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Maria Edgeworth and Romance.

by Sharon Murphy, M.A.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy of the University of Dublin, Trinity College, June 2002.

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SUMMARY

This dissertation concentrates upon an important tension manifest across Edgeworth's prolific writings, and it contends that this tension finally illustrates her unease with the didactic tenets that she (overtly) promoted throughout her work. At issue in all of Edgeworth's works is the preoccupation with what it means to be an individual in terms of the 'new-style patriarchy' that was emerging at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. For Edgeworth, this question is inextricably linked to the biographical details of her own life; in particular, to the type of patriarchal authority that her father asserted over his family. While writing texts explicitly designed to illustrate and to celebrate her father's educational theories, Edgeworth at the same time encodes in her works her concerns regarding the efficacy, or 'truth', of this ideology. Specifically, she reveals her perception that man is much more than a rational being and that allowances must be made for the effects of both his passions and his imaginative life. In this context, I argue that Edgeworth's works effectively operate upon two levels: the didactic level, which promotes the rationalist ideology of her father and her age, and, the subversive level, which interrogates or qualifies the didactic message of her texts. Significantly, both of these levels are curiously informed by her use of romance. On the one hand, Edgeworth's work (overtly) unfolds a vision of reality that is based upon a distinctly rational ideology, and it implies that, in order to be useful and happy, the individual *must* cultivate his/her reason and reject the delusions of romance in favour of rational knowledge. On the other, though, Edgeworth's texts draw heavily upon romance conventions in order to advance this argument and in so doing (covertly) admit not only the power and pleasure, but also the crucial *necessity* of the imaginative life. It is only by recognizing this that we can properly begin to appreciate Edgeworth's motivations and achievements as a writer.

Drawing widely upon all aspects of Edgeworth's writing, this dissertation therefore traces how Edgeworth's use of romance both promotes *and* interrogates a view of reality

that is predicated upon a distinctly (patriarchal) rational vision. By using romance in an attempt to facilitate this vision, Edgeworth curiously destabilizes the overt didactic message of her texts, revealing, for instance, that it may finally be woman's passion and imagination, rather than her reason, that will enable to her to transcend the limitations of domestic life. In advancing this argument, Edgeworth concurrently illustrates her conviction that the cultivation of one's reason is not an unproblematic process and this issue, among others, is examined in my second chapter upon her tales for children and young adults, where, I suggest, she peculiarly reveals her sense of the *pain* that the child or adolescent suffers when his/her imaginative excesses are (re)directed. Chapter three considers why Edgeworth carefully qualifies her arguments about romance in relation to the young male reader, insisting that, for the good of Britain and her empire, particular texts *should* be read by *certain* young boys. Conscious that romance reading always unleashes desire in the reader, Edgeworth's point is that such texts must be used to produce those desires that impel Britain's mercantile and colonial expansion and, further, to regulate those desires *after* they are produced. Chapter four develops this argument, detailing how Edgeworth tries to use romance to facilitate the construction of a 'paternalistic' vision of reality, one where the spread of British influence across the face of the earth is to *everyone's* advantage. My final chapter explores this colonizing romance more closely, detailing why its terms are inevitably influenced by Edgeworth's experiences of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Ireland. Faced with the difficulty of negotiating Ireland's colonial situation in her work, Edgeworth tries to deny or disguise it, constructing a vision of Ireland in her texts that both justifies and facilitates the continuing presence of the colonizing class that she herself represents. In so doing, she concomitantly betrays her perception that the vision of Ireland that she is producing in her texts is *literally* a fiction and this, I conclude, has incredible implications for our understanding of how romance operates in not only these texts, but also in *all* of her work.

Introduction.

Miss Edgeworth wrote of ordinary human life, and not of tremendous catastrophes or highly romantic incidents. Hers was no heated fancy; she had no comprehension of those fiery passions, those sensibilities that burn like tinder at contact with the feeblest spark; she does not believe in chance, that favourite of so many novelists; nor does she deal in ruined castles, as was the fashion in her day. In her stories events mostly occur as in sober and habitual fact.

(Helen Zimmern, 1883)[1]

Maria Edgeworth's 'Tales of Fashionable Life' (including Ennui, The Absentee) are set in drawing-rooms of country houses and castles, and are as novelistic in plot as they are genteel in their setting, following, on the whole, a Burney/Austen mode.

(Joep Leerssen, 1996)[2]

Although separated by more than one hundred years, the above quotations demonstrate that a deep similarity can be drawn between late-nineteenth-century- and modern-day interpretations of Maria Edgeworth's writing. Both Helen Zimmern and Joep Leerssen define Edgeworth as a "mostly" realistic writer, for instance, and they observe that, unlike many of her contemporaries, she firmly rejected the fabulous and the fantastic. While Leerssen for his part does allow that "Edgeworth's novels . . . contain echoes of a Romantic Gaelic Ireland", he dismisses these as being of "secondary" importance to the development of her narratives (42). They are there merely to "add touches of local colour and intercultural tension which would have been unavailable in an English setting", according to him, and so "the register of . . . Romance" that they represent is not central to the working out of Edgeworth's plots (42). For Zimmern, this circumstance would appear to be not only inevitable, but also readily explained: "there was nothing [in Ireland] to

arouse romance in [Edgeworth]", she insists, and, besides, "[r]omance had no place in her nature" (16, 27). Despite the evolution of literary criticism, Leerssen, like Zimmern and so many other critics before and after him, maintains that Edgeworth's use of romance in her work is incidental; as he would have it, it adds nothing of real significance to her "novelistic" plots and settings. My dissertation will dispute this commonly held view of Edgeworth's writing and argue that her use of romance conventions is in fact central to her work.

Born in 1768 at her mother's family home, Black Bourton in Oxfordshire, Maria Edgeworth was the third child of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, an Anglo-Irish landlord. A colourful character, Edgeworth's father married three more times following the death of her mother, Anna Maria Elers, and it was not until 1782 that the young girl settled permanently with her family upon their Edgeworthstown estates.[3] Interested in education and in practical science, Richard Lovell Edgeworth was a huge influence upon Edgeworth: he not only employed her to keep accounts and deal with his tenants, but also encouraged her to read widely. Eventually, he also became her most valued literary adviser, and took an immense pride in the educational treatises, tales about Ireland, novels of manners, and tales for children and adolescents that Edgeworth produced.

This dissertation concentrates upon an important tension manifest across Edgeworth's prolific writings, and it contends that this tension finally illustrates her unease with the didactic tenets that she (overtly) promoted throughout her work. Although this 'unease' manifests itself variously in her texts, my argument is that it is peculiarly encoded in her use of romance conventions. At issue in all of Edgeworth's works is the preoccupation with what it means to be an individual in terms of the "new-style patriarchy" that was emerging at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.[4] For Edgeworth, as we shall see, this question is inextricably linked to the biographical details of her own life; in particular, to the type of patriarchal authority that

her father asserted over his family.

While writing texts explicitly designed to illustrate and to celebrate her father's educational theories, Edgeworth, I will argue, at the same time encodes in her works her concerns regarding the efficacy, or 'truth', of this ideology. Specifically, she reveals her perception that man is much more than a rational being, and that allowances must be made for the effects of both his passions and his imaginative life. In this context, I will contend that Edgeworth's works effectively operate upon two levels:[5] the didactic level, which promotes the rationalist ideology of her father and her age, and, the subversive level, which interrogates or qualifies the didactic message of her texts. Significantly, both of these levels are curiously informed by her use of romance: on the one hand, Edgeworth uses romance conventions in order to promote a rational view of reality in her texts and, on the other, to reveal her perception of the shortcomings of this vision. It is only by recognizing this fact, I will suggest, that we can properly begin to appreciate Edgeworth's motivations and achievements as a writer.

This introduction traces the impulses behind the overt didacticism of Edgeworth's work, and discusses why the traditional critical approach to her work is via her didacticism and her relationship with her father. Next, it examines how the age in which Edgeworth lived necessarily contributed to the didactic content of her work and, indeed, why the didacticism of her texts can be read in terms of the innovations that were taking place in literary fiction at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. I then move on to a consideration of how Edgeworth herself might have understood romance, and I examine how her didacticism is frequently facilitated but interrogated by her use of this narrative form.

A prolific and diverse writer, Edgeworth enjoyed tremendous critical and popular acclaim during her lifetime. Applauded for her literary achievements by luminaries such as Scott and Turgenev, she was also a huge commercial success.[6] Her literary fame proved

transitory, however, and, by the early twentieth century, Edgeworth's works were all but forgotten. Even today, if she is remembered at all outside of academic circles, it is but dimly and as the author of Castle Rackrent (1800), which is effectively (mis)represented to the general reader as the only truly outstanding example of her work. The reasons for the rise and fall of any author's literary fame are always complicated, of course, but in Edgeworth's case it is fair to argue that the decline in her popularity was particularly linked to the style of her writing. As I shall demonstrate below, Edgeworth produced her texts at a very particular moment in the development of the novel, at a moment, it can be argued, when the merit of a text increasingly depended upon its moral content. Although Edgeworth's literary hand ranged widely in terms of the types of texts that she produced, her works ultimately share one feature in common, their overt didacticism, and this at least partially accounts for the steady decline of her texts' popularity throughout the nineteenth century. Initially praised for the "spirit, . . . delicacy, and . . . precision" of her writing, Edgeworth was increasingly criticised for laying on her moral with too heavy a hand for her readers.[7] In his 1817 review of Harrington and Ormond, for example, Francis Jeffrey remarked: "the duties of a *Moral Teacher* are always uppermost in [Edgeworth's] thoughts. . . . It is this which has given to her composition something of too didactic a manner, - and brought the moral of her stories too obtrusively forward".[8] Such 'obtrusive' morals became less and less popular during the course of the nineteenth century and, eventually, if Edgeworth was read at all, it was for her children's literature, and the fame of her other texts was gradually forgotten.

The peculiar circumstances of Edgeworth's own life were another factor that contributed to the decline of her popularity and, ironically, to her eventual re-discovery and re-assessment as a writer. While the biographical details of other female nineteenth-century authors provided ample material for feminist critics, Edgeworth's relationship with her father effectively overshadowed the literary value of her writing. As the eldest

daughter of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's four marriages, Edgeworth attached a singular importance to this relationship; as she puts it in 'her' volume of his Memoirs, for example, their "literary partnership . . . [was] for . . . many years . . . the pride and joy of [her] life" (2: 190). In fact, and as we shall see later when we examine her letters in more detail, Edgeworth throughout her life actively encouraged the popular belief that Richard Lovell Edgeworth was the inspiration behind his daughter's literary career: as she observes in one of her letters, he provided the "'bullion'" that she "'coined'".[9] This interpretation of their relationship eventually passed into critical and popular imagination, and it survived virtually unchallenged until the middle years of the last century.

While the origins of this myth lay with Edgeworth herself, it was compounded by A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth with a Selection from her Letters (1867), the first ever work of 'criticism' that appeared on the author.[10] Edited by Edgeworth's third stepmother, Frances, with her daughters, Harriet and Lucy, this is very much a family memoir, and it paints Edgeworth's life and texts in terms of her relationship with her family.[11] Specifically tracing Edgeworth's life and texts back to the creative influence of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, the editors of the Memoir are keen to stress the special nature of this father/daughter relationship. Quoting at length from the letter that Richard Lovell Edgeworth wrote to Edgeworth from the deathbed of Honora, his second wife, they emphasise that he urged his twelve-year-old daughter to cultivate the desire she felt "'of becoming amiable, prudent, and of USE'" (1: 7).[12] Insisting that Edgeworth will only be "'happy'" if she is "'good'", Richard Lovell Edgeworth prays that God will "'make [her] ambitious of that valuable praise which the amiable character of [her] dear [late step-] mother forces from the virtuous and the wise'" (1: 7). He concludes with the observation that his writing to her at such a time must be remembered by Edgeworth "'as the strongest proof of the love of Your approving and affectionate Father'" (1: 7). The editors of the Memoir note that the writing of this letter had the effect that was intended: "Such a letter,

written at such a time, made the impression it was intended to convey, and the wish to act up to the high opinion her father had formed of her character, became the exciting and controlling power over the whole of her future life" (1: 8).

Written to Edgeworth when she was only twelve years old, this letter peculiarly facilitates the efforts of the Memoirs to portray Richard Lovell Edgeworth as an ideal father and, thereby, to appropriate for him much of the credit for his daughter's literary efforts and fame. Implicit in the text is the assertion that Edgeworth's achievements as a woman and a writer had their origins in her ambition to "'act up'" to her father's "'opinion'"; it implies that they were the *direct* result of the "'exciting'" and, significantly, the "'controlling power'" under which she laboured for the rest of her life. Here, of course, are also rooted the first impulses of Edgeworth's didactic intentions. Separated from her father for long periods during her childhood,[13] Edgeworth was clearly denied a degree of affection that she desperately craved. The few letters that survive from this period, for example, indicate both her overwhelming desire to prove her willingness to become "a good girl"[14] *and* her ambition to prompt Richard Lovell Edgeworth and her stepmother to regular correspondence.[15] By sending a letter from his wife's deathbed, Richard Lovell Edgeworth thus effectively provided his daughter with a (didactic) blueprint for her future happiness: all Edgeworth had to do in order to secure his love, he suggested, was to follow his instructions and to learn from the example of her late stepmother how she ought to behave.[16]

In her 1972 biography of Edgeworth, Marilyn Butler argues that A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth "shaped posterity's view of Maria Edgeworth more decisively than anyone has recognised" (4). From the memoir, she notes, Augustus Hare derived most of his material for his The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth (1894), and subsequent critics and biographers relied heavily upon Hare. What the memoir set up, therefore, were the terms of reference for Edgeworth and her work: that only by appreciating Richard Lovell

Edgeworth's role in his daughter's life could her texts be properly understood. The irony of this, of course, was that, in seeking to ensure Richard Lovell Edgeworth's place in the literary hall of fame, the memoir's editors instead facilitated a growth in the critical opprobrium that had begun to be levelled at him during his lifetime. As Butler observes,

> As soon as Maria Edgeworth and her father became personally known in London, the first signs of suspicion about the authorship of the novels began to appear. Maria Edgeworth was good humoured and amusing, whereas her father was pompous and a bore. The novels were usually entertaining, like her, but sometimes they were heavy, like him. Surely, then, she had written the lively parts and he had inserted the rest? (271).

When Edgeworth completed and published her father's memoirs, she only succeeded in reinforcing the negative public opinion of Richard Lovell Edgeworth and, as more works on Edgeworth began to appear during the latter half of the nineteenth century, he was gradually turned into the Svengali-like figure who had dominated her life. Increasingly, critical opinion accepted as fact the charge that Richard Lovell Edgeworth had constantly interfered in his daughter's work and, specifically, to him was attributed the blame for the didacticism of Edgeworth's texts. This helps to explain why Edgeworth's works were for so long ignored by feminist critics: on the one hand, her texts were no longer widely read and were difficult to obtain; on the other, the degree of influence that Richard Lovell Edgeworth had exercised upon his daughter's literary works seemed beyond debate.

Only in the past thirty years, or so, has a more balanced approach begun to be taken to Edgeworth and her work, and attempts have been made to untangle the threads of her relationship with her father. Patrick Murray, for instance, in his "Maria Edgeworth and her Father: the Literary Partnership", argues that Edgeworth "[f]rom her earliest days . . . unconsciously absorbed" the attitudes of her father.[17] Of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's role in the writing of Edgeworth's texts, Murray argues that her father's "interpolations as well as his excisions tend to improve her work" (43). "Oddly enough", he notes, "[Richard Lovell Edgeworth] clearly discourages the didactic tone into which she fell so easily and

comfortably, and he sometimes inserts sprightly passages which amuse rather than edify" (43). Marilyn Butler's biography of Edgeworth also deflated many of the charges commonly laid against Richard Lovell Edgeworth. In her chapter entitled "A Question of Authorship", Butler painstakingly assesses the evidence that remains regarding the part that Richard Lovell Edgeworth played in the actual composition of his daughter's texts, and she concludes that "none of his surviving criticisms of a book before publication refers to the possible didactic import" (274). "The didactic passages", she observes, "are peculiarly [Edgeworth's], in a sense that nothing else in the tales is. They are the one element that no one ever asked her to put in. They reflect her obsessive desire to promote her father's opinions" (303). Butler therefore contends that it was not Richard Lovell Edgeworth but Edgeworth herself

> who really did try to insist from first to last that the fiction and the educational books were indivisible. As the story of her entire development shows, it was she who felt most anxious to maintain the idea of a partnership. The idea that the fiction must be seen as part of his work, so that it would contribute to his greater glory . . . emanated from her. (287-88)

By effectively freeing the texts of the direct interference of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Butler's argument curiously illuminates the complex nature of Edgeworth's didacticism and its central role in Edgeworth's psyche. Very much influenced by Enlightenment rationalism, Richard Lovell Edgeworth concerned himself greatly with education as he raised his numerous children.[18] Influenced at first by Rousseau, he initially tried to repeat the experiments of Émile with his eldest son, Richard. This proved a disaster, however, and, over the years, Edgeworth's father shifted his position and moved towards a rationalist system of education.[19] Still using his own children as guinea pigs, he gradually transformed education into an empirical science that prized reason over the emotions. Edgeworth faithfully reproduced the fruits of this experimentation in her texts, which effectively sought to impress an *Edgeworthian* system of education upon their readers. Thus, in his preface to the 1809 series of Edgeworth's Tales of Fashionable Life, Richard Lovell Edgeworth could observe: "It has . . . been my daughter's aim to promote, by all her writings, the progress of education from the cradle to the grave".[20] To this end,

he notes, it was Edgeworth's intention in The Parents' Assistant: or Stories for Children (1796), Moral Tales for Young People (1801), and in Popular Tales (1804) "to exemplify the principles contained in Practical Education" (1: 159). Similarly, he insists, these and the projected volumes of Tales of Fashionable Life are intended to illustrate "some of the ideas that are unfolded in Essays on Professional Education" (1809) (1: 159). As such, while each text can be read on its own merits, it can also be read as representative of a far greater work in progress.

The desire to educate therefore infuses *all* of Edgeworth's writing and, while her most obviously didactic texts are her educational treatises, Practical Education and Essays on Professional Education, each of her texts in some way concerns itself with the education of the reader.[21] The major theme of Letters for Literary Ladies (1795), for example, is the question of the education of women, and this issue also informs novels like Belinda (1801) and Helen (1834), as well as many of her lesser-known tales and novels.[22] Similarly, Edgeworth explicitly traces what is at stake in the education of a young *man* in Essays on Professional Education and Patronage (1814), and rehearses this theme for her younger readers in texts like Early Lessons (1801-2) and Frank: A Sequel to Frank in Early Lessons (1822).[23] By the same token, although Edgeworth's Irish Tales are celebrated for their lively and sympathetic portrayal of Ireland and the Irish at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, Castle Rackrent, Ennui (1809), The Absentee (1812), and Ormond (1817) also concern themselves with the national and, implicitly, the *imperial* consequences of the "defective Education" of the individual.[24] As all of this further demonstrates, a striking feature of Edgeworth's work is the degree to which she develops and reworks her different themes throughout her writing. The 'writer' of the "Essay on Self-Justification" in Letters for Literary Ladies, for instance, instructs wives in the art of (mis)ruling the marital home,[25] and the heroine of The Modern Griselda (1804) illustrates the dangers of taking such advice.[26] Practical Education warns its readers, among other things, of the perils of young men falling "victims to the yawning demon of Ennui the moment they are left in solitude",[27] and the hero of Ennui (1809) reveals that this very habit nearly led to his ruination.

As a daughter of an enlightened gentleman, then, Edgeworth "was brought up to believe that a sound education, not gender, was the ultimate measure of ability", but she rapidly discovered that a "gap" existed "between her faith in the Enlightenment promise of progress, and her growing awareness of Enlightenment fear and distrust of women".[28] This "fear and distrust" grew throughout the course of the eighteenth century as individuals struggled to come to terms with a changing social order in which gender roles, and, in particular, the role of women took on increased significance. At the end of the seventeenth century, of primary concern was the need to properly educate young boys so that they could take their place in society. As such, the principal essay in Locke's hugely influential Some Thoughts Upon Education (1693) is specifically addressed to a father educating his son.[29] Rousseau, however, began to reshape the argument when he published Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse in 1761. A version of the medieval story of Abélard and Héloïse, Rousseau's text effectively argues that the stability of society is predicated upon women. It intimates that Julie's potentially revolutionary energy is only diffused once she properly fulfils her obligations as a mother and a wife.[30] Rousseau's Émile (1762) similarly repeats this process of containment. While Émile and Sophy are both educated, an essential point of the text is that Sophy's education is strictly intended to prepare her for the domestic sphere: "To be pleasing in [man's] sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught while she is young".[31]

This emphasis upon the need to educate women in order to prepare them for their domestic role in society features repeatedly in the literature of the period and, in the revolutionary era, as Vineta Colby argues, it came to be understood that upon the results of female education depended nothing less than "the future of the nation itself".[32] Writing in the late 1790s, for instance, Hannah More explicitly links a proper female education to national security in her text. "In this moment of alarm and peril", she writes, women must be properly educated so that they can "come forward, and contribute their full and fair proportion towards the saving of their country".[33] Women who have received a "defective

Education" cannot be expected "to raise the depressed tone of public morals, and to awaken the drowsy spirit of religious principle" of their nation (1: ix, 4). Even a radical such as Mary Wollstonecraft argued that domestic women had to be educated properly in order to fulfil their obligations to society. Ill-educated women, she observes, are

> weak beings [who] are only fit for a seraglio! . . . [W]hilst [women] are only made to acquire personal accomplishments, men will seek for pleasure in variety, and faithless husbands will make faithless wives . . . The box of mischief thus opened in society, what is to preserve private virtue, the only security of public freedom and universal happiness?[34]

This need to educate women properly necessarily affected writers such as Edgeworth, for, as Colby notes, "What woman read is therefore of vital concern to society as a whole, and since they *will* read novels, it becomes an urgent social duty to provide suitable ones" (121). Increasingly, as we shall see, it came to be understood that "suitable" texts were those that impressed a definite moral upon the reader;[35] a recognition, Jane Spencer notes, that peculiarly affected the female writer *and* her texts. "[W]orking within a patriarchal society that define[d] and judge[d] them according to . . . its notions of . . . femininity", Spencer argues that women writers struggled to find a female literary voice acceptable to this society.[36] As such, she insists, women writers manifested various "*response[s]*" to these definitions and judgements in their texts (ix) (Spencer's emphasis). Denoting these responses as "protest, conformity, and escape", Spencer contends that these should not be considered "as mutually exclusive strategies informing three entirely separate traditions" (ix-x). She also observes that these traditions crucially contributed to the evolution of the novel form: "Conformity gave rise to the most continuously sustained of the women's traditions, the novel of the heroine's education. The desire to escape informs the romance tradition, which has so strong an influence on the developing novel and leads to the fantasies of women's gothic" (108). The tradition of protest "dealt with many aspects of women's lives, including their education, and their position as daughters and wives" (109).

Although Spencer's observations have several implications for Edgeworth's use of romance in her writing, her contention that women writers were frequently "drawn to the didactic [or conformist] tradition not because they wanted to preach female subordination,

but because this tradition could be used for the development of a new and more complex treatment of female character" throws a very particular light upon the didacticism of Edgeworth's texts (143). The common didactic theme that unites all of Edgeworth's texts is the stress that they place upon the importance of a sound early education in the cultivation of a rational mind; a point, it is emphasised, that is of particular importance for the *female* reader. The didacticism of Edgeworth's texts argues that women should not be deprived of the means to cultivate their reason, but it also stresses that the ultimate aim of their rational education is to prepare them for the domestic sphere. In their preoccupation with mothers and mothering, Edgeworth's texts therefore trace the crucial role that domestic woman plays in ensuring national stability and in facilitating the spread of the empire. As such, Edgeworth's didacticism seems explicitly designed to satisfy the didactic concerns of both her father and society at the time that she was writing. While Butler may have effectively demolished the myth of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's *direct* interference in his daughter's work, such a reading thus promotes the notion of his *indirect* influence upon her texts; it suggests, as Spencer might have it, that Edgeworth "internalize[d] . . . and reflect[ed]" in her work her father's ideology and that of her age (ix). Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, for example, advances precisely such an argument in her "Home Economics: Domestic Ideology in Maria Edgeworth's Belinda":

> Over the course of the eighteenth century, older-style patriarchy with its emphasis on paternal prerogative, hierarchy and the exercise of force had gradually yielded to new-style patriarchy with its appeal to reason, co-operation between the sexes and the non-coercive exercise of authority. From another perspective, new-style patriarchy no longer operates according to the fear of punishment or injury but according to the more psychologically compelling themes of guilt and obligation. (242-43)[37]

In her Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth and Patriarchal Complicity (1991), Kowaleski-Wallace develops her line of reasoning, noting that Edgeworth's works "repeatedly thematize the family, rehearsing in particular the roles to be taken on by daughters and mothers in relation to patriarchy".[38] As such, Kowaleski-Wallace contends that Edgeworth finally represents a case study "*in complicity*" with the new-style patriarchy of her age (12).

