that Paul dug for her. "She plunges into her pool" and "the first cold shock of cool water revives her spirits and a thousand pleasant memories come to her mind" (87). As she sits in the water, "she can make out in the dim water, on her bare arms and on her breast, the reflection of the two palm-trees that were planted" at their birth. She thinks of Paul and her love for him, of his labor in creating this pool for her, and his "affection, softer than the scent of blossom, purer than spring water, stronger than palm-trees joined together; and she sighs" (73). Even in this peaceful scene, her passion/fever interrupts: "suddenly she is possessed with a consuming fire. Filled with fear by these dangerous shadows and by these waters that burn hotter than the sun in the torrid zone, she leaves the pool and hurries to her mother's side to seek support in this

struggle with herself” (74). Again, in this passage Virginia’s physical fever is paralleled with the awakening passion of her love for Paul. Over and over, the physical sensation she feels is paralleled to a memory or thought of Paul. The shock of cool water brings on “pleasant memories,” and reflecting on the palm trees, which represent their intertwined lives, kindles a “consuming fire” in her. She shows shame and fear at this awakening sexuality, as does her mother when she learns the extremity of Virginia’s feelings. It is the fear that Virginia will express her feelings and become pregnant that incites the conversations that lead to the demise of this community. This portrayal of Virginia complicates our view of infantilization. She is a part of this idealized, natural community, but she is also, in this way, the source of its downfall. She is good, but is the most susceptible to the outside. So in light of the ideas put forth through the representation of natural man, Virginia is, in some ways, less infantilized than Paul. She is more susceptible to corruption and, as we will see, the outside world, and is thus less like the infant ideal. However, this is only one piece of the text’s complicated network of infantilization(s). When we complete our discussion of gender below, we will see that there are other versions of infantilization at work in the novel, and it is through those that we are able to more fully understand the place of Virginia in this ideal community.

Before the final destruction of this small commune, Bernardin is careful to clearly communicate the idyllic nature of life in this small society. Paul and Virginia, as they grow up isolated on this island, live in just the natural state that Rousseau and Bernardin both believe would lead to the greatest happiness, and the children’s peace, goodness, and contentment are meant to represent the truth of that belief. Traditional education has been

replaced; “they had no other studies, but helping and pleasing each other; they were as ignorant as Creoles and could neither read nor write” (47). In case this description does not make it clear, the text re-emphasizes Bernardin’s view of European education: “never had useless learning made them shed tears...they had never been frightened by stories...for children” (47). Instead, their mothers’ love and nature’s lessons have raised them:

Paul and Virginia had no clocks or almanacks, no books of chronology, history or philosophy. They regulated their lives according to the cycles of Nature. They knew the hours of the day by the shadows of the trees, the seasons by the times when they flower or fruit, and the years by the number of their crops...Like fauns and dryads, their existence seemed to be linked to that of the trees...Their want and their ignorance only added to their felicity. (70)

Notice how Bernardin explicitly replaces the traditional subjects of education: earlier, reading and writing; in this quote, chronology, history, and philosophy. Rejecting the tools of the emerging industrial revolution, the text argues that these children are better raised without the influence of clocks and almanacs. Essentially, they are better without the items that tie a person to the rest of society. They have replaced the timepiece with the movements and patterns of nature, measuring their lives against the world around them; in this Bernardin describes their lives as replete with poetry, “the most delightful images were scattered through their conversations.” In order to announce dinner, Virginia would say, “the shadows of the banana-trees are at their feet” and Paul would observe the time of day, “the tamarinds are closing their leaves.” In describing her age, Virginia says, “the mango-trees have given their fruit twelve times and the orange trees their blossoms twenty-four times since I came into the world” (70). Bernardin argues against what he

sees as a misconception of the Enlightenment, basing value on facts rather than morality and experience. He describes the daily enlightenment they bring each other, then pauses, “yes, enlightenment; and if their talk sometimes contained errors, what danger have these for a man whose life is pure?” (70). In their ignorance these “children of nature” are happier and better educated than Europe’s greatest scholars.

However, despite these descriptions of purity and happiness, the story of Paul and Virginia is a tragedy, and while Bernardine argues that this tiny community is an ideal, he simultaneously depicts it as an impossibility. There is an underlying tension between the way Paul, Virginia, and their mothers interact with colonial space—as a place to encounter and engage nature—and the customary social and economic functions of empire. The stories of Marguerite and Madame de la Tour highlight these two functions: after an affair with a nobleman who abandoned her, Marguerite decided to “hide her misdeed in the colonies” and moved to the Ile de France. She illustrates the customary representation of colonial space as an escape—a place to start anew once “she had lost the only dowry of a poor and honest girl, her good name” (42). In contrast, Madame de la Tour came to the island with her husband, but their story represents another narrative of empire: the search for wealth. Unfortunately, Monsieur de la Tour died of a fever in Madagascar, and left his pregnant wife alone “on an island where she had neither credit nor recommendation; her sole worldly possession was a Negress” (41). So, while Bernardin’s idyllic descriptions above may imply that they have escaped these traditions of empire and created a uniquely natural and moral existence, the imminent destruction of this small family argues that such an escape is unsustainable and thus, unrealistic. They

live in an ideal community in colonial space, but the impetus of each woman's journey represents the corruption of the outside world. In some ways, this text seems to be an experiment, inquiring whether imperial space can truly provide escape for these women; can it actually be used for such a pure, ideal function or will the base values of artifice and greed inevitably infect their new lives?

The ambivalence over how to reconcile empire's potential with its more corrupt reality can be seen in the text's depiction of slaves. Because this island off the coast of Africa was uninhabited when the explorers came upon it, the slaves of the text seem to inhabit a doubly-othered role in this European representation, both as black slave and indigenous population. Paul and Virginia perform their mimes "in the native fashion" after dinner, but the activity is also described as being "practiced by the black children on the island" who are slaves. Similarly, the peacefulness of the island is explained through the fact that "for a number of Creoles a lock was an object of curiosity" (68). In the Helen Maria Williams translation of this text, the word 'native' replaces 'Creole.' Historically, this slippage makes some sense—for while the Dutch struggled for years to sustain settlement of Mauritius, it was a band of escaped slaves that was first able to successfully inhabit the island. The second Dutch commander to make this attempt, Adrien van der Stel, decided it could be more easily done with slaves than with convicts, and in 1641 he brought 105 slaves back from Madagascar. However, "within a week, half of them had disappeared into the forests" and the Dutch soon found that "maroon slaves, alone or in groups, colonized the interior" of the island (Vaughan 9). So, although the island was spoken of as uninhabited before colonization, the slaves of the forest filled the role of the

native in the imagination of the settlers—a role characterized by both romance and terror (Vaughan 12). In this way, it is easy to see how these communities in the forest step into the imaginative role usually occupied by the natives of a newly colonized land; they are spoken of as an invisible population to be feared, but also one to be admired for their unique connection to the island and its landscape. Because of this history, the slippage between slave and native is not surprising in this text, but it is still important to recognize the various positions being conflated in such representations.

Ultimately, Bernardin's desire to postulate a new, European natural man, is undermined by an anxiety that in becoming the natural man, one might inhabit too closely the role of the island's native/slave. Paul and Virginia learn from and utilize Creole traditions, not just in play as in the mimes above, but in several small, practical moments; they access this knowledge to live better in their natural environment, much like the escaped slaves must have done as they became the first to successfully inhabit the island. When they are lost in the woods, Paul lights a fire for them "using the native method" (53). They breakfast "in the Creole fashion" when the governor comes to visit—in the same passage where he remarks on their surprising poverty (79). In fact, it is in others' noticing their poverty that this anxiety reveals itself, "they seldom went to the town, afraid of being scorned because they dressed in the coarse blue Bengal cloth usually worn by slaves" (45). It is not surprising that they wore this cloth, but that this family—so joyous in their simplicity and so certain of the moral superiority of their current lives—would let the shame they feel at this comparison guide their actions. The slave population on this island emphasizes this tension, reminding the reader that Paul,

Virginia and their mothers, despite their lifestyles, are European; as we examine the representations of slavery in *Paul and Virginia*, we will see that they put pressure on the possibility of the European natural man, inserting reminders of empire and economics into the idyllic narrative.

***Paul and Virginia* and the Figure of the Slave**

Above, I recounted some of the history of slavery on the island of Mauritius; however, this is certainly not the end of the story. Under French rule, the newly named Isle de France became a thriving colony, with a slave population that outnumbered the Europeans on the island by about eight to one (Selvon 41). It is this development that Bernardin witnessed in his visit to the colony from 1768-70. While Bernardin refused to join the French antislavery organization when asked, he was vocal in his condemnation of the treatment of slaves he saw on Mauritius (Vaughan 57). In his book on this journey, *Voyage à l'Isle de France* (1773), he narrates many of the horrors he saw during his stay. He also, in the final sentence of the text, dedicates the book to the slave population of the island: "For you, unhappy black slave weeping on the rocks at Mauritius, if my hand, which cannot wipe away your tears, could at least make the tyrants regret and repent, then I would not ask any more of the Indies; I shall have made my fortune!" (232-3). The references to slavery in *Paul and Virginia* are also regularly cited as an example of his desire to expose the mistreatment of slaves (Vaughan 57, Selvon 11). Critics of Bernardin, though, have observed that he bought a slave while he traveled Mauritius, contending that his goal, while certainly to incite sympathy, was not to argue for freedom

(Wilson 20). This inconsistency—not surprising in its time—perplexes the modern reader, and readers and scholars alike have found the representation of slavery in *Paul and Virginia* similarly inconsistent (Cook 128, Donovan 28-9). It is this inconsistency that I would like to examine in more detail, looking at the ways that this representation complicates our vision of Bernardin as the abolitionist writer, and our image of the infantilized natural man in this novel.

The most prominent representation of slavery in the text is that of Domingue and Marie—the happy, kindhearted slave couple that is a part of the small, family community. In an article on *Paul and Virginia*, Anna Neill inserts this text into the larger discourses of sentimentalism and republicanism, speaking of the “political shrewdness” of this novel, which deals “simultaneously with the reduction of the slave community (now consisting of named individuals) to the proportions of the family it serves and with the way in which slave ownership then slips into the more convenient category of familial patronage” (43). By depicting these two slaves, who are married to each other, as a part of the family, the text assures that they are not viewed as a family unit of their own, but are instead infantilized into the role of children in this small society. Slightly different than the typical representation of the grateful slave, Bernardin believes that this community, in its response to and relationship with nature, creates a family unit in which each member is equally bound by love; when such a connection is achieved, each will instinctively fill in the role that is ‘natural’ for him or her. Neill points out that in this text, the ‘natural’ role for the slave figures is, of course, “unremitting labour” (*Paul and Virginia* 44). So, even though Bernardin’s empathy may have been great, the distribution

of work and power in his ideal community certainly reveals that he was not above the assumptions of racial inequality so common in his day. Domingue and Marie also illustrate the inability to live in colonial space without colonial corruption.

Barnardin certainly portray's these slaves as a part of the family, but as they age, the community is faced with the problem that Paul's labor is not enough to sustain them all. Madame de la Tour says to Marguerite, "your Negro Domingue is old and worn out, Marie is frail . . . One grows old rapidly in warm countries and more quickly still in affliction" (76). They must now consider a way to raise enough money to purchase more slaves, and the family considers "send[ing] Paul to India for a short time" where "he can earn enough by trading to buy a slave" (76). In this passage, Paul refuses this trip and rejects the typical view of colonial space, disparaging the notion expressed by many others in the text: "why do people come to the islands if not to make a fortune?" (79). In his rejection, he instead praises the labors of agriculture, idealizing his relationship with nature as, not just the most superior, but also the most profitable lifestyle. However, the financial dilemma remains, proving his words wrong. Their lifestyle may be morally superior, but it is unrealistic and financially unsustainable. This dilemma highlights the base economic transaction required to initiate even the most familial slave relationships, reminding the reader that Domingue and Marie were also purchased at one point, and that this ideal community is not actually able to live completely apart from the slave trade the text appears to despise.

Even though Domingue and Marie appear throughout the text, there is one short incident which dominates the representation of slavery in *Paul and Virginia*. In fact, if

there is one passage for which this text has become famous, it is the narrative of the runaway slave girl. At least one image from each artist who has illustrated *Paul and Virginia* and many of the paintings inspired by the text capture a moment from this short story, and at least one adaptation of the text trims the narrative to just this account.^{ix} Even if we set aside the infantilization of Domingue and Marie and allow Bernadine's view of this community as an ideal, the narrative of the runaway slave illustrates how the existence of slavery continues to intrude on their happy life—and continues to be problematic for both the characters and the reader. In fact, slavery is a spectral force in this text, lurking in the background as a representation of the evils of colonialism that cannot be escaped. From the beginning, the reader knows that this is a plantation island worked by slaves brought from Madagascar or East Africa, for Monsieur do la Tour's purpose in coming to the *Isle de France* was to "seek his fortune" by establishing a plantation (41). The narrative of the runaway slave proves that this isolated community is unable to completely remove itself from society; reality is certain to seep into Paul and Virginia's idyllic life.

In this passage, "an escaped Negress" pleads for Virginia's help, showing the girl a "body which was furrowed with deep scars from the whippings she had received." The woman narrates how she planned to drown herself, but upon realizing how close she was to the only "good white people" in the country, she sought out Virginia instead. Virginia feeds and comforts the woman, telling her to "have no fear" (51). This seems like the perfect opportunity for the abolitionist Bernardin to illustrate how Virginia would find a

way to free this woman, or at the very least, restore her to a “natural” place in their small community. Strangely, she does the opposite. She returns the slave to her master.

Virginia is praised for her kindness and mercy because she travels with the woman and begs the master “to pardon his slave”—a master so horrible that Virginia can not approach him without “quaking inwardly” and can not speak but with a trembling voice. Once her task is done, “Virginia quickly signaled to the slave to approach her master; then she fled, and Paul hurried after her” (52). Critics and readers alike have struggled with this representation; in his attempt to address this, Malcom Cook states, “in the context of the novel one can only assume that Bernardin was trying to illustrate the kind of cruelty that was commonplace, while also showing the absolute innocence of the two children” (128). As readers, we know that Bernardine is against such treatment, but it is obvious that Virginia’s act, while well-intentioned, is not going to improve the life of this slave; there is hardly even a pretense, considering Virginia says nothing to the man about the treatment that gave the woman her scars—she only asks him to pardon her running away. The text even indicates an understanding of this through the words of Domingue, who followed the children and came to the plantation after them: “what a cruel pardon it was! For he showed her to me chained by the foot to a block of wood, an iron collar with three hooks fastened round her neck” (56). But in the next sentence, Domingue, Paul, and Virginia have all forgotten this girl to focus on finding their own way home.

These two representations of slavery form a puzzle that reflects both the desire and inability of this narrative to escape its colonial context. Marie and Domingue

represent Bernardin's attempt to remove slavery from this colonial context, but also reflect his refusal to overtly call for its end. These two slaves were purchased 'off stage,' entering the narrative as a part of the family. But the story of Virginia and the runaway slave highlights the textual ambivalence on the topic of slavery—ambivalence that was already evident in the depictions of Bernardin's small idyllic community. Above all, this community is defined by its isolation; in that light, Virginia's great act has everything to do with her willingness to leave her home, and the journey to and back from the plantation. It is a moment where Bernardin makes utterly clear that this ideal is not one that can be exported into society. They could not keep the slave, for her master would come looking for her; they could not advocate for her freedom without fully engaging the outside world, something that is the very antithesis of being for this community. The presence of the runaway slave symbolizes the threat of influence from the outside world. And ultimately, it is this threat that precipitates the collapse of this idyll.

Gender and Infantilization in *Paul and Virginia*

The incident with the runaway slave girl does more than highlight the inconsistencies in representations of slavery in this text. It brings forth a question of gender, anticipating Virginia's own struggles later in the book. In the runaway slave, we see a woman who has tried to take actions that determine the fate of her life: she runs away from the horrors she experiences under the cruel slave master. However, instead of stressing her decision, the text highlights her powerlessness by escorting her directly back to the plantation owner. Interestingly, this girl is not the only escaped slave in the text.

When Paul and Virginia try to return home, they become lost and wander the forests for so long that even once they are found by Domingue and know the way home, their feet are too wounded and sore to allow them to walk. In that moment, “a band of runaway slaves” steps out of the woods and offers them aid. They saw Paul and Virginia traveling with the slave girl and want to reward the kindness of the children. They say, “to show our gratitude we will carry you home on our shoulders” (57). These events are significant for two reasons; first, they highlight the discussion above, further illustrating how the text insists on representing the return of a slave to her abusive master as an act of kindness. Secondly, this passage reveals that there were many slaves—a *band* of them—who were able to escape successfully and live in the forests; it shows the existence of such men in the text, but it also reminds the reader of the lore of this island and its history as a place where runaway slaves create new societies in the thick forests. These men—for all the ones we meet in the text are men—made the same decision as the girl who was just returned to her master, except they succeeded in their attempts to start a new life.

It seems as if women in this text are incapable of making their desires and decisions become reality. The slave girl discussed above is a good example, because we have the clear contrast of men who have achieved the thing she could only attempt. The narratives of both Madame de la Tour and Marguerite are, in some ways, versions of this. However, the most powerful example in the text of a women being impotent in her efforts to control her life is found in the latter half of Virginia’s story. As Virginia matures, the text spirals into tragedy, and everything she wants for her life is forcefully moved beyond her reach. When the family becomes anxious about their financial situation, they suggest

sending Paul to India to do some trading. The narrative describes him as showing “good sense far beyond his years” as he refuses this trip; he says, “Is any commerce in the world more profitable than tilling a field?” states that he won’t leave his land and his family (77). With that, the decision is made. So, as with the slaves, we have a contrast of gender—a man who has been able to successfully accomplish what the woman cannot.

As soon as the conversation about India has finished, a letter is received from France, where an aunt who had previously disowned Madame de la Tour and Virginia, announces her impending death; if Madame de la Tour will return, or rather, send Virginia in her place, “she would see to it that her daughter received a good education and a place at court, and she would settle her entire estate upon her” (77). There is some debate, but in the end they decide that “this ill-fated voyage must not take place” (87). Although Virginia didn’t want to make the trip, she was willing to do so for the good of the community, but in the end Paul’s pleading for Virginia not to go convinces Madame de la Tour not to force her. So, even as the decision is being made, Virginia’s will and desire are but a minor consideration in the discussions. In the end, however, the decision was made by representatives of the outside world: the governor, his staff, and a missionary. In the middle of the night, “towards three o’clock in the morning” these men show up and despite tears and protests from the girl and the mothers, “carried off [Virginia] almost expiring, amidst loud proclamations that it was for the good of the whole family” (89). Ultimately, all the debate and discussion is proven useless; the decision is made for her, showing Virginia’s complete lack of control over her own life. Of course, once she returns to France, this lack of control is only magnified. In the few

short letters she is able to send to her mother, Virginia narrates how she is forced to take up a French education, acknowledge suitors who are repulsive to her, and even change her name. In the end, it doesn't matter that Virginia was happy in Mauritius—she was sent to France, what she describes as the actual “country of savages” (94). There she encounters corruption and evil like she has never seen, and her dramatic, tragic death occurs in her attempts to return to her natural home.

They cannot remain permanently in their natural paradise, but also, Virginia can not return to her past happiness once she has left. Her position clearly communicates the impossibility of complete and sustained isolation. This text shows that if you ignore the outside world, it will come after you, but as it does it removes agency, specifically from the women in the story. It is Virginia who is literally carried away from her community, and it is the society created by Madame de la Tour and Marguerite that is thus destroyed. This discrepancy in power is something that we, as a modern audience, would place into the rubric of infantilization. Women, in this text, are often treated as if they are incapable of making mature, adult decisions; when they try, those choices are ultimately without effect. Such a lack of decision-making power forces them into the position of children whose fate is determined by the adults in their lives.

Infantilization(s) in *Paul and Virginia*

Through these depictions—natural man, the figure of the slave, and the helpless woman—we see that the use and representation of infantilization is extremely complicated in this text. The characterization of the first is thought by the author to be

positive, an idealized reflection of a childlike connection to nature, the state of being yet uncorrupted by society. It is intentional; it is meant to be a virtue, and it deliberately challenges the values of Bernardin's contemporary culture. In contrast, the infantilization of slaves, is not positive, but is likely thought by the author to at least be progressive—a paternal, ameliorative view of how to address the problems of the institution.