While useful, this approach to Edgeworth's texts takes at face value the didacticism of her work, and it privileges this one feature of her writing over everything else in her texts. Edgeworth's texts *are* didactic, and this didacticism is clearly shaped towards facilitating a moral ending that will educate the reader. At the same time, Edgeworth's didacticism is frequently predicated upon her use of romance conventions, and romance, as Spencer reminds us, frequently denotes a female author's desire to "escape" from the restrictions imposed by patriarchal authority (108). Before we can properly appreciate the significance of romance in Edgeworth's work, we must therefore try to understand how *Edgeworth* herself would have conceived of this narrative form at the time that she was writing. Northrop Frye, in his The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance (1976), contends that "the conventions of prose romance shows little change over the course of centuries".[39] Mysterious births, foster parents, adventures involving capture by pirates, shipwreck, narrow escapes from death, recognition of the true identity of the hero and his eventual marriage to the heroine, he argues, are just some of the conventions that date from the earliest Greek romances. Samuel Johnson seems to agree. In his celebrated Rambler No.4 of the 31st March 1750, he writes, "almost all the fictions of the last age will vanish, if you deprive them of a hermit and a wood, a battle and a shipwreck".[40] In his Dictionary (1755), however, Johnson defines romance as "A military fable of the middle ages; a tale of wild adventures in war and love. . . . A lie; a fiction".[41] What is crucial in this definition is that, while the first part deals with the conventions of romance, the second part intimates that romance represents more than just a set of conventions; it implies, in other words, that there is a *meaning* to this narrative form.

What romance may mean, however, is a profoundly complicated issue and, as Diane Elam demonstrates in her postmodernist study of the genre, the meaning may change from age to age as well as from text to text. Pointing out in contradistinction to Frye that romance inevitably "uses and abuses conventional categories of genre", Elam

contends, "each text must in some way redefine what it means by 'romance,' must in the process of this redefinition create a meaning for the genre of romance to which it addresses itself, at the same time as it loses older, perhaps, more established, meanings".[42] Precisely this emphasis manifests itself in the preface to Don Quixote de la Mancha (1605-15), for example, where Cervantes's evident ambition is to stress the essential originality of his work. Insisting that his text is "full of various wild imaginations, never thought of before", Cervantes observes that he has decided to accept the assurance of one of his friends that he has no need to cite "'in [his] margins the books and authors from whom [he] collected the sentences and sayings [he has] interspersed in [his] history'".[43] Although admitting that he draws upon romance in Don Quixote, Cervantes's intimation is that his text nonetheless represents an entirely new type of literary form; it is, as his "friend" would have it, a sort of book that was previously "never dreamed[,] . . . mentioned, nor . . . heard of" (18).

This argument occurs again and again in the literary productions of British authors from the late seventeenth century onwards. In his preface to Incognita: or, Love and Duty Reconcil'd. A Novel (1692), for instance, William Congreve insists that he "resolved . . . to imitate Dramatick Writing" in his text, "namely, in the Design, Contexture and Result of the Plot".[44] This resolution, he remarks, was at least partially impelled by his conviction that he had "not observed it before in a novel" (n.p.). Although keen to insist that his text is not a romance, Congreve's novel nonetheless draws heavily upon the genre's conventions. His central characters are all highborn, for example, his heroes dress as knights and "perform . . . Exercises of Chivalry", and confused or disguised identity is central to the plot of his work (69). Similarly, Horace Walpole stresses that he deliberately set out to surpass pre-existing models of fiction when producing The Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Story (1764). The writing of the text represented "an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern", he emphasises, and, in so doing, to create "a new species of romance" that had never been seen before:[45]

> In the [ancient romances] all was imagination and improbability: in the [modern], nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. But if in the latter species Nature has cramped imagination, she did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old romances. The actions, sentiments, conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion. (9)

Walpole's decision "to conduct the mortal agents of his drama according to the rules of probability" has a wider generic significance, of course, and I will be returning to this in greater detail hereunder (9). For the moment, though, what I want to emphasise is that, like Cervantes or Congreve before him, Walpole labours to stress his originality as an author; as he would have it, by "reconcil[ing] the two [pre-existing] kinds" of romance in The Castle of Otranto, he "struck out" a decisively "new route" in fiction "for men of brighter talents" (9-10).

If this emphasis in Walpole's, Congreve's, and Cervantes's texts clearly demonstrates the efficacy of Elam's argument that "each [romance] text . . . in some way redefine[s] what it means by 'romance'", it also illustrates the fact that romance authors are typically keen to downplay the debt that they owe to their literary forebears. In her preface to the second edition of The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story (1777), for example, Clara Reeve on the one hand identifies her work as "the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto, written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern novel", while on the other insisting that, "tho' not new", it represents "a species . . .[that] is out of the common track".[46] As she would have it, The Old English Baron "assumes a character and manner of its own", and this significantly distinguishes it from the romances and novels that have gone before (3). In a similar fashion, if we move on to the early nineteenth century, we discover that Sir Walter Scott is less anxious to acknowledge his indebtedness to his literary ancestors than to draw attention to the originality of Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years

Since (1814) as an historical novel. In his first chapter, Scott insists that he consciously chose "an uncontaminated name" for his hero and, while allowing in his "postscript, which should have been a preface" that he has been influenced by "Miss Edgeworth", he is emphatic that he has "trace[d] the evanescent manners" of Scotland in a way that has never been achieved in any other work.[47] In order to make this claim, Scott in the first place downplays the literary efforts of writers such as Elizabeth Hamilton (1758-1816) and Mrs. Anne Grant of Lagan (1755-1838) and, as Katie Trumpener points out, he also ignores the fact that Charlotte Smith (1749-1806) and Jane West (1758-1852) had already made use of the name 'Waverley' in their novels.[48] Even more importantly, he chooses not to acknowledge how closely he draws upon romance in Waverley, using the convention of the quest, for instance, in order to transport his hero, and his reader, back to olden times.[49] This inability, or unwillingness, to confront what we might term 'generic indebtedness' to romance is entirely significant and, as I shall demonstrate, it profoundly affects any reading of Edgeworth's work.

Ian Duncan's Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens (1992) is crucial for my purposes, however, because it not only examines the ways in which the meaning of romance is open to a multiplicity of interpretations, but also traces in particular how the meaning of the genre changed during the course of the eighteenth century. For the first half of the century, Duncan argues, "romance meant any prose fiction in the vernacular tongue, particularly those associated with 'the last age', and more particularly those French *romans héroïques* or *romans à longue haleine*, filled with dilemmas of love and honour and adorned with improbable exploits, written to amuse the *salons* of the age of Louis XIV".[50] Unlike the chivalric romances, these were typically written by and for women, and so they became synonymous with the "figure of a female reader, and a feminine culture of romance" that took on increasingly negative connotations (11). Eventually, these romances became the focus for "cultural anxieties about the role of

women and about an expanding constituency of readers thus coalesced in the figure of the Female Quixote" (12). As Duncan has it, romance reading came to be understood as "pleasure without instruction", and was seen as inherently dangerous for young ladies (12). In this context, Charlotte Lennox's The Female Quixote (1752) provided a cautionary tale about the dangers of such reading. Arabella, the heroine, is an avid reader, who is encouraged by her delighted father, the Marquis, to make full "Use of his Library, in which, unfortunately for her, were great Store of Romances, and, what was still more unfortunate, not in the original *French*, but very bad Translations".[51] These romances had belonged to Arabella's mother, and, from her reading of them, Arabella's "Ideas, from the Manner of her Life, and the Objects around her, had taken a romantic Turn; and, supposing Romances were real Pictures of Life, from them she drew all her Notions and Expectations" (7).

Arabella's error, in supposing that "Romances were real Pictures of Life", sums up what had been identified by the end of the century as the principle danger of reading romance fiction, and it also helps to explain why such reading was seen as particularly dangerous for young women. When we read eighteenth-and nineteenth-century critical reviews of the novel and romance, it becomes clear that the elevation of the novel finally rested not only upon its moral content, but also upon its perceived accurate portrayal of everyday life. In the introduction to his Novel and Romance 1700-1800: A Documentary Record (1970),[52] for example, Ioan Williams refers to Clara Reeve's "evidence" that romances were "eagerly received at reading parties well into the eighteenth century".[53] "As the century wore on, however", he notes, romances were increasingly "condemned for presenting a ridiculous picture of human life and inculcating standards of behaviour which had no validity outside their won artificial world" (5). According to Tobias Smollett in his preface to The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748), this occurred the moment "the authors of romance . . . [lost] sight of probability . . . and [applied] to the wonder rather

than the judgement of their readers".[54] "[I]nstead of supporting the character of their heroes, by dignity of sentiment and practice, [they] distinguished them by their bodily strength, activity and extravagance of behaviour" (xxxiv).

The eventual supremacy of the novel was in itself a hard won victory, however, and the form continued to be viewed with suspicion until late in the century. Although the publication of Pamela and Joseph Andrews in the 1740s "demonstrated that fiction could be popular and yet have artistic and intellectual appeal", as Williams argues, the huge increase of fiction that followed Richardson and Fielding's work simultaneously inculcated "a widespread belief that this fiction was morally and intellectually dangerous" (1, 13). In 1778, therefore, Vicessimus Knox could write:

> If it be true, that the present age is more corrupt than the preceding, the great multiplication of Novels has probably contributed to its degeneracy. Fifty years ago there was scarcely a Novel in the kingdom. Romances, indeed, abounded; but they, it is supposed, were rather favourable to virtue. Their pictures of human nature were not exact, but they were flattering resemblances. By exhibiting patterns of perfection, they stimulated emulation to aim at.[55]

Knox's reasoning is fundamental to any discussion of eighteenth-century romance: it implies that, as reading *inevitably* inspires emulation on the part of the reader, it is far better for him, or her, to read romances which typically depict virtuous heroes and heroines and noble and heroic acts. Rather than condemning romances, Knox to all intents and purposes singles them out for (cautious) praise and, in so doing, he highlights the particular anxiety of those eighteenth-century reviewers and readers who argued that the portrayal of entirely realistic characters in fiction should be discouraged. As Johnson so eloquently puts it in his Rambler No. 4: "It is . . . not a sufficient vindication of a character, that it is drawn as it appears for many characters ought never to be drawn" (12-13). The "purpose" of writing is to

> teach the means of avoiding the snares which are laid by Treachery for Innocence, without infusing any wish for that superiority with which the betrayer flatters his vanity; to give the power of counteracting fraud, without the temptation to practice it; to initiate youth by mock encounters in the art of necessary defense, and to

increase prudence without impairing virtue. (13)

Unlike the writers of what he calls "the romances formerly written", Johnson argues that contemporary authors should not only exhibit "the most perfect idea of virtue", but also must ensure that the virtue they portray is not "above probability": specifically, that it is something "humanity can reach" (11, 14).[56] The same sentiments inform James Beattie's 1783 analysis of Don Quixote, which identifies Cervantes's work as a seminal text.[57] "Don Quixote", he avers, "occasioned the death of the Old Romance, and gave birth to the New. Fiction henceforth divested herself of her gigantick size, tremendous aspect, and frantick demeanour; and, descending to the level of common life, conversed with man as his equal, and as a polite and chearful companion."[58] Beattie's further point, though, is that the reader should not misinterpret his quite lengthy discourse upon romances. The reading of such works is "a dangerous recreation", he insists, it "breeds a dislike to history, and all the substantial parts of knowledge; withdraws the attention from nature, and truth; and fills the mind with extravagant thoughts, and too often criminal propensities" (327). "The fiction of romance", as George Canning put it in 1787,

> is restricted by no fetters of reason, or of truth; but gives a loose to lawless imagination, and transgresses at will the bounds of time and place, of nature and possibility. The fiction of [the novel], on the contrary, is shackled with a thousand restraints; is checked in her most rapid progress by the barriers of reason; and bounded in her most excursive flights by the limits of probability.[59]

In this way, although Knox and Canning characterise romance and the novel in the same manner, Canning evaluates the two genres differently. For him, romance is ultimately more dangerous than the novel because it encourages the reader to cultivate his or her irrational mind.

This polarization of the novel and romance is also illustrated by Clara Reeve's The Progress of Romance, Through Times, Countries and Manners; and the History of Charoba, Queen of Aegypt, which was published in 1785. The definitions that The Progress of Romance offers for both the romance and the novel echo those of Beattie and Canning as Reeves argues that what makes the novel distinctive is its emphasis upon real

life:

> The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things.- The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. The Novel gives a familiar relation of such things,[60] as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves; and the perfection of it, is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable,[61] as to deceive us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses, of the persons in the story, as if they were our own. (1: 111)

Romance and the novel, Reeve contends, have been confounded together "insidiously, by those who endeavour to render all writings of both kinds contemptible" (1: 111-12). She argues that there are reputable and disreputable examples of each of the genres,[62] and she defends the reading of romances, and novels, by insisting that parents should encourage their children "to read what is really good" so that, when they grow up, they will "naturally aspire to read the best books of all kinds" (2: 83). The reading of young girls is of particular importance, Reeve avers, for the perusal of inappropriate novels and romances teach

> young wom[e]n . . . to expect adventures and intrigues, - [they expect] to be addressed in the style of these books, with the language of flattery and adulation. - If a plain man addresses her in rational terms and pays her the greatest of compliments, - that of desiring to spend his life with her, - that is not sufficient, her vanity is disappointed, she expects to meet a Hero in Romance. . . . [or] a fine Gentleman in a Novel. (2: 78)[63]

Reeve's emphasis upon "the best books" leads us back to The Female Quixote and to the "cultural anxieties" that Ian Duncan argues are to be found "coalesced" in Lennox's text. While contemporaries read Arabella's adventures as an attack upon romance fiction, the text at the same time illustrates the reasons why such fiction was so attractive to the heroine in the first place. Living in rural isolation in her father's house, and expected by the Marquis to follow his orders and marry her cousin, Mr. Glanville, Arabella instead (temporarily) empowers herself by insisting upon reading her life according to the romances that she loves. By using the conventions of romance, Arabella therefore resists

moving in a straight line from being somebody's daughter to somebody's wife. As Margaret Anne Doody has it, in her introduction to the 1989 edition of the text: "In acting according to the romances, Arabella . . . supplie[s] the lack of an emotional life, create[s] some room for libido, and take[s] upon herself the role of heroic protector of her own chastity."[64] Put another way, and to paraphrase George Canning, Arabella lets her lawless, "*transfiguring*" imagination take flight,[65] and she successfully, if momentarily,[66] transcends the boundaries of her patriarchal existence. In so doing, The Female Quixote thereby reveals the shocking truth that women desire to be more than mere ciphers: a recognition that helps to explain why late-eighteenth-century reviewers heaped such ridicule and condemnation upon romance texts. In a society that was struggling to shore up the patriarchal order in the face of a new age, the 'moral' novel, with its increasing emphasis upon the desirability of the domestic sphere for women, was inevitably perceived as infinitely more suitable reading material for women than the fictions of romance. For, if romances "tell the truth of female desire", as Patricia Meyer Spacks argues, Arabella's desire to replicate the adventures of which she has read therefore "declares her determination to create significance. That subversive desire, a threat to the status quo, defines her as more dangerous than a woman driven by obviously erotic yearnings and raises the possibility that this novel embodies a revolutionary 'tendency'".[67] Laurie Langbauer puts it this way:

> Arabella is obsessed with the disdainful ladies, the lordly ladies, of romance not simply because she is obsessed with sex, but because even more deeply she yearns for power. . . . What she most often cites from romance are instances of heroines' power – the preeminence of their every gesture, their absolute authority over their lovers, their mastery over life and death.[68]

What, then, are we to make of the fact that Edgeworth frequently resorts to the conventions of this "subversive", "dangerous", and "revolutionary" genre in her writing? In the first instance, Edgeworth's texts and letters clearly demonstrate that she was a voracious reader, and so it is hardly surprising that she drew upon romance, as well as

upon history, novels, and travel literature in order to fashion her own narrative form.[69] Further, her correspondence also reveals that she particularly appreciated the ability of a text to 'carry' her 'away' and it is in precisely this context that she praises Elizabeth Inchbald's A Simple Story (1791), for example, or Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Turkish Letters (1763). Writing of the former to her aunt Ruxton, she observes,

> I have just been reading, I believe for the 4th time the Simple Story which I intended this time to read as a critic that I might write to Mrs. Inchbald about it – but I was so carried away by it that I was totally incapable of thinking of criticism or Mrs. Inchbald or of anything but Miss Milner & Doriforth, who appeared to me real persons, whom I saw & heard & who had such power to interest me that I had cried my eyes almost out before I came to the end of their story. I think it the most pathetic & most powerfully interesting tale I ever yet read.[70]

Similarly, commenting upon Montagu's text, she writes, "My head has been these two day[s] in . . . [the] turkish letters - & I see nothing wherever I go but visions of beauteous Fatimas and palaces wainscotted with mother of pearl & nails of emeralds".[71] In responding to texts in this fashion, Edgeworth's correspondence moreover reveals that she was perfectly willing to overlook those moments when a work's (romantic) narrative enabled the limitations of real life to be transcended. Commenting upon Sydney Owenson's The Princess, or, The Beguine (1835) in a letter to her third stepmother, for instance, Edgeworth remarks that the book is "exceedingly amusing . . . both by its merits & its absurdities".[72] Although there are "various errors" to be "detected . . . in [Owenson's] historical remarks & allusions", Edgeworth insists, "we must grant a romance writer a few improbabilities", and indicates that she "would be as charitable as possible" in granting "this right of allowance". Mrs. Edgeworth also quotes from this letter in her Memoir of her stepdaughter, and adds a remark that illustrates that its sentiments were entirely typical of Edgeworth's response to a text. "Maria", she observes, "was always so much interested in a story that she would not stop to reason upon it. I remember when Lady Morgan's 'O'Donnell' [sic] was being read out in the year 1815, at the scene of McRory's appearance in the billiard room, when Mr. Edgeworth said, 'This is quite

improbable;' Maria exclaimed, 'Never mind the improbability, let us go on with the entertainment'" (3: 166).

Even more significantly, perhaps, Edgeworth's letters demonstrate that this determination to "'go on with the entertainment'" frequently swept her away as an *author*, and this is illustrated in the first instance by the fact that she steadfastly resisted her father's encouragement to keep a written note of potential material, preferring, instead, to store up possible incidents and characters in her head. In her oft-quoted letter upon the art of fiction to her friend, Mrs. Stark, she explains, "'I knew that, when I wrote down, I put the thing out of my care, out of my head; and that, though it might be put by very safe, I should not know where to look for it; that the labour of looking over a note-book would never do when I was in the warmth and pleasure of inventing'".[73] Observing that she never used a notebook when writing dialogue, Edgeworth emphasises that she preferred "'imagining [herself] each speaker, and that too fully engrosses the imagination to leave time for consulting note-books; the whole fairy vision would melt away, and the warmth and the pleasure of invention be gone'" (3: 154). As both an author and reader, it is therefore clear that Edgeworth was not a totally didactic creature, and that she thoroughly enjoyed reading and producing texts that stimulated not only her intellect, but also her imagination and heart.

Secondly, Edgeworth's use of romance might also be interpreted as a concessionary gesture to her readers, one through which she attempts to 'sweeten' for them the less appealing didactic connotations of her writing. Henry Stephen posits as much in the Quarterly Review, for example, where he delivers his opinion of the 1809 series of Tales of Fashionable Life. "As a writer of tales and novels", he observes, Edgeworth "has a very marked peculiarity. It is that of venturing to dispense common sense to her readers, and to bring them within the precincts of real life and natural feeling".[74] Unlike other writers, Stephen insists, Edgeworth delights in portraying the gradual development of character,

and "[t]his . . . is often so exquisitely managed, as to leave the readers of romance no regret for the shining improbabilities to which they have been accustomed" (ii: 147). "To our shame, however", he significantly continues, "we must acknowledge that we always think her most agreeable when she deviates a little from her rigid realities, and concedes to the *corrupted taste* of her readers some petty sprinkling of romantic feeling and extraordinary incident" (ii: 147) (My emphasis). By the time he came to review the 1812 series of Tales of Fashionable Life for the Quarterly, John Wilson Croker had evidently decided that this need to 'sweeten' the text with a "slight sprinkling of the extraordinary" had vanished. Emphatically declaring that "'*vraisemblable*' is the only legitimate province of the novelist who aims at improving the understanding or touching the heart", he thus congratulates Edgeworth for moving away from romance in her work.[75] "[W]e cannot reconcile ourselves to the violent and unnecessary vicissitudes of fortune and feeling which disfigure, in a greater or less [sic] degree, every tale of the first *livraison* of this work", Croker observes, and

> are therefore glad to be able to say that in the present volumes we find much less reason for complaint on this point; and we are satisfied that a more genuine and sustained interest is preserved by this attention to probability, than could have been excited by those more amazing incidents and transactions with which Miss Edgeworth has sometimes endeavoured to captivate our attention. (vii: 329)

Most obviously, Edgeworth's preoccupation with romance in her texts can be read as yet another manifestation of her ambition to educate her readers: to teach them, that is, how to negotiate properly this potentially dangerous narrative form. In all of her works, but particularly in Practical Education and Essays on Professional Education, Edgeworth insists that complex gender issues simmer beneath an individual's choice of reading material: responsible parents, she avers, *must* properly supervise their children's choice of books. While Practical Education argues that boys and girls alike must be taught to cultivate their reason, the text emphatically declares, "it may be necessary to remind all who are concerned in *female* education, that particular caution is necessary to manage

female sensibility; to make, what is called the heart, a source of permanent pleasure, we must cultivate the reasoning powers at the same time that we repress the enthusiasm of *fine feeling*" (1: 296-97). This necessity arises from women's "situation and duties in society", which calls upon them "rather for the daily exercise of quiet domestic virtues, than for those splendid acts of generosity, or those exaggerated expressions of tenderness, which are the characteristics of heroines in romance" (1: 297). Clearly echoing Clara Reeve's arguments in The Progress of Romance, Practical Education insists that young ladies inevitably find themselves dissatisfied with their daily existence once they have fed their imaginations upon inappropriate books. "Women, who have been much addicted to common novel-reading", Edgeworth's text notes, "are always acting in imitation of some Jemima, or Almeria, who never existed, and they perpetually mistake Plain William and Thomas for '*My Beverly*!'" (1: 297).[76] Such women also labour under "another peculiar misfortune; they require continual great emotions to keep them in tolerable humour with themselves" (1: 297).

By proposing the means through which women can guard against such dangers, Edgeworth rehearses a strategy that is central to *all* of her writing: she polarizes science and romance, the rational and the imaginative mind. "Women, who cultivate their reasoning powers, and who acquire tastes for science and literature", she notes, "find sufficient variety in life, and do not require the *stimulus* of dissipation, or of romance" (1: 298). With their sympathy and sensibility "engrossed by proper objects, and connected with habits of useful exertion: they usually feel the affection which others profess, and actually enjoy the happiness which others describe" (1: 298). Intriguingly, this insistence in the text breaks down the opposition that Edgeworth overtly labours to construct between "science and literature": specifically, it implies not only that *all* women yearn for a romantic existence, but also that the best way for them to achieve this is by manifesting resolutely rational behaviour.

In the light of such arguments, it is not surprising that Edgeworth's chapter on books in Practical Education devotes particular attention to the care that must be taken in supervising the reading material of young girls and women. In the first instance, the text argues that the role of the mother is crucial; it insists that she must carefully supervise the reading of *all* of her children. "We are acquainted with the mother of a family, who has never trusted any book to her children, without having first examined it herself with the most scrupulous attention; her care has been repaid with that success in education, which such care can alone endure' (1: 321-22). Such vigilance goes beyond merely marking books with pencil. This mother made herself the ultimate censor of her children's reading material by performing "some necessary operations [with] her scissars" (1: 322). Even more precautions must be taken, though, when the books in question are destined for young girls:

> With respect to sentimental stories, and books of mere entertainment, we must remark, that they should be sparingly used, especially in the education of girls. This species of reading cultivates what is called the heart prematurely, lowers the tone of the mind, and induces indifference for those common pleasures and occupations which, however trivial in themselves, constitute by far the greatest portion of our daily happiness. (1:332-33).

The negative "effects which are produced upon the female mind by immoderate novel-reading" cannot be underestimated (1: 333). "To those who acquire this taste every object becomes disgusting which is not in an attitude for poetic painting" (1: 333). The real threat of this reading, the text reveals, is that it poses a considerable potential danger to the stability of the domestic sphere: "A tragedy heroine, weeping, swooning, dying, is a moral-picturesque object; but the frantic passions, which have the best effect upon the stage, might, when exhibited in domestic life, appear to be drawn upon too large a scale to please" (1: 333).

At the same time, books such as Robinson Crusoe, which "should not early be chosen for boys of an enterprising temper, unless they are intended for a seafaring life, or

for the army", are perfectly safe for the female reader (1: 336). This type of reading "cannot be as dangerous [for girls] as it is to boys; girls must very soon perceive the impossibility of their rambling about the world in quest for adventures; and where there appears an obvious impossibility in gratifying any wish, it is not likely to become, or at least to continue, a torment to the imagination" (1: 336). I would suggest that this argument in Edgeworth's text is crucial, for two reasons. Firstly, Edgeworth's ostensible contention here is that the reading of romance is always dangerous because it unleashes powerful desires in the reader. These desires, she intimates, are inevitably linked to action: the reader *always* tries to emulate that of which he or she reads. Unlike Arabella's beloved romances in The Female Quixote, romances of conquest and adventure like Robinson Crusoe (1719) are therefore 'safe' for female readers. These, Edgeworth implies, will never *physically* be in the position to replicate such books.[77] Secondly, while acknowledging the dangers of romance reading, Edgeworth simultaneously admits its *power*. She intimates, that is, that it will be to Britain's national and imperial advantage if romance reading is allowed to *certain* young boys. Essays on Professional Education thus positions Robinson Crusoe at the beginning of a long list of recommended reading for the future soldier or sailor. Such boys, Edgeworth insists, "should read accounts of shipwrecks and hair-breadth scapes [sic], voyages and travels, histories of adventurers, beginning with Robinson Crusoe".[78] Acknowledging that reading inevitably inculcates the reader's desire to emulate what is being read, Essays on Professional Education designates Robinson Crusoe as "the most interesting of all stories, and one which has *sent* many a youth to sea" (137) (My emphasis). Edgeworth develops this argument in the chapter devoted to the military and naval professions in Essays on Profession Education, declaring that romance reading should not only be exalted but also positively encouraged in this very particular young male reader:

> The first books that [such a young man] reads should be such as are calculated to rouse in his young mind the notions of honour, and the feelings of emulation. In his education it must be the object to excite enthusiasm, not to subject him at an early age to the nice calculations of *prudence*. Consequently a species of reading, which may be disapproved of for other pupils, should be recommended to the young soldier. His imagination should be exalted by the adventurous and the marvellous. Stories of giants, and genii, and knights and tournaments, and 'pictured tales of vast heroic deeds,' should feed his fancy. (137)

Pointedly, the text observes that the "grand object" of this boy's education is to "excite . . . in [his] mind, admiration for great actions, and a passionate enthusiastic desire to imitate" that of which he reads (142). In this way, Edgeworth's work not only anticipates that the reading of romance texts like Robinson Crusoe will inspire young men to travel, but also that it will encourage them to make manifest Britain's incontrovertible moral and cultural superiority in their dealings with other races and lands.

Edgeworth's efforts to harness romance in this manner therefore demonstrate not only her perception that the genre "is implicitly instructive as well as escapist",[79] but also the efficacy of Northrop Frye's contention that romance is frequently "kidnapped" into literature in order to support "the ideology of an ascendant class" (29, 57). "In every period of history", he writes, "certain ascendant values are accepted by society and are embodied in its serious literature. Usually this process includes some form of kidnapped romance, that is, romance formulas used to reflect certain ascendant religious or social ideas" (29-30). This is obviously true of those instances in Practical Education and Essays on Professional Education where Edgeworth tries to use romance to facilitate *directly* national and imperial expansion, but it is also true of the way in which she uses the genre's conventions throughout her work in order to cultivate the reason of her other, more general readers. Through her use of romance conventions, Edgeworth turns this into an *ontological* issue, and she implies that the individual will only be 'happy' if he or she cultivates a rational mind. As my arguments here are particularly informed by my reading of Frye's analysis of romance, it might be useful to briefly state his main contentions at

this point of my thesis.

In his reading of romance, Frye argues that the genre's heroes and villains primarily exist to symbolize a contrast between two worlds. "There is, first", he writes,

> a world associated with happiness, security, and peace; the emphasis is often thrown on childhood or on an 'innocent' or pre-genital period of youth, and the images are those of spring and summer, flowers and sunshine. I shall call this world the idyllic world. The other is a world of exciting adventures, but adventures which involve separation, loneliness, humiliation, pain, and the threat of more pain. I shall call this world the demonic or night world. (53)

Emphasising that "[e]ven in the most realistic stories there is usually some trace of a plunge downward at the beginning and a bounce upward at the end", Frye contends, "most romances exhibit a cyclical movement of descent into a night world and a return to the idyllic world, or to some symbol of it like a marriage" (54). The hero or heroine's sense of ontological crisis, or "alienation", typically compels this "cyclical movement", with him or her perceiving that he or she no longer occupies an authentic identity, or 'self' (54). "Reality for romance", Frye thus observes, "is an order of existence most readily associated with the word identity. Identity means a good many things, but all its meanings in romance have some connection with a state of existence in which there is nothing to write about" (54). This state, it may be inferred, typically exists immediately before or after the journey, or quest, which is undertaken by the hero or heroine as a result of his or her sense of ontological insecurity or "alienation". Once this journey or quest has been completed, and the hero or heroine's identity has been (re)established, the narrative ceases, usually with a profoundly symbolic celebration, such as a marriage, closing the text. As Frye puts it, "Most romances end happily, with a return to the state of identity, and begin with a departure from it" (54).

If Ennui, The Absentee, and Ormond lend themselves most obviously to Frye's model, it is my contention that Edgeworth draws upon such a paradigm throughout her writing. In her case, however, her heroes and villains do not exist to symbolize a contrast

between two worlds, but, rather, between two ontological conditions, or states. As we shall see, the didactic emphasis of Edgeworth's work is that it is necessary to cultivate one's rational mind in order to be happy and, further, that the individual who fails to do so is inevitably plunged into an underworld life. Overtly, therefore, Edgeworth's texts argue that the pleasures of passion and the emotions *always* prove to be illusory, and they contend that the truly contented individual is the one who uses his reason to govern his imagination and heart. While Edgeworth's use of romance conventions thus appears to immediately facilitate the didactic imperatives that impel her texts, the very fact that she relies so heavily upon the genre in the first place introduces some curiously subversive resonances into her writing. Firstly, critics observe that romance is, by definition, a 'prophetic' genre; that it seeks not so much to represent or to interpret reality, as to create an idealized view of the world.[80] As it is always concerned with illustrating the "potential", the "possible", or, even more significantly, the "ideal", they note there is, inevitably, a strong "wish-fulfillment element" to romance texts (Frye 179).

For her part, Edgeworth goes to great lengths to stress the essential veracity of her work, insisting in her letters and her textual footnotes that many of her fictional "scenes, sayings and events are . . . factually based".[81] In particular, she avers that Richard Lovell Edgeworth has primarily inspired much of what she writes, and she intimates time and again that she is effectively recording details that have been faithfully drawn from his life. By using romance in order to facilitate "the transcription of [this] actuality",[82] though, Edgeworth exposes the "wish-fulfillment element" of her writing, thereby raising the possibility that she is finally unfolding a distinctly *Edgeworthian* view of reality to her readers. Ironically, this is made particularly apparent by the extraordinary emphasis that Richard Lovell Edgeworth places upon the realistic nature of his daughter's texts. In his preface to The Parents' Assistant, for example, Edgeworth's father assures the reader that the tales that follow are no mere fantasies: they are, he avers, useful lessons that have been

drawn from real life. While writing the texts, he insists, great care was taken "to avoid inflaming the imagination, or exciting a restless spirit of adventure, by exhibiting false views of life, and creating hopes which, in the ordinary course of things, cannot be realized" (1: xi). What Richard Lovell Edgeworth effectively asserts in his preface, therefore, is that his daughter's texts are incontrovertibly realistic; that they are, in other words, *opposed* to romance.

This tacit attack upon romance is made explicit when Richard Lovell Edgeworth quotes Johnson's observation that "'[b]abies do not like to hear stories of babies like themselves . . . they require to have their imaginations raised by tales of giants and fairies, and castles and enchantments'" (1: xi). Richard Lovell Edgeworth's contention is that, even if this is true, "why . . . should [babies] be indulged in reading them? It may be said that a little experience in life would soon convince them, that fairies, giants, and enchanters, are not to be met with in the world. But why should the mind be filled with fantastic visions, instead of useful knowledge?[83] Why should so much valuable time be lost?" (1: xi).[84] This same argument features again in the preface to Moral Tales. The difficulty of writing for youth is repeated once more, and Richard Lovell Edgeworth indicates that the text is designed for readers who are older than those of The Parents' Assistant. His further assertion is that the tales that follow "shall neither dissipate the attention, nor inflame the imagination" (1: v). By implying that his daughter's texts are based upon real life, that is, upon lessons learned from the education of his own children, Richard Lovell Edgeworth does not of course admit that the 'reality' upon which the didacticism of the texts rests is in itself a type of 'romance' in that what he and Edgeworth offer the readers are texts that are based upon a very particular version of the Edgeworth family. While it can be argued that *all* texts are *always* slanted to suit the vision of the author, the Edgeworths' didactic vision meant that they had to be the exemplars of the texts that they were producing. Put simply, they had to be the living proof of their own lessons

on education. It is this recognition that lends a peculiar significance to the letter that Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote to Sara, his wife, urging her to read Practical Education:

> 'I pray you, my love! read Edgeworth's Essay on Education - read it heart & soul - & if you approve of the mode, teach Hartley his Letters . . . J. Wedgewood informed me that the Edgeworths were most miserable when Children, & yet the Father, *in his book*, is ever vapouring about their *Happiness*! - ! - However there are very good things in the work - & some nonsense!'[85]

This comment of Wedgewood's implies that there exists a different 'version' of the Edgeworth family than that which is constructed by Richard Lovell Edgeworth and his daughter in their work, and this recognition obviously has profound implications for Edgeworth's readers. In the first instance, it challenges the didactic efficacy of her texts by exposing what I would term their *aspirational* nature. It intimates that, contrary to the Edgeworths' didactic assertions, the results of their system are *not* certain, and that there is no guarantee that the outcomes of Edgeworth's texts can be extra-textually reproduced. While this recognition clearly impacts upon all of Edgeworth's work, it particularly affects her Irish writing, for, implicitly, each of her Irish texts revolves around the argument that all of Ireland's difficulties will be necessarily resolved once every one of the nation's landlords replicates Richard Lovell Edgeworth's example. By similarly returning "home"[86] to their Irish estates, the texts aver, Ireland's erstwhile absentee landlords will effectively recover the true lineaments of their Protestant Ascendancy identity and, more than this, they, too, will discover that their reformation will be necessarily recognized and appreciated by their native dependents. In discovering themselves as enlightened landlords and impartial magistrates to their tenants, Edgeworth asserts, the Protestant Ascendancy will *inevitably* reap the rewards of their ontological labours; as she would have it in Richard Lovell Edgeworth's Memoirs, each, like her father, will be recognized as "a *real gentleman*" for coming back (2: 37). "This phrase, pronounced with well known emphasis, comprises a great deal in the opinion of the lower Irish", she contends, "They seem to have an instinct for the *real gentleman*, whom they distinguish, if not at first sight, infallibly at

first hearing, from every pretender to the character" (2: 37).

Edgeworth makes extremely complex use of romance imagery and conventions in order to sustain this argument in her Irish writing, to all intents and purposes (re)presenting Richard Lovell Edgeworth's 1782 return to Ireland to her readers as an archetypal quest with apocalyptic consequences for national and imperial reform. In so doing, she illustrates a crucial point about romance: namely, that the production of a romance text pleasures the *author* as well as the reader; that the "desires" of *both* are fulfilled by the text that is produced.[87] Edgeworth's use of romance, as we shall see, peculiarly satisfies her ambition to turn Richard Lovell Edgeworth's experiences and theories into what Frye would call "the structural core" of her fiction; it allows her, that is, to rehearse a "vision of [her father's] life as a quest" towards the widespread dissemination of reason and knowledge (15). By constructing her texts around Richard Lovell Edgeworth's 1782 return to Ireland, moreover, Edgeworth simultaneously demonstrates the efficacy of Frye's argument regarding the way in which the manipulation of time contributes to the wish-fulfilment element of romance fiction. "Time being irreversible", he notes, "a return to a starting point [in a text] . . . can only be a symbol for something else" (175). "The past is not returned to; it is recreated", and so an author illustrates the "selective" nature of memory whenever he or she 'brings' something 'back' (175). Further, by "recreat[ing] the past and bring[ing] it into the present", the author at the same time "bring[s] something into the present which is potential or possible, and in that sense belongs to the future" (179). To put this another way, he or she illustrates what Gillian Beer identifies as the prophetic nature of romance: specifically, how the genre enables the individual who controls it to impose the effects of his or her "transfiguring imagination" upon the world, and to therefore ignore the limitations of the reality in which he or she is placed (79, 41).

This argument is important, and so I want to elaborate upon the issues that it raises more fully here by referring once again to Don Quixote. In this text, Cervantes's hero

evidences a stubborn refusal to accept the reality in which he finds himself and this propensity, critics insist, may or may not be indicative of the fact that he is finally labouring under nothing more than a deep-seated psychosis.[88] As the canon observes to Don Quixote at one point:

> 'How is it possible, any human understanding can persuade itself, there ever was in the world . . . so many dragons, so many giants, so many unheard-of adventures, so many kinds of enchantments, so many battles, so many furious encounters, so much bravery of attire, so many princesses in love, so many squires become earls, so many witty dwarfs, so many billets-doux, so many courtships, so many valiant women . . . so many and such absurd accidents, as your books of knight-errantry contain?' (485-86)

While men may read such texts and even enjoy them, the canon's argument is that any *sane* man would "'consider what they are'" and throw them from him "'against the wall, [or] . . . into the fire, . . . for being false and inveigling'" (486). In order to counteract the canon's argument, Don Quixote draws upon the ingenious theory of reality that he has earlier constructed for his squire, Sancho Panza. It is the *canon*, he maintains, who is "'the madman and the enchanted person'", for, as he would have it, the cleric has fallen victim of "'the crew of enchanters [that is] always about us, . . . alter[ing] and disguis[ing] all our matters, and turn[ing] them according to their own pleasure . . . [into] something else'" (487, 219). Don Quixote, on the other hand, is adamant that his belief in romance actually *protects* him from these enchanters: "'the order of chivalry'", as he calls it, has "'ways of compounding . . . everything'" and this enables him to pierce through the delusions that blind other men and so see of what reality is truly made (149).[89]

Cervantes's hero persistently denies the reality in which he finds himself in order to sustain this argument, and the far-reaching consequences of his strategy are most clearly illustrated for the reader when he and Sancho Panza discuss Dulcinea del Toboso, his beloved. Don Quixote asserts that Dulcinea is "'beautiful and chaste'", but Sancho rebuts this, observing that the girl in question is in fact a "'jade'", Aldonza Lorenzo, who "'will pitch the bar with the lustiest swain in the parish'" (226, 224). To contradict the squire's

argument, Don Quixote invokes what Michael McKeon calls "the aestheticizing language of 'as if'",[90] and this enables him not only to impose his 'imaginings' upon Dulcinea del Toboso (*and* others), but also to "'look upon'" his fantastic, as-yet unperformed deeds "'as already done'" (289). "'I imagine that everything is exactly as I say, without addition or diminution'", he notes,

> 'and I represent [Dulcinea] to my thoughts just as I wish her to be both in beauty and quality. Helen is not comparable to her, nor is she excelled by Lucretia, or any other of the famous women of antiquity, whether Grecian, Latin, or Barbarian. And let every one say what he pleases; for if, upon this account, I am blamed by the ignorant, I shall not be censured by the most severe judges.' (226)

By acting *as if* Aldonza Lorenzo is beautiful and chaste, in other words, Don Quixote *makes* her become so; the fact that he "'believe[s]'" her to possess these qualities is in itself "'sufficient'" to turn her into "'the greatest princess in the world'" (226).

My following chapters will explore the more complex connotations of this "aestheticizing" strategy in more detail, but what I want to emphasise here is that it peculiarly illustrates Diane Elam's contention that what Frye calls 'kidnapped romance' frequently "act[s] as a narrative veil that hides 'the language of ideology'" (20). By acting at all times *as if* what he envisions *is* real, Don Quixote anticipates making what he envisions *become* real, but, crucially, this involves persuading others to accept his interpretation of himself and of knightly behaviour. When he and Sancho Panza happen upon some windmills, for example, Don Quixote insists upon casting them as "'monstrous giants'" (65). In so doing, though, he observes not only that he "'intend[s] to fight [them], and take away all their lives'", but also that this will "'begin to enrich'" both himself and his squire (65). Significantly, Don Quixote immediately insists to Sancho Panza that such actions are entirely warranted: "'it is lawful war, and doing God good service to take away so wicked a generation from off the face of the earth'" (65). Similarly, Cervantes's hero advances a very particular reading of chivalric romances in order to justify both his own colonial desires and those of Sancho Panza:

> 'You must know . . . that it was a custom much in use among the knights-errant of old, to make their squires governors of the islands or kingdoms they conquered; and I am determined that so laudable a custom shall not be lost for me: on the contrary, I resolve to outdo them in it . . . And do not think this any extraordinary matter; for things falls out to such knights by such unforeseen and unexpected ways, that I may easily give thee more than I promise.' (64)

As Frye would have it, here and throughout the text, Don Quixote uses the rituals of his beloved chivalric romances to "[express] the ascendancy of [the] horse-riding aristocracy" to which he aspires (57).[91] That is, he draws upon them in order to "express . . . [his] dreams of [his] own social function, and the idealized acts of protection and responsibility that [he] invokes to justify that function" (57). "This is the process of . . . 'kidnapping' romance", Frye observes, and it demonstrates that, skilfully used, the genre is an extremely powerful ideological weapon (57).

A central point of my dissertation, then, will be that Edgeworth for her part uses romance with a singular talent. On the one hand, her work (overtly) unfolds a vision of reality that is based upon a distinctly rational ideology, and it implies that, in order to be useful and happy, the individual *must* cultivate his/her reason and reject the delusions of romance in favour of rational knowledge. On the other, by drawing heavily upon romance conventions in order to facilitate this argument in the first place, Edgeworth at the same time (covertly) admits not only the power and pleasure, but also the crucial *necessity* of the imaginative life. To put this another way, she reveals her perception that reason alone is not sufficient to (re)negotiate existence, and that the passions and imagination are also necessary to (re)order the world. In my first chapter, I will focus upon texts like Letters for Literary Ladies, Belinda, and Helen, and I will demonstrate how Edgeworth's use of romance in these works both promotes *and* interrogates a view of reality that is predicated upon a distinctly (patriarchal) rational vision. By using romance in an attempt to facilitate this vision, Edgeworth, I will argue, curiously destabilizes the overt didactic message of her texts, and she reveals her recognition that it may finally be woman's passion and

imagination, rather than her reason, that will enable to her to transcend the limitations of domestic life. In advancing this argument, we shall see that Edgeworth concurrently illustrates her conviction that the cultivation of one's reason is not an unproblematic process and that it frequently involves tremendous mental, emotional, and, sometimes, physical suffering. This issue, among others, will be examined in my second chapter upon Edgeworth's tales for children and young adults, where, I will suggest, she peculiarly reveals her sense of the *pain* that the child or adolescent suffers when his/her imaginative excesses are (re)directed. In this context, my contention will be that readers must beware of reading these texts as purely didactic set-pieces: they are profoundly subversive, I shall demonstrate, and they use romance in order to both rehearse *and* interrogate (idealized) patterns of adulthood as well as childhood and adolescence.

Chapter three will move on to a consideration of Edgeworth's analysis of the wider, national and imperial implications of a young person's education. Specifically, it will trace why she carefully qualifies her arguments about romance in relation to the young male reader, insisting that, for the good of Britain and her empire, particular texts *should* be read by *certain* young boys. Peculiarly conscious that romance reading always unleashes desire in the reader, Edgeworth's point is that such texts must be used to produce those desires that impel Britain's mercantile and colonial expansion and, further, to regulate those desires *after* they are produced. Chapter four will develop this argument, and it will examine how Edgeworth endeavours to use romance as a veil to disguise the less appealing aspects of colonial and imperial ideology. Rather than addressing Britain's involvement in slavery and the slave trade directly, for instance, we shall discover that Edgeworth uses romance to facilitate the construction of a 'paternalistic' vision of reality; as she would have it, *all* Britons are necessarily honourable and virtuous and so it is to *everyone's* benefit that Britain should spread its influence across the face of the earth. My fifth chapter will examine this colonizing romance more closely, and detail why its terms are

inevitably influenced by Edgeworth's analysis of the social and political situation in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Ireland. Faced with the difficulty of negotiating Ireland's colonial situation in her work, I will argue, Edgeworth tries to deny or to disguise it, constructing a vision of Ireland in her writing that both justifies and facilitates the continuing presence of the colonizing class that she herself represents. In so doing, my contention will be that Edgeworth concomitantly betrays her perception that the vision of Ireland that she is producing in her texts is *literally* a fiction, and my final argument will be that this recognition is incredibly important to our understanding of how romance operates in not only these texts, but in *all* of her work.

Chapter 1:

Maria Edgeworth and the Education of women.

The misfortune of women has usually been, to have power trusted to them before they were educated to use it prudently.[1]

When Maria Edgeworth published her first ever text, Letters for Literary Ladies, to which is added An Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification, in 1795, she took as her subject a topic that greatly exercised the pens of writers throughout the eighteenth century: women's education. She also, of course, produced her work when "[t]he Rise of Revolutionary feminism and even the prominence of women writers, whatever their politics, seemed [increasingly] to challenge paternalist and patriarchal power".[2] Not surprisingly, then, Edgeworth peculiarly encodes her awareness of *and* her responses to such ideological formations in her text. As well as advocating the cultivation of women's reason, Letters for Literary Ladies simultaneously insists that this in itself will necessarily guarantee the continuance of the patriarchal prerogative. The rational woman, the text avers, will inevitably reject the temptations posed by passion and the imagination in favour of the duties and pleasures of domestic life. Although the didactic level of Edgeworth's text thus appears to immediately facilitate the rationalist ideology that impels all of her writing, we shall see that there is another, subversive dimension to this work. On this second level, Letters for Literary Ladies admits not only that women perceive both the attraction and, crucially, the *power* of a passionate and imaginative existence, but also that even the rational, educated lady may succumb to its temptations. In advancing these arguments in her text, Edgeworth therefore manifests the ambivalent preoccupation with romance texts that would inform all of her writing. On the one hand, she insists that romance reading is dangerous for women; that it leaves them vulnerable to foolish

fantasises and misconceptions. On the other, Edgeworth reveals her perception that it may be the reading of romance that will finally empower women; that it may be this, rather than reason, that will ultimately enable them to renegotiate the limitations of domestic life. In this way, Letters for Literary Ladies effectively sets up the terms of the complex discourse that informs Edgeworth's treatment of women's education throughout her work, and my intention in this chapter is to move from a consideration of this text to an analysis of how this discourse develops in her later (women's) tales and novels. Focusing in particular upon Belinda (1801) and Helen (1834), which were published some thirty odd years apart, I will consider whether Edgeworth's treatment of romance differs substantially in these two texts.

As its name suggests, Letters for Literary Ladies takes the form of an epistolary text, and, as such, it is entirely appropriate that the text has its origins in a series of letters exchanged between Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Thomas Day (1748-89), his great friend. In their correspondence, the two men discussed women's education in general and the possibility of a literary career for Maria Edgeworth in particular. Day was horrified when he discovered that Richard Lovell Edgeworth was encouraging his daughter to study politics and history, and positively outraged when he learned that Edgeworth was preparing a translation of Madame de Genlis's Adèle et Théodore: ou, Lettres sur l'education (1782) with a view to publication. In the event, another translation appeared first, and Edgeworth did not publish her first text until six years after Day's death.[3] In this context, the first part of Letters for Literary Ladies, "Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend, upon the Birth of a Daughter", and, "Answer to the Preceding Letter", is much more than the (literary) site of an intense, intellectual debate: it is also the place wherein Edgeworth affords herself the last word on an argument that had already been played out in real life.

The Gentleman in Letters for Literary Ladies takes Day's part in the text,

advancing the type of arguments that Day put forward against Edgeworth's education and possible literary career. Crucially for my purposes, the overwhelming implication of his argument is that he opposes the education of women because he believes that women *always* perceive things differently from men. "[W]e see things as they are", he observes, "but women must always see things through a veil, or cease to be women" (3). His true fear, it rapidly becomes apparent, is that, once they are educated, women will be better able to impose their (non-patriarchal) view of reality upon their surroundings; that is, they will be able to force the world to imitate the romantic (mis)perceptions of their imagination and heart. Noting that "[m]uch attention has lately been paid to the education of the female sex", the Gentleman thus adopts a distinctly patriarchal, utilitarian stance in relation to "the literary productions of women" (3). He insists that he has yet to be provided with "solid proofs of [the] utility" of such endeavours, and observes, "In poetry, plays, and romances, in the art of imposing upon the understanding by means of the imagination, [women] have excelled; - but to useful literature they have scarcely turned their thoughts" (3). Invoking a motif that is central not only to Edgeworth's writing, but also to much literature of this period, the Gentleman therefore explicitly genders science and romance, reason and the imagination. "I have never heard of any female proficients in science", he argues, "few have pretended to science till within these few years" (3).