These, however, are both very different manifestations of infantilization than the gender discrepancies just discussed; this infantilization of women is not highlighting a virtue, nor is it Bernardin's attempt to address colonial injustice. Instead, it stems from a perceived weakness in women—a weakness that is assumed in the larger culture of the late 18th century. This is something that the philosophies of Rousseau and Bernardin would describe as, in many ways, the opposite of infantilization. But we as modern readers recognize that the destructive effects are the same as that of the infantilization developed according to Locke's discussion of reason. This infantilization, though, is most likely unconscious and unintentional, a manifestation of societal views rather than a direct challenge to popular thought. These three infantilizations reveal how extraordinarily complicated representations of childhood and growth were in this period, setting the stage for the rest of our discussion; generalizing the treatment of natural man, slaves, and women under the same term is problematic at best. So, it is important that as scholars we use this term carefully, articulating what exactly we mean by infantilization, and exploring how its use in a given context may change or challenge our view of the text, the author, and the culture from which they come. This is my goal through the rest of the dissertation: to articulate a clear concept of infantilization and show its use in

several texts written for children in the 19th century. In the latter half of this chapter, *The Stolen Boy & The Little Savage* illustrate how this same theme of the native is rearticulated into portrayals of the savage. It is in these texts that we see a clear pattern of infantilization emerge. Just as Bernardin shows an anxiety about the relationship between the child and the native, these authors utilize the process of infantilization to first highlight the relationship between the child and the native, and then eliminate it, creating a distance between the two as the narrative progresses.

Disentangling Metaphors: The Child and the Savage in *The Stolen Boy & The Little Savage*

In chapter one, we saw how Rousseau uses the metaphor of the child to define the native as the noble savage, and above I have illustrated the multiple and complicated constructions of infantilization that come from putting this definition to use in *Paul and Virginia*. We also see the anxiety that develops from aligning the child too closely with this noble savage. Even if the child is idealized as a young innocent with a unique relationship to nature, it makes sense that as the child grows, he or she will need to be distanced from the figure of the native. As the 19th century progresses, we see a specific effort on the part of authors, while acknowledging and maintaining the connection between the child and the native, to also depict a child who leaves savagery behind in order to become a proper citizen of enlightened society.

Both *The Stolen Boy* and *The Little Savage* illustrate this process in the way they portray their child protagonists. Even though it seems these boys are in some ways,

naturally savage, these texts ultimately use the image of the savage as a contrast to what the child can become, allowing the child to grow and leave behind his savage nature, effectively trapping the native in his infantilized state as the new metaphor for one's past uncivilized, violent, and immature condition. In his book, Seth Lerer discusses this pattern in the writing of G.A. Henty: "The boy grows as an ethical participant in the colonial world, and in that growth, his life calls attention to the childishness of a native populace" (162).

The texts I will examine, particularly Hofland's, are full of the racist stereotypes of the American indigenous peoples that a reader would expect to find in an early 19th-century text. Some discussion of these passages is necessary, though, to fully understand the connection—or rather, dis-connection—that is being made in these texts between the child and the figure of the native; these passages show most clearly the strategic work by these British authors to represent the child's ability to move beyond the savage beginning of his infancy.

The Child and the Native in *The Stolen Boy*

The very first sentence of Hofland's text is dialogue between Little Manuel del Perez and his father, Don Manuel, both of whom have recently immigrated to Texas: "Dear father, pray come and look at some of the strangest people that ever were seen" (*The Stolen Boy* 7). This introduction sets the stage for the obsession Manuel has with the indigenous population of his new home. The boy is described as generally active and lively, and yet "never had his dark eyes glistened with so much pleasure as now, or his

inquiries on subjects of curiosity been made with so much interest” (8). Watching the natives seems to awaken something inside Manuel, and he feels immediately interested and connected to them. As Manuel settles in, his interest only grows. He learns to throw a hatchet, shoot a bow and arrow, and to navigate the woods with ease; he obtains a “coronet of feathers, and a pair of moccasins” to wear, and even learns the language of the Choctaw traders that come to their town (12).

Once the connection between the native and the child is quickly established, the text moves on to its larger goal of illustrating the necessary and eventual separation between the two. An early interaction between Manuel and his father immediately informs the reader that this text is not about Rousseau’s noble savage. Little Manuel observes, “I took them to be good people, father, only ignorant. Do you take them to be so?” (9). Don Manuel, however, responds in the negative, elaborating that while they may have good qualities he “is not partial to the Indians.” Little Manuel pushes, stating, “surely they are very honest, good people,” but his father corrects him: “there are points about them that more than counterbalance their virtues” (9). He then describes them as violent, unforgiving, revengeful, cruel, and without reason. He emphasizes native savagery over their noble qualities he has previously described, and argues that they should be judged by this savagery; these are their defining characteristics.

This emphasis on savagery is not just a reflection of the text and author’s contemporary culture, but also a strategic representation of childhood that shows Manuel’s connections with this community, and then takes careful pains to place him above it, showing his growth and maturity in contrast to the natives around him, and his

eventual return to the society of his own (European) kind. This careful separation adjusts the view of both the native and the child, and thus addresses the anxieties that the innocent, natural child may be too closely associated with Rousseau's noble savage.

The most potent condemnations of the American indigenous peoples, however, eventually come from Manuel himself. The first occurs early in the text, before his kidnapping. As he watches the Choctaw traders who he admires, he is appalled to find that they spend a good deal of their profits on rum and brandy and "exhibit a terrible propensity to drunkenness which is such a remarkable trait in their characteristics" (13). This stereotypical representation is strategically used to separate the child and the native, showing in Manuel a natural repulsion for what he sees as lesser qualities in those people who had previously piqued his interest.

After Manuel is kidnapped by a group of "Cumanche[s]," he is taken in by a tribal leader, Tustanuggi, and his wife Moscogi, who decide to adopt him because they believe he will be of use. Although their belief is unfounded—they think he has powers to heal because he stopped their infant from crying with a piece of candy—Manuel manages, through luck and a little wit, to maintain his usefulness long enough to establish his place in the community. Through these early scenes, the text emphasizes how it is Manuel's wit that saves him from a gruesome death, an intelligence that, as often as not, plays on the ignorance of the native population around him.

One of the first—and most often repeated—observations made by Manuel is the lack of affection shown by these people toward each other. He describes Tustanuggi as "hard-hearted" in his "coldness...towards his own wife and children" after a return from

such a long journey. Manuel's fears that Tustanuggi must therefore be a cruel master are proven unfounded, but this lack of emotions in the Comanche people is something that both Manuel and the narrator observe and condemn. Upon his arrival, Manuel cries when separated from Diego, the family servant who was kidnapped along with the boy. The narrator describes how an older tribesman uses Manuel's tears as an object lesson for the young, teaching them not to be so weak. The narrator comments that "his bitter sobs would have awakened compassion in the heart of any human being, save an Indian; but they are taught from infancy to quell all the natural feelings of the heart" (29). Notice the language that makes the indigenous men and women practically inhuman and unnatural. If compassion would erupt in "any human being," then the logical conclusion to this statement is that these people are not human.

Another version of this same complaint emerges in the description of ceremonial "rites in honour of the dead" in which they disinter the bodies and mourn again those who have been lost (84). The narrator gives the typical descriptions to set the natives apart as unusual and other: "they stand distinct from all other people who ever have existed... This dreadful view of mortality, in every state of decay, so naturally disgusting to every sense, they endure without shrinking" (84). However, it is not this otherness that strikes Manuel, but a revision of the above complaint; "he could not help thinking how much better it would have been to show such affection to the living, whom it would render happy, than to the dead, who felt it not" (85). In fact, Manuel decides that the particular combination of lamentation and feasting must either "be connected with frivolity or hypocrisy" (85). The boy has become quick to evaluate and condemn the people he once so admired,

confirming to the reader that there is a natural predilection in Manuel, to the culture and society from which he comes.

Such condemnations are found throughout the text. At one point, Manuel thinks on the Comanche struggle for enough food during the winter; his thoughts reflect a typical Western argument against native ownership of American land: “Child as he was, he could yet see the folly of their conduct, in persisting so pertinaciously in the way of their ancestors, by never cultivating land” (51). Notice the contrast here as the child is very specifically identified as being more reasonable than his indigenous masters. He is able to see the value of agriculture, and condemns their inability or refusal to do so. In fact, in his criticism, Manuel—or the narrator, for the boy’s thoughts and the narrative voice are often indistinguishable in these passages—also identifies in native culture a resistance to changes and growth. Their love of tradition is written off as stasis and a refusal to improve and accept progress, “the whole design of an Indian, from his cradle to his grave, is to live as his fathers have lived before him . . . without allowing himself to suppose that error can have existed, he continues to perpetuate it” (85-6). In this passage, the native culture is infantilized and described as being permanently immature in its love of tradition. Even worse, the language here plays on the already-established rhetoric of infantilization to argue that, in essence, they bring it on themselves; they *choose* to ignore and reject progress and growth. It is through his calculated and specific rejection of this static culture, that Manuel proves that the European child, while in some ways often wild and innocent, is not savage, and will therefore, when the time is right, leave that past behind to grow into adulthood.

Interestingly, Manuel is kidnapped right before his ninth birthday, when his father had decided it was time to begin to remove the boy from his favorite play and pastime: following and learning from the indigenous men. Don Manuel had a desire to “render his son . . . fit to become a citizen of the world” and so, while he was pleased with the physical activity stimulated by Little Manuel’s new interests, the man had decided to “enter [Manuel] on a more regular course of study” which had “been interrupted by the voyage to America” (14). It is interesting that this kidnapping occurs at a cross-roads for Little Manuel, when he is about to be forced to give up his connection to the native culture around him in order to join his family in their part of American society. This timing specifically addresses anxieties about the connection between the child and the native because, in occurring *before* Little Manuel is forced back into a Western education, it allows the separation between the boy and the native to be his own choice. As he is being taken back to the tribe, the narrative posits the following hypothesis:

When Manuel was enabled in any measure to overcome the severe grief, which at this period might be said to bow him to the earth, he was more happy than his fellow-sufferer, in not thinking so ill of the persons by whom they were taken as [Diego] did. In fact, within a few months, Manuel had loved the Indians with enthusiasm, entered into their pursuits with pleasure, studied and extolled their virtues excused their faults, and even fancied that he should enjoy their manner of living; so that it appeared possible that if he were not destined for slaughter, he might exist amongst them happily enough. (25)

This passage articulates the attraction of the boy to the indigenous people, and hints at the test being given. This statement is, in many ways, true. Aside for some anecdotal difficulties, and his own grief in missing his family, Manuel is able to survive and exist quite well among the Comanche tribe. Interestingly, it is his ability to live among the

‘savages’ that allows him to escape and grow, while the infantilized other—also adept at living their lifestyle—is left behind by the boy.

The text emphasizes that it is despite this success and despite a relative happiness in his new life that Manuel pursues a desire to return to his own society. Essentially, the narrative forces him to try out an existence in this culture to which he is so attracted, thus making the boy decide for himself that he would rather join his parent’s society than remain with his indigenous family. Every bit of plotting and planning, every struggle and moment of starvation along the journey, is thus figured as a decisive effort on Little Manuel’s part to return—not just the love of his family—but to the education he was about to resume when he was taken, and the society and culture to which he would return. Thus, he is separated from the image of the savage, not by force, but by his own natural characteristics and desires. He learns from the Comanches, and even uses their knowledge in his journey to escape, but his tribulations are all endured for the final goal of returning to his own culture and entering into a ‘proper’ adulthood. His final actions of the text are to aid his parents in sending gifts to Tustanuggi and Moscogi—once the crying child, Manuel has now become the benevolent patron. The text ends with a description of his mother’s efforts to give Manuel the education he was to begin the day after he was kidnapped, “she applied herself diligently to assisting her son's education; and left no means untried to strengthen the principles, enlighten the understanding, and confirm the affections of her long-lost, stolen boy” (154). Manuel returns the day before his thirteenth birthday, and steps right back into the life that was intended for him, but this time he does so by choice. He leaves behind the interests and obsessions of his

childhood, having experienced life as a “Cumanche” and deciding that he preferred the culture and society of the new American states.

Growth and Education in *The Little Savage*

The Little Savage was one of Frederick Marryat’s very last books; in fact, he was just over half-finished with the story when he died, and the text was finished and edited by his son, Frank. Marryat was known for his boy’s adventure stories, and this book is certainly another example of that genre. This Robinsonade is unique among its peers for instead of portraying a European traveler who is shipwrecked onto an exotic isle, this text is “the first instance of a boy being left alone upon an uninhabited island” (2). Frank Henniker, the little savage of the title, was not just left alone on the island, but born on it to parents who had been stranded and were later killed by Edward Jackson, the cruel man who raised the boy.

The title of this text makes the comparison between the boy and the native explicit; strangely enough, though, it creates its depiction without any portrayals of an actual indigenous population. In this, it relies entirely on the metaphor of the savage—the image of the immature, violent creature—a metaphor that, ironically, was at least partially created with the rhetoric of childhood. In this text, we see another example of a Victorian author acknowledging a connection between the child and the native, but then working to separate the two, showing a child who grows past the savagery of his youth.

In some ways, *The Stolen Boy* is a text about the innate senses of the European child that will keep it from being completely swallowed by its own interests in savagery.

In contrast, *The Little Savage* shows a boy completely consumed by his savage nature, but clearly articulates that the blame is not to be laid on natural instincts but on a faulty education. As a narrator reflecting on his past, Frank admits his savagery, but says, “let the reader reflect that I was made so by education” (29). Thus, Frank’s journey away from savagery and toward adulthood is one that equally emphasizes the importance of a careful, proper education.

Frank’s initial ‘education’ was given to him by Edward Jackson, the man who raised him. Readers are given many examples of the cruelty of this man toward the young boy under his care. He has refused to give the boy either of their names, calling him ‘boy,’ and instructing him to refer to the man as ‘master.’ Such nomenclatures obviously call to mind the history of slavery, a comparison that is made explicit once the tables are turned, and Frank has gained power over his tormentor. “It’s my turn now—you’re the boy, and I’m the master.” He continues, “the reader must remember that I did not know the meaning of the word ‘boy’; my idea of it was, that it was in opposition to ‘master,’ and boy, with me, had the same idea as the word ‘slave’” (27-8). The descriptions of Jackson’s treatment of the child are equally disturbing; Frank describes how the man would “drag or pull [him] over the dangerous places” of the “rocky and difficult” terrain of the island. If the boy approached his ‘master’ at the wrong time, Frank was “sure to receive a cuff or a heavy blow” (9). There is no doubt of Jackson’s shocking and repeated cruelty to the boy, and this is the education that creates a savage of the child.

Most interesting in these narratives of abuse, are the descriptions of Jackson’s refusal to engage in anything that looks like traditional education. Not only did he refuse

to tell Frank their names, but he wouldn't tell him anything of his history, including the story of his parents, his country, or the world beyond their island. In fact, Frank describes how "he would throw a stone at me if I asked questions" (9). The only way that the boy obtained any information was in the few times when Jackson was sick; "only by refusing to attend him or bring him food and water" could Frank get him to answer any questions he had about anything, and the boy was punished for these moments after Jackson had healed (9). Even the boy's language development was inhibited by his lack of education, for "except to order [Frank] to do this or that...he never would converse," and so the boy's "language was composed of very few words" (10). It was a specific education that created Frank into the savage he became, but more accurately it was a *lack* of education, and this lack is seen throughout the text. The narrative describes a book—the only link on the island to the outside world—which Jackson refused to let Frank touch or see: "I asked what it was for and what it was, but I got no answer. It remained upon the shelf, for if I looked at it I was ordered away, and at last I regarded it with a sort of fear, as if it were a kind of incomprehensible animal" (13). Frank laments how he "had very few ideas," and this description of the book illustrates his relationship with anything educational. Jackson creates the boy into the uneducated savage, who is not just ignorant, but even scared of the things that could help him. The text has several passages that draw a connection between Frank and traditional representations of natives, such as the boy's first sighting of a ship. He asks, "Is she alive?" (16). Jackson berates him for his ignorance, but also refuses to satisfy the boy's curiosity with information about the new-found object on the horizon.

Everything changes when Jackson is permanently blinded by lightning. Frank immediately recognizes the shift in power, forcing a swap in their titles and making Jackson call him master. Interestingly, Frank does not use his power to punish the man for the physical abuses he has experienced over the years. He later describes himself as cruel and savage in his treatment of Jackson, but the only physical damage he causes the man is a cut made in self-defense; Jackson was attempting to sneak up on and attack Frank in the night, and the boy, who was lying awake with his knife, cut the arm that reached for him. Instead, Frank uses this new-found power to gain an education. He explains to Jackson, “for a long while I have asked you many questions, and you have refused to answer them.” Frank gives the man a choice: teach him, or die. “Either you shall promise to answer every question that I put to you, or you may live how you can, for I shall leave you to help yourself...recollect, I am master now; so take your choice” (23). In the end, it is not violence or revenge that Frank desires, but knowledge, and this is what we see him gain throughout the rest of the text.

Starting with their names, Frank soon learns their history and that of Frank’s parents; he is also given descriptions of England, his true home. He says, “my thirst for knowledge was certainly most remarkable, in a boy of my age; I presume for the simple reason, that we want most what we cannot obtain” (30). Once Frank was able to obtain instruction, he learned quickly. In contrast to Paul and Virginia who gained a unique and separate education from nature around them, Frank used nature to learn as much as he could of traditional education. For example, he gathered shells from the sand and Jackson

used them to teach him basic counting and arithmetic. He longed for the knowledge his peers in England would have gained long before his age.

Even though he was blind, Jackson even taught the boy to read and write through the use of a prayer book. The man could recite the Lord's Prayer, and was able to teach the alphabet once it was located in the book, creating for Frank "new worlds for imagination and thought to dwell on" (34). Through this process of education, both the man and the boy were softened, and became more kind to each other. Frank began reading the Bible, to himself and aloud to Jackson, and while the narrative makes it clear that the boy doesn't have a complete understanding of the text, it does affect both listeners. In fact, it is the influence of the Bible that finally persuades Jackson to fully confess his part in the death of Frank's parents. And as soon as he has done so, he dies, leaving Frank alone on the island. Only now does he become the young Robinson Crusoe one would expect in a Victorian children's text. He shows himself to be intelligent and resourceful in his ability to create and improve his surroundings. He plants a garden, adopts pets of increasing intelligence, and trains them to help him survive.

Through this representation of Frank's desperation to gain an education, the reader is shown the picture, not of a noble savage but of a horrible savage who longs to be something different. It depicts in the child of British descent a natural desire to develop above those savage impulses and illustrates how quickly such developments are made once the necessary opportunities are given. Later in the story, a widowed missionary woman, Mrs. Reichardt, is also stranded, and becomes Frank's companion. When Frank asks what a missionary is, a passing sailor describes her as "a preacher who

goes out to teach the savages” (117). This description is shown to be true in Frank, the savage whose education she completes, for it is Mrs. Reichardt who instructs Frank in the Christian religion that completes his British education. Those who encounter Frank tease him, saying they will tell others he is a true savage, describing him by saying that “the natives of this island are savages, who eat raw flesh, have seals for playmates, and don’t wear clothes enough for common decency” (124). Still, the boy is in one main way starkly contrasted with the actual natives Mrs. Reichardt had previously attempted to teach. She describes them as being like Frank, “ignorant of everything that in civilized countries is considered knowledge,” but unlike him, she depicts these people as being “incompetent to understand what [she] seemed so desirous of teaching,” stating that “making them comprehend the principles of Christianity appeared to be a hopeless task” (198-9). The natives Mrs. Reichardt encountered resisted the very education for which Frank longed; in fact, they resisted it so strongly, that they killed her husband Heinrich and drove her away. In this way, Marryat makes a clear distinction between the Little Savage, and the native. He uses Frank’s love of knowledge, and his desire and ability to learn and develop as a way to distinguish him from the infantilizing representation of the native as a people incapable of learning and growth.

Because there are no actual native characters in this text, the savage becomes a metaphor, which can not change or grow as a person, but exists solely as a representation of the boy’s horrid past. Frank is like the savage, but anxious and able to leave those characteristics behind. At the end of the book, the narrative gives several accounts that indicate how Frank will move on and leave this title of savage behind. He speaks of the

way he has cultivated the island, saying, “The Little Savage, at seventeen, had been transformed into a farmer, and the cultivation of the farm and the care of the live stock soon left him no time for indulging in vain longings to leave the island” (228). As in *The Stolen Boy*, the cultivation of land is seen as a key step away from savagery. Notice how this narrative voice, previously full of first person pronouns, creates distance between the narrator and his past self. He now takes up the title of “The Little Savage,” using the phrase as a descriptor of another person—the child-self whose savagery has since been abandoned. Mrs. Reichardt playfully gives him this title, stating that he “should find some difficulty in establishing [his] claim to the title of European, but none at all to that of Little Savage” (300). However, by the end of the text, that is precisely what he has done. He has grown, and moved beyond this state.