In advancing this argument, the Gentleman develops an earlier point in his text, thereby further revealing his anxiety that educated women will encroach upon the male prerogative. Although he is willing to admit (grudgingly) "that women are equal [to men] in natural abilities", he emphasises that they also occupy a very particular "situation in society", and that disastrous results must necessarily result when women seek to infringe upon the male preserve (2). Admitting that some women have succeeded "in the most difficult and most extensive science of politics", he reveals his fear is that women will *subjugate* men if they are allowed to develop their reason (3). Rationally educated women,

he perceives, may refuse to accept the limitations of domestic life. Noting that he is "inclined to think, with the Duke of Burgundy, that 'queens who reigned well were governed by men, and kings who reigned ill were governed by women'",[4] he insists,

> The isolated examples of a few heroines cannot convince me that it is safe or expedient to trust the sex with power: - their power over themselves has regularly been found to diminish, in proportion as their power over others has been increased. . . .Trace the history of female nature, from the court of Augustus to the court of Louis XIV, and tell me whether you can hesitate to acknowledge that the influence, the liberty, and the *power* of women have been constant concomitants of the moral and political decline of empires . . . (3-4)

The Gentleman's argument here is incredibly significant, illustrating, as it does, an overwhelming ideological anxiety of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. By explicitly linking the decline of empires to the rise of female influence, the Gentleman insists his 'Friend' "clearly perceive[s] how much in society depends upon the honour of women; and how much it is in the interest of every individual, as well as of every state, to guard their virtue, and to preserve inviolate the purity of their manners" (5). Patently reflecting the ideological preoccupations of much literature of this period, the Gentleman's emphasis is that the very fabric of society rests upon "female integrity" (5). As he puts it to his friend, "You would look with horror at one who should go to sap the foundations of the building; beware then how you venture to tear away the ivy which clings to the walls, and braces the loose stones together" (5).

In advancing his arguments, the Gentleman here clearly reveals that his thinking has been greatly influenced by Rousseau, whose Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse envisaged a social order predicated upon woman's fulfilment of her 'naturally' ordained roles as a wife and mother. As I argued in my introduction, Rousseau's desire would be to contain the potentially revolutionary energy of Julie, that is, of woman, within domestic roles, and he repeats this process of containment in Émile where he addresses the issue of Sophy's education. In Book V of the text, he observes that man "should be strong and active", while "woman should be weak and passive; the one must have both the power and the will;

it is enough that the other should offer little resistance" (385). "When this principle is admitted", he insists, "it follows that woman is specially made for man's delight" (385).[5] Rousseau's further argument curiously illuminates the arguments of Edgeworth's Gentleman, for he, too, insists that it is peculiarly a woman's responsibility to ensure the welfare of her family. "[S]he forms a bond between father and child, she alone can win the father's love for his children and convince him that they are indeed his own. What loving care is required to preserve a united family!" (388). In other words, Rousseau's contention is that woman serves as the "foundation" which holds "the bonds of convention" together (390). By so doing, he implies, woman underpins society as well as her home.

The Gentleman's assertions in Letters for Literary Ladies therefore patently rehearse some of the more significant objections that were raised in relation to women's education at the end of the eighteenth century. In an age racked by revolution, Rousseau's thinking made it possible for woman to be 'figured' as an anti-revolutionary tool; one who would safeguard man's integrity by fulfilling her duties as a mother and wife. As Hannah More puts it in Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education:

> The general state of civilized society depends more than those are aware, who are not accustomed to scrutinize into the springs of human action, on the prevailing sentiments and habits of women, and on the nature and degree of the estimation in which they are held. Even those who admit the power of female elegance on the manners of men, do not always attend to the influence of female principles on their character. (1: 2)

In this way, Émile clearly offered the late eighteenth century the means through which the threat of woman's rights could be negotiated and diffused. Rousseau argues, "All the faculties common to both sexes are not equally shared between them, but taken as a whole they are fairly divided. Woman is worth more as a woman and less as a man; when she makes a good use of her own rights, she has the best of it; when she tries to usurp our rights, she is our inferior" (391). Woman, thus, should not seek to extend her "rights" at the expense of the rights of man, and, ingeniously, Rousseau's text argues that woman herself perceives the logic of this argument:

> To cultivate the masculine virtues in women and to neglect their own is evidently to do them an injury. Women are too clear-sighted to be thus deceived; when they try to usurp our privileges they do not abandon their own; with this result: they are unable to make use of two incompatible things, so they fall below their own level as women, instead of rising to the level of men. (392)

Rousseau appeals to the "sensible" mother, urging her to take his advice and not to try "to make [her] daughter a good man in defiance of nature. Make her a good woman, and be sure it will be better both for her and us" (392). Nature, Rousseau argues, "means [women] to think, to will, to love, to cultivate their minds as well as their persons; she puts these weapons in their hands to make up for their lack of strength and to enable them to direct the strength of men. They should learn many things, but only such things as are suitable" (392). "Nature herself," he argues, "has decreed that woman, both for herself and her children, should be at the mercy of man's judgement" (392).

The way in which the argument concerning what was 'natural' for woman is endlessly reworked in the literature of the late eighteenth century causes Caroline Gonda to assert:

> Ideology works to present a political or socially constructed state of affairs as natural, as not only the way things should be but the way things are, always have been and always will be. It does so by reiterating 'commonsense' pronouncements about what is natural, normal and right; by rewriting history to conceal the existence of dissident behaviour; through the imagery of popular culture; and through the forces of education.[6]

Rousseau's contention regarding woman's 'natural' position in society is underpinned by his assertion that a woman's education must "be planned in relation to man" (393). As I observed in my introduction, this means that his insistence that woman's 'duties' revolve around man is central to his writing. The further correlation of this argument, of course, is that woman will accept this definition of her role and retreat to the domestic sphere for the good of society. "When the Greek women married", Rousseau points out, "they disappeared from public life; within the four walls of their home they devoted themselves to the care of their household and family. This is the mode of life prescribed for women alike by nature and reason" (395). In his study of education in the Romantic period, Alan Richardson argues that this "cultural logic - that woman's 'natural' condition entails both a subordinate social role and an unequal responsibility for the legitimacy (as well as care) of

offspring, and that female education should emphasize at once 'pleasing' and 'modest' behavior - runs throughout eighteenth-century British conduct books and educational treatises".[7] Ultimately, of course, it is precisely this "cultural logic" upon which the argument of the Gentleman in Letters for Literary Ladies finally rests.

The potential threat that educated women pose to (patriarchal) society therefore infuses the arguments that the Gentleman advances against 'literary ladies'. Observing that such women "are much more numerous of late than they were a few years ago", his contention is that they "have acquired a degree of consequence and an appropriate character" as a result (7). One of his reservations about this occurrence is that "[t]he deference that is paid to genius, sometimes makes the fair sex forget that genius will be respected only when united with discretion. Those who have acquired fame, fancy that they can afford to sacrifice reputation" (8). Insisting that men "dislike that daring spirit in the female sex, which delights to oppose the common opinions of society", ladies of wit, he writes, "are more liable to be spoiled by admiration than beauties" (8). This is so because those who are vain of "trifling accomplishments, of rank, of riches, or of beauty, depend upon the world for their immediate gratification (8-9). "They are sensible of their dependence" and in "their subjection" lies their safety (8-9). The literary lady who is conscious of her own superiority, on the other hand, will find such subjection "insupportable" (9). Rather than gracefully submitting to the opinions of men, she will, the Gentleman implies, seek to impose *her* views upon others throughout her life.

At the root of the Gentleman's arguments, thus, is the late-eighteenth-century's fear that educated women will ultimately challenge the patriarchal order upon which society rests. "Superiority of mind must be united with great temper and generosity", he argues, in order "to be tolerated by those who are forced to submit to its influence" (11). Insisting that he has seen "witty and learned ladies, who did not seem to think it at all incumbent upon them to sacrifice any thing to the sense of propriety", the Gentleman observes that these ladies "seemed to take both pride and pleasure in showing the utmost stretch of their strength, regardless of the consequences, panting only for victory" (11). The Gentleman's description of his reaction to such ladies is significant: "Upon such occasions, when the

adversary has been a husband or a father, I must acknowledge that I have felt sensations which few ladies can easily believe they excite" (11). These "sensations" represent the mingled sense of horror and alarm which the patriarchal figure experiences when he sees women act against 'nature'. They are informed by his anxious perception that "a lady, who aspires to the sublime delights of philosophy and poetry, must forego the simple pleasures, and will despise the duties of domestic life" (11).

What the Gentleman is finally grappling with here, of course, is the paradox that lay at the heart of the debate about women's education at the end of the eighteenth century. As Richardson argues,

> Educational reform may be advocated in order to make women better companions to (and even civilizers of) men, and more adequate tutors of their children, but such 'mental improvement' must never challenge woman's fundamentally subordinate role, or interfere with the cardinal virtue of modesty, or disrupt the sexual division of society into distinct spheres of activity. (172)

Even radical writers, such as Wollstonecraft, had difficulty working within the parameters of this ideological equation: specifically, how *can* a woman be educated and yet remain the same?[8] For his part, the Gentlemen tries to solve this dilemma by insisting that man enjoys what we might term 'property rights' to pedagogical authority, and the fact that he believes these rights to be 'perpetual' is central to Edgeworth's text. Allowing that he "could combine all [the] virtues - that [he] could form a perfect whole, a female wonder from every creature's best" in educating his daughter, the Gentleman wonders how his friend will "preserve" his prodigy "from that desire of universal admiration, which will ruin all [his] work?" (12). He further insists that his friend will ultimately discover that society at large is not yet ready for the educated female and that he will "in a few years" discover that he has therefore wasted his "labour" (13-14). Man's "work" and man's "labour" are inevitably wasted, the Gentleman in other words implies, whenever they are expended on woman's education. This is particularly the case because woman's happiness is not in the first instance predicated upon educational achievements, but, rather, upon friendship and love, "the just performance of all the duties of life, and the self-approbation arising from

the consciousness of good conduct" (14).

In the "Answer to the Preceding Letter", the Friend seeks to soothe the Gentleman's fears, arguing he is "willing to allow, that the more learning, and wit, and eloquence a lady possesses the more troublesome and the more dangerous she may become as a wife or daughter, unless she is also possessed of good sense and good temper" (15). As his letter shows, he shares with the gentleman a vision of womanhood shaped to patriarchal ends. "Women who have been well educated", he avers, "far from despising domestic duties, will hold them in high respect; because they will see that the whole happiness of life is made up of the happiness of each particular day and hour, and that much of the enjoyment of these must depend upon the punctual practice of those virtues which are more valuable than splendid" (21). Agreeing with the Gentleman's dislike "in the female sex [of] that daring spirit which despises the common forms of society, and which breaks through the reserve and delicacy of female manners", the Friend insists, "the best method to make [his] pupil respect these things is to show her how they are indispensably connected with the largest interests of society" (22). He notes,

> Believing, as I do, that woman, as well as man, may be called a bundle of habits, I shall be peculiarly careful, during my child's early education, to give her as many good habits as possible; by degrees as her understanding, that is to say as her knowledge and power of reasoning shall increase, I can explain the advantages of these habits, and confirm their power by the voice of reason. I lose no time, I expose myself to no danger, by this system. (22-23)

Again, Edgeworth's text here patently rehearses arguments that originated with Locke and Rousseau. In Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693), for example, Locke argues that the education of children should begin when they are "very little", and he observes that the father must take steps to "imprint" his authority upon his children in their "infancy".[9] In so doing, the father will ensure that his children will first of all act as his "obedient subject[s]" and then as his "affectionate friend[s]" in later life (33-34). Locke's further point, though, is that the father must adjust his treatment of his children

when they "grow up to the use of reason" (34). At this moment, he avers, the enlightened parent will take steps to secure his ascendancy over his childrens' minds and hearts:

> Fear and awe ought to give you the first power over their minds, and love and friendship in riper years to hold it: for the time must come, when they will be past the rod and correction; and then if the love of you make them not obedient and dutiful; if the love of virtue and reputation keep them not in laudable courses, I ask, what hold will you have upon them to turn them to it? (34-35)

Rousseau adopts a similar approach in Émile. Although he argues that "the real teacher" of a child is the father, the "imaginary pupil" of Rousseau's text is an "orphan" who is under a tutor's care (18, 20, 23). Like Locke, Émile urges educators of children to "[u]se force with children and reasoning with men" (65). As Richardson points out, "Again as in Locke, perfect mastery of the child is sought not through overt discipline but through engaging [the child's] affections" (50). "By playing on the child's affections", Richardson argues, "by giving him the appearance but not the reality of freedom, discipline can become all but perfectly internalized" (50).

Some lines written by Edgeworth's father, and included in his Memoirs, expertly illustrate the patriarchal issues at stake in this method of education:

LINES
Addressed to my dear children, in my 73d [sic] Year;
when in declining health, and my sight nearly lost.

With boys and girls, a baker's dozen,
With many a friend, and many a cousin:
The happy father sees them all
Attentive to his slightest call;
Their time, their talents, and their skill,
Are guided by his sovereign will,
And e'en their wishes take their measure
From what they think the patriarch's pleasure:
'How does he rule them? – by what arts?' –
He knows the way to touch their hearts. (2: 492)

For her part, Beth Kowaleski-Wallace contends that Locke in fact "posited the method to assure parental authority through nontyrannical means", and she argues that the effects of this on the female child "have received virtually no attention".[10] Locke's approach, she argues, "amounts to a psychological manipulation of the child's natural affections, a seduction of the child's loving predisposition" (19). Moreover, Kowaleski-Wallace contends, "Because of her perception of the father's disproportionate status in the domestic

setting, the young girl is particularly susceptible to such impressions when the father turns his attentions to her tutelage" (20). Caroline Gonda advances a similar argument in her Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709-1834 when she contends that in the eighteenth century "[t]he education of daughters and the role of the father-daughter bond in that education [became] . . . particularly important in the new order of the sentimental family, a family supposedly ruled not by paternal or marital tyranny but by love" (xv). Gonda argues that Locke's essential premise is that love, not fear, is the most effective means of ensuring the continued compliance of children with their parents' wishes, and she notes, "By the second-half of the eighteenth century, James Nelson's An Essay on the Government of Children [(1756)] was stressing the tactical importance of inculcating filial love" (31).[11] In tracing the possible effects of such thinking upon the female child, Kowaleski-Wallace and Gonda each stress the degree to which the education of young girls was inextricably linked to their projected role within the patriarchal family. Gonda argues, "The family is both a microcosm of the wider society and - if properly regulated - the best assurance of that society's continuing order" (xv). As such, the need to 'properly regulate' the family led to the need to 'properly educate' women so as to take their place in that family. As Gonda has it: "The sentimental family depends for its success on the construction of a particular kind of female heterosexuality" (30). The arguments of Edgeworth's Friend in Letters for Literary Ladies can in this way be read as a proposal for how this "particular kind of female heterosexuality" may be constructed. From here springs the significance of the Friend's reworking of the Gentleman's earlier image of society as a "building" (5): "You tell us that civil society is like a building, and you warn me not to tear down the ivy which clings to the walls, and braces the loose stones together. - I believe that ivy, in some situations, tends to pull down the walls to which it clings" (23-24). Amplifying my arguments in my introduction, the Friend's intimation here is that the 'properly educated' woman will not only properly 'regulate' the family, but also that she will shore up and safeguard society by embracing the domestic life.

Significantly, the Friend attempts to diffuse the Gentleman's fears regarding literary ladies by advocating that especial care must be taken to ensure that such women

read and produce the right type of books. Echoing the Gentleman's strategy, he polarises science and romance, and insists that women are adversely affected by the reading of romance texts:

> [M]any of the errors into which women of literature have fallen, may have arisen from an improper choice of books. Those who read chiefly works of imagination, receive from them false ideas of life and of the human heart. Many of these productions I should keep as I would deadly poison from my child: I should rather endeavour to turn her attention to science than to romance, and to give her early that taste for truth and utility, which, when once implanted, can scarcely be eradicated. (25)

Intriguingly, the Friend's further insistence is that his ambitions in this regard will be peculiarly facilitated by the fact that the power of romance has all but vanished. "The days of chivalry are no more", he notes,

> the knight no longer sallies forth in ponderous armour, mounted upon 'a steed as invulnerable as himself.' - The damsel no longer depends upon the prowess of his mighty arm to maintain the glory of her charms, or the purity of her fame; grim barons, and castles guarded by monsters and all-devouring dragons, are no more; and from being the champions and masters of the fair sex, we are now become their friends and companions. We have not surely been losers by this change; the fading glories of romance have vanished, but the real permanent pleasures of domestic life remain in their stead; and what the fair have lost of adulation they have gained in friendship. (29)

The Friend's arguments here clearly evoke Edmund Burke's treatment of the passing of the *ancien régime* in his Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London relative to that Event in a Letter intended to have been sent to a Gentleman in Paris (1790).[12] In his text, Burke famously draws upon chivalric imagery in order to express his astonishment that "ten thousand swords" did not leap "from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened [Marie Antoinette] with insult":

> But the age of chivalry is gone. – That of sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. . . . It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness. (170)

Insisting that "[t]his mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the antient chivalry", Burke avows, "all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason" (170-71). "On this scheme of things", he notes, "a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly" (171).

Crucially, although he insists that romance and domestic life exist in completely different registers, Edgeworth's friend seizes upon Burke's imagery in an attempt to promulgate his vision of a new, rational world order. In so doing, of course, he tacitly acknowledges not only the power of romance, but also its *attraction*. Romance effectively transcends reality, he admits, thereby enabling the individual who controls it to impose his or her vision upon the world. Not surprisingly, then, the Friend evidences satisfaction at what he perceives as the genre's 'demise'. While stressing that the vanishing of romance has proved advantageous for both sexes, his true recognition is that it has done much to assuage the (patriarchal) anxieties of himself and his friend. Specifically, he perceives that this "change" has disempowered women, stripping them of the "homage" that had previously been their due and *compelling* them to settle for a domestic life. Significantly, Hannah More draws upon precisely the same type of imagery four years later in her Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, where she writes of not wishing "to bring back the frantic reign of chivalry, nor to reinstate women in that fantastic empire in which they sat enthroned in the hearts, or rather in the imaginations of men" (1: 19). At the same time, though, she warns that those who would reform society should be careful

that they do not, instead, "subvert" it (1: 23). "We do not correct old systems, but demolish them; fancying that when every thing shall be new it will be perfect" (1: 23), and More's anxiety is that the romantic image of womanhood will merely be replaced by one of female "tyrants", forever seeking their rights (2: 15).

The fact that the argument of Edgeworth's Friend is perhaps more hopeful than real disturbs the didactic complacency of the narrative, however, and it informs his anxious insistence that woman's education must be carefully managed. "I shall early cultivate my daughter's judgement, to prevent her being wilful or positive", he avers, "I shall gradually teach her to reflect upon the consequences of her actions, to compare and judge of her feelings, and to compute the morn and evening to her day. – I shall thus, I hope, induce her to reason upon all subjects" (30-31). Contrary to the Gentleman's belief that such an education must lead to woman's "desire to govern", the Friend's insistence is that women such as his daughter will inevitably discover that "their influence must be private" (31). "[B]y their own awakened observation: they will be convinced that power is generally an evil to its possessor; that to those who really wish for the good of their fellow-creatures, it is at best a painful trust" (31). Also, because women will be educated privately, their 'public' ambition will not be awakened, as they will not be exposed to the "infectious spirit, which men catch from one another in the course of their education" (32). In any event, the Friend argues, the man who believes he can prevent the education of women is deluded: "it is absolutely out of our power to drive the fair sex back to their former state of darkness: the art of printing has totally changed their situation; their eyes are opened, - the classic page is unrolled, they *will* read: - all we can do is induce them to read with judgement – to enlarge their minds so that they may take a full view of their interests and ours" (34). In order to promote this happy patriarchal state of affairs, the Friend emphatically declares that women must be exposed to "the unprejudiced testimony of [their] father[s] or . . . brother[s]; they [must] learn to distinguish the pictures of real life

from paintings of imaginary manners and passions which never had, which never can have, any existence (34). To put this another way, he insists that women must be persuaded to accept men's (rational) view of reality and to give up their romantic (mis)perceptions of real life. Rather than allowing their womenfolk to entertain foolish delusions, the Friend therefore implies, the conscientious husband or brother will take every possible opportunity to ensure that his wife or sister remakes the world in his patriarchal image.

Concluding his argument, the Friend addresses once more the particular fears that inform the Gentleman's contentions. Contrasting the instability of revolutionary French society with the stability of England's domestic social order, he reiterates his conviction that the role of woman is of singular importance. "French women mixed much in company . . . [and] gallantry and a taste for the pleasures of *society* prevailed", he argues, but the "countenance expressive of sober sense and modest reserve continues to be the taste of the English, who wisely prefer the pleasures of the domestic life" (36). At the same time, English domestic life should be "enlivened and embellished with all the wit and vivacity and politeness for which French women were once admired, [but] without admitting any of their vices or follies" (36). In so doing, the Friend insists, English women will ensure that their company is attractive to their husbands and, if men "can meet with conversation suited to their taste at home, they will not be driven to clubs for companions" (36). Instead, the well-regulated domestic hearth will act as a magnet upon men and "[t]his mixture of the talents and knowledge of both sexes must be advantageous to the interests of society, by increasing domestic happiness. - Private *virtues* are public benefits; if each bee were content in his cell, there could be no grumbling hive; and if each cell were complete, the whole fabric must be perfect (37).[13] It is impossible, he observes, to overestimate

> the pleasures which men of science and literature enjoy in an union with women who can sympathize in all their thoughts and feelings, who can converse with them as equals, and live with them as friends; who can assist them in the important and

> delightful duty of educating their children; who can make their family their most agreeable society, and their home the attractive centre of happiness. (37-38)

Although the Friend appears to be unfolding an egalitarian view of the male/female relationship at this moment in his text, it is important to recognize that this vision is carefully circumscribed: women can be men's equals and live with them as 'companions' and 'friends', he avers, but only once they first of all embrace domestic life. Rather than affording woman authority in her own right, the Friend therefore attempts to (re)make her in *his* patriarchal image.

The final question that the Friend poses to his reader is whether "women of uncultivated understandings make such wives or such mothers?", and the second part of Letters for Literary Ladies is obviously designed by Edgeworth to answer this with a resounding 'No', and to thereby illustrate the didactic moral of the earlier part of her work (38). "Letters of Julia and Caroline" is an epistolary text consisting of seven letters, and Edgeworth provides her readers with two heroines: Julia, a heroine of sensibility who has indulged her "taste for romance and poetry", and the rational Caroline, who is her "philosopher" friend (40-41). The lives of Julia and Caroline together teach the reader the benefit of actively pursuing the type of domestic life described by Edgeworth in the first part of Letters for Literary Ladies and, as such, Julia's rejection of the "permanent pleasures of the domestic life" is contrasted with Caroline's reasoned acceptance of her role as a wife and a mother. Significantly, the fact that Julia has "waste[d]" her "sympathy" on "*fiction*" rather than "*reality*" is central to Edgeworth's narrative (40). "The species of reading" that she enjoys, Caroline avers, has effectively 'injured' Julia's mental capacities; specifically, it has rendered her incapable of properly negotiating real life: "[it] must be hurtful . . . to the mind, as it indulges all the luxury of woe in sympathy with fictitious distress, without exerting the exertion which reality demands: besides universal experience proves to us that habit, so far from increasing sensibility, absolutely

destroys it, by familiarizing it with objects of compassion" (45-46).

Edgeworth's text begins by revealing that Julia is precisely the type of uneducated woman of whom the Friend is so fearful. "In vain, dear Caroline, you urge me to *think*", but, Julia tells her friend, she can "profess only to *feel*" (39). In this 'letter', Julia makes it clear that Caroline has previously urged her to reflect upon her feelings, to analyse her notions of happiness, and to explain her system. Julia's response, however, is that she has "no system" and that this is the "very difference" between the two friends (39) . Julia's "notions of happiness cannot be resolved into simple, fixed principles", nor dare she "even attempt to analyse them; the subtle essence would escape in the process: just punishment to the alchymist in morality!" (39). This difference, the didactic level of Edgeworth's text intimates, will inevitably be the cause of Julia's downfall; she will necessarily pay a price for her irrational life. By acting only according to her emotions, by refusing to *reason* her way towards happiness, Julia rejects the very principles upon which Caroline's existence is founded. As Claire Connolly notes in her introduction to the text, "Julia's first letter is followed by five letters from Caroline, all 'quoting' from Julia's 'other' letters, and paraphrasing their arguments. This is a disabling strategy, one which guarantees Caroline's ultimate moral victory, which she herself has already predicted" (xxv).[14]

Caroline seizes Julia's argument that "a woman's part in life is to please", and she reshapes it, arguing: "Conscious of her worth, and daring to assert it, I would have a woman early in life know that she is capable of filling the heart of a man of sense and merit; that she is worthy to be his companion and friend" (40, 45). At this moment, Edgeworth's heroine plainly rehearses the Friend's arguments from the earlier part of Letters for Literary Ladies, for, as we have seen, he, too, envisages a world where men and women exist as "companion[s] and friend[s]", but where, "[w]ith all the energy of her soul, with all the powers of her understanding, . . . woman endeavour[s] to please those whom she esteems and loves" (45). In Julia's case, she must choose whether "to please"

Caroline's brother or the wealthy and eminent Lord V. Julia has told her friend that her "'heart is not yet decided in its choice'" and Caroline urges her to rely upon "a *safer*, [she will] not say a *better* oracle . . . [her] reason" (46-47). "Since we cannot expect in life to realize all our wishes", she observes, "we must distinguish those which claim the rank of wants. We must separate the fanciful from the real, or at least make the one subservient to the other" (47). Caroline's emphasis here is plainly intended to counter Julia's romantic propensities: it is designed, specifically, to contain her friend's (implicit) desire to live out her beloved romance texts. Julia's significant assertion is that her "love of poetry, and of all the refinements of literary and romantic pursuits, is so intimately 'interwoven in [her] mind, that nothing could separate them, without destroying the whole fabric'", and so Caroline's insistence is that this means her friend must conduct herself even more carefully when contemplating marriage (47). If [the irrational] Julia "cannot make" her tastes "subservient to external circumstances", Caroline asserts that it is "absolutely necessary for [Julia's] happiness" that she seeks a husband who as nearly as possible shares the fancies of her imagination and heart (47). In this way, Caroline therefore advances from the other side the Friend's argument from the earlier part of Edgeworth's text where he said that he would educate his daughter so that she could "conform her taste[s]" to whomever she might marry (20). Julia has not received the type of education advocated by the Friend, and the fact that this renders her peculiarly vulnerable when choosing her husband is an essential point in Edgeworth's text.

Of Julia's possible suitors, Caroline admits that Lord V has his attractions, but she argues that these lie chiefly in his wealth and his rank. If Julia should marry him, Caroline warns her friend that she will have to

> renounce all the pleasures of the heart and of the imagination; you must give up the idea of cultivating literary taste; you must not expect from your husband friendship and confidence, or any of the delicacies of affection: - you govern him, he cannot therefore be your equal; you may be a fond mother, but you cannot educate your children; you will neither have the time nor the power to do it; you must trust them

> to a governess. In the selection of your friends, and in the enjoyment of their company and conversation you will be still more restrained: in short, you must give up the pleasures of domestic life . . . (49)

Another, better choice is offered by Caroline's brother, however:

> domestic life is offered to you by one who has every wish and every power to make it agreeable to you; by one whose tastes resemble your own; who would be a judge and a fond admirer of all your perfections. You would have perpetual motives to cultivate every talent, and to exert every power of pleasing for his sake - for *his* sake, whose penetration no improvement could escape, and whose affection would be susceptible of every proof of yours. (49)

Caroline eagerly encourages Julia to decide in favour of her brother, effectively insisting that this union would enable her friend to enjoy the peculiar *power* of the domestic existence:

> The regulation of your time and occupations would be your own. In the education of your family, you would meet with no interruptions or restraint. You would have no governess to counteract, no strangers to intrude; you might follow your own judgement, or yield to the judgement of one who would never require you to submit to his opinion, but to his reasons. (49-50)

Julia chooses Lord V and, in her third letter to her friend, Caroline's "prophecies" have all been fulfilled, and Julia is debating whether or not to leave her husband (50). Crucially, Caroline's emphasis is that Julia's fate continues to be dictated by her "[i]magination" (51). Rather than seeking possible *rational* solutions to her predicament, Julia, she avers, is uselessly "dwell[ing] with unavailing sorrow on [her] past" existence (50-51). Instead of embracing the opportunity to use her reason to resolve her difficulties, in other words, Julia is persisting in clinging to her misguided view of reality. Caroline thus argues, "Is not the conduct of a woman, after her marriage, of infinitely more importance than her previous choice, whatever it may have been? Then now consider what yours should be" (51). The point that Caroline is making is unmistakable: Julia can still retrieve "the real permanent pleasures of domestic life" (29). In advancing this argument, however, Caroline simultaneously illustrates the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century's double standard in relation to male and female behaviour. "From domestic uneasiness a man has a thousand resources", she notes,

> [d]issipation, ambition, business, the occupation of a profession, change of place, change of company, afford him agreeable and honourable relief from domestic chagrin. If his home becomes tiresome, he leaves it; if his wife become

> disagreeable to him, he leaves her, and in leaving her loses *only* a wife. (51-52)

But, asks Caroline,

> what resource has a woman? - Precluded from all the occupations common to the other sex, she loses even those peculiar to her own. She has no remedy, from the company of a man she dislikes, but a separation; and this remedy, desperate as it is, is allowed only to a certain class of women in society; to those fortune affords them the means of subsistence, and whose friends have secured to them a separate maintenance. (52)

A peeress can leave her husband while "a peasant's wife cannot", Caroline observes, and this is so because she "depends upon the character and privileges of a wife for actual subsistence. Her domestic care, if not her affection, is secured to her husband" (52). This argument, I would contend, effectively reveals the darker side of the marriage compact, and this introduces some extremely subversive resonances into Edgeworth's text.

As Claire Connolly argues, for example, the "price" of Caroline's "certainty" regarding Julia's fate is, ultimately, "exclusion" as

> Julia's voice is heard only indirectly, as it threatens the fabric of Caroline's world. If women were allowed to rant, cry and moan, how could they ever stand on an equal footing with men? Such eruptions of feminine emotion threatened the smooth surface of Enlightenment discourse. Caroline is calm, rational and respected by her husband, and thus guaranteed domestic harmony. Yet she pays the price of her felicity, for Caroline is one in a long series of Edgeworthian heroines who must sacrifice pleasure to principle. (xxv)

Such a reading of "Letters of Julia and Caroline" challenges the didactic message of the text, and Caroline's reasoned advocacy of the pleasures of domestic life can be (re)interpreted as a series of expedient accommodations on the part of woman. What Edgeworth's text makes clear is that women are not "on an equal footing with men"; that they are, effectively, *compelled* to embrace a domestic life. Caroline argues that a woman's "domestic care, if not her affection, is secured to her husband," and she further contends that "it is just" that this should be the case (52). Man "sacrifices his liberty, his labour, his ingenuity, his time, for the support and protection of his wife; and in proportion to his protection is his power" (52). Caroline's argument here patently echoes the Gentleman's belief that man at all times retains the property rights to female education.

However rational the wife in however enlightened the marriage, the fact that the balance of power remains forever tipped in favour of the male is thus central to Edgeworth's text.

This, then, is why Caroline urges Julia not to be hasty in leaving her husband, and it is why she uses Rousseau-like reasoning in an attempt to persuade her friend to once more "retire to the bosom of [her] . . . family" (53).[15] Caroline urges Julia to "prepare for [herself] a new society; perform the duties, and you shall soon enjoy the pleasures of domestic life; educate your children; whilst they are young, it shall be your occupation; as they grow up, it shall be your glory" (53). The world, Caroline asks, will wonder who "'educated these amiable young women? Who formed their character? Who cultivated the talents of this promising young man? Why does this whole family live together in such perfect union?'" (53). The answer, Caroline says, will be "Julia", "who turned all the ability and energy of her mind to their education" (53). Similarly, Caroline argues that it is still within Julia's power to earn her husband's "respect and love" (54). Julia can secure the admiration of society by becoming a model wife and mother and, when Lord V hears her praises being sung by others, "he will have vanity enough to be proud of [her]; and a vain man insensibly begins to love that of which he is proud" (54). Caroline pleads with Julia to "set an example, then, dear Lady V-, of domestic virtue; your talents shall make it admired, your rank shall make it conspicuous" (54).[16] Caroline concludes this letter to her friend by expressing her continuing desire to Julia "as happy in domestic life" as she is herself (55).

Caroline's "ultimate moral victory", however, unfolds in the remaining three letters of the text. Julia rejects her friend's advice, separates from her husband, and lives a life which has Caroline pleading with her to "come to me: fly from the danger, and be safe" (57). Clearly, the intimation of the narrative is that Julia has succumbed to an imaginative "disease": specifically, that she has allowed her romance-inflamed imagination to plunge her into an underworld life (56). As Caroline puts it, "Neither the rational hope of

happiness, nor a sense of duty governed you; but some unknown, wayward power seemed to have taken possession of your understanding" (56). This, Caroline insists, effectively dissolved Julia's essential integrity; the fact that Julia could no longer perceive "the boundaries of right and wrong" is one pointed emphasis of her 'text' (56). Further, by expressing herself "peculiarly averse to philosophy", Caroline avers that Julia turned her back on the restorative that could have cured her illness and instead continued to use inappropriate texts to 'feed' her mind (56). Not surprisingly, therefore, Julia rejects Caroline's advice, and Caroline next writes to Julia to inform her that she "must renounce all future intercourse" with her as a result of her behaviour (57-58). Although the pair has been friends since childhood, Julia's actions have rendered the continuance of this friendship impossible. Caroline is "a sister, a wife, a mother; all these connexions forbid [her] to be longer [Julia's] friend"; "in infamy" she cannot share (58). In this way, Edgeworth's text reveals that Julia has become a threat to herself *and* others as a result of her behaviour. It emphasises that further communication between the two friends will endanger Caroline despite the fact that she has been, and is, an exemplary daughter, sister, mother, and wife. Julia's excessive sensibility is therefore once again troped as a contagion or as a poison in Edgeworth's text; one which will attack *all* society by first of all undermining woman's virtue.

The national (and imperial) ramifications of Julia's actions are pointedly underlined in the final letter of Edgeworth's text. Although she knows that "all connexion between [Julia] and her family must for some time have been dissolved", Caroline writes to Lord V to inform him of the details of Julia's last hours (58). Enclosed in this letter is the final note that Caroline has received from her friend; a circumstance, as Nicola Watson would have it, that symbolizes the "eras[ing]" of Julia as the "epistolary heroine" of her own text (74). This "redirection", Watson avers, "breaks the circuit of private correspondence extraneous to the marriage and subjects it language to social sanctions" (74-75). In other

words, it represents the re-absorption of Julia back into the patriarchal order and demonstrates the essential futility of her imaginative life. Significantly, Julia's note reveals that she is recently returned from France; a fact that is clearly meant to remind the reader that her actions have all along had a wider, *national* significance. In the first instance, it recalls the Friend's argument that the stability of English society is predicated upon that society's preference for domestic life, and it implies once again that this happy situation will be threatened if women read inappropriate texts. As just such a reader, Julia has allowed her excessive sensibility to persuade her to reject English domestic stability in favour of a disreputable life in France. In so doing, Edgeworth's point is that Julia has effectively abandoned her anti-revolutionary duties as well as her hearth. This, of course, illustrates Watson's contention that the

> identification of political liberty and female desire, rendered the more volatile by injudiciously cultivated sensibility, made it possible in the late 1790s to imagine France's projected military invasion of Britain as a mere continuation of that invasion of Britain via the minds and bodies of its women which libertarian literature had supposedly already begun to achieve. (11)

When Caroline rushes to her friend, the first emphasis of Edgeworth's narrative is that Julia has plumbed the very depths of misery as a result of her behaviour. Julia is discovered sat

> [u]pon a low matted seat beside the fire . . . she was in black; her knees were crossed, and her white but emaciated arms flung on one side over her lap; her hands were clasped together, and her eyes fixed upon the fire: she seemed neither to hear nor see anything round her, but, totally absorbed in her own reflections, to have sunk into insensibility. (59)

Secondly, Edgeworth's text further emphasises that Julia is not only an effective outlaw from society, but that this is a fact of which she herself is peculiarly sensible. It thus observes, "She seemed to think that she had lost all right to sympathy, and received even the common offices of humanity with surprise: her high spirit . . . was quite broken" (60). Similarly, when she brings Julia home with her, Caroline cannot avoid "being shocked with the contrast between the dreadful situation of [her] friend, and the happiness of the family to which [Caroline] was returning" (60). On hearing voices, Julia pleads with her

friend to "'[f]or Heaven's sake . . . not let any body see [her]!'", and Caroline assures her that she will go "directly to her own apartment, and that no human being should approach her without her express permission" (60). Caroline's children come rushing into the hall, however, and what Caroline has most feared happens: "little Julia was amongst them" (61). Julia's daughter eventually recognizes her mother, and it is only "now for the first time [Julia] burst[s] into tears" (61). The circumstance of this meeting between mother and daughter is highly symbolic: it demonstrates Julia's (belated) recognition that she has exchanged an idyllic for a demonic life.

On her deathbed, Julia is heartbroken and ashamed "'to die a disgrace to all who ever loved [her]!'", but she is also frantic lest her innocent daughter inherit the consequences of her actions (62). Julia thus begs Caroline to "'be a mother to [little Julia] - let her know [Julia's] whole history, let nothing be concealed from her'" (62); in other words, she pleads with her friend to make a moral tale out of her misspent (romantic) life. There is, of course, a larger issue at stake here, and it is one that haunts not only most of Edgeworth's texts, but also much late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century writing. Telling "little Julia" that she "'will live to blush at [her] mother's name'", Julia reveals her recognition that the sins of mothers are invariably visited upon their children; specifically, that *daughters* in particular suffer for these sins in later life (61-62). As Mary Wollstonecraft would have it, this is partly due to the fact that a child's character is in the first instance moulded by his or her childish "first impressions" (224). If all children are the products of such impressions, or associations, she avers,

> [t]his habitual slavery, to first impressions, has a more baneful effect on the female than the male character, because business and other dry employments of the understanding, tend to deaden the feelings and break associations that do violence to reason. But females, who are made women of when they are mere children, and brought back to childhood when they ought to leave the go-cart forever, have not sufficient strength of mind to efface the superinductions of art that have smothered nature. (224-25)

In other words, Wollstonecraft insists that the girl child "will [inevitably] imitate her mother or aunts" (129). It is just such a conviction, we shall see, that informs Colambre's initial refusal to countenance a marriage with Grace Nugent in The Absentee. Although he knows her to be in every other way respectable, Colambre will not marry Grace so long as

he (mistakenly) believes that she is descended from a long line of women where none was "'*sans reproche*'".[17] Crucially, Edgeworth's treatment of this issue in Letters for Literary Ladies and throughout her work echoes the sentiments of Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Inchbald, Mary Hays, and Amelia Opie among others, in that she implies that *generations* of women are necessarily tainted when a mother reads inappropriate texts.[18] Julia's last words to her daughter are that she must "'*be good and happy*'", and this first of all patently echoes and underpins the Friend's argument from the earlier part of Edgeworth's text (62). It also, however, encodes Julia's fervent aspiration that Caroline will be able to preserve "little Julia" from the effects of her mother's foolish reading and actions and, thus, convince her of the efficacy of a rational, domestic life (61).

The final part of Letters for Literary Ladies is entitled "An Essay on Self-Justification", and it contains, perhaps, the voice of a more assertive Julia who has gained the upper hand in her marriage. The 'writer' of this satiric essay purports to teach brides how to rule their husbands, and she instructs her pupils, "Obtain power, then, by all means: power is the law of man, make it yours" (64). Ostensibly departing from the arguments of the preceding texts, Edgeworth's 'writer' does not advance reason as the means through which this power should be obtained. Instead, she advocates that women should "contradict, debate, justify, recriminate, rage, weep, swoon" in order to get their way (64). All is fair in this 'war', she avers, the end purpose of which is to make "husbands rue the hour when first they made [their wives] promise 'to obey'!" (77). Coming after the first two parts of Letters for Literary Ladies, "An Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification" thus appears to sit rather oddly at the end of a text designed to illustrate the benefits of female education. While obviously designed to expose the flaws of an irrational system, it at the same time introduces some unsettling resonances into Edgeworth's text.

Firstly, the essay manifestly recognizes the inequality upon which society is founded, "power is the law of man", but it also insists that it *is* possible for women to achieve a kind of power of their own through which this patriarchal order may be subverted (64). Edgeworth's text also implies that women can seize this power by a

method which is incomprehensible to men; one which challenges the notion of a purely rational existence and which celebrates the transformative power of irrational behaviour. The essay-writer instructs her readers to be their "own spies" (74). "[F]rom the looks, gestures, [and] slightest motions of [their] enemies", she insists, they must "form an alphabet" and then "a language intelligible only to [themselves]" (74). Despite the essential subjectivity of this code, the writer avows that this strategy will be spectacularly productive, that it will enable women to "condemn" men and, thereby, to transcend the boundaries of their patriarchal existence. In advancing this argument, of course, Edgeworth's text plainly echoes Charlotte Lennox's The Female Quixote, and the incomprehensible sighs and signs that Arabella forces those around her to interpret. Like Arabella, Edgeworth's 'writer' intimates that romance *empowers* women; it enables them, she insists, to impose their view of reality upon the world:

> In vain, when you accuse your friends of the high treason of blaming you, in vain let them plead their innocence, even of the intention. 'They did not say a word which could be tortured into such a meaning.' No, 'but they looked daggers, though they used none.'
>
> And of this you are to be the sole judge, though there were fifty witnesses to the contrary. (74).

Significantly, the writer explicitly recognizes the revolutionary nature of this strategy. "[W]omen of sense, wit, feeling", she avers, should be "let" to "triumph in their various arts" because *her* readers' arts "are superior. Their empire, absolute as it sometimes may be, is perpetually subject to sudden revolutions" (75).

As I remarked in my introduction, Edgeworth most obviously reworks and develops the theme of "An Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification" in The Modern Griselda (1804), where she illustrates the disastrous effects of the heroine's romantic, misguided behaviour. As a woman of "too much sensibility", Griselda is all too aware of "the effects, and . . . the whole extent of [her] power", and she delights in being "possessed of . . . powers of enchantment!" (5, 13, 15-16). Rather than being guided by her husband, Griselda insists upon his constant adoration, and "the most remote hint that anything in her conduct, manner, or even dress, could be altered for the better, was the

signal for battle, or tears" (24). In other words, and reflecting the Friend's argument in Letters for Literary Ladies, Edgeworth's argument here is that Griselda turns herself into a romantic creature to whom her husband must pay eternal "homage". Griselda's adventures, it thus rapidly becomes apparent, are the direct result of her desire to *live out* romance texts. When she eventually determines to leave her husband, Griselda mistakenly believes that "[t]he catastrophe . . . would always be in her own power; she recollected various separation scenes in novels and plays, where the lady, after having tormented her husband or lover by every species of ill-conduct, reforms in an instant, and a reconciliation is effected by some miraculous means" (188). Instructing her maid to prepare for her departure, she thus recalls "the effect which the sight of the corded trunks produced in the Simple Story [sic]" and she happily anticipates her husband's reaction when he sees her trunks in the hall (190).[19]

Having initially capitulated in the face of his wife's demands, Griselda's husband finally perceives that he is engaged in a "combat" upon which depends not only his own future, but also that of the whole patriarchal order (77). As the narrative presents it, Mr. Bolingbroke, "as he now deserves to have his name mentioned", realizes that he is engaged in a war to cast out his wife's (romantic) demons and to regain control of his hearth (79). "[R]oused" by the "representations" of his rational friend, Mr. Granby, and also "perhaps by a sense of approaching danger", he "resolve[s] to assume the guidance of his wife, or at least of himself" (79). The securing of this (patriarchal) 'victory' is crucial, Mr. Granby insists: it will disempower Griselda and leave him "at peace for life" (77).

Edgeworth's treatment of romance in The Modern Griselda in this way rehearses the arguments of Letters for Literary Ladies, but it also illustrates the essential ambivalence with which she treats the genre throughout her writing. Despite the text's didactic assertion that its heroine does not manage to "produce the revolution" that she "had expected", The Modern Griselda nevertheless admits that she does (momentarily)

empower herself through her reading of romance texts; that she does (temporarily) transcend the boundaries of her domestic life (171). As such, Edgeworth's use of romance in this tale encodes the two subversive arguments that also inform Letters for Literary Ladies: namely, that woman inevitably desires something more than a purely rational (domestic) existence and, further, that her reading of romance may enable her to at least challenge, if not undermine, the prescriptions of the patriarchal order. Before I move on to a more detailed consideration of how Edgeworth uses romance to develop these competing themes in Belinda and Helen, I want to briefly consider how Practical Education rehearses and refines the arguments that she first put forward in Letters for Literary Ladies. Specifically, I want to examine why, despite Richard Lovell Edgeworth's protestations to the contrary in his preface, the Edgeworths touch more than "slightly" upon their "opinions concerning the female character and understanding" in their treatise; why, in fact, these "subjects" are crucial to their text (1: viii).[20]

Published jointly with Richard Lovell Edgeworth in 1798, Practical Education is comprised of twenty five chapters, with an appendix with "[n]otes containing Conversations and Anecdotes of Children" at the end of the text (2: 733). As a work that is expressly designed to elevate the "art of education" to an "experimental science", Practical Education draws upon the theories of writers such as Locke and Rousseau, Lord Kames and Joseph Priestley,[21] but the Edgeworths' emphatic declaration is that it adopts only those precepts that have been proven by "practice and experience" (2: 734, 1: v). The assertion that the text unfolds a model of education that has been tried and tested in real life effectively opposes the treatise to romantic pedagogical theories; it intimates that the reader can trust the work. In his preface to Practical Education, Richard Lovell Edgeworth carefully explains the different contributions that were made to the text's composition: "The first hint of the chapter on Toys was received from Dr. Beddoes;[22] the sketch of an

introduction to chemistry for children was given to us by Mr. Lovell Edgeworth; and the rest of the work was resumed from a design formed and begun twenty years ago" (1: ix). This "design", of course, was that of Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Honora Sneyd, and, in the appendix to the text, Edgeworth describes the inestimable contribution of her father's second wife:

> Several years ago a mother, who had a large family to educate, and who had turned her attention with much solicitude to the subject of education, resolved to write notes from day to day of all the trifling things which mark the progress of the mind in childhood. She was of opinion, that the art of education should be considered as an experimental science, and that many authors of great abilities had mistaken their road by following theory instead of practice. (2: 733-34).

In this way, Practical Education is revealed to represent the physical manifestation of a project first begun by Honora, who, it is understood, was an *exemplary* mother. "The title of 'Practical Education'", Edgeworth thus observes, "was chosen by this lady, and prefixed to a little book for children, which she began, but did not live to finish. The few notes which remain of her writing are preserved, not only merely out of respect to her memory, but because it is thought that they may be useful" (2: 734). Returning to Richard Lovell Edgeworth's preface, the reader further discovers that "[a]ll that relates [in the text] to the art of teaching to read in the chapter on Talks, the chapters on Grammar and Classical Literature, Geography, Chronology, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Mechanics, were written by Mr. Edgeworth, and the rest of the book by Miss Edgeworth" (1: ix-x). In writing the "rest of the book", however, Richard Lovell Edgeworth insists that his daughter was guided by the example of her stepmother; Honora, he observes, was Edgeworth's overwhelming inspiration. He notes,

> She was encouraged and enabled to write upon this important subject, by having for many years before her eyes the conduct of a judicious mother in the education of a large family. The chapter on Obedience was written from Mrs. Edgeworth's notes, and was exemplified by her successful practice in the management of her children; the whole manuscript was submitted to her judgement, and she revised parts of it in the last stage of a fatal disease. (1: x)

To put this another way, Honora Edgeworth is revealed as the major influence behind each and every word of Practical Education: she, effectively, 'mothers' the text.

This argument is extremely significant, of course, particularly given the importance that the Edgeworths' attach to 'mothering' in their treatise. "One of the best motives which a woman can have to cultivate her talents after she marries", Practical Education observes, "is the hope and belief, that she may be essentially serviceable in the instruction of her family" (2: 536). While "[a] fond mother will tremble at the idea, that so much depends upon her own care in the early education of her children[,] . . . she may be persuaded that patience and perseverance will ensure her success" (2: 713). "The first steps [in the education of children] require rather caution and gentle kindness, than any difficult or laborious exertions; the female sex are from their situation, their manners, and talents, peculiarly suited" to this momentous task (2: 713). If a mother's role in "the superintendence of the early years of childhood" is *always* important, Practical Education emphasises that this is much more the case when the children in question are young girls (2: 713). Mothers must prepare their daughters for their proper roles in society, it avers; daughters must be educated "so that they may be happy in the situations in which they are most likely to be placed" (1: 168). Echoing Rousseau's thinking in Émile, Edgeworth observes, "So much depends upon the temper of women, that it ought to be more carefully cultivated in early life; girls should be more inured to restraint than boys, because they are likely to meet with more restraint in society" (1: 168).[23] Implicitly, her text consigns young girls and women to a domestic life.

This image of restraint, or of submission, I noted in my introduction, is carefully developed by Edgeworth in her chapter "On Sympathy and Sensibility", where, among other issues, she insists that is positively essential that young girls are only exposed to appropriate texts. "[A] being endowed with the most exquisite sympathy", she argues, "must, without the assistance and education of reason, be, if not equally incapable of social intercourse, far more dangerous to the happiness of society" (1: 266). In order to "manage female sensibility", therefore, Edgeworth avers that "the reasoning powers" of woman

must be "cultivate[d]", while "the enthusiasm of *fine feeling*" must be "repress[ed]" (1: 296-97). It is for this reason that a mother's role in the education of her daughter in particular is revealed to be of such importance. "[T]oo much care cannot be taken to form all those habits in morals and manners, which are distinguishing characteristics of amiable women", the text notes, and so, as "[t]hese habits must be acquired early", it is particularly a *mother's* responsibility to quickly impress upon her daughter the benefits of a domestic life:

> it will tend to the happiness of society in general, that women should have their understandings cultivated and enlarged as much as possible; that the happiness of domestic life, the virtues and the powers of pleasing in the female sex, the yet more desirable power of attaching those worthy of their love and esteem, will be increased by the judicious cultivation of the female understanding, more than by all that modern gallantry or ancient chivalry could devise in favour of the sex. (2: 546, 549-50)

Once again, Edgeworth's vocabulary here is significant, for it indicates that it is finally *every* woman's destiny to serve as man's companion or friend. The rational woman, it reveals, ultimately cultivates her reason for one particular (patriarchal) purpose: namely, to render herself more capable of 'pleasing' as a daughter, sister, mother, or wife.