Once he learned his history, returning to England became his greatest desire, “I considered that I belonged to it, for my father and mother were English, and though I might be called The Little Savage, and be fixed to an obscure island in the great ocean, I felt that my real home was in this great country” (188). As a reader would suspect, ultimately this desire is fulfilled. And, in the final words of the story, the reader again witnesses the narrator distancing himself from his past title, “We made a quick voyage to England, and as my readers will no doubt be glad to hear, the Little Savage landed safely at Plymouth, and was soon cordially welcomed to his grandfather’s house in London” (262). He leaves behind, not just the island but the savagery of his childhood. He developed into, and was accepted as a British citizen.

This narrative of development is key to British acceptance of the natural, savage child, for it must be clearly understood that there is no inherent connection between the British man or woman and the natives they encounter as they travel the empire. Stories like *The Stolen Boy* and *The Little Savage* narrate and illustrate the pattern of infantilization that we set out to define in this chapter. They depict a stereotyped, infantilized native who is static and unchanging—one who is used to create a representation of the child who grows, changes, and matures. In the next chapter, we will look at two more books that exemplify this pattern, examining more closely the role of education in representations of infantilization.

Endnotes

ⁱ Originally in the French, *Paul et Virginie*.

ⁱⁱ For a few examples, see Peter Hulme's work in *Colonial Encounters*, or, more recently, Daniel Carey's "Reading Contrapuntally: *Robinson Crusoe*, Slavery, and Postcolonial Theory" in *The Postcolonial Enlightenment*, a collection edited by Carey himself.

ⁱⁱⁱ Unsure how to cite: from cook bio, from a manuscript in (La Havre, 170:15) that seems to have been intended as the 'Préambule' to *L'Arcadie*. Translated by me

^{iv} There is some discrepancy about the authorship of this translation; in his biography, *Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: A Life of Culture*, Malcolm Cook attributes this translation, "published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1790" to Jane Dalton (115, 123).

^v For further details on these, and many more examples of *Paul and Virginia*'s presence in succeeding works of literature, read Donovan's introduction to this text or Paul Toinet's *Paul Et Virginie. Répertoire Bibliographique Et Iconographique*.

^{vi} For a more thorough summary, see Damrosch, Chapter 13: "Rousseau's Originality." Many would argue that Rousseau has several versions of the natural man, with the 'savage' on one end of the spectrum and Emile on the other—a natural man who can, in fact, exist in society. See Cooper and Marks.

^{vii} Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the text of *Paul and Virginia* will be taken from the edition translated and edited by John Donovan.

^{viii} This correlation is further discussed in "The Sentimental Novel and the Republican Imaginary: Slavery in *Paul and Virginia*"

^{ix} Ringwalt, J E, and Bernardin . Saint-Pierre. *Paul and Virginia, Or, the Runaway Slave: A Play in Three Acts*. Philadelphia: Ringwalt & Brown, 1864. Print.

Chapter 3
The Child “Gone Native”:
Education and the Anglicization of the British Child

The anxiety over the corruptive force of empire was ubiquitous in the years of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Whether it was the “savage” races encountered, the existence and influence of slavery, or the land itself, many texts deal explicitly with the need to protect and reform the British child who has been raised abroad. These fears extend to adults as well; in *The Secret Garden*, Mary’s mother, Mrs. Lennox, neglects her maternal and household duties because she is spoiled by the riches and parties available to her in India. In *Bardic Nationalism*, Katie Trumpener discusses this trope in the context of slavery, elaborating on a series of novels in which men who have made fortunes in the empire return to Britain and marry. Unfortunately, “Not even the most saintly wife can convert them from the habit of despotic power, from the imperiousness, immorality, and ruthlessness that have marked their business lives” (Trumpener 171). Agnes Maria Bennett’s *Anna, or Memoirs of a Welsh Heiress, Interspersed with Anecdotes of a Nabob* (1785), Amelia Opie’s *Adeline Mowbray* (1804) and Mary Hays’s *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796) are all cited for their examples of adults who are “so deeply permeated by plantation ideology” that they can no longer exist in Britain (171-173). Interestingly, it seems that in order to have a chance of being satisfactorily re-Anglicized, a character must return from the periphery of the empire during childhood, before the corruption of their character is complete. Mrs. Lennox dies in the first chapter of *The Secret Garden*, but as M. Daphne Kurtzer discusses in *Empire’s Children*, Mary lives to return to Britain and be re-educated and reformed. In this chapter, I will look at

two examples from 19th-century children's literature of characters who follow this trajectory. These children have been corrupted by their life in the colonies—and by their interactions with the infantilized other—and must return to Britain to be reformed. Through this process, the space of empire and the slave or native associated with that space is infantilized, existing as a static contrast to the changing child.

In some ways, the representations of the savage child that I discussed in chapter two are examples of the tradition of reforming the colonial child, but the children in *Paul and Virginia* and *The Stolen Boy* don't need to be reformed so much as guarded. It is *The Little Savage* that shows a child in need of reform, and also, appropriately, a child in need of education; books specifically focused on re-Anglicization emphasize and explain the process of education to a much greater extent. The unruly son in *The History of Sir George Ellison* mentioned in my first chapter is an example of this anxiety, but the discussions of education are more pronounced in the narratives I am about to examine. This re-education is a crucial function to portrayals of infantilization, for it stresses the process of growth that characterizes the representation of the British child as one of change and maturation, simultaneously highlighting the fact that the other is kept static.

In *The Little Savage*, we found the story of a child who was not just associated with the imperial space in which he lived, but had truly 'gone native,' leaving behind the knowledge and traditions of his British culture. This story, though, also articulates for the reader the way such a child is to be recovered—through education. In this chapter, I will examine two more texts that show British children who have been, in one way or another, corrupted by their colonial context. Perhaps because of the stronger association of the

child with the other, these texts more specifically stress the importance of specific education practices for the process of re-Anglicization. The colonial space and culture continues to be a negative influence that must be abandoned as the child matures, but the emphasis on education re-articulates the relationship between the child and the other. Like the books I discussed in chapter two, Mary Martha Sherwood's *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer* (1814) and Barbara Hofland's *The Barbadoes Girl* (1816) first draw a connection between the child and the other, and then they utilize a narrative of development to create a distance between the two. Each of these texts emphasizes a particular educational focus—evangelically-focused religious education in the former, moral and empirical education through peer regulation in the latter—in order to safely usher the child back toward a British identity. As we will see, this process leads them away from the place and the people of their childhood, who are used in these texts to highlight the progress of the child, but aren't allowed to grow and develop in the narrative.

Evangelical Education in *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer*

Mary Martha Sherwood was known for the strong evangelical message in her early 19th-century children's stories. The most famous example of such a text is *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer*. This is a story of a child whose contact with empire had gone too far. However, unlike Trumpener's examples cited above, Sherwood's critique is not of slavery or extravagance, but of children being raised entirely by their colonial caretakers overseas. After Henry's parents die, he is left with a

women who instructs her servants to take good care of the child, but fails to care for him herself. The entirety of Henry's upbringing and education is managed by Boosy, the child's bearer.ⁱ The narrative traces the relationship between the two, outlining the boy's dangerous connection to Boosy's native culture, his reform, and then his conversion of Boosy.

Boosy fills an interesting space in this story, for he is the greatest maternal force in Henry's life. He soothes the boy with milk or toast when he is fretful in the night; he takes Henry out in his carriage, and he bathes, dresses, and feeds him. Even though Henry is taught to call the British woman he lives with 'mama,' there is no confusion about who is raising him. The text makes it clear that she never sees him, and Boosy is the one who loves and cares for the boy "as if he had been his own child" (Sherwood 9).

This close relationship between the boy and his bearer leads to a child whose own British culture is completely unknown to him. The text says, "Henry could not speak English, but he could talk with Boosy in *his* language as fast as possible" (13). The text goes on to describe the manner in which Henry sits, the food he eats, and the clothes he wears—or shoes he doesn't wear—all to emphasize to the reader the extremity of this boy's immersion in his bearer's culture. Interestingly, this passage is also full of Hindi vocabulary words for the reader; verandah, paun, bazar, panjammahs, and bangles are all italicized in the text, with notes at the bottom of the page that give definitions of each word. This works to further emphasize Henry's comfort in that culture—and simultaneously educate the British reader a bit about the imperial culture in India. The passage concludes, "no one could have told by his behaviour or manner of speaking that

he was not of Indian origin, but his delicate complexion, light hair, and blue eyes, at once shewed his parentage” (14). This speaks to the level of anxiety at work in the text. As in Hofland’s *The Stolen Boy*, there is an implicit warning about the development of the child in the imperial space, and the interest he or she may take in the new culture. However, Sherwood works to assure her reader that things won’t go too far; even in the very passage that narrates the extent to which Henry has ‘gone native,’ she emphasizes his whiteness—subtly assuring the audience that he will not be lost beyond recovery in this text.

While Boosy loved and raised the boy, he ultimately fails in what Sherwood considers to be the most important maternal duty: that of instilling Christian beliefs and values into a child. So ultimately, the bearer must be replaced; Henry’s new education begins when a young missionary woman comes from Britain to visit his ‘mama’ and takes him on as her project. Sherwood indicates the importance of the task of religious education by making her book, *Little Henry*, a tool for British mothers who are teaching their own children. Each passage that explains a part of Christianity is accompanied by long excerpts of the Bible itself, sometimes even a list of verses that can be used to teach a specific idea. To further emphasize this point, the middle of the book—during Henry’s religious education—reads exactly like a religious catechism from this era.ⁱⁱ The emphasis on this style reminds the reader of the process of education, and emphasizes the usefulness of the text itself. Essentially, Sherwood is arguing that just as a parent would use a catechism to teach religious principles, they can utilize *Little Henry* to instruct their children as well. Using all these methods, the young lady teaches Henry verses and

precepts from the Bible and works to convert the child to Christianity. In the beginning, Henry objects strongly to these teachings, but he is eventually won over, taught to read the Bible, and converted.

Through this process, the bearer is pushed out of the position of authority, and the text begins to emphasize the master/servant dynamic as the proper relationship between Henry and Boosy. The bearer's culture with which Henry grew up is his childish past he must leave behind. When the young lady teaches Henry what sin is, she says this:

Sin, my child . . . is whatever displeases God. If your mamma were to desire you to come into her room, or to do something for her, and you were to refuse, would she not have reason to be displeased with you? . . . Or, if you ask Boosy to fan you, or to carry you in your palanquin, and Boosy does something quite different, or if you desire him to carry you one way, and he carries you another; would he not do wrong? . . . Well, then; whatever you do contrary to the commands of God, displeases him, and is sin. (29)

Notice the power structure that is outlined here: God is to human, as mother is to child, as Henry is to Boosy. In Henry's acceptance of his Christian (British) heritage, he and Boosy have reversed roles. The boy is now the parental figure, despite Boosy's age and his past role as the man who raised Henry. This structure is continued throughout the text, particularly as Henry takes on the task of evangelizing and converting Boosy. In doing this, Henry takes on the responsibility that according to Sherwood is among the most important of the parent's tasks—the very role the young lady chastises Henry's mama for failing to fill. Henry eventually learns to read and write, not only in English, but in Boosy's language of Hindi so that he can better educate and evangelize the bearer.

In Sherwood's eyes, Henry's maturation is unambiguously positive. He is converted and takes to converting and educating Boosy. In the book, all who see him

admire and remark on his dedication to this task; however, Henry doesn't grow into actual adulthood in the story because he contracts an illness and dies. Henry is sickly throughout the text and speaks several times of his impending death: "sometimes I think...when I feel the pain which I did this morning, that I shall not live long" (79). Even this sickness, however, is used as a device toward the conversion of his bearer; in fact, it becomes his most powerful tool, as he regularly exclaims his final wish: "I think I shall die soon, Boosy. O, I wish! I wish I could persuade you to love the Lord Jesus Christ!" The text then narrates the boy flinging his arms around the bearer, imploring "him to be a Christian" (79).

Little Henry provides a clear example of how infantilization of the other is used to support the maturation of the British child. In this text, Boosy is forced to switch places with his charge and become subordinate to a boy whose only claim to authority is his British blood. Boosy's culture, language, and beliefs are made synonymous with childlike immaturity, and it is only by discarding these infantile traits that Henry is able to grow and change—a path that Boosy, despite his age, cannot follow. The last paragraphs of the text discuss Boosy's conversion, but unlike Henry's story, the reader hears nothing of growth and development that occurs in the days and weeks after he becomes a Christian; we are simply told that he died soon after. Essentially, Boosy's conversion in this text is not about Boosy, it is about Henry's success as an evangelist. It is the final step revealing the child's success in his embrace of Evangelical Anglican Christianity. The other has been infantilized and left behind in service of the British child.

Peer Education and *The Barbadoes Girl*

While Hofland's *The Barbadoes Girl* does not have the same focus on religious education as *Little Henry*, its discussion of its young protagonist's moral development shows a similar pattern of infantilization. After her father dies, Matilda Hanson is sent back to Britain while her mother stays behind to settle their affairs. She lives with family friends, the Harewoods—an idealized British family with a father, mother, and three children: Edmund (age twelve), Charles (ten) and Ellen (eight). Matilda, who is only seven years old, is shown to be a violent, spoiled child who has been ruined by her upbringing in the colonies—specifically by living in the midst of slavery.

The re-Anglicization of Matilda does not occur naturally once she is in Britain, nor is it subtle or gentle. In fact, the text lays out a strategic system of education moving from a system of peer regulation to self regulation, with the final confirmation of Matilda's success being her own ability to step into the role of peer regulator for another. Interestingly, this process is about more than just education. Through the association of this young protagonist with the colonial space from which she comes, both Matilda's slave Zebby and the land of Barbados itself is infantilized and then dismissed. While her education is aimed at ushering Matilda into the position of a responsible, adult woman of Britain, the text implies that in order to do this, she must leave Barbados behind and move beyond the infantile habits and limited knowledge she acquired in that colony. However, Hofland does not take a completely dismissive stance toward perspectives beyond Britain; instead, she sets up a hierarchy of perspectives in which the value of the colonies is contingent upon them being filtered through the cultural and educational

center of London. Matilda is taught what it means to be British, and the reader is shown that limited value can be placed on the colonies without being a threat to the cultural center. This story illustrates how infantilization still functions in a text that makes an effort to value the space of empire. The metaphor of the child is productive in this effort, for it allows the author simultaneously admire and demean the periphery of empire. The book performs a balancing act of critique, reform, and affirmation that acknowledges the perspectives Matilda might have gained in Barbados but reaffirms London as the central perspective in the empire.

Again, we have a paradoxical use of growth and stasis. Matilda is fitted for adulthood as a thinking, self-evaluating British citizen, but the island with which she is so closely associated is left behind, forever dependent on the central perspective of its mother country for value. In doing this, Hofland transforms her book from a simple children's parable to a political lesson about maintaining the empire, for even as the child grows into adulthood, the narrative infantilizes the colonial space from which she comes.

The book sets up this political thesis by making a direct connection between its protagonist and the colony she inhabits. When Matilda is being condemned by her peers, she realized the insults "accusing her country in general terms, [were] aimed at her in particular" (Hofland 79). As we will see, Matilda's misbehavior is spoken of as a result of the institutions and the climate of Barbados. This direct connection indicates that this text has implications beyond the education and reform of one spoiled girl. Hofland uses this technique to invite the reader to look at the text as a discussion of Britain and her

colonies, and her model for controlling Matilda can be seen as a model for managing the ‘children’ of the motherland.

Hofland draws a direct connection between Matilda’s moral failings and her time in Barbados, reflecting the commonly held belief that children who return from abroad will need to be taught what it is to be British:

In all their native hideousness, [Matilda displays] such traits of ill-humour, petulance, ungovernable fury, outrageous passion, and vile revenge, as are the natural offspring of the human heart, when its bad propensities are matured by indulgence, particularly in those warm countries, where the mind partakes the nature of the soil. (*The Barbadoes Girl* 37)

Notice how the very weather of Matilda’s island home is blamed for her character (a common association aligns the heat of the colonies with a tendency toward laziness). The quotation implies that the country—the very ‘nature of the soil’—has somehow corrupted her mind. It is as if Hofland holds suspect the lushness of the earth and the ease with which it is cultivated; the land itself indulges and spoils those who live on it, creating unnatural desires and expectations in them.ⁱⁱⁱ

Katie Trumpener specifically identifies such narratives of the spoiled child returning to England as abolitionist by examining the ways in which the temperament of these children is blamed on the existence of slavery in the colonies. *The Barbadoes Girl* certainly fits within the mold she identifies. When Matilda arrives, her physique is literally weak and malformed from being carried around by slaves. Even though this connection is not made as directly, we see a similar pattern in *Little Henry*; it is not attributed to his relationship with Boosy, but the boy is weak and sickly, and as we observed, dies at a young age. Matilda’s body is not the only evidence of this negative

influence: “passion and peevishness were also the traits of this unfortunate child, who had been indulged in the free exercise of a railing tongue, and even a clawing hand, towards the numerous Negro dependents that swarmed her father’s mansion” (12). Trumpener notes that these texts, “describe the reimportation into Britain not of hardwon self-knowledge gained in the empire but of the ignorance and corruption endemic to the imperial system” (169). The children in these books attempt to transplant their behavior back into Britain, resulting in “lasting social conflicts” (169). For example, Matilda brings her slave, Zebby, back from Barbados with her; even though the woman is freed upon reaching Britain, Matilda continues to treat her like a slave. There are numerous conflicts in the home over Matilda’s behavior toward Zebby; the Harewoods must explain to the child that Zebby is a servant now, not a slave, and a good British master is polite and kind to his or her servants. Although Trumpener is right that Hofland likely intended this text to take a progressive stance toward slavery, the infantilization in the text—even if it is subconscious—keeps it from being effectively so. Many of Matilda’s problems are attributed to the existence of slavery in Barbados, but in reality, the slaves themselves are never mentioned beyond their relationship to the girl—most notably, in their relationship to her state as a spoiled, deformed child. The specter of the slaves is used to make a point about this girl and her education, not developed in order to excite sympathy—or certainly action—in the reader. As I will discuss in more detail later, the abolitionist message of the text is so subsumed under the narrative of Matilda, that what we get instead is a narrative that perpetuates and justifies the infantilization of black men and women, regardless of their status as slave or free.

Ultimately, the argument of this text is that one cannot expect to cultivate British values and character in the colonies. There is always the danger, or the certainty, of corruption. When Charles and Ellen Harewood express their fear that Matilda's travels will have made her more knowledgeable than them, the oldest son, Edmund, reminds them of the purpose of her trip: "as Miss Hanson is coming to Britain for education, and is yet very young, surely Charles must be wrong in supposing that she is . . . better informed than we are, since it is utterly improbable that she should have had the benefit of such instructions as we have enjoyed" (10). In this early passage, Edmund outlines the purpose and direction of Matilda's narrative; we will watch her as she gains "such instructions" and Hofland will show the process very carefully. Edmund implies that it is necessary for Matilda to travel to Britain for a proper education. It would not be enough to bring over a British governess to teach the colonial child; the child needs to see and experience Britain herself, and to live among her peers. Mr. Harewood confirms this idea when he dismisses the value of Matilda's life experience:

She will, of course, be acquainted with many things to which you are necessarily entire strangers, although I must remark that Charles's expression, 'she has seen much of the world,' is not proper; for it is only applied to people who have mixed much with society—not to those whose travels have shown them only land and water. (10)

There is a great deal packed into this short quotation. The reader is quickly given Mr. Harewood's definition of one who has 'seen much'; it is not someone who, like Matilda, has only experienced the periphery of the empire. Notice how he categorizes what she has had the chance to observe as merely 'land and water'; obviously, the native populations of the West Indian Islands and the plantation culture have nothing of

significance to teach. In his view, it is only the traveler who mixes with ‘society’—with those experienced in the customs and values of Britain itself—who can be seen to gain a great deal from the experience. Matilda has seen much, just not much that counts.