In advancing this argument, Edgeworth plainly repeats one of the Friend's most crucial arguments in Letters for Literary Ladies: she intimates, that is, that woman has benefited immeasurably since the days of romance have passed. Emphasising that "[m]uch prudence and ability are requisite to conduct properly a young woman's literary education", she insists that mothers must not expose their daughters to books that inspire in them an (inappropriate) admiration for the chivalric order (2: 550). Rather, Edgeworth avers, mothers must carefully manage their daughters' imaginations so that they accept as 'natural' the limitations of domestic life:

> [The young woman's] imagination must not be raised above the taste for necessary occupations, or the numerous small, but trifling pleasures of domestic life: her mind must be enlarged, yet the delicacy of her manners must be preserved: her knowledge must be various, and her powers of reasoning unawed by authority; yet she must *habitually* feel that nice sense of propriety, which is at once the guard

> and charm of every feminine virtue. By early caution, unremitting, scrupulous caution in the choice of books which are put into the hands of girls, a mother, or a preceptress, may fully occupy, and entertain their pupils, and excite in their minds a *taste* for propriety, as well as a taste for literature. (2: 550)

This is so important that Edgeworth remarks, "It cannot be necessary to add more than this general idea, that a mother ought to be answerable to her daughter's husband for the books her daughter had read, as well as for the company she had kept" (2: 550). In this way, Practical Education effectively tries to turn the mother into a patriarchal agent; one who will proscribe the subversive excesses of her own and her daughter's imagination and heart.

As I have suggested, the theories on women's education that are outlined in Letters for Literary Ladies and Practical Education are endlessly reworked by Edgeworth in her later texts. The vision of the literary lady that is unfolded in these works is of a woman whose happiness is inextricably linked to the cultivation of her reason. It is only because she has been properly educated, the texts insist, that Edgeworth's literary lady is able to take her 'proper' place in society. These texts of Edgeworth's also clearly define what this proper place will be. Letters for Literary Ladies and Practical Education both aver that, instead of threatening the social order, the educated woman will accept the restraints placed upon her by society, and that she will recognize that her best happiness lies in her role as a wife and mother. Content to exercise her reason from strictly within the domestic sphere, Edgeworth's literary lady will thus ensure the welfare of society by carefully supervising her children's education. In an age of revolution, therefore, Letters for Literary Ladies and Practical Education predicate the stability of society upon the educated woman. In particular, they insist that such a woman will inevitably turn her back on the subversive fantasies of romance and embrace the prescriptions of the patriarchal order.

As I have also suggested, however, this represents but one possible reading of these texts, and it takes at face value Edgeworth's unquestioning compliance with the dictates of

the patriarchal fictions that she relates.[24] Although she *overtly* works from within the confines of the domestic sphere, I argued that Edgeworth *covertly* challenges the terms of this ideology, and, further, that this is peculiarly demonstrated by the way in which her use of romance simultaneously facilitates but interrogates the didactic message of her texts. In order to illustrate this point more clearly, my intention is to move next to a detailed discussion of Belinda and Helen, the two texts that respectively represent Edgeworth's first ever novel of manners and her last significant piece of adult fiction. Although some thirty-three years separate the publication of these two works, Edgeworth, as we shall see, rehearses substantially the same arguments in each of these novels. Women must be educated for the good of society, she avers. They *must* be encouraged to reject the transient delights of a romantic life and persuaded, instead, to embrace what the Friend in Letters for Literary Ladies terms the "real permanent pleasures" of the domestic existence (29). In order that this may be accomplished, each of the novels insists that woman must be turned into the 'correct' type of reader: specifically, one who rejects romance texts and who cultivates her rational mind.

In Belinda, for example, Edgeworth traces the dramatic consequences of the fashionable Lady Delacour's reformation for her readers. By (re)assuming her domestic duties, this dissipated lady effectively (re)discovers her true potential; she realizes, that is, that can she *transform* society as a dutiful mother and a wife. In advancing this argument in her narrative, Edgeworth pays a singular attention to Lady Delacour's reading, and the particular inference of Belinda is that Lady Delacour is unable to immediately appreciate the power and the pleasures of a domestic existence due to her love of inappropriate texts. Although she prefaces her long recital of her history to Belinda with the observation that her "'story'" is nothing like "'a novel'", that "'[o]f all lives, [hers] has been the least romantic'", an essential point of Edgeworth's tale is that Lady Delacour *has* conducted her

life as if she were in a novel; that she has, effectively, tried to *live out* her beloved books (31).

As Heather MacFadyen observes, this circumstance has two immediate consequences for Edgeworth's narrative. In the first instance, Lady Delacour is "consistently characterized as an actress" throughout the novel,[25] with the recognition that she was effectively "two different persons" at home and "abroad" particularly striking Belinda (7). When surrounded by company, the young girl realizes, Lady Delacour gloried "in the character of the mistress of the revels, shone the soul and spirit of pleasure and frolic – But the moment the company retired, when the music ceased, and the lights were extinguishing, the spell was dissolved" (7). Secondly, MacFadyen observes that Edgeworth underlines Lady Delacour's preoccupation with play acting by drawing attention to the fact that she herself chooses to "[supplement] her obvious theatricality with frequent and ostentatious references to literary texts" (425). "A rough tally of the rates of allusion and quotation by the characters and the narrator of Belinda reveals that Lady Delacour outquotes them all, alluding to literary texts eight times more frequently", MacFadyen points out, but the crucial point is that Lady Delacour "misuses" all of her literary skill and knowledge (425-26). Unlike Belinda, who uses her "domestic" reading "to regulate her . . . desires", Lady Delacour utilises her reading "to support a rapidly altering sequences of personas whose novelty and daring enable her to maintain her public preeminence" (426). While this may be satisfying in the short term, even Lady Delacour eventually perceives that she has effectively plunged herself into an horrific underworld existence by indulging her taste for inappropriate texts.

Relating her history to Belinda, Lady Delacour thus constructs her narrative in terms of her escalating sense of ontological alienation; everything would have been different, she avers, if she "'had . . . dared to *be* [*herself*]!'" (42). She recalls that, upon marrying Lord Delacour, she failed to assume her proper domestic duties. Instead, she

turned herself into a "'fashionable'" lady and tried to 'govern' her husband, and this, inevitably, drove him from the family home (32). Rather than trying to repair the breech between them, Lady Delacour instead continued to provoke Lord Delacour relentlessly; in other words, she failed to perceive the "'sort of companion'" that she "'*could* . . . have made of'" her husband if she had been a dutiful wife (36) (My emphasis). In a similar fashion, Lady Delacour admits to Belinda that she also failed to fulfil her maternal duties. Two of her children having died, she put her third out to nurse, and firmly resolved "not to undertake its [sic] education" (37). Later, upon discovering that her daughter's governess had "'turned out to be Lord Delacour's mistress in form", she retaliated by exiling the young Helena to "'a celebrated academy for young ladies'" (37). Having thus abandoned her duties as a wife and mother, Lady Delacour left herself peculiarly vulnerable to the dangers of a dissolute, fashionable existence. With "'nothing at home, either in the shape of husband or children, to engage [her] affections'", she ill advisedly cultivated the acquaintance of Harriet Freke, and this self-declared "'champion for the Rights of Women'", Lady Delacour belatedly realizes, took a singularly malicious delight in urging her to ever more outrageous behaviour (37, 216).

In the first instance, Harriet Freke encouraged her efforts to make her husband jealous of her relationship with Colonel Lawless, and this eventually succeeded so well that it led to a duel between the two men in which the colonel lost his life. Secondly, Harriet Freke fanned the flames of a rivalry that already existed between Lady Delacour and Mrs. Luttridge, and the pair finally agreed to meet for a duel at the former's instigation.[26] Although circumstances prevented the duel from being fought, the event profoundly changed Lady Delacour's life. Having grievously wounded her breast when her "'overcharged'" pistol recoiled, Lady Delacour confides to Belinda that her horror of public humiliation and pity prevented her from seeking medical intervention (51). Now, *literally*, as she believes, "'tired to death'" by living "'the life of a hackneyed fine lady'",

Lady Delacour entertains one final resolution:

> 'to conceal from the world, what I cannot conceal from myself, that I am a dying woman. – I am, and I see you think me, a strange, weak, inconsistent creature – I was intended for something better – but now it is too late – a coquette I have lived, and a coquette I shall die – I speak frankly to you – let me have the glory of leading Clarence Hervey [Belinda's admirer] about with me in public for a few months longer, then I must quit the stage. – As to love, you know with me, that is out of the question; all I ask or wish for is admiration.' (55, 57)

One of Belinda's didactic functions in Edgeworth's narrative is to prove to Lady Delacour that she is wrong; specifically, she has to impress upon her friend that it is still possible for her to reform her 'self' by assuming a domestic existence. As Lady Anne Percival observes, this effectively entails the 'disenchantment' of Lady Delacour, and the point that is being made for the reader is underlined by the fact that this resolutely rational lady uses quixotic language in order to trace the change that must be effected in order to 'turn' Lady Delacour back into a proper mother and wife. Lady Delacour, she insists, "'was not always the unfeeling dissipated fine lady that she now appears to be. – This is only one of the transformations of fashion – the period of her enchantment will soon be at an end, and she will return to her natural character'" (95). When Lady Delacour is "'tired of the insipid taste of other pleasures, she will have a higher relish for those of domestic life'" (95). MacFadyen's argument is that this involves Belinda teaching Lady Delacour that she needs friends rather than admirers,[27] and what is crucial for my purposes is that this necessarily requires that Lady Delacour be persuaded of the dangers of her fascination with romance texts. The implicit intimation of Edgeworth's narrative, I would suggest, is that Lady Delacour overwhelmingly tries to empower herself through her reading of courtly romances; as the Friend in Letters for Literary Ladies would have it, that she tries to (re)introduce into the world her notion of chivalrous behaviour. Recalling the events immediately after her 'duel' with Mrs. Luttridge, for example, Lady Delacour's observation to Belinda is that she and her opponent had to call upon their "'knight'", Clarence Hervey, to protect them from an angry mob (53). "'[T]he untutored sense of

propriety amongst these rusticks was so shocked at the idea of a duel fought by women in *men's clothes*'", she recalls, that she truly believes she and her fellow combatant would have come to real harm only for the "'knight-errantry'" of their protector (51, 54). Similarly, Lady Delacour further betrays her preoccupation with chivalry when a Spanish gentleman at one of her parties challenges Hervey to a game of chess. "'Whoever wins shall be my knight'", she observes, "'and this silver chess-man shall be his prize. – Was it not Queen Elizabeth, who gave a silver chess-man to one of her courtiers as a mark of her royal favour?" (103). When Hervey is "victorious", he immediately looks for Lady Delacour "from whom he expect[s] the honours of his triumph" (104). Lady Delacour has left the room, but quickly returns, "dressed in the character of Queen Elizabeth . . . with a large ruff and all the costume of the times" (104).

Slowly but surely, Belinda reforms and transforms Lady Delacour; she turns her, that is, back into the "'something better'" she should all along have been but for her fascination with courtly life (57). The fact that this process is a difficult one is pointedly underlined in Belinda: the novel insists that it is not easy to reverse the mental and, sometimes, the physical damage that occurs as a result of the reading of romance texts. Although Belinda eventually succeeds in reconciling Lady Delacour to her husband and daughter, Edgeworth emphasises that Lady Delacour's prior experiences with Harriet Freke cause her to continue to doubt the motives of her friend. Rather than perceiving that Belinda's actions are informed by her essential loyalty and compassion, Lady Delacour increasingly believes that her intention is to impress upon Lord Delacour "'what a charming wife and mother she would make!'" (170). These suspicions temporarily drive Belinda from the Delacour household, and it is not until Lady Delacour perceives that Belinda is "the only real friend she ha[s] ever possessed" that the way is finally cleared for her true recovery to be effected (248). Once reunited with her ladyship, Belinda realizes that one obstacle remains to her friend's mental and physical recovery: she has to be

persuaded, that is, to give up her new-fascination with "methodistical" texts (254).

Informing Belinda that her mistress has "'spen[t] . . . many hours of the day and night'" absorbed in these books, Lady Delacour's faithful servant, Marriott, reveals that even *she* is capable of perceiving the dangers of such reading:

> 'I'm sure that they do her no good, but a great deal of harm, especially now her spirits should be kept up as much as possible. . . . [They] have made my lady melancholy all of a sudden. Ma'am, my lady has let drop very odd hints within these two or three days, and she speaks in a strange *disconnected* sort of style, and at times I do not think she is quite right in her head.' (284)

Marriott's analysis of Lady Delacour's state of mind appears accurate, especially when Lady Delacour eventually confides to Belinda her conviction that a ghost is haunting her. On three occasions, Lady Delacour reveals, she has been visited by "'a vision'" of the deceased Colonel Lawless, and she emphasises that she "'considers [this] as a warning to prepare for [her] death'" (290). Crucially, it is Belinda's "presence of mind" that is in the first instance responsible for the clearing up of this mystery (291). As Edgeworth would clearly have it, Belinda effects her friend's mental, physical, and ontological recovery. Keeping "perfectly silent" when this 'vision' next appears, she alerts the household to the presence of an intruder, and the ghost is eventually proved to be nothing more than Harriet Freke dressed in "'man's clothes'" (291, 293). Unaware of Lady Delacour's illness, this lady has convinced herself that some scandalous reasons must be impelling her erstwhile friend's retreat to the country, and she has made repeated visits at night in the hope of "detecting the intrigues, and afterward of publishing the disgrace, of her former friend" (293). Significantly, Belinda's efforts to restore Lady Delacour to herself are peculiarly facilitated by the rational Dr X and Mr. Moreton, whose combined endeavours echo those of the unnamed clergyman doctor in Charlotte Lennox's The Female Quixote. Like Lennox's doctor, Dr X perceives that Lady Delacour's welcome physical recovery is not sufficient;[28] that, as "the passions have a powerful influence over the body, . . . it [is] full as necessary in some cases to attend to the mind as to the pulse" (298). Desirous of

effacing the "impression" that her late "course of . . . reading . . . had made on her imagination", Dr X- thus persuades Lady Delacour to submit to the supervision of Mr. Moreton in future, and this clergyman carefully substitutes "the consolations of mild and rational piety" for the "terrors" that she had previously gleaned from methodistical texts (298, 302).

On a didactic level, therefore, Belinda functions as a sort of 'ontological exorcist' in Edgeworth's narrative: she facilitates the casting out of the romantic demons that have previously possessed Lady Delacour and restores her to the real, permanent pleasures of domestic life. Significantly, however, Belinda also performs this service for Clarence Hervey. His admiration for Lady Delacour, the text infers, is perhaps first of all rooted in his recognition of a kindred spirit; like Lady Delacour, he, too, entertains a fatal predisposition for romance texts. What I am suggesting here is in the first instance best illustrated by referring to that moment in the narrative when Lady Delacour masquerades as Elizabeth I and where Hervey positively delights in entertaining her affectation. "[T]hrowing himself at her feet", Hervey

> addressed her in that high flown style, which her majesty was wont to hear from the gallant Raleigh, or the accomplished Essex.
>
> Soon the coquetry of the queen entirely conquered her prudery; and the favoured courtier, evidently elated by his situation, was as enthusiastic as her majesty's most insatiable vanity could desire. – The characters were well supported; both the actor and actress were highly animated, and seemed so fully possessed by their parts, as to be insensible to the comments that were made upon the scene. (104)

Ultimately, however, Hervey is "recalled to himself by the deep blush which he saw on Belinda's cheek, when Queen Elizabeth addressed her as one of her maids of honour, of whom she professed to be jealous" (104). Hervey becomes suddenly "conscious that he had been hurried by the enthusiasm of the moment farther than he either wished or intended", and considers the wider consequences of his behaviour (104). Like Lady Delacour, he submits to the instruction of Dr X and, brought up short up by this

gentleman's observation that he has so far chosen "'to be – nothing'", he resolves henceforth to "'pursue noble ends'" (105-06). Intriguingly, Hervey takes the as yet unreformed Lady Delacour as his "new project", resolving to "wean [her], by degrees, from dissipation" and attach her once more to her domestic hearth (113).

The reader, of course, only understands the true significance of this "project" when Edgeworth unfolds the details of the Virginia St. Pierre sub-plot in her narrative. By trying to reform Lady Delacour in this fashion, Hervey is effectively abandoning the imaginative precepts that have previously (mis)guided his existence; specifically, he is rejecting romance in favour of the didactic precepts of his rational friends. About a year before meeting Belinda, the text reveals, Hervey spent some time in France. It was "just before the revolution", it notes, "when luxury and dissipation" were at their highest (343). Disgusted by the "vanity, affectation, and artifice" of the "Parisian belles" whom he encountered, Hervey's "naturally ardent" imagination was rendered particularly vulnerable just at that moment when he chose to read Rousseau's books (343). "[C]harmed with the picture of Sophia [sic], . . . he formed the romantic project of educating a wife" with whom he could spend the rest of his existence (343). Returning to England, Hervey fortuitously happened upon Rachel, a young girl living with her grandmother in splendid isolation in a forest. Enchanted in the first place by the girl's appearance, he was further delighted when he learned that she had been reared "'away from all the world'" (347). Giving her grandmother his word that he would "'not be the ruin of [her] sweet innocent girl'", Hervey took Rachel away from the forest following the old lady's death (347). Placing her under the protection of a Mrs. Ormond, Hervey "was struck with the idea, that [Rachel] resembled the description of Virginia in [Bernardin] de St Pierre's celebrated romance [Paul et Virginie (1787)]; and by this name he always called her, from the hour that she quitted her cottage" (350).

Charming though all of this appears to Hervey, this changing of Rachel's name is

highly significant, symbolizing, as it does, the patriarchal compulsions that finally inform his romantic project(s). Through his use of romance, Hervey hopes to accomplish a very particular ambition: namely, to turn Rachel into *his* notion of an ideal woman and wife. Although he contradicts Mrs.Ormond's confident assertion "'that [*he*] could make [Virginia] anything [he] pleased'", Edgeworth's novel intimates that it was precisely this patriarchal conviction that in the first place attracted Hervey to Rachel (355). He was attracted to her, it intimates, *because* he perceived in her innocence the opportunity to impose upon her his view of her 'self' and the world. Upon meeting Belinda, however, Hervey begins to perceive the foolishness of his endeavours; he realizes, that is, the greater ramifications of trying to replicate his version of Rousseau's patriarchal text. As a result of being bred up in solitude without the benefit of a rational education, he discovers that "Virginia's mind was either perfectly indolent, or *exalted* by romantic views and visionary ideas of happiness. As she had never seen anything of society, all her notions were drawn from books" (359). Belinda's rational behaviour, on the other hand, secures Hervey's "esteem" and, eventually, "his heart":

> In comparison with Belinda, Virginia [increasingly] appeared to him but an insipid, though innocent child; the one he found was his equal, the other his inferior; the one he saw could be a companion, a friend to him for life; the other would merely be his pupil or his plaything. Belinda had cultivated tastes, an active understanding, a knowledge of literature, the power and the habit of conducting herself. Virginia was ignorant and indolent, she had few ideas and no wish to extend her knowledge. She was so entirely unacquainted with the world, that it was absolutely impossible she could conduct herself with that discretion, which must be the combined result of reasoning and experience. (358-59)

To put this another way, Hervey discovers the efficacy of the Friend's arguments in Letters for Literary Ladies; he realizes, that is, that it is impossible for a man to make a good wife out of a woman who has been denied *all* rational knowledge.

The overwhelming didactic message of Edgeworth's text is clear: men and women alike must cultivate their reason and protect themselves against the dangerous effects of reading romance texts. Mr. Percival, who, with his wife, symbolizes the rational heart of Edgeworth's narrative, illustrates the particular danger of such reading. Readers of

romances, he tells Belinda, operate under a perilous misconception: they expect to *live out* what they read. This, Mr. Percival avers, inevitably leads to suffering and disillusionment; real life *does not* resemble romance texts:

> 'From poetry or romance young people usually form their early ideas of love, before they have actually felt the passion; and the image which they have in their own minds of the *beau ideal* is cast upon the first objects they afterward behold. This, if I may be allowed the expression, is Cupid's Fata Morgana. Deluded mortals are in ecstasy whilst the illusion lasts, and in despair when it vanishes.' (240)

Countering Belinda's (romantic) suggestion that "'when a woman may be convinced that she ought not to indulge a *first* love, should she not be prevented by delicacy from thinking of a second'", Mr. Percival emphasises that every individual must adhere to a utilitarian vision of reality (241). "'[D]elicacy, like all other virtues'", he observes, "'must be judged by the test of utility. We should run into romance, and error, and misery, if we did not constantly refer to this standard'" (241). The individual's "'reasonings as to the conduct of life'", in other words, "'must depend ultimately upon facts'" (241).

Mr. Percival's grouping here of romance, error, and misery is extraordinarily important, for it illustrates his perception of the perilous effects of a "'belief in the unextinguishable nature of a first flame'" (241). Pointedly noting that he "'scarcely know[s] an idea more dangerous to domestic happiness'", Mr. Percival's emphasis is that, although both men and women may labour under such a fallacy, *women* are much more likely to do so because of their predisposition for inappropriate books:

> 'The woman who marries one man, and loves another, who . . . nourishes in secret a *fatal* prepossession for her first love, may perhaps, by the eloquence of a fine writer, be made an interesting heroine; but would any man of sense or feeling choose to be troubled with such a wife? – Would not even the idea that women admired such conduct necessarily tend to diminish our confidence, if not in their virtue, at least in their sincerity? And would not this suspicion destroy our happiness? Husbands may sometimes have delicate feelings as well as their wives, though they are seldom allowed to have any by these unjust novel writers.' (241)

Assuring Belinda that he does "'not suspect Lady Anne Percival of sighing in secret for some vision of perfection, any more than she suspects [him] of pining for the charming

Lady Delacour, who . . . was [his] *first love*'", Mr. Percival observes, "'there are ingenuous minds which will never be enslaved by fashion or interest, though they may be exposed to be deceived by romance, or by the *delicacy* of their own imaginations'" (242). Mr. Percival's insistence that neither he nor his wife pine after a first love is extremely important in Belinda. Examining a portrait of Lady Anne and her family with Mr. Vincent, Mr. Percival's ward and her would-be suitor, Belinda thus observes,

> 'how much more interesting this picture is to us, from our knowing that it is not a fancy-piece; that the happiness is real, not imaginary; that this is the natural expression of affection in the counteance of the mother; and that these children, who crowd around her, are what they seem to be, the pride and pleasure of her life!' (223).

On the surface level, Edgeworth's working-out of the Virginia St. Pierre sub plot appears to demonstrate the efficacy of Mr. Percival's didactic contentions. Although convinced of his love for Belinda, Hervey feels honour-bound to marry Virginia, especially when Mrs. Ormond tells him that the young girl is being driven "'to distraction'" by her desire to be his wife (380). Eventually, however, Hervey discovers that Mrs. Ormond's analysis of Virginia's behaviour is mistaken; she is, in fact, "embodied and . . . enamoured of a phantom" whom she has never seen, and is "'haunt[ed] . . . day and night'" by this "'image'" (443, 442). Having happened upon the picture of a man one day while still living with her grandmother in the forest, Virginia's "imagination, exalted by solitude and romance", has turned this unknown figure into a hero like those in one of her books (443). While herself convinced that she will be "'[p]erfidious, *ungrateful*'" if she does not marry Hervey, Virginia admits that she would prefer to remain unmarried unless she "'could see in reality'" this vision (368, 443). The "'figure'" of this unknown man, she acknowledges, has won supremacy over Hervey's image in her mind and heart (442).

Having carefully illustrated for the reader the reasons why the reading of romance is dangerous, the fact Edgeworth uses the genre's conventions in order to facilitate the didactic message of her novel introduces some exceedingly subversive resonances into the

text. In the first place, and contrary to Mr. Percival's didactic assertions, Virginia's reading of romance proves to be spectacularly productive: it allows her to live out her fantasies in real life. Although believed to be an orphan, Virginia "often pictured" her father "in her fancy, . . . secretly nourish[ing] the hope, that she should not for ever be a *deserted child*":

> The belief in what the French call *la force du sang* was suited to her affectionate temper and ardent imagination, and it had taken full possession of her mind. The eloquence of romance persuaded her, that she should not only discover, but love her father with intuitive filial piety, and she longed to experience those *yearnings* of affection, of which she had read so much. (387)

While Mr. Percival would challenge both the utility and the rationality of such convictions, Virginia eventually facilitates the fond "yearnings" of her heart. Through Hervey's efforts, she is eventually reunited with her father, and the fact that Mr. Hartley recognizes his daughter as a result of "the mole on her forehead" symbolizes both Virginia's remarkable success in turning herself into a heroine and the complex use to which Edgeworth puts romance in her texts (389). Similarly, when Lady Delacour reveals that the figure that has haunted Virginia's imagination is not a phantom but the equally "'enamoured'" Captain Sunderland, the way is finally clear for Virginia to realise the more subversive of her "illusion[s]" (443, 361). She satisfies her desire to "'see in reality'" the man who is *her* "'idea'" of a romance hero and therefore makes physically visible the image that she has previously mentally nourished (443, 438). In so doing, Virginia illustrates the arrogance of Hervey's (patriarchal) attempts to use her "as a blank sheet on which he can write his own romance" (Spencer 162), and she asserts the power *and* the sanctity of woman's autonomous mind.

Similarly, the fact that it is Lady Delacour who is primarily responsible for uniting Virginia and Captain Sunderland and, thus, Belinda and Clarence Hervey, has some overwhelming implications for Edgeworth's novel. Firstly, and as we have seen, the didactic emphasis of Belinda is that Lady Delacour undergoes a fundamental conversion in

the narrative; specifically, that she recognizes the dangers of romance reading and learns to use reason to govern her thoughts. Explicitly, the didactic message of the text is that this involves Lady Delacour's acceptance of the patriarchy's view of reality. As Mr. Percival might have it, she learns to reject the (misguided) perception of the world that is unfolded in romance texts. In clearing up the mystery surrounding Virginia and Captain Sunderland, however, Lady Delacour challenges such a reductive reading of her reformation. She demonstrates that hers was not a total conversion, and that she continues to perceive *and* desire the power and the pleasure of the imaginative life. Alone of all those who immediately surround her, Lady Delacour therefore illustrates her conviction that the rational reality espoused by the Percivals is not an absolute one; that, as Virginia's adventures demonstrate, it *is* possible to use one's imagination to transform the world.

While this is most obviously illustrated by the conclusion of Belinda, it is also demonstrated by Lady Delacour's responses to the Percivals' attempts to cultivate Belinda's reason throughout the text. Before she learns the true nature of Virginia's relationship with Clarence Hervey, Belinda believes the girl to be his mistress and resolves "to banish him from her thoughts" (230). Encouraged by the Percivals to consider instead the attentions of Mr. Vincent, Belinda is at first distressed by Lady Anne's dismissal of her "'fear . . . that it is not in [her] power to return his affection'" (228). Lady Anne believes this reservation may not prove "'a sufficient objection'" to Belinda and Vincent's marriage (228). "'In a mind as well regulated as yours'", she observes, "esteem may certainly in time be improved into love'" (229). While "'not pretend[ing] to be what is called in love with Mr Vincent'", Belinda eventually learns to "'esteem'" and "'love him'", and this enables her to regulate her affections (341). Not surprisingly, this horrifies Lady Delacour, and one intriguing implication of Edgeworth's narrative is that this is in the first case because she is better able than the rational Percivals to see through Hervey's mysterious behaviour. Although the mystery surrounding Hervey and Virginia at this point remains to

be resolved, Lady Delacour insists that Hervey will in due course be able to explain his actions. "'Begging your pardon, my dear'", she tells Belinda, "'the man loves you. Some entanglement, some punctilio, some doubt, some delicacy, some folly, prevents him from being just at this moment where, I confess, he ought to be – at your feet'" (257).

In a similar fashion, Edgeworth's narrative subversively intimates that Lady Delacour is also a better judge of Belinda's true character than Lady Anne, and, again, that this is entirely due to her predilection for inappropriate texts. Upon meeting Mr. Vincent for the first time, "Lady Delacour received him with all the politeness imaginable; and even her prepossessions in favour of Clarence Hervey could not prevent her from being struck with his appearance. 'Il a infiniment l'air d'un héros de roman,' thought she, 'and Belinda is not quite so great a philosopher as I imagined'" (315). This instant in the tale demonstrates Lady Delacour's perception that, contrary to her protestations, Belinda is a passionate as well as a rational creature, and that she is not being governed *totally* by her reason in deciding to be Mr. Vincent's wife.

Furthermore, despite the fact that Lady Delacour's own "incessant comparison between her *first love* and her husband excited perpetual contempt and disgust in her mind for her wedded lord, and for many years precluded all perception of his good qualities", an essential point of Edgeworth's narrative is that her ladyship remains overwhelmingly in favour of first loves and that it is this that inspires her endeavours to promote Belinda's and Hervey's marriage (259). "[P]ersuaded that the most effectual way to secure [Belinda's happiness] would be to promote her union with her *first love*", Lady Delacour decides to "'move Heaven and Earth to break off [Belinda's and Mr. Vincent's] absurd match'" (261, 428). Unlike the essentially passive Lady Anne, the romance-reading Lady Delacour is used to acting as her own agent. When she learns of Captain Sunderland's existence, Lady Delacour therefore takes active steps to solve the mystery of Virginia's admirer, launching what she describes as "'indefatigable'" inquiries (446). Through a series of convoluted

coincidences, she eventually discovers that Captain Sunderland is not only in love with Virginia, but also that he is the best friend of Mr. Hartley, Virginia's father. Although she does not immediately interpret Captain Sunderland's behaviour correctly, the important point is that Lady Delacour perceives at once that Virginia is effectively embroiled in her own romance fiction and, unlike Hervey or Mrs. Ormond, she allows Virginia the power of an autonomous heart. Noting that Captain Sunderland had used a "'spyglass'" to watch Virginia "'day after day'" in her forest cottage, Lady Delacour observes, "'For ought I know, he is the first knight or squire upon record, who ever fell in love with his mistress through a telescope. But Virginia, who . . . is better read in romances than any of us, can set me right, if I am incorrect. At all events, I hope the novelty and delicacy of this mode of courtship will recommend him to her favour'" (447-48).

Significantly, it is left to Lady Delacour to "'finish the novel'" (449), and the elaborate 'theatrical tableaux' that she creates underscores the didactic message of Edgeworth's text. Carefully arranging the assembled company, she "display[s] the harmony made possible by domesticity", Heather MacFadyen argues, and intimates that she finally possesses "both the domestic and literary authority" of a reformed mind (438):

> 'Captain Sunderland – kneeling with Virginia, if you please, sir, at her father's feet – You in the act of giving them your blessing, Mr Hartley – Mrs Ormond clasps her hands with joy – Nothing can be better than that, madam – I give you infinite credit for the attitude – Clarence, you have a right to Belinda's hand, and may kiss it too – Nay, Miss Portman, it is the rule of the stage – Now, where's my Lord Delacour? – He should be embracing me, to show that we are reconciled – Ha! here he comes – Enter Lord Delacour, with little Helena in his hand – Very well! a good start of surprise, my lord – Stand still, pray, you cannot be better than you are - Helena, my love, do not let go your father's hand – There! quite pretty and natural! – Now, Lady Delacour, to show that she is reformed, comes forward to address the audience with a moral.' (450-51)

The pictorial nature of Lady Delacour's conclusion has another implication, I would suggest, however, for it at last demonstrates the true significance of Edgeworth's preoccupation with pictures and portraits throughout the work. Apart from Virginia's picture of Captain Sunderland and Belinda's drawing of Lady Anne and her family, for

example, Hervey commissions a painting of Virginia, Lady Delacour a portrait of Captain Sunderland, and Mr. Hartley carries a "'miniature picture'" around with him to aid his search for his "'long lost child!'" (383, 389). On the one hand merely facilitating the working out of the convoluted coincidences that impel the narrative, on the other these pictures and portraits demonstrate the extremely complex use to which Edgeworth puts one of the most powerful of all romance conventions. Northrop Frye argues, for instance, that pictures, tapestries, and statues are staples of romance texts, usually appearing near the *beginning* of narratives to indicate the threshold of a romance world (109). "A central image of descent", he writes, "[is] that of being involved with pictures or tapestries or statues or mirrors in a way that suggest[s] the exchange of original identity for its shadow or reflection" (155). Edgeworth's use of portraits and pictures *throughout* her text, I would argue, illustrates her conviction that *any* world may function as a demonic or an idyllic realm. The difference, she insists, depends entirely upon the individual, upon the essential integrity of his or her ontological condition or state.

More than this, Edgeworth's use of pictorial images also demonstrates her belief that the individual must harness the power of his or her passions and imagination in order to perceive the world correctly because only a small part of reality can be 'seen' by the rational mind. When Belinda and Lady Delacour simultaneously view Virginia's portrait, for instance, the fact that each 'sees' the significance of this painting differently is emphasised in the narrative. Mistakenly believing that the portrait is a representation "'of Clarence's mistress'", Belinda is plunged into a state of "excessive" confusion upon viewing the picture, while Lady Delacour correctly insists that Virginia "'will never be'" Hervey's wife (179). Again, this amplifies my earlier argument that Lady Delacour's romantic imagination enables her to perceive a reality other than a purely rational one; specifically, that her reading enables her to transcend the limitations of her own, Belinda's, *and* Virginia's existence and to envision a different life. By concluding the novel, Lady

Delacour therefore celebrates her (superior) powers of perception; she intimates that, as she so subversively desired, her powers, and love, have proved "'a match'" for the rational Percivals and transformed Belinda's world (261).

Finally, the manner in which Lady Delacour chooses to finish the novel has one further overwhelming implication for Belinda: it demonstrates that the *aspirational* nature of the domestic felicity depicted in this text and, indeed, in all of Edgeworth's writing. Pointedly resisting the desire of Lord Delacour's aunt that she should illustrate "'*how* people become happy in a rational manner'", Lady Delacour significantly insists upon leaving "'[s]omething . . . to the imagination'" in her conclusion (450). Like Edgeworth, she thus effectively presents her 'readers' with a text in which character and plot development have been arrested. If this immediately emphasises the essential artificiality of what is being depicted, it also raises the question of what will happen when the characters and plot are released from their moment of suspension. To put this another way, Lady Delacour concludes her novel with a 'picture' that may symbolize *either* the entrance to or the exit from a romance world, and this, I would suggest, is the final subversive implication of Edgeworth's text.

Some thirty-three years separates the publication of Belinda and Helen, and yet Edgeworth deals with fundamentally the same themes in each of these texts. As in Belinda, Helen traces what happens when its young heroine is taken into somebody else's marital home, and it considers the consequences of her discovery that women must make considerable sacrifices in the service of motherhood and marriage. Helen also rehearses the earlier novel's preoccupation with women as readers, and the fact that Lady Davenant's failings as a wife and mother are in the first place the result of her own *and* her mother's reading is central to the text. As is the case with Belinda, however, the didactic message of Helen is both facilitated and qualified by Edgeworth's use of romance conventions. The

novel thus simultaneously celebrates and challenges the notion of an existence that is entirely predicated upon reason, and, even more so than in Belinda, it implies that it is necessary to harness one's passion and imagination in order to properly (re)negotiate the world.

Like Lady Delacour in Belinda, then, Lady Davenant treats the young heroine of Helen to a long account of her history, and she similarly indicates that many of the difficulties that she experienced were primarily the result of her reading. Significantly noting that *her* "'castle-build[ing]'" mother's "'worldly plan'" was to secure "'a castle'" for her daughter, Lady Davenant wryly observes that she "'was only too ready, too glad to believe all that [she] was told'".[29] She was "'was very romantic'", she observes to Helen, and hers "'was honest, pure, real romantic love . . . [that was] nursed by imagination more than by hope'":

> 'I had early, in my secret soul . . . a pattern of perfection – something chivalrous, noble, something that is no longer to be seen now-a-days . . . Mine was to be a demigod whom I could worship, a husband to whom I could always look up, with whom I could always sympathize, and to whom I could devote myself with all a woman's self-devotion.' (9: 51).

To all intents and purposes admitting here that she entertained what Mr. Percival would term the notion of a *beau ideal* in her youth, Lady Davenant further intimates that this inspired her to try to force reality to imitate her perceptions. Not happening upon such an ideal in real life, she acknowledges that "'after [her] own imagination [she] made one'" (9: 51). Having "'dwelt upon it, doated on it'", Lady Davenant "'at last threw this bright image of [her] own fancy full upon the being to whom [she] thought [she] was most happily destined – destined by duty, chosen by affection'" (9: 51).

Allowing that she was effectively enslaved by romance, Lady Davenant reveals to Helen that circumstance exposed her to great danger; it divided her from her true, rational, 'self', as she would have it, and allowed a deceitful man to capture her heart. Emphasising that her "'eyes'" were essentially "'bewitched'" at this time, Lady Davenant passed "'some

months in a trance of beatification'", and was only "'awakened'" from this "'dream'" state "'by a rude shock'" (9: 51-52). Discovering that her lover was secretly paying his attentions to one "'much fairer'" than herself, his reaction when she confronted him with this knowledge caused her "'eyes'" to be finally "'opened'" (9: 52-53). He declared that the calmness of her demeanour proved that she had never really loved him, and this caused Lady Davenant to confront the foolishness of her actions and to perceive the danger of allowing her actions to be governed by her imagination and heart.

Like Lady Delacour in Belinda, Lady Davenant reveals that she was punished both physically and emotionally for privileging her passions and emotions over her rational mind. In the first instance, she fell ill immediately after parting from her lover, and, believing "'the spring of passion, which [she] then thought the spring of life'", to be irreparably "'broken, [she] meditated [her] resolution [to quit public life] secretly and perpetually as [she] lay on [her] bed'" (9: 55). Significantly, Lady Davenant remembers that her recovery began when she was struck by an edifying sentence in The Rambler, but that she nonetheless had to undergo several more severe trials before she totally effaced the effects of her love of inappropriate texts. Rescued by Lord Davenant, Lady Davenant thus admits that she not only "'burned'" to see him "'distinguished among his peers'", but that, in so doing, she to all intents and purposes tried to (re)cast her new husband as her champion and defender (9: 58). "'He entered the lists'", she observes, "'and on the political tournament tilted successfully. Many were astonished, for, till they came against him in the joust, they had no notion of his weight, or of his skill in arms'" (9: 58). Similarly, having read Germaine de Staël's Considérations sur la révolution française (1818),[30] Lady Davenant succumbed to the "'mischievous effect'" of a "'few passages'" in the text (9: 59). De Staël dismissed English ladies as no "'great conversational [or] political influence'" in English society, and so Lady Davenant set out to prove the authoress wrong by "'exhibit[ing] [herself] in the character of a female politician'" (9: 60).

"'I believe I had a notion at the same time of being the English Corinne'" (9: 60).[31] This dangerous affectation lasted for but a short period, though, and it was brought to an end by the Davenants' "'dear friend D- . . . [who] could not bear to see it'" (9: 60). Prompted by his particular regard for Lord Davenant, this gentleman set out to "'disenchant'" his friend's wife (9: 60). Having arranged for her to hear the ridicule to which she was being subjected behind her back, D proved to Lady Davenant that she was being ridiculed as "'[t]he prating she, the mock Corinne'" by one of her most fervent 'admirers' (9: 60). The shock of this discovery, she tells Helen, brought her back to her "'natural form'" (9: 60).

Although D accomplishes much in terms of Lady Davenant's reformation, it was Lord Davenant's incontrovertibly superior (patriarchal) character that finally 'cured' his wife. Having first of all tried and failed to persuade her husband to secure a place for a man who was to marry the favourite maid of one of her friends, Lady Davenant next endeavoured to convince Lord Davenant to secure a pension for her mother so that she could satisfy her (romantic) ambition to build a "'dairy'" (9: 63). "'[D]airies'", Lady Davenant dryly observes, "'were then the fashion'" (9: 63). His patience tried to the utmost, Lord Davenant confronted his wife with the observation that he would sacrifice anything for her except his "'honour'" and that, as she was apparently incapable of seeing this, they had better part (9: 65). Echoing her reaction when she discovered her first lover's perfidy, Lady Davenant remembers that she fainted following this pronouncement of her husband's, and the fact that this symbolized her shedding of yet another inauthentic self permeates the text. At this instant, Edgeworth implies, Lady Davenant cast off her quixotic delusions and realized the necessity of using her reason to govern her actions and thoughts. Echoing my earlier observations in relation to Letters for Literary Ladies and Belinda, however, the subversive intimation of the narrative is that Lady Davenant's essential relationship to her husband does not substantially change as a result of this moment of revelation. Whilst deluded, we recall, she had entertained the desire to find "'a

demigod whom [she] could worship, a husband to whom [she] could always look up'" (9: 51). Although Lady Davenant insists to Helen that she moved on from such foolish fantasies, the intimation of the text is that Lord Davenant ultimately proved to be such a husband: namely, one who "'stooped down'" to forgive his wife's womanly transgressions and thereafter regulated her behaviour (9: 65).

In this context, Lady Davenant insists that the change in ministry that then occurred was extremely fortunate, for it prompted Lord Davenant's resignation and left him free to supervise the (re)education of his wife. What the text makes clear, though, is that Lady Davenant underwent a very particular type of (re)training: she learned, that is, to read the right type of books. "'Of course I had read all such reading as ladies read'", she observes, "'but this was very different from the kind of study that would enable me to keep pace with Lord Davenant and his highly informed friends'" (9: 66). While Lady Davenant insists that "'this was the happiest time of [her intellectual] life'", an essential point of Edgeworth's narrative is that her ladyship could only learn so much after her disenchantment (9: 67). With her eyes properly opened, she remembers that she "'saw and craved the boundless treasures opened to [her] view'" (9: 67). Although desiring "'to read all that Lord Davenant was reading'" so that she "'might be *up* to his ideas'", Lady Davenant significantly emphasises that "'this was not to be done in an instant'" (9: 67). In other words, Lady Davenant discovers that it is not possible for her, or any woman, to immediately efface centuries of patriarchal pedagogical privilege.

Lady Davenant's rehearsal of her history to her young friend reveals that there are, clearly, many similarities between Belinda and Helen. In both texts, after all, an older matriarchal figure traces her story for the benefit of a younger woman, and warns her of the dangers of replicating her adventures. What makes Helen different from Belinda, however, is that, unlike Lady Delacour, Lady Davenant has explicitly rejected the powers and the pleasures of the passions and the emotions: specifically, she is a matriarchal figure

who unequivocally urges her friend to embrace a rational life. Unlike the romantic Lady Delacour, though, Lady Davenant is gradually revealed to have very poor powers of (ontological) perception, and the (subversive) intimation of the text is that this is *because* she has elevated her reason over her imagination and heart. As a rational woman, Lady Davenant is only able to see a small part of reality; unlike Helen, for example, she fails to perceive *why* "'the desire of pleasing universally'" should be the "'ruling passion'" of Cecilia, her daughter (9: 20). Lady Davenant thus dismisses this propensity of Cecilia's as mere evidence of her "'little mind and . . . cold heart'", while Helen judges, rightly, that this character defect grew out of the maternal neglect that Cecilia suffered as a child (9: 20). Cecilia, she observes, was left "'all day long with her governess, and . . . the governess's apartments were quite out of the way, in one of the wings at the end of a long corridor, with a separate staircase; she might as well have been in another house'" (9: 13). It is therefore significant that Lady Davenant rejects Helen's plea to tell her story to Cecilia on the grounds that it would "'answer no purpose'": "'Cecilia sees as much as she can ever see of my character, and I see, in the best light, the whole of her's'" (9: 69).[32] Calling Helen her "'very good little friend'", she instructs her to "'keep [her] personal narrative for [her] own use'" (9: 69). As is the case with Belinda, then, Helen effectively operates upon two levels: the didactic level, which emphasises that reason must be privileged over passion and the emotions, and, the subversive level, which indicates that it is only possible to 'see' a small part of reality with one's rational mind. The fact that both levels are facilitated by Edgeworth's use of romance conventions, as we shall see, introduces some extraordinary tensions into the text.

In order to illustrate the didactic imperatives that impel this text and all of her writing, however, Edgeworth details what happens to Helen when she ill advisedly allows Cecilia to overrule her notions of moral behaviour. Cecilia is married to General Clarendon, a man who had always insisted that he would never marry any "'woman with

whom there was a danger of a first love'" (9: 24). Although she had enjoyed a brief flirtation with a Colonel D'Aubigny, Cecilia never declared this to the General, allowing him to lead her to the altar convinced that she was totally "'unspoiled by the world . . . a perfect angel'" (9: 25). Persuaded by Cecilia to receive a "'packet'" of compromising letters as if it were her own, Helen's compliance initiates a chain of events that not only causes the General to doubt her veracity, but also impacts upon her developing relationship with Granville Beauclerc, his ward (9: 231). Not perceiving that one duplicitous act invariably leads to another, Helen is appalled when she and Beauclerc simultaneously spy a letter of Cecilia's addressed to "'*My dear, too dear Henry*'" in a desk (9: 258). Although he believes that the writing on the letter is Lady Cecilia's, Beauclerc is astonished when Helen takes it and tears it to pieces. Significantly, Edgeworth's narrative emphasises that this act to all intents and purposes transforms Helen's perception of both herself and those who surround her, and the fact that everything and everybody thereafter appeared to her "as in a dream" is important (9: 260). Having restrung her harp in a "dreamy state", everything "passed 'charmingly' [for Helen] till a door softly opened behind her, and she saw a shadow on the wall, and some one stood, and passed from behind her" (9: 260). This shadow, of course, is Beauclerc's and the fact that Helen has begun her descent to an underworld existence is symbolized by her decision to retreat from him "to the darkest part of the room" (9: 260). Edgeworth reworks and develops this theme throughout the novel as, for example, when Helen attends a party with the Clarendons and Beauclerc and realizes that she is the focus of ridicule and derision. It is revealed that an enemy of Helen's, Lady Katrine Hawksby, has been instrumental in arranging for the letters of the deceased Colonel D'Aubigny and Cecilia to be published, and she has promoted the belief that the recently engaged Helen is the "'*La belle fiancée*'" of the text (9: 279). Although unable to understand the meaning of the whispers that surround her, Helen's reaction on her journey home after the party symbolize her perception that she and Beauclerc are being

driven further apart. "[A]ll the time", the text notes, she "felt as in a feverish dream, watching the lights of the carriage flit by like fiery eyes, while she thought only of the strange words she had heard, and why they should have made Beauclerc angry with her" (9: 280-81).

Helen is set one "'last trial'" of the "'proof of [her] sincerity'" by the General, who asks her to distinguish between what is true and fabrication in the illicit book (9: 305). She brings the text to Cecilia, who is "glad to separate what was at worst only foolish girlish nonsense from things which had been interpolated to make out the romance" (9: 306). Yet, although she is conscious that Helen has "'saved'" her, "even in this last trial, when it came to the proof, Lady Cecilia was not perfectly true" to her word (9: 306). Instead, "[s]he purposely avoided putting her mark of acknowledgement to any of those expressions which most clearly proved her love for Colonel D'Aubigny" (9: 306). When Helen returns the book to the General, he reveals that he has copies of the original letters. Having compared 'Helen's' text and these copies, he informs the devastated Helen that he will not "'sanction'" her marriage with Beauclerc, as he will not allow his ward to marry a woman in whom there is no "'truth'" (9: 308). Too late, Helen becomes "conscious that she [has] sunk step by step, dragged down that slippery path by Cecilia, instead of firmly making a stand, as she ought to have done, and upholding by her own integrity, her friend's failing truth" (9: 320).

This moment of recognition is one of overwhelming significance for Helen. It finally opens her eyes to Cecilia's perfidy and persuades her that she must flee her friend's household so that they may *both* regain the upper-world and secure their ontological salvation:

> 'O Cecilia! how different from what I thought you – or how changed! And I have helped to bring her to this! – I – I have been the cause – I will not stay in this house – I will leave her. To save her – to save myself – save my own truth and my own real character . . . Farther and farther, lower and lower, I have gone; I will not go lower, I will struggle up again at any risk, at any sacrifice.' (9: 321)

Before she can begin this ascent, however, Helen has to complete another "'sad trial'"; specifically, she has to part with her "'old friends for new'" and travel with the General's sister, Miss Clarendon, to her isolated Welsh house (9: 328). Although Miss Clarendon maintains that this journey will be devoid of "'mystery . . . romance . . . [and] adventures'", the fact that this *is* a romance journey is crucial to Edgeworth's text (9: 334). As she enters her new friend's home, it therefore observes that "Helen felt as if she were in a foreign land, and in a dream", and Helen's immediate "low fever" is symbolic of the real suffering that she is yet to experience (9: 335). Upon receipt of a letter addressed to "'To Mrs Granville Beauclerc'", the woman whom she *should* by now have become,[33] Helen thus slips into a state of "languid submission" (9: 336, 338). She moves and speaks "languidly", and observes that she "'should have been glad to die'" if Heaven had liked (9: 338-39). Her most dangerous point is reached, though, when she receives a letter from Cecilia. This convinces her that her friend has still not told her husband the truth, even after their first child, a son, has been safely delivered.[34] "There was, as Miss Clarendon termed it, 'a backsliding in her recovery' . . . Her soul was sunk within, nothing farther to hope; there was a dead calm, and the stillness and loneliness of Llansillen made that calm almost awful" (9: 342).