The text elaborates on these conflicting impulses; it shows that the key to this instruction is not simply Mrs. Harewood, the perfect model of domesticity, or their teachers who have educated them well, it is the fact that they have been able to mix with the appropriate ‘society’ for their acculturation. In the case of *The Barbadoes Girl*, this means Matilda’s peers. Although the text does not argue that British society is perfect, it does argue that colonial children must see and experience London society to be truly British. Because the population of truly British children will always be in Britain, this system insures the primacy of the cultural center irrespective of the quantity or quality of knowledge that is brought in from the colonial periphery. The text models a system of peer regulation leading to self regulation for both moral and scholastic training.

Theories of peer-regulated education were espoused by influential educational theorists toward the end of the 18th century, and they quickly worked their way into the childrens literature of the time. By the time *The Barbadoes Girl* was written, these theories would have been commonplace and well ingrained into the educational system. Under the influence of Enlightenment discussions of reason and perfectibility, educational theorists moved away from “outdated disciplinary/child-rearing practices,” comparing them to bad medical advice being used on a patient (O’Malley 88). As Michel Foucault describes in *Discipline & Punish*, “the disorder and confusion” that resulted from increased class size and a lack of methodology “made it necessary to work out a

system of supervision” in the parish schools. Teachers “selected from among the best pupils a whole series of ‘officers’” whose roles were split between specific tasks and surveillance of the other students (Foucault 176-7). Later in the same text, Foucault’s famous discussion of panopticism illustrates a similar concept—from the calculated exposure of the people utilized in managing the plague, to the system of “branding and exile” applied to lepers, and finally in Jeremy Bentham’s *Panopticon* as the “architectural figure” of this theory (195-201). The effect of this prison system, “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power,” instilled a similar mindset as the peer management system of disciplining children discussed above (Foucault 201). If children are to be taught to regulate each other (and eventually themselves), they must believe that a greater power (a parent, teacher, etc.) is always able to watch them. Eventually, the older child becomes the stand-in for the parent, watching the younger children and only bringing in the parent when necessary.

These developments can be traced in children’s literature at the end the 18th century, and the beginning of the 19th century. Just as the panopticon controls prisoners with the possibility of surveillance, children’s literature makes the gaze of the parent implicit. Alan Richardson discusses a textual preoccupation with “convincing the child of its own legibility—its openness to inspection by parents and teachers and (still more effectively) to their moral conscience and to God” (138). Many children’s books employ a supernatural monitor, often a fairy, who corrects the child and is eventually internalized in the conscience. He also discusses Mary Martha Sherwood’s story “The Father’s Eye”

(1830), which “explicitly equates the parental gaze with the omniscient eye of God” (139). In his chapter on the development of the ‘self-regulating subject’ in children’s literature Andrew O’Malley discusses numerous texts that use the system mentioned above, where the older or more virtuous child stands in for the parent (92-96). Sarah Fielding’s *The Governess, or Little Female Academy* provides an excellent example in Jenny, who “acts as mediator, pointing out to her peers their faults” (94). So, peers are used to teach and regulate younger or less well-behaved children, and eventually that voice and role are internalized and self regulation is attained.

This very same system is at work in *The Barbados Girl*. According to O’Malley, “teaching children accountability for their actions was an essential part of the late 18th-century didactic goal of raising responsible, self-regulating subjects” (96). Toward this purpose, Hofland clearly uses the Harewood children rather than their parents or the governess. The parents are almost always in the background of the scene—again, the ever-present gaze—but they rarely interfere; instead, children chastise the wrongdoing of their peers. The traditional authoritarian tool of punishment is replaced with shame; by using peers rather than the adult enacting punishment, a child is thought to feel the wrongdoing more deeply. When Matilda throws beer in Zebby’s face, Ellen hides in her mother’s lap in disgust, Edmund exclaims “What a brute!” and Charles “offer[s] his handkerchief to the aggrieved Zebby, kindly condoling with her on her misfortune” (*The Barbadoes Girl* 14). During such incidents, the parents barely speak to Matilda and actually instruct the servants to ignore her when she acts up, as they plan to do. In this way, Hofland demonstrates how peers effect regulation better than authority figures.

It is not just Matilda's moral education that is enacted through a peer-based model, but all subjects; although a governess is hired to instruct Matilda and Ellen, the reader is never given a single scene in which she does so. Instead, every moment of enlightenment and education depicted is an interaction among the children. The conversation that follows between Edmund and Matilda reads like an education catechism: "Do pray tell me . . . what snow is and why I never saw it before," says Matilda (26). Edmund responds with the appropriate scientific description. In order to explain why she has not seen snow before, he responds with a lesson about the equator being closer to the sun and therefore warmer. Implicit in this lesson is a reaffirmation of the climate differences between Barbados and Britain; this conversation thus subtly reminds the reader not only of the heat in Matilda's home, but also the stereotypical representations that accompany that heat—those of laziness, over-indulgence, and physical weakness. Just as it did in Sherwood's text, the resemblance of this moment to a catechism reminds the reader that this is a very practical moment of education. And it is obvious that Edmund is completely capable of making his young friend understand the concept completely.

Interestingly this incident precipitates a crucial change in Matilda's moral character as well. Throughout the book, Hofland implies a close relationship between scholastic and moral education, and in this scene, this connection is cemented. This feels especially appropriate considering the moral implications hinted at in a discussion of the heat of Barbados. Upon receiving Edmund's answers, Matilda breaks down into tears, "I am so—so very ignorant," she sobs (26). When the Harewood children list the unusual

things she has seen, Matilda corrects them and explains herself further: “it is not exactly that I am crying for . . . it is because I have been so very naughty, and you are all so—so—so . . . so good!” (27). In this moment, Matilda’s lack of scientific knowledge triggers a realization of her moral failings. Recognizing one type of ignorance, leads to an understanding of another. Matilda’s moral instruction and her scholastic education are obviously being paralleled in the text, and acquiring empirical knowledge precipitates moral growth. The text describes her improvement, “It was observed, that as her mind became enlightened, her manners were softened” (23). The more she learns, the better she becomes, and, as stated above, every lesson emphasizes her need to emulate her peers: the good and wise examples given to her in Ellen, Charles, and Edmund Harewood.

The Child and the Other: Representation of Progress in Matilda and Zebby

As in the more rigid penal and education systems mentioned earlier, the ultimate goal is not peer regulation/education, but *self* regulation/education. One of Matilda’s most exhilarating triumphs occurs when she is able to internalize and re-apply the knowledge gained about snow. At a party, a group of children decide to play “Quiz the West Indian” in an effort to trick and embarrass Matilda. Knowing that she had never seen hail, they attempt a trick by telling her the hailstones are comfits and she should eat them. Her response acknowledges her previous instructor, shows that she has internalized the knowledge gained before, and confirms that she is able to reapply it: “I do not want to eat them; I know they are snow, some kind of condensed snow, or ice, and I wish to examine them . . . unless Edmund assures me to the contrary; I shall certainly conclude

that these little balls are frozen rain-drops.” This is seen as a great victory, and Edmund applauds Matilda, saying, “you have quizzed your quizzers very completely” (77).

In their embarrassment, Matilda’s peers attack her, and just like in the scene above, the intellectual issue turns into a moral one. The children mockingly ask Matilda to show them more of her knowledge: “Miss Hanson has studied natural philosophy . . . I always thought that young ladies in the West India islands studied physical subjects more than any other” (77). They continue the theme, but instead of conceding Matilda’s intellectual accomplishment, they use the moment to attack her moral character. They gather round her to make their accusations: Now I don’t doubt, Miss Hanson, being so wise in other matters, can tell you exactly how much pain is necessary to kill a slave, how many stripes a child can endure, and how long hunger, beating, and torturing, may be applied without producing death” (78). Once the attack is made, the children drop the pretense of the quiz and simply start condemning Matilda with a list of horrors: “mere children amuse themselves in Barbadoes with sticking pins into the legs of little children, dropping scalding sealing-wax upon their arms, and cutting lines and stars in their necks with knives and scissors” (78). In this scene, Matilda’s position is inverted for the first time—she is the victim. By making Matilda the innocent who is surrounded by a group of barbarous children, Hofland portrays her as the moral superior to those around her. This, however, is just the first step of her moral triumph.

Matilda demonstrates that she has evolved beyond peer regulating and is now a self-regulating subject. O’Malley discusses several texts where children are commended for their ability to use reason to either discern their own wrongdoing, or even create their

own punishment.^{iv} These are the triumphant moments of self regulation in these texts. Hofland gives her reader a particularly interesting version of this in *The Barbadoes Girl*. At several points, Matilda shows reason as she compares herself to the Harewood children and sees that she falls short (the passage when she exclaims her ignorance above is a good example). In an earlier passage, she compares her own violent outbursts to Edward's carefulness with his words, "Matilda was much struck with this; she was well aware that, under the same circumstances, she should have said much more than he had" (18). However, the most dramatic moment of such comparison occurs after the crowd of children has attacked her with the cruel accusations about slavery (above). In this moment, Matilda shows signs of guilt—"burning blushes," an inability to speak—not because she has done the things she is accused of, but because she can reasonably imagine a version of herself that could have done them:

Her conscience accused her of many crimes, which, though far removed from atrocity like this, were yet utterly unjustifiable, and, as she now believed, might have led to the utmost limits of tyranny, cruelty, and oppression; and all she felt or feared in her own conduct, seemed to rise to her memory, and stamp conscious guilt on her expressive features. (79)

It is her ability to follow her previous misbehavior to its logical conclusion that makes Matilda feel (and show) guilt in this moment. She realizes that if a child is indulged too long, what starts as simple misconduct will lead to 'the utmost limits of tyranny.'

This passage also provides a further example of how the abolitionist impulse in this book is diluted because it is so subsumed by Matilda's narrative. If we stop and look at the use of slavery here, we see that the structure and perspective of this passage actually transfers the sympathy for the slave to Matilda while simultaneously detracting

from actual representations of the horrors of slavery. When Matilda is accused of these horrors that she has not committed, the reader is not reminded that these horrors *actually do exist* in the colonies, but allowed to consider the opposite. Of course, Hofland is not trying to say this treatment never happens, but the fact that in this narrative they are brought up and dismissed as false accusations allows the reader to forget that they do.

This is made worse by Mr. Harewood's defense of Matilda. When Ellen asks him to "convince every body that people in the West Indies do not torture their poor slaves," he responds sarcastically, "I have no right to contradict such evidence as has been brought forward by respectable witnesses" (80). As these witnesses are children who he is about to correct and chastise, he seems to deny the existence of such horrors in the same breath. In a later statement where he acknowledges that "these cruelties may sometimes take place in our islands," he does so in such a way that belittles and dismisses them. He says that these horrors may occur, because he has seen versions of them in the barbarity of the other children's treatment of Matilda: "I have . . . heard words applied to the heart of an unoffending individual, more painful than the lash, and seen looks directed against her, more torturing than any of the hateful operations you have mentioned" (80). By comparing Matilda's suffering in this scene to the suffering of a slave being tortured, Hofland belittles the plight of the latter. The representations of slavery in this text are not about slaves but about Matilda and her process of development.

Hofland goes on to affirm Matilda's maturation by having Mr. Harewood commend her. He finally steps in to shield her from the children's accusations, saying the following:

When enlightened by education and taught by religion, [man] rises from the state of barbarity, and becomes not only civilized but humane, gentle, condescending, and charitable . . . this child, this blushing, trembling, self-condemning, but *self-corrected* child, has done this. (emphasis mine 80-81)

This is Matilda's moment of moral triumph in the eyes of her guardian. He observes her use of reason—note how he affirms her condemnation of the future self that may have been—and praises her for it. Hofland not only connects Matilda's intellectual and moral education through the earlier snow scene, but she connects them through her dual moments of triumph in the hail scene. Matilda proves her knowledge, is accused of moral wrongs, and is defended because of her ability to judge and correct herself.

The other children who harass Matilda in the scene above are criticized similarly. In fact, Mr. Harewood draws an analogy between their cruelty to Matilda and the abuse of a slave owner: "I have not the least hesitation in saying, that those who could thus treat an amiable fellow-creature . . . would, if they had the power, wound the body also, and might, by hardening their hearts against the claims of humanity, in a short time become capable of every possible enormity" (80). There are numerous implications in this passage. First, it emphasizes that not all children in Britain are good; one still must be careful about the education of a child—specifically that the proper peers are chosen to serve as models. The second is familiar after examining *Paul and Virginia*: this passage is loaded with the fears and anxiety about the moral influence of the colonies. Mr. Harewood asserts that any person can degenerate into a barbarous state. This functions not just as a reprimand to the characters, but also as a warning to readers that if a child's education is not carefully guarded, and a child's influences are not carefully contained—

especially those from abroad—then any person could become a savage. This narrative serves as a warning, not just against slavery and the despotism it breeds in young minds, but of all the tangential effects that are much more likely to be found in the life of a British child: indulgence, gluttony, physical inactivity, etc. Zebby slides from slave to British servant with ease, emphasizing this point and reminding the reader of the narratives of spoiled British children who rule their home with the same childish fury Matilda exhibited in the beginning of this novel.^v

In fact, Zebby's progression from slave to free woman is one that reveals more than just the relevance of Matilda's lessons to her British peers and readers; it reveals the ways in which infantilization is at work within this text. We have examined the narrative of Matilda's growth—her progression from a peer regulated to a self-regulated being. With that in mind, it is interesting to note the narrative of Zebby, who arrived in Britain with Matilda. While she doesn't have the temper of the young child, her language, ignorance, and subservient status mark her as childlike, and this infantilization is re-emphasized as we watch Matilda develop and observe how Zebby is left behind. In a text that is all about growth and change, Zebby is represented as one who, as an adult, is beyond such progress.

Zebby is heavily featured in the early chapters of Matilda's narrative. For the most part, however, she exists mainly to re-emphasize how slaves have spoiled the young girl. We see the woman comforting and rewarding the child when she should be punished and instructed. After the incident where Matilda throws beer in Zebby's face, she defends the girl, saying to Mr. Harewood, "Sir, me hopes you will have much pity on Missy"

(15). Repeatedly, the character of Zebby is used to illustrate how terrible Matilda is when she first comes to Britain. She then disappears into the background, flitting in and out of scenes with the other servants, until one final, telling interaction with Matilda.

I want to quickly outline Zebby's narrative as it parallels that of her young mistress. Probably the largest abolitionist statement made in this text is the open discussion of the fact that, upon her arrival in Britain, Zebby is free. While she certainly receives better treatment in her new home, her movement is for the most part lateral. She becomes a servant in the Harewood home, and although the fact of her freedom is emphasized, the reality in the text is that she remains just as submissive, helpless, and ignorant as she was when she arrived. The arc of her narrative assures that the reader recognizes this stasis. Obviously, Zebby's gained freedom is a significant, positive change in her life, but it does not keep her character from being infantilized throughout the text.

At the beginning of chapter three, Hofland illustrates the place of the servants: to function as examples to the children in how to trust and obey the adults in the household. They are on the same plane as the children, except without the hope of growth beyond that status. When Betty the housemaid falls and hurts her head, she is brought to Mrs. Harewood for treatment. The words narrating the scene re-emphasize their relationship, she "was now brought forward by her good master, to claim the assistance of her kind and skilful mistress" (19). As the children watch their mother take care of the servant, they note that Mrs. Harewood's treatment of vinegar on the cut "must smart exceedingly." Thinking of this, Ellen comments, "How good Betty is!" and the servant responds, "I

know your mamma does it for my good; and though she gives me some pain, yet she saves me from a great deal more.” As Matilda watches this scene, she thinks on those involved, “they were foolish, yet they were certainly happy, and she wished she could feel as happy as they did” (19). Both Betty and the Harewood children are happy in their submission to the adults of the household, and Betty is cited, just as Ellen, Charles, and Edmund as a peer from whom Matilda can learn. This is the position into which Zebby moves; however, her race guarantees that in this narrative she will be infantilized even more than Betty.

There are several ways that Zebby’s stasis obviously contrasts with Matilda’s growth; the text describes “poor Zebby’s mind [as] but little enlightened, and her faith comparatively uninformed” (51). Her dialogue remains in the exaggerated dialect of the black slave. The shortcoming she most closely shares with Matilda is one the girl overcomes, but for Zebby, the condition is permanent: “It is well known that the negroes are naturally averse to bodily labour” (49). This description comes from a key passage where we see Matilda’s growth and newfound maturity specifically contrasted with the stasis of her former slave. Late in the text, after the young girl has been reformed, Zebby falls ill, and Matilda becomes her nurse. The image parallels Mrs. Harewood’s care of Betty, as Matilda is pictured fluffing Zebby’s pillows and feeding her broth. However, because the broth is doesn’t appeal to her in her sickness, Zebby overturns the scalding liquid onto Matilda, who is burned to the point of temporary disfigurement. The text uses this moment, which inverts the earlier scene when Matilda throws beer into Zebby’s face, as a final confirmation of Matilda’s growth. The girl does scream and yell in her pain

upon being burned, but as she awakes after being treated, Matilda's first thought is to comfort and forgive Zebby for her actions. Before they know if the scars on her face and body will be permanent, she comes to terms with her looks, "attain[ing] such a degree of mental beauty, as would render the total destruction of her personal beauty a trifling loss, in comparison" (55). By creating parallels to the two earlier scenes, Hofland has here compared Matilda in her progress and growth to Mrs. Harewood, and Zebby in her stasis to the original state of Matilda. Even this dramatic scene of the woman's sickness is subsumed under the main narrative of Matilda's moral development, further illustrating the changes in the young girl.

Setting the Pattern

Lest the reader think that Matilda is a unique case, Hofland expands her argument by providing a final example for the reader. At the very end of the novel, a girl named Harriet Weston returns to Britain from Jamaica. The text notes that she is "certainly subject to the same errors . . . which had formerly distinguished Matilda" (83). Hofland uses Harriet to solidify the model of peer regulation/education. For when Matilda meets her, she makes the following suggestion:

I will . . . become little Harriet's governess; I am quite sure it will do us both a great deal of good, for she will every hour remind me how much more naughty and tiresome and provoking I used to be when I first came over, and teach me to endure with patience, and remove with gentleness and firmness, the errors which, in so young and engaging a child, claim my compassion rather than blame. (85)

Matilda is, herself, an exemplary result of this model of education and is thus the perfect advocate for its efficacy and its continued use. As she matures and grows, she will take

on new children from the colonies, preparing them for an adulthood that leaves their colonial habits behind. Matilda speaks of the model she can be to Harriet, and of the good she will gain from her time as a ‘governess.’ Harriet will be a daily reminder of the flaws she has overcome. Hofland shows here that Matilda has been ushered into the role of the peer regulator, and that the method of education used with her should be a pattern. This also emphasizes Matilda’s progress for the reader; she has grown so much that she can now take on the role of the more mature peer educator.

This is why the call for a certain type of education—for a specific perspective on knowledge—is a political act. Hofland is building an argument for how to incorporate the good parts of the colonies back into Britain while maintaining complete control over the exchange of knowledge, and she is doing it without having to stoop to discuss financial gain and power. However, in this process colonial space is infantilized; because in order for knowledge and perspectives to be valuable, they must be filtered through the motherland—the mature, adult space of London. Hofland gives the reader a clear portrayal of this approach. Earlier I explained how Mr. Harewood allows for the possibility of valuable knowledge coming from the periphery; in this scene, Edmund explains how. Matilda has been bragging about the leagues of slaves she had waiting on her in Barbados, and Edmund chastises her:

You have been so much taken up with fine verandas, grand dinners, kneeling slaves . . . and sweetmeats, that you have never once boasted of your pure air, and the glories of your evening sky, where all the planets shine with such a glowing luster, that . . . Venus is there a kind of moon, in the light she sheds upon the earth, and those stars which are scarcely to be discerned here, are beheld in that enchanting air as bright as the stars of Orion with us. (31)

He claims that Matilda has been bragging about all the wrong things; she doesn't appreciate Barbados for the correct reasons. Then he gives the reasons why it should be valued—for its natural state and the scientific knowledge that can be gained from that state. When Charles deduces that these advantages must be due to the West Indies' location closer to the sun, Edmund corrects him. "The brilliancy of which I speak arises from the greater purity of the air: we frequently see objects here through a kind of veil, which, though too thin to be perceptible, has yet its effect upon all objects: in some cases it alters, or rather bestows, a colour which does not properly belong to them" (31). In this passage, Edmund argues that the reason to value the perspective and knowledge to be gained in the West Indies is their clarity in comparison to London. However, unless one has been to London—unless London is the standard and the filter—the clear skies of Barbados are not unique. He argues here for a perspective that mirrors Hofland's larger argument. In order to be valuable, knowledge—and morality, and education—must be filtered through the cultural center of the empire. Thus assuring that as Britain continues to extend her influence across the globe, she will never risk being eclipsed by her satellites.

It is important, though, that even when benefits such as the clear skies are described, the perspective of Britain remains superior. The description of London's smog, given later in this passage, actually serves as a metaphor for this filtration of knowledge. Edmund acknowledges that the haze warps and changes the view of the skies. However, he also, significantly, discusses the beauty of this effect. It "sometimes adds to [objects'] sublimity, and invests them with imposing greatness, proportioned to the obscurity with

which they are enveloped” (31). So, the more an object is obscured, the more magnificent its appearance. One can imagine Hofland making the same argument for the colonies; the more they are subsumed by British agendas, the greater they will become. The periphery is valued for the bright, clear sky, but it is not half so grand and majestic as the deep copper and red of a London sunset.

Both Zebby and Boosy are infantilized as their childish wards are shown to change and grow at a rapid rate. In these texts, they are left behind, finding themselves in an inverted position where the child now holds the position of authority and maturity. Both texts emphasize the foreign land, the culture and climate that must be left behind as the child establishes an idealized, truly British identity—an identity that would be impossible for the freed slave or the Indian bearer. The patterns of infantilization and stasis are clear, and as we look ahead we will see how they have worked their ways into children’s literature in surprising ways. Infantilization of this type is not only found in representations of the new world, but in accounts of play and imagination as well, and as we move on to books that emphasize the fun of childhood, we will find familiar patterns at work beneath the surface of each text.

Endnotes

- i A bearer is described in the text as “a servant, whose work is to carry a palanquin; but who is frequently employed to take care of children” (Sherwood 8-9).
- ii Originally a tradition of religious instruction, the catechism uses a question and answer format to give children rote answers that they were to memorize and recite to authority figures. Some prominent examples are Isaac Watts’ *Catechisms* (1730), Sarah Trimmer’s *Sunday-School Catechist* (1788), and Richmal Mangnall’s *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions* (1800). The latter was the first of many secular catechisms that addressed historical and scientific topics. For further reading on the subject, see Alan Richardson’s *Literature, Education, and Romanticism* (pp 64-77). For a discussion of the development from religious to scientific catechisms, see Alan Rauch’s “A World of Faith on a Foundation of Science: Science and Religion in British Children's Literature 1761-1878.”
- iii See, for example, Thomas Carlyle’s “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question” in which he argues that because of the “strong sun [that] supplies itself gratis” and “rich soil” crops grow abundantly, and the freed black slaves will not work because they are “up to the ears in pumpkins” and therefore have no motivation to harvest the sugar cane (3,4).
- iv One example is Mary Cockle’s *The Juvenile Journal; or, Tales of the Truth* (1807) where young Caroline Montgomery is taught to keep a journal that her governess reads regularly; when she is able to identify wrongdoing in the journal she is rewarded. A second is *The History of Young Edwin and Little Jessy* (1799) where Edwin recognizes his own selfishness and proposes his own appropriate punishment to his father (O’Malley 97-98).
- v Just as *The Secret Garden*’s Mary Lennox provides a nice touchstone for Matilda, its Colin Craven exemplifies the spoiled British child.

Chapter 4

From Reality to Fantasy: Representations of Empire and the Infantilization of Space

In the last two chapters, we have examined how the peoples associated with colonialism are repeatedly infantilized in 18th and 19th-century texts for children; they are kept static so that they may better contrast with the European child who grows, matures, and develops in the ideal manner. I want to move on, in this chapter, to also explore how space is infantilized. I've discussed how infantilization is accomplished by allowing people to function as an imaginative void—one that allows the European writer to create characters who conveniently serve the British child rather than exhibit their own will and purpose. Representations of space show a similar pattern. We will see that these same patterns of infantilization can be found, not only in realistic spaces that aim to reflect the natural world, but also in fantasy texts, where an author can construct and fill such an imaginative void without the restrictions of reality. In this chapter, I want to show a progression from realistic fiction to fantasy writing; for infantilization is found, not just in fiction that actually features a slave or a native who can be easily marginalized, but also in stories that feature fairies, or any other being that can be portrayed as other. In *An Evening in Autumn; or, the Useful Amusement Intended for Children* (1821), we can see representations of people which bring to mind those of my earlier chapters, but the use of maps in the text also emphasizes how the girls in the story infantilize the space of empire. Through Johann David Wyss' *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812 as *Der Schweizerische Robinson*) we see how infantilization is applied to the land of empire through the island setting Wyss creates for his story, and finally, in Jean

Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy* (1869), I discuss how infantilization is applied to imaginative lands—those created to fill the pages of fantasy stories written for children. This progression from real-world to fantasy will reveal just how pervasive infantilization became. I will then finish the chapter with a case study; examining infantilization in Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* (1863) which reveals just how closely connected real world ideology and politics are to fantasy representations of the infantilized other.

Child's Play: the Space of Empire

In *An Evening in Autumn; or, the Useful Amusement Intended for Children* (1821), we are given a very domestic illustration of the infantilization of imperial space. Rather than showing its reader the wilds of Texas or forests of Mauritius, this little book portrays the educational game that fills the evening hours for a small group of girls. This is a text that sets forth imperial ideologies, but it places them in a setting that is inherently childlike, that of the educational space—in essence a schoolroom. Also, it puts empire in the context of the childish act of play. In fact, many books and toys designed for children in the 19th century specifically depict or encourage the child to 'play' empire—to imagine themselves on a journey to an island they could control and inhabit. Empire here—both the people and places discussed in this text—is infantilized as it is connected to things that are inherently of the child, and then it is used and dismissed so that these British girls may learn and grow. The larger cultures and histories are erased as the people and lands discussed in this book are reduced to small, memorable vignettes that

can be processed and retained by the English child. Instead of placing her characters on the island itself, the author uses the metaphor of the map to illustrate how each and every British child can know, speak for, and thus in some sense control, imperial space.

The book opens on a group of girls who are finishing a day of fun and play. The text states that “after having amused themselves with different games” all day, a group of children ask themselves “what we can find to play at after tea” (6). They are afraid they have run out of games, for the old ones have been used so much that “they have become no play at all” (7). As a solution, one of the older girls suggest that they invent one; a new activity called “*Useful Amusement*, because it will combine use with pleasure” (9). As the text continues, we learn that the content of this game is essentially an explanation of the people, spaces and products of empire. One of the elder girls running the game, Caroline, outlines the rules of the evening’s activity: each girl may write down any question on a sheet of paper, and then all the questions will be placed in a basket where they will be drawn out and answered. After each of these questions is asked, the girls may proceed with any related questions that come to mind: “ask whatever you please:—from whence such a thing is brought, in what country such a plant grows, and so on” (11). One might think that this would facilitate a broad range of questions. However, Caroline’s sample questions— “What is coffee? What is tea?”—and her statement that they will use maps to locate each item’s place of origin set the format the girls follow; they will be talking about the British Empire and its products. The ‘guidance’ Caroline gives them in her sample questions actually dictates the course of the dialogue. They stay within the boundaries she has set, asking mostly about important items of trade within the empire,

and the countries from which those items come. This set up is infantilizing in two ways. The particular way this activity is shown sets up the role of teacher and student between the older and younger girl, and it classifies empire as simple educational content for children. Also, the qualification and treatment of these topics as a game is inherently infantilizing because they are reduced to the role of childish entertainment, and limited in scope so that they may fill that role.

Even while the text communicates a sense of agency and fun to its child reader, it reassures the adult reader that it will still accomplish the goal of education. It subverts the traditional educational form of the catechism through allowing an actual dialogue rather than a series of rote questions, but it re-inscribes it by having the girls promise to repeat what they have learned at a later point. One of the little girls remarks, “I shall have so much to tell mamma, when I go home” (35). This sentence recalls the original catechistic form, where the child is reciting learned answers back to the parent. A later scene makes a similar gesture toward the old form. When they are discussing coffee, Augusta states that it was brought to England at about the same time as tea, which they have previously discussed. In her excitement to know the answer, Eliza exclaims, “Oh, I know, then! . . . one hundred and sixty years ago, in the reign of Charles the Second. You see, dear Caroline, I do not forget what you have once told me” (82). The text assures the adult reader that although it may vary from the tradition catechism, this game is still an effective learning tool. *Useful Amusement* indicates that it intends to influence and educate its reader and that the answers that these girls receive (and learn) will still portray a clear, supportive attitude toward empire.

The table covered in maps is a prominent prop in the scene of this game, and Caroline and Augusta's ability to speak for other countries is tied to their facility with these maps. In Voltaire's discussion of geography, he outlines how "a map of the world" can be used to correct those who are ignorant enough to believe that all nations ascribe to the European perspective: "make them pass their finger over...make them observe in the four great divisions of the earth, and in the fifth, which is as little known as it is great in extent, the prodigious number of races, who either never heard of those opinions, or have combated them, or have held them in abhorrence" (306). For Voltaire, the map is a symbol of the vastness of the earth, and of how one cannot make assumptions about the thoughts of other people. It is an argument against a dominating Euro-centrism.

Conversely, the maps used in *Useful Amusement* are meant to make the young girls—and its young readers—comfortable with the world and confident in their ability to speak about it with authority. They infantilize as they fix and shrink the places they portray, and allow the girls to forget that these are growing, changing lands, not small shapes on a piece of paper. The use of the maps exhibits a desire to speak for rather than learn from various parts of the world. They look to the map with each question, and find the country in which a particular product is made. For example, in their discussion of tea, the girls locate China on the map before them; this leads to a discussion of the "very great wall" along the Northern border of the country. When Louisa asks why such a wall was built, Caroline responds, "The Chinese are a reserved people, and do not like the have much to do with the people of other countries; so they built this great wall...to keep the Tartars from coming to them and taking possession of their country" (31). Defense

against an invading power, is described here as if it is simply a case of shyness or social unease. This perspective is, of course, convenient for England, a country in the process of controlling countries around the globe. In this lesson, Caroline erases the enormity people will go to in order to defend their lands from such invading powers, describing it instead as being “reserved toward other nations” (32). Instead of using the map to recognize their own inability to know everything it contains, an understanding of the geography on the map is equated with the ability to speak for those who live in the various regions it depicts. More than that, in speaking for those people, they erase the inconvenient parts of their history, and instead portray them as a childish, shy nation—one that, perhaps, could use the guiding hand of the British Empire to assist in their international relations.

Another use of the map is to restructure the categories typically used for the items in a catechism. While catechisms are usually divided into chapters by topic (What is mineralogy? What are narcotics? What are vegetables? What are fabrics?), the items listed in *Useful Amusement* are categorized by geography. When an initial question is read, they turn to the map to find where the product is from, and then Caroline and Augusta list the other products from that country or region. For example, they learn that sugar is from the West Indies, find the islands on the map, and then learn the following:

Not only sugar-canes grow here in abundance; but the climate is so warm, that groves of lemon and orange trees produce their fruit in the open air...Pineapples, figs, mulberries, and other delicious fruits grow to perfection. The vineyards, or plantations of vines, produce much larger and finer grapes than any we have. (16)

Notice how this change in structure makes every answer into a list of commodities.

Instead of a list of fruits, vegetables, or types of minerals, each section of the book is,

instead, a list of the possible export goods of each country on the map. Caroline makes this connection clear when she finishes her description of the grapes from the West Indies. They are dried in the sun where “these, in a little time, become raisins, and are then sent over to us” (16). Notice how in both this quotation and the longer one above, the labor of the slaves and workers in the West Indies is erased as the passive voice implies that they all grow naturally, without effort. The climate is responsible for the groves of fruit trees and the vineyards produce their grapes without any mention of a human hand. The list ends with an explicit reference to the fact that these are not just fruits, but produce for trade. When the reader learns about how tea comes from China, she also learns that they are “famous for their manufactures of silks, earthen-ware, porcelain, and paper”(32). Ivory comes from the elephants in Ceylon, but so do “cinnamon; and other spices, gold, precious stones, and pearls” (104). Each country mentioned is a mine of resources that the British Empire can utilize. So, their act of examining the map is actually about conceptualizing the empire, and identifying the vast resources at England’s disposal. It is not just that imperial space is rhetorically manipulated and controlled through its role as an educational tool; through its portrayal of commodification these passages connect this smaller act of infantilization with the larger, cultural one.

Finally, the presence of the maps is also used to instill the belief in the girls that all other nations are inferior to England. As they discuss each country, the girls are careful to point out the disadvantages of living there. For example, when Charlotte

exclaims that it must be “delightful...to live in such a warm climate” as the West Indies, Caroline corrects her:

Many disadvantages which we do not feel, make up for these pleasures. In the West Indies...the showers of rain come but seldom; and, indeed, when they do come, they are more like floods than showers . . . but even these storms are trifling when compared with those called *hurricanes*, which are violent gusts of wind and rain accompanied by thunder and lightning, and sometimes by and earthquake. (emphasis in the original, 17-18)

In case the reader is not suitably terrified, the text includes an illustration of an island in a hurricane. Lightning splits the sky, rooftops are blowing off of houses, palm-trees are bent to the ground, and natives are waving their arms in fear. When Caroline finishes her dialogue about the hurricane, she asks if Charlotte still envies the weather of the West Indies. “Oh no, indeed . . . how glad I am that we are in no danger from these terrible storms. How happy I am to be a little English girl!” (19). Notice that this scene is not simply about establishing the fearful weather in the West Indies; it is a strong reaction against Charlotte’s thought that she might prefer to live there. The text anticipates this thought and challenges it immediately. Charlotte understands that England is better, but in case the reader has missed the point, the author gives several more examples of this lesson throughout the text.

Each time the girls are given a list of reasons why other countries are inferior—“the huts of Lapland, or the wigwams of North America”—they are asked if they would prefer to live there (53). With each scene the girls reply in a chorus, “I should not like it...how glad I am that I am an English girl” (60). As Judith Butler argues in *Gender Trouble*, “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results” (25).

Similarly, these girls are being taught to perform the identity of the British girl, an imperial identity that includes the infantilization and dismissal of the other peoples and lands they encounter. The information they are given leaves only one reasonable answer, and each time, the iteration of these feelings seems to be the result of experiencing and rejecting what another country has to offer. The girls (and the reader) are left with the idea that England has been fairly measured against foreign lands, and has been found to be superior.

In *Useful Amusements*, empire is a faraway place that one can know through British education; specifically, in this case, through a study of maps that depict the place of each land in the British Empire. The book posits the activity of these girls as a game, but the emphasis on the products and thus the ideology of empire remind the British reader of the practicality—the *Useful-ness*—of the education the girls receive through this activity. These are accounts of actual places and their products, but we see that the girls turn them into imaginative voids that they may fill. What evidence do they have of the Chinese personality that led to the building of the Great Wall? How else could they give a lesson on the entirety of the West Indies, and speak of nothing but the weather and the products that travel from those islands to England? These girls discuss convenient imaginings of the places and peoples that are represented by the maps in front of them. The drama of the image of the West Indian hurricane illustrates the way these lessons are products of an imagination at work.

Next, I want to examine a text that takes a small step outside the realm of realistic fiction--outside the realm of the possible. It doesn't just show characters making an

imaginative leap when discussing empire, but it does so itself. Like *Useful Amusements*, *Swiss Family Robinson* turns the realm of empire into an imaginative void, and it does so in service of education. However, the way in which that void is filled crosses the boundary over into the impossible, bringing us one step closer to the fantasy texts we will examine at the end of the chapter.

***Swiss Family Robinson* and Re-Imagined Colonial Space**

The infantilization of colonial space in *Swiss Family Robinson* can be better understood if we put it into a more historic context of imperial attitudes toward the landscapes encountered by British travelers. Often, the landscape itself is treated similar to the empty, moldable child conceptualized in Locke's blank slate. In his introduction to *Landscape and Empire 1770-2000*, Glenn Hooper discusses the many complex reactions that colonists had to the landscapes they came across on their journeys. He speaks of it as "threatening one moment, filled with unsurpassed potential the next . . . a constant source of surprise and challenge" (Hooper 1). This concept of 'unsurpassed potential' illustrates the connection between colonial space and the child—both are viewed as unformed, waiting for a more mature hand to direct their growth. Hooper describes the constant desire to map, control, and change the space of a colony, not just once, but repeatedly:

It is almost as though, against all rational thought and despite years of possession and experience, colonists must make, and remake, what they have physically taken possession of. Sometimes arrogantly, at other times nervously, the landscape is remodeled by colonists, not just because it needs to be contained, yield a profit, or support the community who live there, but because it is also regarded as a very visible marker of ownership and authority. (2)

This description illustrates why this act is one of infantilization. The remaking of colonial landscape is not just about guiding and growing—about training the young, wild land up into a more mature and productive version of itself. Instead, the land is re-made over and over again, as a constant reminder of the childlike status of colonial space in the hands of its parental invaders.

An example of this desire to remake colonial space is found in the history of the island of Jamaica. Art critic Jill Casid describes the way in which the land was made into a “virtual tabula rasa” by a process of “vast deforestation, the clearing of all undergrowth, and the burning of any remaining roots” (7). This erasure of the natural landscape served a dual purpose: it cleared the space necessary for the large sugar plantations that were to inhabit the island, but it also provided the opportunity to re-make the landscape into a British idealization—a tropical paradise. As Casid describes, “plant transfers to the Caribbean from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the South Pacific so radically transformed the landscapes of the Caribbean islands that those species of flora most symbolically associated with the ‘tropics’ were precisely those plants by which the British grafted one idea of island paradise onto another” (7). Essentially, British settlers re-educated this island-child, refusing to recognize its own fully-grown landscape and dictating that it should fill the role of the moldable ideal.

This re-making, which can be seen so literally in the story of Jamaica is just as evident in colonial children’s literature, specifically in texts such as Wyss’ *The Swiss Family Robinson*. Although originally written in German, the text was translated into English by 1814, with the most influential English translation by William Godwin and his

wife Mary being published in 1816.ⁱ The book was extremely popular. In an introduction to an 1871 London edition of the text, Charles Nodier compares it to *Robinson Crusoe* in the following manner, “‘Robinson Crusoe’ will ever remain a good and noble book but the ‘Swiss Robinson’ merits, perhaps, the first place among all the works of imagination designed for the instruction of men as well as children, manhood no less than youth” (9). The book became known, not just for its many reprintings, but for the artistic license each new translator and publisher felt free to take with the text; it was changed, edited and expanded numerous times over the course of the next one hundred years, often to further a particular agenda.ⁱⁱ

Like the *tabula rasa* of Jamaica, Wyss molds the island landscape in this text into a useful ideal rather than acknowledging the reality that such islands have their own, real history and geography. Drawing from the didactic tradition of children’s literature, the author assembles an abundance of exotic plants and animals in order to maximize the usefulness of the text as an educational tool. Every encounter on the island precipitates a lecture by the father on the origins, variations, and uses of the plant or animal in question. Possibly the most vocal critic of *The Swiss Family Robinson*, was Captain Frederick Marryat, whose own *Masterman Ready, or the Wreck of the Pacific* (1841) was written as an antidote to what he considered the dangerous educational risks in taking such liberties in natural description:

The fault which I find in it is that it does not adhere to the probable or even the possible which should ever be the case in a book even if fictitious when written for children . . . much ignorance, or carelessness had been displayed in describing the vegetable and animal productions of the island on which the family had been wrecked. The island is supposed to be far to the southward . . . yet in these temperate latitudes we have not only plants,

but animals introduced, which could only be found in the interior of Africa or the torrid zone, mixed up with those really indigenous to the climate. (Marryat vii)

Marryat's censure is directed at Wyss' narrative re-making of this landscape into something it could not naturally be. However, Casid's description of Jamaica reveals to us that perhaps *Swiss Family Robinson* is not so impossible as Marryat believed. Although an undiscovered island would certainly not contain such incompatible varieties of wildlife, Wyss' narrative grafting of these things together echoes the more literal actions of colonists as they infantilize the landscapes they encounter by re-making them into something more useful or more ideal.

The very moment the family steps foot on the island, they are greeted by the “disagreeable scream of some penguins and flamingos” (26). Interestingly, naming these two birds together immediately makes this island an impossibility because the habitats of these two birds rarely overlap, and neither are anywhere near the possible locations of the family's crash. In fact, the best estimates of the location of this island are in what are now either the Timor or Arafura Sea near New Guinea—a location which fails to provide a suitable habitat for either the penguin or the flamingo. Similarly, they encounter a pack of jackals the first night, which are indigenous to southwest Asia and Africa, regions well out of range of the likely crash site. And so Wyss continues, assembling a cornucopia of impossible wildlife throughout the text. As in *Useful Amusement*, the reality of the place is not as important as its educational potential. In fact, we find in this text a similar attitude about depictions of empire; just as *Useful Amusement* creates convenient representations of imperial space, *Swiss Family Robinson* disregards the facts of nature in

order to create a more useful educational text—or amusing piece of entertainment—for his young reader. In this case, Wyss fills his island with as many plants and animals as possible, so that the father has the greatest possible variety of topics for his educational lectures, and thus the young reader learns a wider variety of things. In fact, as readers of Marryat's criticisms came to the defense of *Swiss Family Robinson*, they cited the preference for the entertainment value of Wyss' imprecision over Marryat's careful accuracy. For example, in the July 1869 *Macmillan's Magazine*, Charlotte Yonge lamented that Marryat's comments seemed to have inspired a downturn in the text's popularity:

It has been one of the greatest of favourites until Captain Marryat's nautical criticisms cruelly disclosed its absurdities. To be sure when one comes to think of it no one but a German could have thought it practicable to land the whole family in a row of washing tubs nailed together between planks and the island did contain peculiar fauna and flora but the book is an extremely engaging one for all that and we decidedly would prefer reading it at this moment than the rather characterless *Masterman Ready*.

This note garnered a response in the July 1869 edition of *The Spectator* which assured "Miss Yonge...that the 'Swiss Family' is beginning to be read again almost as much as it deserves. Bother Marryat and his nautical knowledge!...we never met a child yet whom this story did not fascinate" ("Some Magazines" 825)

Also, like Hooper's description of colonial landscape above, this desire to mold and form the island is closely linked to justifying and developing a paternal impulse in culture through readers. Not only do Wyss' descriptions of his island imply the ability to change and shape colonial landscape to fit personal and national agendas, but the characters themselves exhibit the same desire to reorganize and domesticate the island

landscape for which their namesake, Robinson Crusoe, was famous. Like Crusoe, Wyss' family is self-conscious about their patriarchal role on this island, comparing themselves not just to Crusoe, but to their Biblical predecessors: "our forefathers journeying in the deserts" (124). Wyss shows awareness of what he is doing as the author by making his family aware of what they're doing as characters—when Ernest declares "I too...am quite delighted with it" in regards to his actions, one imagines that he also speaks for his creator (124).

Infantilization in *Swiss Family Robinson* is related to what we saw in the history of Jamaica; in both cases the lands—one imaginary, one real—are treated as an imaginative void, and then written, or re-written, in with the necessary items to make them ideally useful to its author. In the case of Jamaica, the island is turned into a tropical phantasmagoria, in Wyss' case, an educational one. The island is not just made subject to the young patriarchs who inhabit it, but also the young readers who will be educated by it. It is created to serve them, and to aid them as they learn and grow, preparing them for their role as citizens of the empire. Like Yonge, Wyss is not concerned with whether this island could actually exist, but with how he can use it.

Both the freedom the author takes with the landscape of a tropical island, and the freedom later translators and publishers take with the text itself highlight the fact that even though this book was not a fantasy, its characters most certainly occupied an imagined space—one that was continually re-created and re-imagined. It is no surprise, then, that during the Victorian era, the connection between imagination and empire remains strong. Not only is colonial space something that can be changed and re-

imagined, but children are taught that play and imagination are often directly connected with the imperial project. We have seen how empire is made into an educational game in *Useful Amusement*, and Wyss makes a small step away from strictly realistic fiction to create an impossible setting for his educational text. These patterns of infantilization are just as easily seen in books that leave any claims to realism far behind. In 19th century fantasy literature for children, such as Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy*, we often find the same structures at work, except this time her fantasy worlds and characters—rather than actual distant lands and people—who are the ones created to serve the growth of the British child.

Infantilization and the Construction of Imaginary Worlds

Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy* is an enchanting fairy tale in the tradition of other Victorian writers such as George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll. However, in *Ventures into Childland*, U.C. Knoeflemacher discusses the many ways this text varies from the texts of these better-known writers, specifically citing the influence of her own “didactic tales for children” which “paradoxically finds its way into a text that seems unrestrained in its indulgence of the extraordinary” (280). In this way, *Mopsa the Fairy* represents the tradition of infantilization working its way into the emerging genre of the children's fairy story. The book follows a boy named Jack, who happens upon a nest of fairies and takes them with him as he rides on the back of an albatross to fairyland. While this text does not overtly refer to the New World or other colonial spaces, it exhibits the same patterns of infantilization that have been found in the colonial children's literature

discussed in chapters two, three, and above. In these stories, the fantastic is infantilized so that the child may learn the lessons of the adult world, and take a step closer to properly entering that world. As we will see, not only is the adult, or human, world favored and prioritized, but the imaginative world is static, left behind to languish once it has served its purpose in the life of the child, who moves on and even forgets he or she ever visited such an exotic space. Such is the case with Ingelow's Jack, whose visit to fairy land prioritizes the boy's home of England, infantilizes fairies, and argues for the superiority of humans; Jack then leaves fairy land behind so that he may return to England better prepared to embrace his role of citizen and adult.

The text's discussions about money reveal how things of Jack's world are valued beyond those of fairyland in this text. The slave woman Jack encounters explains to him that "real" money is more valuable than the money of her world. It is "not like what my master has. His money has to be made every week . . . so it never has time to look old, as your half-crown does; for that is how we know the real money, for we cannot imitate anything that is old" (88). Not only is the money from Jack's world more valuable, but its value is confirmed through its ability to age. In being forever new (young), the things of this land are shown to be static, and inferior to the aged (adult) goods of the physical world. The value of human money is made clear when Jack tries to buy a slave from a fairy named Clink with only a shilling: "the little brown man fell on his knees and said, 'Oh, a shilling and a penny . . . of mortal coin! What would I not give for a shilling and a penny!'" (95). As the transaction continues, Clink is at times "trembling with eagerness," and "his eyes grew bigger and bigger as he gazed" at Jack's money; he runs from the

scene “shouting for joy” once he gets hold of the coin for himself. The money from Jack’s world is unique in the land of the fairies, and holds a value beyond his understanding. This is but one example of how the author takes pains to re-affirm traditional Empirical values and spaces even when comparing them to the wonders of fairyland.

It is not just Jack’s money, but Jack himself who is shown to have great and unique power in the land of the fairies. There are several moments that reveal the elevated status of mortals in this land. Jack learns that humans are uniquely connected to emotions, and that “the fairies can only laugh and cry when they see mortals do so” (122). In this way, he holds a power over the fairies around him, controlling their ability to engage these forms of expression. The truth is, these fantastical beings can only play-act at human emotion, just as the infantilized peoples of empire are thought to only be able to play-act at knowledge and culture; they do not show the British civility and traditions of knowledge that are valued by the imperial power. More importantly, though, we see Jack’s power in two of the major events of the story. The slave Jack buys turns out to be a queen whom he has saved from a long exile. As she leaves her captors and approaches her home, she becomes more and more beautiful and regal; and after Jack frees her, she confesses to him, “I am the Fairy Queen!” (110). She tells Jack that before he came she “had almost forgotten that [she] had ever been happy and free, and [she] had hardly any hope of getting away” (111), but Jack’s unique power and kindness—along with the unique value of his mortal money—were able to free her. When the queen left her people, they all went to sleep, so in a way, Jack’s ability to save the queen and return

her to her people has returned, not just the queen, but her entire kingdom to their proper existence. Just think, all of this has been brought about by the power of the English pound, or actually, by only a fraction of a pound.

Another example of Jack's power in this world is his relationship with Mopsa. Although Jack encounters an entire nest full of fairies, only Mopsa grows into what we would think of as an adult; the rest remain diminutive and silly throughout the text. Interestingly, the thing that separates Mopsa from the others is Jack's favor. When the queen sees the small fairies—for Jack keeps them in his pocket through most of the book—she says to Mopsa, “these are fairies . . . but what are you?”(101). Mopsa's response does not identify her difference as a natural one; she is not from a different race or tribe. She states, “Jack kissed me...and I want to sit on his knee” (102). Through the next few pages, we learn that because Jack liked Mopsa the best, and made her his favorite, he has change her very being. She is a different creature than her fairy brothers and sisters. “The love of a mortal works changes indeed” says the queen, “it is not often that we win anything so precious” (103). Obviously, Jack's favor is highly valued, and it is powerful. We learn later in the text that Mopsa is not just different, but special. Because Jack has turned her into a fairy that will grow and change, she is destined to become a queen, and rule over the other fairies.

Not only does Jack's favor change Mopsa from the traditionally static role of a fairy to that of a growing fairy queen, but Jack is also charged with the care of this being. He is given these very paternal instructions: “let her sit on your knee sometimes, and take care of her, for she cannot now take the same care of herself that others of her race are

capable of” (103). Even though she is growing, she is treated like a child by this British boy. Not only must he protect and care for her, but he takes upon himself another typically paternal role—that of the educator. After Mopsa begins to grow, “he said she must be taught to read [and] she made no objections” (146). He uses daisies and buttercups to form letters that she learns. The other fairies sit around watching, helping Jack by gathering the flowers for him. Jack gives Mopsa the foundation of a traditional British education—the letters of that language—so that she can learn to read.

Even when the imaginative land through which Jack travels seems to be criticizing the human world, it is actually emphasizing lessons taught to children in typical educational texts. This education goes beyond basic schoolhouse teaching to instruct on moral issues as well. As Jack travels through the lands that border fairyland, he passes a bay full of ships that are stranded as punishment. Jack observes, “all their sails are set, but they cannot sail, because there is no wind” and asks, “how did they come there” (15). Instead of giving an explanation that reveals how all of these ships found this magical bay, Jenny the albatross replies, “some of them had captains who ill-used their cabin-boys, some were pirate ships, and others were going out on evil errands” (15). Notice how Jenny does not take this opportunity to talk about how wonderful and magical this land is; she lists the wrongs of those being punished—a quick moral lesson for the reader in not mistreating others or doing evil.

Moral education is, in fact, the primary goal of fantasy texts like *Mopsa the Fairy*; since the characters and setting of fairyland cannot model proper scientific learning, they are instead turned into object lessons for more spiritual learning. Consider the passage

about the ill-used horse. When Jack comes upon the sad, decrepit old beast, the fairies explain, “he has come here to get all right again . . . he gets low-spirited when he thinks of all he has gone through; but he is a vast deal better already than he was. He used to live in London; his master always carried a long whip to beat him with, and never spoke civilly to him” (30). As with the previous example, when asked *how* something happens, the fairy responds with *why*: “in this country . . . they begin by being terribly old and stiff, and they seem miserable and jaded at first, but by degrees they get young again” (32). Even in the distant world of fairyland, a young reader cannot escape the basic tropes of a moral education. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, John Locke writes of children’s tendency to abuse animals:

This I think should be watched in them, and if they incline to any such cruelty, they should be taught to contrary usage. For the custom of tormenting and killing of beasts, will, by degrees, harden their minds even towards men; and they who delight in the suffering and destruction of inferior creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate or benign to those of their own kind. (90-1)

Even when the infantilized fantasy critiques the human world, *Mopsa* limits itself to the long-established tropes of paternalism toward lesser creatures—lessons that are commonplace in educational texts of the time.

In the end, there is no doubt that Jack influences fairyland, much as a colonizer might—in the view of the British—influence a colony. *Mopsa* may outgrow Jack, eventually turning into a woman who can be queen, but the boy is responsible for both *Mopsa*’s ability to grow and her education—creating in her a new queen for a cursed people. Also, the boy-prince of that land has turned into a second Jack; *Mopsa* explains, “because he is the heir, of course . . . when I like you the best of the anything in the world,

and when I am come here to be queen? Of course, when the spell was broken he took exactly your form on that account” (206). Jack will not stay in fairyland with Mopsa, but her king will be Jack, nonetheless. The prince of that land has turned himself into a copy of the boy, and will remain behind in his place. So, even as Jack leaves, his influence remains, and it is hard to overlook the overt paternalism as he leaves a copy of himself to rule the land. He will grow and change, but in the static world of the fairies, his likeness will rule along with Mopsa, the queen he created.

Throughout the text, the infantilization of the imagined land is emphasized in several different ways. When the queen explains to Jack the location of fairyland, the reader is reminded of the Victorian ideas of the new world as a place located in the past, as discussed in chapter three. Like imperial space, fairyland is represented as a primitive time of the past, rather than a place in a physical location: “you know...that your people say there was a time when there were none of them in the world,—a time before they were made, Well, THIS is that time. This is long ago.” She further explains, “when the albatross brought you, she did not fly with you a long way off, but a long way back,—hundreds and hundreds of years” (137). While this text does not make any overt comparisons between the imaginative world and imperial space, this passage reveals one way in which they are similarly conceptualized.

While the treatment of the small fairies or the education of Mopsa do infantilize this imaginative world, the most revealing piece of infantilization of the text comes in the overall structure of the story. This story rushes its protagonist off to a magical world that is ultimately rife with lessons that sound suspiciously similar to those he would have

learned in a conduct manual of the time. He certainly enjoys his adventure, but in the end he returns to his home to grow up properly. In this text, the imaginative world is not only left behind and forgotten, but also compared to the human world, and found to be wanting. Just as in *Useful Amusements*, the British reader is left with a clear message about the superiority of their home. When Jack returns, he sees his mother sitting by an open window reading aloud. The narrative explains both Jack's reaction and the result of this scene: "Jack listened as she read, and knew that this was not in the least like anything that he had seen in Fairyland, nor the reading like anything that he had heard" (243). After being seen by his parents, he crawls up on his father's knee and the text describes the boy's thoughts: "what a great thing a man was; he had never seen anything so large in Fairyland, nor so important; so, on the whole, he was glad he had come back, and felt very comfortable" (244). As modern readers, we think of such fantasy stories as tales that idealize an imaginative space to the detriment of the dull, real world. That is not the case with this story, though. Upon his return, Jack values the domestic British space in a new, profound way. He compares it to the fairyland, and decides he would rather be in the human world growing up. Ultimately, he forgets his adventure in the imaginative world. While he was initially sad upon leaving Mopsa, we find he quickly recovers.

As Jack's feet were lifted up from Fairyland he felt a little consoled. He began to have a curious feeling, as if this had all happened a good while ago, and then half the sorrow he had felt faded into wonder, and the feeling still grew upon him that these things had passed some great while since, that that he repeated to himself, 'it was a long time ago.' (241)

After the scene where he reunites with his parents, Jack "began to forget the boy-king, and the apple-woman, and even his little Mopsa, more and more" (243). This text

perfectly illustrates my definition of infantilization, as it is evident that Jack is completely moving on from, and even forgetting, fairyland, and he will continue to grow into a British adult—the ideal he remarks upon as he thinks of his father in admiration.

As we have seen through a progression of texts, whether they are the actual lands and people of imperial space or the imagined lands and people of fantasy stories, the other is repeatedly infantilized in service of the education and progress of the British child. The marginalization of certain people groups in the Victorian era is a topic that has been discussed and examined extensively. This is one reason I believe this examination of infantilization is important, particularly a discussion of infantilization in fantasy texts; it provides a new context for this topic. Not only that, but as we will see in my conclusion when I discuss a fantasy text that challenges the tradition of infantilization, it may even provide some new ways to think about challenging these harmful patterns of thought. However, before I move on to texts that challenge infantilization, I want to more closely examine a fantasy text that is emblematic of this tradition. In Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* (1863), we see infantilization at work on a variety of levels. In this way, the book is a perfect example of how infantilization can be used on scientific, political, and religious themes to further the goals and values of Empire.

Imperial Creations: Imaginary worlds in *The Water Babies*

We have seen several ways in which the New World is connected to the imagination—it is in the fact that colonizers literally re-imagined the landscape of the

islands they encounter, and the way in which play is used as another method for educating children about empire. As we saw in *Mopsa the Fairy*, the worlds created by authors of fairy tales and fantasies for children show the influence of the imperial imagination. In the case of *Mopsa*, this is subtle, calling upon the tropes of imperial writing. Sometimes, however, this relationship is overt, seen through references to specific places such as America, the West Indies, or the Far East. In *The Water Babies*, Charles Kingsley uses overt references to the United States to help construct the imaginative world through which Tom journeys, building in an evolutionary and moral critique of the young country. Through a discussion of his politics and his Darwinian dismissal of their culture, Kingsley infantilizes the United States as he represents it as a place that is permanently stuck in a childish state. He also infantilizes the fantasy world he creates in the text, as it exists only to teach Tom the lessons he needs to leave behind this constructed world of the water babies; in the end, Tom grows into a mature adult, who no longer requires the assistance of Kingsley's fantasy world to help him grown and mature.

Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies* is a familiar text to scholars and teachers of children's literature. It has a chameleon-like ability to highlight and illuminate a variety of issues from Victorian literature and culture. Regardless of the literary approach, certain aspects of the text—such as the reformist nature of Kingsley's work, the evident racism in the narrative, or its Darwinian perspective—emerge in conversations over and again. These themes, however, gain new significance when looked at through the lens of infantilization. In order to truly understand the transatlantic nature of Kingsley's

infantilization in the text, we must focus on a new aspect of this book; the context of the American Civil War provides a crucial lens that illuminates Kingsley's perspective of the United States, and reveals the nuances of what Kingsley intended in advocating for 'reform.' Through his use of Darwinian thought, Kingsley strategically contextualizes America within the existing systems of evolutionary racism, condemning Americans for refusing to submit to the hierarchy through which humans are ordered under nature's design, and depicting them as brutes who have devolved to a primitive state. This should sound familiar, for Kingsley's uses this tactic to infantilize the country, representing them as unable to mature into an adult nation and depicting them as fixed in their brutish, childlike state. Although he is a strong contender for legislation that would improve the conditions of the working poor, this infantilization reveals that Kingsley is opposed to any constitutional reform that would democratize the British system.

Kingsley's disdain toward America is well-documented. In the short story, "Phaethon," he criticized the American academic: "How, in the name of English exclusiveness, did such a rampantly heterodox spiritual guerilla invade the respectabilities and conservatism of Herefordshire" (355). He also lampooned the American politician, describing him as "unable from some defect or morbidity to help on the real movement of [his] nation" ("Phaethon" 359). He believed that democracy was a failed system, with a government destined to become a "puppet of the Press" (quoted in Kendall 69). Even in his 1866 Cambridge speech, when he argued for the unpopular idea of giving a school lectureship to a Harvard professor, his dislike of American ideals was evident:

If there should be, in any minds, the fear that this University should be ‘Americanized,’ or ‘democratized,’ they should remember, that this proposal comes from the representatives of that class in America which...feels itself in increasing danger of being swamped by the lower elements of a vast democracy . . . It is morally impossible that such men should go out of their way, to become propagandists of those very revolutionary principles, against which they are honorably struggling at home. (*Letters* 365)

Notice that his endorsement for this Harvard professor is only on the basis of his *not being* like the majority of Americans. While Kingsley did warm to Americans on his lecture tour of the states, he never lost his aristocratic desire for a hereditary class, or his distinct preference of monarchy over the democratic system that gives voices to people he saw as petulant children.

One may wonder why, in a chapter so focused on empire, I choose to highlight Kingsley’s discussion of America. It is true that by the publication of this text, the United States had been separated from the British Empire for well over half a century. However, as the below discussion indicates, this is one reason why Kingsley’s portrayal of America is particularly relevant to the topic of infantilization. *The Water Babies* was serialized (1862-1863) and published (1863) in the heart of the American Civil War (1861-1865), which we find was not simply a private conflict, a War Between the States, but an event that was playing out on the world’s stage. Many Englishmen still thought of America as an experiment in democracy, and the end of the civil war would reveal whether this form of government could actually endure. People were watching. More specifically, Britain was watching to see the outcome. Kingsley was among those who thought failure was inevitable, and he was vocal about his views. He expressed his perspective through letters and lectures, but also through *The Water Babies*. He believed that the United States

would crumble, and would be forced to rejoin the empire it rejected—a prodigal child, returned to the motherland. This is why this text is so applicable for a discussion of empire and infantilization. If empire were really about teaching and promoting growth throughout the world, colonies would be allowed or even encouraged to grow; instead, they had to fight bloody wars and uprisings to gain their freedom, and even once they had, many from England still believed viewed them as forever stuck in that childlike role. In this way, The United States represented a challenge to the empire, and Kingsley’s portrayal of Americans and the Civil War exhibits the act of infantilization as a defense against that challenge.

Besides a natural British antipathy toward the colonies that rebelled against England, Kingsley’s view of the civil war has a great deal to do with the contemporary politics at home. One historian states, “The reformers – whether Radicals, Irish, Whigs, or Chartists – often pointed to American democracy as a model” (Bellows 507). British conservatives believed that the civil war confirmed their fears and criticisms of democracy; Kingsley expressly stated that the downfall of America would be good for his people: “I can come to no conclusion, save that to which all England seems to have come—that the war will be a gain to us” (*Letters* 319). British conservatives believed that the Civil War would eventually lead the prodigal child back to its motherland. After their own political system had failed, Americans would have no choice but to return to Britain, rejoining the Empire and taking its place among England’s other political children. Again, an infantilizing viewpoint, not just because it portrays America as a child of England, but because it tries to force the United States to remain in that position

permanently. For Kingsley, his criticism of Americans and his classism are one and the same. The American republic posed a threat to the British class system, and its downfall meant that challenges of reform could be avoided. In another letter he calls the war “a blessing for the whole world by breaking up an insolent and aggressive republic of rogues” (Quoted in Waller 560).ⁱⁱⁱ Obviously, he anticipates that The Civil War will mark the downfall of America, and he believes this is a good thing.

Kingsley’s commitment to British conservatism is also seen through his particular use of evolutionary theory. Unlike his predecessors, Kingsley is able to lend his infantilization of colonial people and spaces an air of scientific credibility by invoking the work of Charles Darwin. While the publication of Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* challenged religious dogma, Darwin’s text also works to affirm many of the structures that were important to Victorians. The idea of ‘survival of the fittest’—notoriously coined by social Darwinist Herbert Spencer the year after *The Water-Babies*’ publication—was used to argue a causal link between social prosperity and biological superiority. While Darwin himself may not have intended such an interpretation, it is clear how readers made such conclusions: “When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief...that vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply” (Darwin 129). Who is healthiest and happiest if not the wealthy aristocracy? This statement subtly perpetuates Victorian structures by inferring that the prosperity of the ‘healthy’ and ‘happy’ is an outworking of the natural order. In this light, Darwin’s argument takes on a specific moral weight. British ideals such as vigor and prosperity are elevated from social customs, to immutable natural laws.^{iv} In her book,

Darwin's Plots, Gillian Beer recognizes Kingsley's humanitarian impulse, but also notes that he has taken advantage of these moments in Darwin: "Kingsley's fantasy persistingly reveals the social models implicit in Darwin's work, the procedures...whereby the natural order in Darwin's formulation reproduces the forms of Victorian society: division of labor, competition, family structures" (Beer 121). Not only does *The Water-Babies* reveal these models, but it also perpetuates them. Kingsley's classism, racism, and Darwinism are infantilizing, anti-democratic expressions, arguing for the parental right of the aristocracy and the preservation of the existing social lines.

While many critics have noted the racism in the text, it is important for us to examine it and place it in context with Kingsley's infantilization of America. For Kingsley, the British social hierarchy is a microcosm of a larger, global hierarchy. *The Water-Babies* is littered with racist slights, characteristic of the British colonialist mentality. As Jessica Straley notes in her discussion of Kingsley's interest in recapitulation theory, "Just as the animal kingdom exhibited rudimentary stages of human embryonic development, non-European peoples seemed to Victorians to represent the primitive stages of their own civilization and now according to recapitulation, their childhood as well" (Straley 589). Through his references to other races as childish and animalistic, Kingsley expresses this view. Like many a Victorian Briton, Kingsley viewed the Irish as a lower race of brutes. In *The Water-Babies*, he tells the tale of St. Brandan who went to the "wild Irish" as a missionary. When they ignored him, he joined the water-babies, and "the people who would not hear him were changed into gorillas, and gorillas they are until this day" (*Babies* 157-8). He states that the bullheaded lobster

was Irish (151), and tells his reader not to be angry with the “poor Paddy” who “knows no better” than to lie about everything and wonders “why poor ould Ireland does not prosper like England”(96). He denigrates the Irish as stupid and boorish, and he refers to tribal peoples as savage and less advanced (61). He speaks of the Cannibal Islands where they don’t understand the Englishman who tells them of ice and snow, “in his country water turned to marble, and rain fell like feathers” (60). He describes the old seal as “looking exactly like a fat old greasy negro with a gray pate”(*Babies* 114). Kingsley’s racism is outlined by the belief that other races and cultures are less developed than the British. But unlike Tom, who become an infant so that he can grow and change, these people are always portrayed as static. They are locked in their immaturity, used, in this text, to create Kingsley’s imaginative world and the lessons that world contains for young Tom.

Kingsley’s racism is deeply rooted in his understanding of Darwinism. His infantilization of other peoples is framed within a race’s standing in the evolutionary process; they are portrayed as unable to evolve past their primitive, childish state. It is in using such terms, he is able to preserve the tone of the objective observer—he is merely a man of science, stating the facts. Kingsley himself was aware of the connections he was drawing; in 1863, he spoke in a letter about the prevalence of Darwin’s ideas, “Darwin is conquering everywhere, and rushing in like a flood, by the mere force of truth and fact”(*Letters* 337). Kingsley was not simply a fan, misconstruing another’s ideas; he and Darwin were involved in an active dialogue about the evolutionary supremacy of the English race. He was sent an advance copy of *Origin of the Species* and Darwin quoted

his approving letter response in the second edition of the text (Levy 198). In the correspondence that followed, they discussed the question of “barbarians” and “savages” in light of the superiority of Anglo-Saxons and natural selection. At one point, Darwin states, “It is very true what you say about the higher races of men, when high enough, replacing & clearing off the lower races. In 500 years how the Anglo-Saxon race will have spread & exterminated whole nations; & in consequence how much the Human race, viewed as a unit, will have risen in rank” (quoted in Levy 203). In this infantilizing statement, other races were less-developed, and, you will note, the discussion is not about how they will grow and change, but how they will be eliminated by the “Anglo-Saxon race” which is more evolved and *continues* to rise in rank.

It makes sense that America would present a particular challenge to those who wanted to use evolution as scientific evidence upon which to base their racism. Since most of the citizens of that country were either born British, or of English decent, they could hardly argue that this society was ‘less evolved.’ This is where infantilization is a valuable tool for a writer like Kingsley—by casting the question in the light of an adult versus a child, he is able to make racist assertions, similar to those he makes toward the Irish, while still acknowledging the inherent link between England and America. In order to facilitate this, *The Water-Babies* develops his idea of another class of evolution, a sort of regression. Kingsley solves this problem by portraying people and societies moving backwards in the evolutionary process as a sign of their physical, ideological, and moral lapses. Beer notes that this concept is consistent with Darwin’s views, “the movements of transformation as Darwin describes them involve loss as well as gain, degradation as well

as achievement” (123). Kingsley explores this concept at length, using it as the impetus for Tom’s moral awakening and ultimately forming it not only into a scathing critique of Americans as the ‘degraded’ relatives of their British ancestors. Kingsley’s story can be seen as more than just a judgement; it may also function as a warning to the Americans that if, at this turning point in their history, they would return to the fold of the British Empire, perhaps they could become the British child—who could grow and develop—rather than remain the infantilized other. Perhaps they could make good on their unique connection to England—the connection that once gave them a special status among imperial spaces. They may choose at this point whether they will align themselves with the boy who will grow and develop, or the unchanging, belligerent creatures he meets along his journey.

There is a clear example of reverse evolution in Tom’s journey. When he begins to misbehave his body shows the effects: “Tom looked at himself: and he was all over prickles, just like a sea-egg . . . when Tom’s soul grew prickly with naughty tempers, his body could not help growing prickly too” (185). It is important to distinguish this moment from the magical second chance that Tom receives at the beginning of the book. For that transformation does not carry with it the explicit moral lesson found in moments of degeneration (its lesson is a more general ‘be good’ rather than the specific instructions: ‘don’t lie’ or ‘don’t be lazy’). Tom’s prickled body is a moment of moralistic teaching in the text, but it also introduces devolution; in moments where he shows moral deficiency, his body reflects this in becoming more animal-like, more grotesque. Kingsley uses this type of degeneration in a separate critique: that of the

American states and their democracy. In one of the more explicit references to Darwinian thought, Kingsley elaborates on this theory of regression. The fairy Mrs.

Bedonebyasyoudid explains it to Tom:

Folks say now that I can make beasts into men, by circumstance, and selection, and competition, and so forth...But let them recollect this, that there are two sides to every question ...and, if I can turn beasts into men, I can, by the same laws of circumstance, and selection, and competition, turn men into beasts. (*Babies* 203-4)

Over the course of the book, the text proceeds in showing the reader examples of men turning into beasts, or of beasts turning even more beastly. In fact, these portrayals are the bulk of the imaginative world Kingsley creates; he places Tom among these absurd people and animals, one after another. As is the nature of infantilizing representations, Kingsley also specifically uses them to aid in the development and maturation of his protagonist. Many of these stories mention the United States explicitly. In these moments, *The Water-Babies* places Americans into the category of the infantilized, describing them throughout the text as humans who are static or backsliding. For example, as Tom is traveling through the ocean, he happens upon Allfowlsness—a meeting of birds. During this meeting, the birds brought out a young lady-crow and attacked her, “pecked her to death there and then” (*Babies* 219-20). As the narrator criticizes the hoodies (hooded crows) that made the attack, he makes the following comparison: “But are they not true republicans, these hoodies, who do every one just what he likes, and make other people do so too, so that, for any freedom of speech, thought, or action, which is allowed among them, they might as well be American citizens of the new school” (220). Similar to the above criticism of the press, Kingsley’s

criticism of free speech, progresses step further to denounce American freedom of a broader scale, arguing that this American value is one of the things that keeps them in a childlike, brutish state. If they would but let these things go, and return to their British roots, perhaps they could, once again, move forward instead of backwards.

Kingsley dislikes democracy because of his aristocratic view that people are not necessarily fit to rule themselves; a country can't give everyone equal rights and privileges or else it will degenerate into chaos. This opinion is expressed in a later incident in the novel. Tom runs across a group of whales, and again the narrative singles out one type of whale as worse than the others. The good whales lay sleeping, but the sperm whales were kept out, because they are always fighting "so she packs them away in a great pond by themselves at the South Pole . . . and there they butt each other with their ugly noses, day and night from year's end to year's end. And if they think that sport—why, so do their American cousins" (*Babies* 229). In this passage the Americans are not simply *like* animals, but are now identified as genetic cousins of these quarrelsome beasts. The Americans are devolving even as the book progresses.

Notice that in both these cases, the narrator only criticizes one variation of the species. Because Kingsley cannot deny kinship to Americans as he might with other races, he instead argues that they have degenerated since their time as Britons and are now an inferior class of human. Just as some birds and whales are superior to the hoodies and the sperm whale, the British people (or more specifically, the British aristocrats) are superior to the Americans. Kingsley believed that each country had a place, and America had stepped out of theirs: "Evil, as such, has no existence; but men can and do resist

God's will, and break the law, which is appointed for them, and so punish themselves by getting into disharmony with their own constitution and that of the universe" (Kingsley, quoted in Manlove 219). Signaled by their rejection of the British monarchy and acceptance of chaotic democracy, the Americans were a people who have broken the law appointed by God through the design of the universe. Kingsley never minced words; America was not wrong, it was evil. Democracy was in 'disharmony' with the way things were supposed to be—the natural order of immutable boundaries between the classes.

The most detailed example of Kingsley's devolution is the tale of the Doasyoulikes; this story functions as a fable, a final, infantilizing warning to an American reader about the dangers of their current values. After Kingsley's criticisms given, earlier in his text, the name alone is enough to connect this tale with Americans; it references, almost directly, the description given above of the hoodies. Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid describes them as "such comfortable . . . people" (180), which sounds very much like an earlier passage which describes what happens if people are "quite comfortable:" it "makes them naughty as it has made the people in America (*Babies* 198). Kingsley's constant references to the 'uncontrolled freedom' Americans advocate sounds a good bit like the people he describes who degenerate because they all follow their own desires.

There are a few other reasons to link this tale to Kingsley's view of Americans. The narrative states that the earliest ancestors of the Doasyoulikes planted corn for food. Corn, being a food native to the Americas, is hardly a subtle indicator of Doasyoulike locale. Finally, before the last Doasyoulike is killed, he tries to say to his hunter, "Am I

not a man and a brother?” (*Babies* 202). This statement references the abolitionist icon created by Josiah Wedgewood that was one of the most common images of an African American before the civil war: “The basic abolitionist emblem [of] the figure of a kneeling black man in chains, his upraised arms imploring ‘Am I not a man and a brother?’” (Schwartz 266). It was ubiquitous, found on printings, quilts, medals, and pincushions all over the United States. As one critic notes, “In the midst of the American Civil War, no one would miss the reference to the abolitionist question” (Levy 202). Also, since England abolished slavery in 1833 (the slave trade in 1807), this is a jab at the brutality and the moral infirmity of America—still not willing to give up the practice without a war. Obviously, Kingsley is drawing a connection between the moral decline of the United States and the devolution of the Doasyoulikes. The story of the Doasyoulikes is given to Tom so that he will learn the moral lessons they ignored. Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid accomplishes this by showing him the devolving people in a series of photographs. The tale reads like a Darwinian *Pilgrim’s Progress* as Doasyoulikes leave the land of Hardwork for the land of Readymade, where they quickly begin degenerating as a result of their indolence. So, as in *Useful Amusements* and *Swiss Family Robinson*, we see infantilization as a key part of the education of the British child.

Kingsley outlines several specific examples of ‘natural selection’ (or ‘survival of the fittest’), which he links closely with Victorian ideals of hard work and vigor. First he laments the “weakly little children” who died because food was scarce (*Babies* 199). In the next stage of the society, the people had to live in trees to escape rain and flooding, and those who could not climb well died off. Also, they were being hunted by lions, so

“the ladies will not marry any but the very strongest and fiercest gentlemen, who can help them up the trees” (*Babies* 200). When the next photo is turned, the Doasyoulikes have feet that grab tree-branches like hands, and in the next they have grown hair all over their bodies. The process continues step by step, following a sort of devolution backwards from human to ape.

As it develops, the Doasyoulike tale bridges the gap between Kingsley’s specific American prejudice and his larger racist views. Over the course of their story, the Doasyoulikes devolve more and more, getting compared to a series of other ‘races’ along the way. Both the reference to corn, and the description of living off the land (on roots and nuts) imply that the first stage of the Doasyoulike’s degeneration makes them comparable to native Americans; in fact, upon first seeing them, Tom exclaims, “Why...they are growing no better than savages” (*Babies* 199). Next, they are compared to the Irish. When Ellie comments on how ugly they are, the fairy responds, “Yes; when people live on poor vegetables...their jaws grow large and their lips grow course, like the poor Paddies who eat potatoes” (*Babies* 200). The “toe-thumb-men” of the trees are compared to “a Hindoo tailor [who] uses his toes to thread his needle” (*Babies* 200). The final state of devolution is so abhorrent, that Kingsley considers it hardly human at all. The downfall of the Doasyoulikes climaxes in a double-comparison, to both black people and actual primates. In the moment he attempts his “am I not a man and a brother” plea, he finds he has lost his humanity altogether: “but he had forgotten how to use his tongue; and then he had tried to call for a doctor but he had forgotten the word for one. So all he said was ‘Ubboboo!’ and died” (*Babies* 202). This array of racism is integrated into

Kingsley's critique of America as a nation that is choosing to destroy itself; he is using what he sees as the evolutionary scale of development to mark the looming horrors of American devolution, giving them a warning of the path they are on.

Kingsley was certain that this process of devolution had already begun. He saw the American civil war as the beginning of the end for democracy—a turning point where they could either return to the fold, or continue to devolve. Toward the end of his journey Tom travels to the Island of Polupragmosyne, where “every one knows his neighbor's business better than his own” (*Babies* 247-8). Even the name of the island itself reflects this quality, *polypragmosyne* being the ancient Greek word for inserting oneself in other's affairs. The inhabitants of this land pull Tom aside and give him conflicting directions in a chaotic hoard. The main attraction on this island is the Pantheon of the Great Unsuccessful, where, included in a list of failures such as the Tower of Babel, Kingsley places a series of lecturers who are advocating failed and hopeless ventures. It is here, that the reader finds one final description of America: “the presidents on the union which ought to have re-united, and secretaries of state on greenbacks which ought to have done just as well as hard money” (*Babies* 248). This obvious reference to the troubles of the civil war indicates that Kingsley assumes the union between the states has already failed, and done so at the hands of the people's own meddlesome politics.

While this discussion of infantilization opens a new conversation about Kingsley's opinions and treatment of America, it also enriches a much older conversation about the contradictions between the author's advocacy for improving the position England's poor, and his conservative viewpoint. This image of Kingsley is very different

than that of the benevolent reformer that usually accompanies discussions of *The Water Babies*. Many have argued that the purpose and success of this novel is its philanthropic impulse.^v It is well-recognized for raising awareness of the plight of ‘climbing boys,’ resulting in the reform acts of 1864 and 1875.^{vi} As one critic notes, “While Kingsley was undoubtedly an irredeemable secondhand alarmist in the matter of social problems...he nonetheless provided what none of his forerunners managed to provide: a powerful, readable, mythic text read by, and to, simply every bourgeois child” (Cunningham 122).

When thought of in conjunction with Kingsley’s advocacy of sanitation reform and improved conditions for the lower class, Kingsley’s classism in this text seems a contradiction. Bellows states:

Although the ‘sages’ wanted to reform to improve the conditions of the working classes, they did not approve of constitutional reforms or of democracy. Like the Radical Tories, they thought the reforms had to come from above, not from below. Carlyle, Ruskin, Kingsley, and to a lesser degree Arnold, did not believe the working classes were capable of managing their own destinies. (521)

So, while Kingsley did want to improve the lot of his fellow man, it is not because he thought they were capable of more, but because he desired to practice an aristocratic paternalism toward the lower form of life around him. His perspective on The Civil War reveals that Kingsley is only in favor of reform to a point, he has no desire for constitutional reform that would, in his eyes, make England more like the unruly states across the pond. The text reveals a truly infantilizing impulse; he thinks of the lower classes and other cultures as children—permanent children, not ones who will grow into adulthood where they may eventually care for themselves, but young brutes who will continually devolve as long as they are left to care for themselves.

This contradiction is seen throughout *The Water Babies*. In the text, Kingsley is careful not to imply that lower-class people are not without inherent value. In fact, he *ennobles them* for dutifully filling these (less ‘happy’ and ‘healthy’) roles. He argues that those who fill unpleasant jobs, such as chimney sweeps, should be honored instead of reviled. There is even an episode in which Kingsley praises the scavenging sea creatures for similar reasons; “to make up to them for having to do such nasty work, they were not left black and dirty, as poor chimney-sweeps and dust-men are. No; the fairies are more considerate and just than that” (*Babies* 160). In this way, he argues for elevating the lower class—not financially so that they may change their lives and positions, but in social status.

While humanitarian, Kingsley’s social message is hardly radical. A look at the conclusion of *The Water-Babies* re-emphasizes two crucial aspects of our discussion. First, the text has a ‘happy ending’ that is more concerned with restoring class structure than the individual happiness of its characters. Tom the sweep gets a new life, but he is not allowed to marry the aristocratic Ellie. Kingsley specifically draws attention to this omission, chiding any reader that dares imagine such a class-breaking union, “My dear child, what a silly notion! Don’t you know that no one ever marries in a fairy tale, under the rank of a prince or a princess?” (*Babies* 281). While this qualification technically applies to Ellie as well (she is not a princess), she clearly inhabits the same privileged sphere. Although reformed, Tom still cannot join the upper-class. As Cunningham observes, “if Tom is as honourable a civic functionary as Kingsley’s thought about scavenging sea-creatures suggest, one wonders why he has to undergo such a long and

arduous purgation before he is thought fit to consort with bourgeois Ellie”(Cunningham 140). Kingsley’s beliefs are benevolent, but not reformatory. He wants to find a way to improve the situation for some without disrupting the contemporary bourgeois system.

The restored class-structure at the novel’s conclusion is a direct response to the ‘problem’ set forth at the beginning of the story: class lines are being threatened. The chase scene that ends in Tom’s ‘death’ and subsequent rebirth as a water-baby is a direct result of his invasion into Ellie’s pristine bed chamber.^{vii} Moreover, several times during the text, Tom almost hugs Ellie, but refrains for he remembers the difference in their status: “And he jumped at her, and longed to hug and kiss her; but did not, remembering that she was a lady born; so he only jumped round and round her, till he was quite tired”(*Babies* 187-8, also on 208). Even though Tom has now reformed, learning his moral lessons from Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, he still cannot approach Ellie informally. For it is not the difference in their character that separates them, but the difference in their birth. This is an important lesson that Tom learns on his journey, one that Kingsley intended to impart to his reader. It is a lesson that is also revealed through Kingsley’s discussions of America in *The Water Babies*, and his perspectives on The American Civil War found in his lectures and letters. It is a lesson that affirms the British hierarchy in the face of radicals and reformers who might look to democracy as a way to upset the privileges and distinctions of birth.

A look at the larger structure of the novel reveals that it is not just the people of America, or other cultures who are infantilized, but as in *Mopsa the Fairy*, the imaginative world, which these references work to create. Tom’s journey takes him into

the imaginative world of the Water Babies, but only temporarily—only long enough to teach him the lessons of the text: don't be greedy or selfish, be kind and forgiving, etc. Also like Ingelow's text, the lessons taught here are very much ones of 19th century England, and would sound familiar to any reader of more realistic moral tales of children's literature. Essentially, the imaginative world of this text is used to serve the adult world of England. This is confirmed by the end of the text, where Tom goes straight from being a water baby, to an adult. He skips over childhood completely, and grows up to be "a great man of science, [who] can plan railroads, and steam-engines, and rifled guns, and so forth" (281). Notice how thoroughly he has been ushered into the world of adults by the list of his achievements. His business is progress and war, and there is no indication that he ever thinks back upon the imaginative world that made him into this man. The imaginative world has served its purpose, and been left behind.

This is further emphasized by the "moral" that Kingsley appends to the end of the book. He summarizes a couple lessons to be taken from the book; one is to "learn your lessons, and thank God that you have plenty of cold water to wash in; and wash in it too, like a true Englishmen" (283-4). Notice how traditional these lessons are. Similarly, the reader is also told to be kind to efts found in the water, and hope that some day "they will wake up and be ashamed of their nasty, dirty, lazy, stupid life, and try to amend" (283). Notice how similar this is to Tom's lessons; the children reading this story are told to learn Tom's lessons, and to pity those who don't—all in hopes that in the end, each may turn into "grown men" (283). Adulthood is so explicitly the goal and reward of this text; in these words it re-emphasizes the process of growth, a process that is only allowed to

the proper British child, not the Americans, the “savages” or even the imaginary world Kingsley creates. *The Water Babies* is explicit about the state of these things that may be used to aid the child on his path to adulthood. They are infantilized not because they are looked down upon—although this is certainly true of Americans and natives in this text—but because they are used and dismissed. They are compared to the child, but the child is allowed to grow and mature beside them while they are shown to be static.

The final words of the book are a tongue-and-cheek warning about the book’s status as a fairy tale, saying, “remember always, as I told you at first, that this is all a fairy tale, and only fun and pretence: and, therefore, you are not to believe a word of it, even if it is true” (284). This statement does two things. First, it argues the truth of the book—the lessons given to Tom and his child readers are ones he actually believes should be learned, and the opinions given about different peoples and groups are ones he actually has. However, it also confirms the infantilizing status of the text as one that should dim in the light of reality. Children *are* meant to read this text and laugh at Kingsley’s humor, enjoying themselves as they enter the world of the Water Babies, but they are also meant to learn the appropriate lessons, and return to reality one step closer to being proper British adults—leaving behind the imaginative world that Kingsley created.

Endnotes

ⁱ This is not Mary Wollstonecraft, who died in 1797, but his second wife, Mary Jane Clairmont, who he married in December of 1801.

ⁱⁱ Agendas such as a re-emphasis on the domesticity of the text, a reduction of the role of the mother, or in the 1910 Everyman edition, and addition of savages to more clearly represent European rhetoric of imperialism (Seelye xx).

ⁱⁱⁱ According to Waller, Henry Kingsley probably influenced his brother's dislike of Americans, for his beliefs were fervent. He is quoted in a letter to Alexander Macmillan stating, "I don't care much what happens, so long as the American Union goes to smash...I like the Northerners better than the Southerners on the whole, but I hate both, and the Union most of all three" (Quoted in Waller 559).

^{iv} Similarly, while Evolution and Christian Creationism may seem incompatible to us, they were not as so for Victorian audiences. Darwin takes care in his writing to allow room for both schemas. Consider how he argues for the transition from thinking about collecting new 'species' to instead thinking about creating 'genealogies;' he states that scientists "will then truly give what may be called the plan of creation" (Darwin 456). By introducing these terms, Darwin softens the call towards scientific progress by placing it *in the service* of the Victorian conception of religion. He may not believe in a creator who initiated the work of evolution, but he certainly makes the space for that belief in the terms he has chosen.

^v For example, Susan Chitty argues in her books that "the overt theme of *The Water-Babies* is of course straightforward and philanthropic. Kingsley wanted to better the lot of sweeps' boys" (221).

^{vi} In 1864 Parliament outlawed the use of climbing boys by chimney sweeps, but the practice was not completely abolished until 1875 when law required sweeps be licensed, refusing licenses to sweeps that employed climbing boys. Susan Chitty discusses this in detail in her biography, *The Beast and the Monk* (222-3).

^{vii} This is the locus of the sexual readings of the text that note Tom's phallic entry into Ellie's virginal chamber. See the Water-Babies section in *The Erotic World of Fantasy* (Duffy).

Conclusion

Throughout this study, I have attempted to articulate the connection between imaginative writing for children and the imperial imagination, discussing how this connection allows for slippage between the treatment of children (and beings) who inhabit the former, and the treatment of slaves, natives, and even the land itself that make up the latter. This, however, is just the beginning of the potential discussion of infantilization and its use in perpetuating a discriminatory mindset.

In chapter one, I began the discussion by with several authors who challenge the infantilizing representations of women and slaves. Many of my examples since then have discussed the ways in which children's literature, whether intentionally or not, has perpetuated the tradition of infantilization. I would like to end with a short discussion of the ways in which children's literature, specifically Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, also challenges that tradition. Many scholars have discussed the way in which Lewis Carroll's Alice books are complicated and subversive texts. When it comes to the patterns of infantilization, he once again presents a challenge to the dominant ways of thinking.

***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the Tradition of Infantilization**

Anon, to sudden silence won,
 Infancy they pursue
The dream-child moving through a land
 Of wonders wild and new,
In friendly chat with bird or beast—
 And half believe it true. (19-24)

The above stanza is taken from the poem that opens the published text of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*; in this work, Carroll narrates the creation of the famous story (Carroll 3-4). This particular stanza, however, gives a description of the tale that sounds remarkably like many works of early children's literature. Whether the "land" through which the child moves is *Paul and Virginia's* Mauritius, the newly explored American frontier of Texas, the invented island of Johann David Wyss, or an imagined world inhabited by fairies, children's books consistently mark the space by exclamations of the "wonders" the child may encounter—the "wild and new" with which the child must interact as it travels beyond the comforts of its own home.

Alice obviously knows the tradition that proceeds it and calls attention to its relationship to such texts. As she falls down the rabbit hole in the opening chapter, Alice thinks about where she may land: "How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downwards...I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand? Or Australia?" (Carroll 8). Alice assumes that she is traveling to one of the distant lands which she, as a properly educated British child, has probably read about in a book much like those we examined in earlier chapters of this study. You will notice, though, that she has also been taught to think the people of such lands strange—her own childlike logic leads her to assume they must live upside down, since they are on the opposite side of the world from her own 'right-side up' British home. In drawing this connection, Carroll indicates his own understanding of the debt fantasy writing owes to the descriptions and imaginings of imperial space. The latter had, in its ability to constantly surprise and fascinate, created

ideas and feelings upon which authors could capitalize as they invented their own new worlds. Carroll's narrative hints at this, as he describes Alice's early reactions to Wonderland, "for, you see, so many out of the way things had happened lately, that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible" (10). British society had been surprised, shocked, and delighted by the discoveries that went along with imperial expansion, and it is no wonder that there developed a tendency in popular fiction toward creating worlds that could reproduce such feelings of wonder. This, however, is where the similarities end between *Alice* and the previous texts I have discussed. For Carroll's wonderland operates very differently than the imaginative worlds that came before, and it inherently challenges the system of infantilization that operates within those worlds. Many have argued the subversive power of this text—and nonsense literature more generally discussing cultural norms that are undermined by the process of disregarding traditional plot and idea structure. I would argue that another of those cultural norms is the discriminatory thought associated with infantilization. By rejecting the traditional hierarchy that places the British child over the imaginative land he or she visits, Carroll undermines the patterns of infantilization seen in much of children's literature, and perhaps even provides a pattern for how infantilization on a larger scale may be destabilized.

Countless scholars have identified *Alice* as unique because "the pious, the moralistic, and the didactic are as much absent from its pages as if they had never existed at all in children's literature" (Avery 325). In fact, in the preface to the Norton Critical Edition of this text, Donald Gray speaks of the "now orthodox interest of twentieth-

century readers in the subversive and anarchic qualities of [Carroll's] writing" (viii).

When this text is considered in light of my earlier discussions, it becomes apparent that this subversion directly relates to the pattern of infantilization. While the texts we have examined use people—and then imaginative space—to help grow a British child into a proper English adult, the basic impulse of *Alice* undermines this exact procedure. Alice's experience in Wonderland does not solidify her understanding of her self, her education, or the growth she must undergo to become an adult. Instead it repeatedly confuses and questions these things, undermining the tradition of education in children's literature and embracing a sense of nostalgia rather than depicting a child who moves on happily toward adulthood.

In previous texts I've discussed, the child often compares life in the adult world of England with that elsewhere and uses this juxtaposition to solidify his or her own satisfaction with an identity as a British child. This comparison doesn't work so clearly for Alice, though. "It was much pleasanter at home...when one wasn't always growing larger and smaller, and being ordered about by mice and rabbits. 'I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit hole—and yet—and yet—it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life!'" (Carroll 28-9). While Alice finds the unpredictability and strangeness of Wonderland unsettling, she also cannot deny the attractiveness of this 'curious' place. The reader feels the power of her "almost" in the sentence above, and her repetition of "and yet" emphasizes her inability to completely wish herself back to her home in England. We find this same tension earlier in the text when Alice encounters the cake that eventually grows her into a giant, "she was quite surprised to find that she remained the

same size. To be sure, this is what generally happens when one eats cake, but Alice had got so much into the way of expecting nothing but out-of-the-way things to happen, that it seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go on in the common way” (12). Even though Alice spends much of the text fighting against the disorder of Wonderland, Carroll clearly communicates that she is also drawn to it. Ordinary life quickly begins to feel dull in comparison, and this time the adult world of England does not come out one top.

Unlike other child characters who solidify their own identity through their interaction with a magical land, Alice’s identity is immediately destabilized upon her arrival in Wonderland. In fact, Alice’s struggle with identity is one of the key features of the text. Because of her inability to control her size as she grows and shrinks, Alice says to herself, “Who in the world am I? Ah, *that’s* the great puzzle!” (15). She then proceeds to think through the other children she knows and consider who else she may have become. She continues to grow and shrink throughout the book, and repeatedly laments her inability to control these changes. Later in the text, when she has grown larger than even the trees of Wonderland, a bird calls her very species into question because of her long neck. Alice argues, “I’m *not* a serpent, I tell you...I’m a—I’m a—...I—I’m a little girl” (43). While the ellipses replace the bird’s response, the dashes are all in the text, emphasizing Alice’s hesitation as she attempts to claim her basic identity as a little girl. She has to re-start the statement four times, and by the time she gets it out, it is now impossible that she could complete it in a convincing manner. Alice questions whether she may be Mabel, and can barely even identify herself as a girl rather than a serpent; one thing is certain: this is not the narrative of developing a stable and sure identity through

development toward adulthood, for even growth can no longer be depended upon by the child in Wonderland.

Nina Aurbach describes Alice in this confusion as “prim and earnest in pinafore and pumps, confronting a world out of control by looking for the rules and murmuring her lessons” (334). Indeed, so much of what makes Alice stand out in Wonderland are her childish attempts to mimic the adult manner of England and her unsuccessful efforts to apply those rules to her experience in Wonderland. As Aurbach points out, she does this, not only by scolding and correcting those she meets, but by attempting again and again to access her education. She “murmer[s] her lessons” throughout out the text, but these lessons fail to order or explain the strange world she has encountered. When Alice questions her identity after her change in size, she fears she may have become Mabel, a girl who “knows so very little!” (15). In order to determine if this has happened, she recites a poem to herself, and is devastated to find that “her voice sounded hoarse and strange, and the words did not come as they used to do” (16). Notice how the language makes Alice herself passive, and describes the actions of “her voice” and “the words” of the poem. This is not a matter of memory; it is not that Alice can not recall the correct words, but that these incorrect words “come” out on their own. Her very voice had changed, and these seem to be a force beyond her that refuses the validity of her usual practice of recitation. She cannot confirm her identity by accessing her previous education, for it has—on its own—turned to nonsense.

In reality, the poem she recites is the first of many parodies for which the text of Alice is known. In this example, Carroll famously revises Issac Watts’ “Against Idleness

and Mischief” (1715) into a playful verse about a crocodile. So, this moment in the text not only highlights Alice’s inability to order or define herself according to her education, but as Martin Gardner has pointed out, it also undermines the very tradition of education by introducing what will become a pattern of mocking sincere educational texts that have been a part of the cannon of children’s literature. In this case, “Carroll has chosen the lazy, slow-moving crocodile as a creature far removed from the rapid-flying, ever-busy bee” that is the subject of the original poem (Carroll, Tenniel and Gardner 24).

Early in the text, the narrative gives a droll description of Alice’s relationship with a typical educational text. We are told that she is careful to read the label of the bottle she encounters, “for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you” (Carroll 10-11). The text continues with a list of several such lessons, including among them the one that Alice applies to her situation in wonderland: “that, if you drink much from a bottle marked ‘poison,’ it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later” (11). Carroll mocks these stories by his sarcastic and humorous descriptions of them. The account of them as “nice little stories” contrasts sharply with the reality of their content, and he specifically describes the lessons found within these tales in such a way as to make them ridiculous. The adjective ‘red-hot’ makes the lesson that the poker will burn you obvious, and silly. The narrative description of poison is comical, and shows the child’s inability to properly apply what she has learned; poison is something you must not drink “too much of”—as if drinking a little poison is perfectly

alright—and the understatement that it might simply “disagree” with a person—rather than kill them—is both amusing and alarming to the reader.

As we read such a narrative, there can be no doubt that Carroll’s use of such educational children’s literature is pejorative. This fact is then confirmed by the actual events of the book. For Alice applies her lesson and carefully reads the label before drinking from the bottle, but in the end this doesn’t help. For her lessons haven’t prepared her for the liquids of wonderland. The books she read were designed for the logical adult world, where a liquid was poison or not—would harm you or wouldn’t; in wonderland, however, the outcome of drinking (and eating) is not so clearly good or bad. It does, however, precipitate Alice’s greatest frustration of her visit to wonderland. After she drinks from the bottle, she shrinks, and when she eats a cake she finds in the room, she grows. As discussed above, this instability of size is one of the main causes of Alice’s identity confusion in this book. It continues throughout the text—for a total of twelve times—and is almost always associated with consumption. At several points in the text, Alice speaks of her frustration with these changes, and specifically her inability to control them. These changes in size re-emphasize Alice’s inability to hold on to a stable identity, and make the point of tension the issue of growth. When the caterpillar asks Alice who she is, she responds that she doesn’t know because “being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing” (35). She also connects these changes with her inability to remember the educational rhymes she continues to try and quote, “I ca’n’t remember things as I used, and I don’t keep the same size for ten minutes together!” (36). So, Alice can not correctly remember much of the knowledge she has been taught in the adult

world, and what she does remember and apply is proven useless in the strangeness of wonderland; Carroll emphasizes this uselessness by having that moment of application—Alice’s heeding the advice given about poison—set in motion the problems with size that frustrate Alice and her concept of identity throughout the text.

It is not just adult thinking, but adults themselves that are made to be ridiculous in this text. In Wonderland, the more adult a character is, the more likely they are to be abrasive, violent, and unappealing. This is most obviously seen in the descriptions of the dutchess and cook—who are described throwing pots and dinnerware and “tossing the baby violently up and down” as it cried—and, of course, in the famous example of the red queen, who marches around yelling her famous mantra, “Off with her head!” (49, 64) From the depiction of adults, to the derision of the lessons they work so hard to pass on to children, this text makes it very clear that it has a different set of priorities than most of the fantasy texts that have come before it. *Alice* is not a book that is designed to move the British child toward adulthood—pushing him or her on to maturity as the ultimate goal, and it is not a book that prioritizes the adult world over the magical land of the text. In fact, we see just the opposite. Survival in wonderland requires one to leave behind both reason and reality, and as we see with Alice, if a character will not do so they will be stripped from her. As Robert Polhemus states, “The Alice books do not address our serious, responsible, moral selves; Carroll turns his back on the adult world” (365). This text completely rejects the pattern of infantilization we have discussed throughout this study, refusing to make a magical world that bends to the will of the real adult world.

In the end, Carroll's nostalgia for childhood completely overshadows the ideas of growth and maturation that are usually emphasized in such texts. The last page of *Alice* illustrates this perfectly; after Alice has awoken and run home, the narrative shifts to the perspective of her older sister, who stayed behind "thinking of little Alice and all her wonderful Adventures, till she too began dreaming after a fashion" (Carroll 98). Carroll then described her dream, where she could hear all the strange sounds, and "half believed herself in Wonderland." The text makes clear, though, that "she knew she had but to open [her eyes] again, and all would change to dull reality" (98). The sounds she heard were but the rustling of the grass and the sheep-bells off in the distance. These and "all the other queer noises, would change (she knew) to the confused clamour of a busy farm-yard" (99). The sadness and disappointment at the sister's inability to replicate Alice's experience is palpable. Although she may close her eyes and glimpse wonderland, she is stuck in the "dull reality" of England. Finally, she thinks of a future Alice who has grown and matured, but it is not Alice's maturity which her sister contemplates, but,

how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather about her other little children, and make *their* eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale...how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days. (emphasis in the original 99)

In this passage, it is future Alice's ability to remember her childhood that makes her special—her ability to identify with children by accessing her own past and sharing it with them. It is not what she becomes, but what she was that matters. Carroll emphasizes the *state* of childhood, not the child as a figure of future potential—one that can be filled with a specific type of knowledge and integrated into society. In fact, Carroll laments the

inevitability of this growth, and the only redemption for it is found in a nostalgic clinging to a childlike past. It is this contrast that illustrates most distinctly the significant difference between Carroll's text and the mindset of infantilization, where the child grows and leaves behind the infantilized other or magical world. Where the other being or space is used and discarded for the purpose of growing up the British child. The Alice books prioritize the power of Wonderland, and her ability to dream it represents Alice's childlike state. Growth and maturity are seen as a disappointing inevitability rather than an end goal.

Many scholars have discussed this nostalgia for childhood as a troublesome aspect of Carroll's writing. Peter Coveney famously discusses the 19th century cult of the child, and he argues that with men such as Carroll, "their awareness of childhood is no longer an interest in growth and integration...but a means of detachment and retreat from the adult world" ("Escape" 328). While studies such as James Kincaid's *Child Loving* have discussed danger of eroticizing the child through such pronounced nostalgia, I want to consider that perhaps it also has another effect. By refusing to prioritize the adult world of reason and order, Carroll's writing undermines the tradition of infantilization. While he may not overtly—or even intentionally—argue for a more equal view of the slave, native, or woman in British culture, by upsetting the literary hierarchy that stems from the same tradition of infantilization, he undermines the influence of that tradition and perhaps even illustrates for his reader how such a defense might be made.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is just one of the many texts that are made even more rich by being placed in the context of the tradition of infantilization. Other books

such as J.M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* come to mind as having potential for study in this context, for both work heavily on the themes of childhood, growth, home, and space. Because they were written so much later, I expect we would find that they neither support the tradition of infantilization so clearly as a text like *Mopsa the Fairy*, or undermine it so clearly as *Alice*. I would expect, instead, a rich and complicated interaction with the texts and traditions that have come before. Infantilization, as a practice, has embedded itself deeply into both our culture and our literary tradition, and it is important that we continue to examine not only its history, but also its current existence in our world. Hopefully this study will work as a springboard for precisely such conversations, providing some of the groundwork needed to move past a cursory use of the term into an understanding of the complex history of its development and use.

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