Helen's recovery, or ascent to the upper-world, begins once Miss Clarendon pointedly remarks that she "'cannot bear to see [her] any longer in this half-alive, half-dead state'" (9: 343). Helen, she observes, must exert herself or she is "'in danger of being lost in indolence'" (9: 343). Significantly, in treating Helen's return to health, Edgeworth develops a theme that is central to her novel: she insists that Helen and Cecilia are effectively "'double[s]'" and that the actions of one profoundly affect the other's state (9: 155). Having failed once in her duties as Cecilia's "'better self'", Helen is therefore anxious when she learns that the ailing Lady Davenant is to shortly return to London

(9: 155). Summoned back to London to greet her, Helen's fear is that Lady Cecilia will once more embroil her in the deceits of a demonic existence. "'And how shall I,' thought Helen, 'without plunging deeper in deceit, avoid revealing the truth? Shall I assist Cecilia to deceive her mother in her last moments; or shall I break my promise, betray Cecilia's secret, and at last be the death of her mother by the shock?'" (9: 348). When she and Cecilia are reunited, "Helen would scarcely have known her" friend "so changed [was she] in her whole appearance (9: 348). The emphasis of the narrative is unmistakable: if Helen has suffered as a result of Cecilia's duplicity, Cecilia has effectively been separated from her 'self' as a consequence of her deceptions. I quote the following passage at length because of its significance:

> instead of the bright beams that used to play in [her] eyes, there was now a dark deep-seated sorrow, almost despair. . . . it would have been impossible for any one who had any feeling, to have looked upon Lady Cecilia Clarendon at that moment, and to have recollected what she had so lately been, without pity. The friend of her childhood looked upon her with all the poignant anguish of compassion –
>
> 'Oh! my dear Cecilia! how changed!'
>
> Helen was not sensible that she had uttered the words 'how changed!'
>
> 'Changed! yes! I believe I am,' said Lady Cecilia, in a calm voice, 'very much changed in appearance, but much more in reality; my mind is more altered than my person.
>
> Oh! Helen! if you could see into my mind at this moment, and know how completely it is changed; - but it is all in vain now! You have suffered and suffered for me! but your sufferings could not equal mine. You lost love and happiness, but still conscious of deserving both: I had both at my command, and I could enjoy neither under the consciousness, the torture of remorse.' (9: 349)

Cecilia's analysis of her situation is intriguing, and it illustrates a contention that is crucial to Edgeworth's text. The General's decided prejudice against first loves prior to his marriage was patently not only irrational, but also symbolic of the worst type of patriarchal behaviour. Rather than seeing Cecilia as she was, the General tried to 'rewrite' her; in other words, he tried, like Clarence Hervey with Virginia, to turn her into *his* image of perfection. By transforming her into the "'perfect angel'" of his imagination, the text intimates that the General put Cecilia under terrific ontological pressure: he compelled her, that is, to emulate the "'idol'" of *his* heart (9: 25). As Lady Davenant observes, this by

necessity meant that Cecilia had to occupy an inauthentic state after her marriage; specifically, that she had to "'keep herself at the height to which he ha[d] raised her, or cease to receive his adoration'" (9: 25). The fact that Cecilia successfully deceives her husband over D'Aubigny's letters has a further catastrophic implication for her relationship with the General: it causes her to perceive the imperfections of *his* mind. As she puts it: "'To [his] judgement I had always looked up; it had raised me in my own opinion; it was a motive to me to be equal to what he thought me: but now that motive was gone, I no longer looked up to him; his credulous affection had blinded his judgement – he was my dupe! I could not love one who was my dupe'" (9: 350). Crucially, the further intimation of Cecilia's argument is that this recognition not only alienated her from her *self*, but also plunged her into a terrifying, underworld existence: "'I thought myself a monster; I had grown used to everything but that – that I could not endure; it was a darkness of the mind – a coldness; it was as if the sun had gone out of the universe; it was more – it was worse – it was as if I was alone in the world. Home was a desert to me'" (9: 351).[35] Edgeworth's other point, of course, is that the General is also pulled down to the underworld as a result of the fundamental deception that lies at the heart of his marriage. Cecilia thus notes, "'he . . . [became] more retired; his spirits . . . declined with mine'" (9: 351). As she went out late more and more at night, her "'multitude of paltry excuses'" began to open the General's eyes (9: 351). Calling Cecilia a "'Beautiful creature!'", he observed, "'half those charms would I give for *truth*!'" (9: 351).

I have said that Helen doubles Cecilia in Edgeworth's narrative, but it is equally true that Beauclerc also 'doubles' the General in the novel. Unlike his guardian, however, Beauclerc's attempts to impose his view of reality upon those who surround him are inspired by his reading; he effectively admits that his desire is to (re)create and to "'revel'" in the "'holiday world'" of romance texts (9: 101). Emphasising that the General would dismiss this "romance" of his ward's as "'*Schwarmerei* . . . [or] 'sky-rocketing'",

Edgeworth's intimation is that the better part of Beauclerc's mind has been "'raised'" by his admiration for "'the chivalrous courtesy of other times'" (9: 93, 102). As a devotee of Sir Walter Scott in particular, Beauclerc's character has been edified by the works of this "'Great and good enchanter'" and he has learned to "'think more nobly'" of others and himself (9: 101-02). While this obviously affects *all* of Beauclerc's relationships, Edgeworth is particularly preoccupied with how it impacts upon his relations with women, and she intimates that the young man is better able to relate to the fairer sex than the General as a result of his chivalrous behaviour. If this is variously encoded in Helen, it is made particularly apparent at one crucial instant in the narrative. One of the houseguests at Clarendon Park is Horace Churchill, a man whose over-riding vanity prompts him to vie with Beauclerc for Helen's affection. Seeing that Beauclerc's "romantic enthusiasm had more charm for her than wit or fashion", Churchill decides to be "a little romantic, and perhaps, even take a touch at chivalry, a burst like Beauclerc, but in a way of his own, at the degeneracy of modern times" (9: 127). Unimpressed by Churchill's efforts, Helen compares his and Beauclerc's attitude to women and, in so doing, illuminates an argument that is of paramount importance to Edgeworth's novel. Beauclerc, she notes, "'always speaks of woman [sic] in general with respect – as if he had more confidence in them, and more dependence upon them for his happiness. Now Mr Churchill, with all the adoration he professes, seems to look upon them as idols that he can set up or pull down, bend the knee to or break to pieces, at pleasure'" (9: 126).

Although referring here to Churchill, Helen's comments obviously reflect as well upon the General's relationship with Cecilia, for, as we have seen, the fact that the General similarly 'sees' Cecilia as *his* creature, or idol, is central to Edgeworth's narrative. Beauclerc, for his part, perceives Helen as a romance heroine, and this is made particularly apparent at that moment in the text where Edgeworth describes his efforts to organize a hawking party. In the first place, this ambition is itself inspired when he views "hunting

and hawking pieces" by Philips Wouwermans (1614-68), a Dutch painter (9: 131). Transfixed by one that depicts "the Duchess and her ladies, from Don Quixote", Beauclerc "fancied he discovered in one of the figures some likeness to Helen; the lady had a hawk upon her wrist" (9: 131). Having instructed a friend to purchase a "hawking establishment" for him, Beauclerc "completely shut out, for the moment, all other objects . . . before his imagination were hawking scenes, and Helen with a hawk on her wrist, looking most graceful – a hawk of his own training it should be" (9: 131-32). Although Beauclerc here gives himself over wholeheartedly to a fanciful image of Helen, Edgeworth's argument is that this image is finally much more desirable than that which the General adopts in relation to his wife. Beauclerc's elevated opinion of everybody and everything in general predisposes him to a more steadfast belief in Helen's integrity and, unlike the General with Cecilia, he sees Helen as superior in and of herself and not just as his future bride. When she is first suspected of an inappropriate relationship with D'Aubigny, Helen therefore tells Beauclerc that, yes, "'[t]here is a mystery which [she] cannot explain'", but she challenges him to nonetheless accept that she has always acted correctly (9: 266). "'This is the test to which I put your love'", she observes, "'put mine to any test you will, but if your confidence in me is not sufficient to endure this trial, we can never be happy together'" (9: 266). In rising to this challenge, Beauclerc notably acknowledges the difference that exists between his relationship with Helen and that of the General with Cecilia. He admits, in other words, that Helen is an autonomous being and not simply a creature for him to (re)fashion in his heart:

> 'The General, with his strict, narrow, conventional notions, has not an idea of the kind of woman I like, or what Helen really is. He sees in Helen only the discreet proper-behaved young lady, adapted, so nicely adapted, to her place in society, to nitch and notch in, and to be of no sort of value out of it. Give me a being able to stand alone, to think and feel, decide and act, for herself.' (9: 267)

Despite some moments of doubt, Beauclerc remains true to Helen and, like the General, he suffers enormously as a result of Cecilia's duplicitous behaviour. Having

injured Horace Churchill in a duel fought over Helen's honour, he flees to France, and the consequences of his "banishment" precisely reflect those of Helen's period of Welsh isolation (9: 344). In France, Beauclerc's eyes are finally opened to the extent of the deceptions of Lord Beltravers, his self-styled friend. This "fiery" gentleman, the text reveals, has all along acted duplicitously towards Beauclerc (9: 84);[36] firstly, in order to secure money with which to pay his gambling debts, and, secondly, in the hopes of marrying his unsuspecting friend to his sister. During his stay in Paris, Beauclerc's powers of perception are finally sharpened, and he sees that Lord Beltravers is, indeed, "'a counterfeit'" as Lady Davenant has all along insisted (9: 77). "[T]hen and there", the text notes,

> Beauclerc first came to the perception that his good friend had predestined him and his fortune for [his sister] Lady Blanche, whom, all the time, he considered as a fool and a puppet, and for whom he had not the slightest affection: it was all for his own interested purposes.
>
> Beauclerc suddenly opened his eyes wide, and saw it all at once: how it had happened that they had never seen it before, notwithstanding all that the General on one side, and Lady Davenant on the other, had done to force them open, was incomprehensible; but, as Lady Davenant observed, 'A sort of cataract comes over the best eyes for a time, and the patient will not suffer himself to be couched; and if you struggle to perform the operation that is to do him good against his will, it is odds but you blind him for life.' (9: 363)

Significantly, *all* of the main characters begin their ascent back to the upper world when the ailing Lady Davenant greets her "'dear children!'" once more near the end of the novel, and the fact that this is a highly charged moment for Lady Davenant in particular is a crucial point in Edgeworth's text (9: 355). Conscious that she is dying, Lady Davenant is at last compelled to look properly at Cecilia and is forced to acknowledge the part that *her* maternal neglect has played in misshaping her daughter's character and life. As "[t]hey all entered the saloon", the text observes,

> it was a blaze of light; Lady Davenant, shading her eyes with her hand, looked around at the counteances, which she had not yet seen. . . . the light was now full upon [Cecilia's] face and figure; and her mother saw how it was changed! and looking back at Helen, she said in a low, awful tone, 'I see it; the black spot has spread!' (9: 356)

Cecilia's belated confession of all of her actions similarly prompts Lady Davenant's significant observation that she "'still'" has a daughter: "'Not such as I might have had, but that is my own fault'" (9: 356). Insisting that "'there is a redeeming power in truth'", Lady Davenant observes that the consequence of this may be that Cecilia may prove "'yet . . . more worthy to be [the General's] wife than she has ever yet been!'" (9: 357). Her son-in-law is unflinching, however, and he resolves to leave England the moment he has "'publicly'" restored Helen's honour (9: 357).

The fact that all of this constitutes the beginning of Helen's ascent from the underworld is made extremely clear in the novel,[37] but it is only on the day of her and Beauclerc's marriage that *all* of the characters' trials are finally completed. Upon rising from her knees at the altar, Helen's character is publicly restored: "the sun shone out, and a ray of light was on her face and it was lovely" (9: 369). In an effort to similarly restore Cecilia's reputation, Lady Davenant draws out and holds up "to public view" a locket containing a miniature of Cecilia that was stolen by D'Aubigny and used by Lady Katrine Hawksby, and others, to cast aspirations upon her daughter (9: 370). "'This locket'", Lady Davenant proclaims to the assembled wedding guests, '" was *stolen* by a worthless man, given by him to a worthless woman, from whom I have obtained it; and now I give it to the person for whom it was originally destined'" (9: 370).[38] By putting the locket around Helen's neck, the narrative emphasises that the public part of Lady Davenant's trial is accomplished; all that remains is for her to try to reconcile the General to Cecilia. "[H]er colour flitted – her hand was suddenly pressed to her heart . . . she slowly left the room – and was no more seen by the world!" (9: 370).

Retiring with her family, Lady Davenant thus performs the last momentous action that is symbolically intended to atone for her failings as a mother. Humbling herself entirely by throwing herself at her son-in-law's feet, this intensely proud woman pleads

with the General "'[as] a mother for her child – a dying mother for your wife'" (9: 371). If he separates from Cecilia after the wedding as he has planned, Lady Davenant avers, the General will effectively condemn his wife to the horrors of a perpetual, underworld existence. He will, in other words, "'[g]ive her up to the whole world of slanderers'", who will positively delight in pulling her "'character'" to pieces (9: 371). This observation breaks the General, and he turns to clasp Cecilia in his arms. Blessing them both, Lady Davenant finally admits that the sufferings that all of those present have endured are the direct result of her earlier neglect of her maternal duties; she intimates that, for the good of all, a woman *must* properly fulfil her obligations as a mother as well as a wife:

> 'Now,' said she, 'I give my daughter to a husband worthy of her, and she more worthy of that noble heart than when first his. Her only fault was mine - mine, my early neglect: it is repaired – I die in peace! You make my last my last moments the happiest. Helen, my dearest Helen, now, and not till now, happy – perfectly happy in Love and Truth!' (9: 371)

Edgeworth's use of romance in Helen appears to immediately satisfy the didactic imperatives that impel all of her work, but I would suggest that her treatment of the genre in this novel differs in one crucial respect from that in her earlier texts. As my following chapters shall demonstrate, each of Edgeworth's works derides romance while seeking to harness its power; to put this another way, each explicitly elevates reason over passion and the emotions, while at the same time indirectly acknowledging and celebrating the power of the imagination. What is different about Helen, however, is that, while the text plainly perpetuates this process, it also offers a spirited defence of romance with both the youthful Beauclerc and the rational Lady Davenant eulogizing the attractions *and* the integrity of the imaginative life. In his passionate defence of romance reading, Beauclerc defends romance texts by not only emphasising their transformative powers, but also by insisting that such works essentially protect the very psyche of the reader. "'It is the curse of age to be . . . miserably disenchanted'", he notes, "'to outlive all our illusions, all our hopes. That may be my doom in age, but, in youth, the high spring-time of existence, I will not be

cursed with such a premature ossification of the heart'" (9: 104). By reading romances, he indicates, the individual is kept emotionally and imaginatively alive; he protects himself from the enervating effects of a purely rational life.

If this observation in the narrative is in itself extremely important, it is impossible to overestimate the significance of the fact that the rational Lady Davenant echoes Beauclerc's sentiments in the novel. The emphasis of this lady's long recital of her history to Helen, after all, is that the young girl should beware of "'building . . . castles in the air'", and that she should use her reason to protect her 'self' from the dangers of "'false, and perhaps vain imaginations'" (9: 46). When she admires Beauclerc's "power . . . of being rapt into future times or past, completely at his author's bidding, to be transported how and where he pleased", on the other hand, Lady Davenant recognizes the pleasurable effects of such transportations, and she mourns the fact that, unlike Beauclerc and Helen, she is no longer able to sustain such flights of fancy (9: 126). "'As we advance in life'", she observes,

> 'it becomes more and more difficult to find any book the sort of enchanting, entrancing interest which we enjoyed when life, and books, and we ourselves were new . . . the fact is, that [not] only does the imagination cool and weaken as we grow older, but we become, as we live on in this world, too much engrossed by the real business and cares of life, to have feeling or time for factitious, imaginary interests. But why do I say factitious? while they last, the imaginative interests are as real as any others.' (9: 126)

Beauclerc's expression of gratitude to Lady Davenant "'for doing justice to poor imagination, whose pleasures are surely, after all, the highest, the most real, that we have, unwarrantably as they have been decried both by metaphysicians and physicians" engages with and destabilizes the utilitarian, didactic message that overtly informs not only this text but all of Edgeworth's writing (9: 126-27). Specifically, I would argue, it demonstrates *Edgeworth's* perception that reason alone is not enough to order reality; that imagination and passion are also necessary in order for the individual to have a happy as well as a useful life.

Helen is Edgeworth's last substantial piece of adult fiction, so it is tempting to suggest that her treatment of this theme in her text is merely representative of the greater maturity that she herself had inevitably achieved by the time she produced the novel. Marilyn Butler argues, for example, that the novel is

> coherent . . . because its central theme comes deep from Maria Edgeworth's experience: it dramatizes a conflict in values which she had lived through. In childhood she had felt herself in the position of a Cecilia, in awe of stern older figures (perhaps her father, certainly her first stepmother), and convinced that her own desire to please was the sign of a weak, inferior character. In old age, as she herself became mentor to younger members of the family, she came on the contrary to value warmth, expressiveness, and the talent for friendship.[39]

Although Butler's comments are useful, I would contend that to adhere too closely to such a reading of Helen is curiously reductive; it fails to consider, for instance, the significance of the fact that Edgeworth variously manifests her appreciation of "warmth, expressiveness, and the talent for friendship" *throughout* her texts and, indeed, in her *letters*.[40] Similarly, while Edgeworth's treatment of the value of the imaginative life is made peculiarly explicit in Helen, my following chapters will show that this also informs her tales for children and adolescents *and* her Irish writing. In each of these texts, we shall discover, Edgeworth overtly unfolds a vision of reality that is based upon a distinctly rational ideology, one where she implies that the individual *must* cultivate his/her reason in order to successfully govern his/her actions. At the same time, however, by drawing heavily upon romance conventions in order to facilitate this argument, Edgeworth admits not only the power and pleasure, but also the crucial *necessity* of the imaginative life into her writing. To put this another way, she reveals her perception that passion and imagination are necessary to (re)negotiate the world, that reason alone is *not* sufficient to order existence. In advancing this argument in her work, of course, Edgeworth rehearses and refines an argument that we have already seen variously informs "Letters of Julia and Caroline", The Modern Griselda, Belinda, and Helen. She illustrates her conviction, that is, that the cultivation of one's reason is not an unproblematic process and that it may

frequently involve tremendous mental, emotional, and, sometimes, physical suffering. This issue, among others, will be examined in my next chapter upon Edgeworth's tales for children and adolescences, where, I will suggest, she peculiarly reveals her sense of the *pain* that the child suffers when his/her imaginative excesses are (re)directed.

Chapter 2:

Edgeworth's Tales for Children and Adolescents.

[P]arents would save themselves a great deal of trouble, and their children some pain, if they would pay some attention to their early education.[1]

We have seen in my previous chapter how texts such as Letters for Literary Ladies and Practical Education stress the importance of a proper early education for children, one that is preferably conducted at home under the eye of a benevolent mother. The texts insist that only through such an education can a young person be properly prepared to take his or her place in society, and, while arguing that girls must receive a different education to that of boys, they insist that both sexes must be persuaded to use their reason to govern their actions and thoughts. In this context, Edgeworth places a singular emphasis upon reading, and the didactic message of her writing is that care should be taken so that women in particular are only exposed to appropriate books. Unlike romances, she avers, such texts will have an entirely beneficial effect upon woman: they will convince her, that is, that her own best interests are 'naturally' served by embracing domestic life. In this way, Edgeworth attempts to diffuse and contain cultural anxieties surrounding the issue of women's education; the *rational* literary lady, she insists, will necessarily contribute to the stability of the existing (patriarchal) social order.

In advancing this argument, I also observed that each of Edgeworth's texts contributes to a greater didactic enterprise, and that, as such, no text should be read in isolation from the others. This, in the first instance, is immediately illustrated by the publication details of her texts. The Parent's Assistant: or Stories for Children was published in 1796, Moral Tales for Young People in 1801, Early Lessons between 1801

and 1802, and Popular Tales in 1804.[2] Within the same period, Edgeworth also published Practical Education in 1798, Castle Rackrent in 1800, Belinda in 1801, and Essay on Irish Bulls and The Modern Griselda in 1802. It is therefore not surprising that the themes in Edgeworth's texts persistently overlap, especially given the often-lengthy intervals that existed between the composition of a text and its eventual date of publication. "Lame Jervas",[3] for example, was published in Popular Tales in 1804, although Edgeworth completed the tale itself in 1799. As I shall demonstrate in my next chapter, a central theme of this tale is its celebration of the English way of life and, by implication, of the forces that impel imperial expansion. Between 1799 and the publication of Popular Tales, England, and its empire, were subjects that hugely preoccupied Edgeworth, as she witnessed the profound effects which the Act of Union had upon Irish politics and society. In this sense, then, the spirited defence of the English system that lies at the heart of "Lame Jervas" has implications for the issues of national identity that are raised by Castle Rackrent. Each text in its own way attempts to diffuse explosive issues of class and racial identity by envisaging a future in which different societies, and social orders, reach accommodation through mutual respect.[4]

The realization that the tales Edgeworth wrote for children and adolescents are ultimately implicated in national stability and imperial expansion is extremely important. As Lawrence Stone argues, the eighteenth century "was a turning point in the recognition of childhood as a period with its own distinctive requirements".[5] Newly invented toys for children made their appearance in newly rational toyshops, but what was even more significant was the huge outpouring of children's literature, which took place by the end of the century. Stone points out: "Between 1750 and 1814 some twenty professional writers of children's books produced some 2,400 different titles" (258). Crucially, this new literature did much more than merely entertain its readers: it also sought to contribute directly to their education. In this way, such books played a significant role in constructing

the notion of childhood that was emerging at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. They were, as J.H. Plumb argues, "designed to attract adults, to project an image of those virtues which parents wished to inculcate in their offspring, as well as to beguile the child" (81). Amplifying Mitzi Myers's argument that children's texts in general function as "key agents of socialization[,] diagram[ing] what cultures want of their young and expect of those who tend them",[6] Alan Richardson therefore contends, "The construction of childhood in an age of revolution and reform is neither a politically disinterested nor an ideologically neutral matter".[7] "In order to grasp the historical significance of the rise of a child-centred British culture", he writes, "it is necessary to explore links between education, ideology, and power within a society that underwent a profound shift from traditional hierarchical structures of domination to more consensual forms of managing political and social relations" (24-25). In other words, this new literature played its part in underpinning the social order by cultivating very particular attitudes to gender, class, and race in its readers. The final aim of this literature was overtly didactic: its ambition was to 'manage' the child *and* the parent both inside and outside of the text that was produced.[8]

In light of this recognition, Myers contends, readers and critics for a long time responded purely to the didactic level of such works, and they failed to appreciate how female writers in particular "smuggle[d] . . . their own symptomatic fantasies" into their writing (34). "[H]owever tirelessly didactic and ostensibly down to earth" such texts may appear, she declares,

> [the] paradigms of benign and powerful maternal governance and good girlhood [that they depict] reflect both female fantasies and real cultural change. On the one hand they read nurture as power, showing a decided preference for maturity over the childishness male preceptors recommend to women and perhaps also evincing a longing to have been nurtured themselves, for a surprisingly large number of the [Georgian] period's women writers record unhelpful or absent mothers. (34, 54-55)

In her pioneering readings of Edgeworth's literature for children and adolescents, Myers

thus argues that Edgeworth uses her tales both to rewrite her own childhood and negotiate "the paternal *and* maternal narratives and languages made available to her by her culture" (Myers's emphasis).[9] By "[r]omancing the [m]oral [t]ale", as she would have it, Edgeworth transforms her stories into "the site of maternal longing and magical thinking as much as reason and 'useful knowledge,' of feelings as well as the 'facts' that the preface lauds" (101). My analysis of Edgeworth's tales for children and adolescents has much in common with that of Myers; like her, for instance, I believe that Edgeworth uses her tales to romanticize and rewrite her early life. In examining these texts, however, I am going to examine how this ambition is informed by what I have already identified as Edgeworth's overriding compulsion in her work: namely, her desire to rehearse and celebrate Richard Lovell Edgeworth's theories and achievements in her writing. While "narrativiz[ing] female fantasy", as Myers has it, Edgeworth simultaneously labours to celebrate her father's didactic vision. My interest in this chapter will be to examine the significance of the fact that she attempts to use romance conventions in order to facilitate both of these ends.

In the interests of 'managing' the textual and extra-textual child and parent, as we shall see, Edgeworth's texts in the first instance plainly keep an eye on their adult as well as their child audience. In two of the tales in The Parent's Assistant, for example, Edgeworth contrasts two little boys and the types of education that they receive from their fathers. The hero of "Lazy Lawrence"[10] is the good-natured and hard-working Jem, while Francisco is the exemplary little boy in "The Little Merchants".[11] One aim of each of these tales is to persuade their young readers to emulate these hard-working and honest little boys, but another is to impress upon their paternal readers that *they* will be punished like the fathers of Lawrence and Piedro if they similarly neglect the education of their children. In "Lazy Lawrence", the text pointedly observes that Lawrence's father "was an alehouse-keeper, and being generally drunk, could take no care of his son; so that Lazy Lawrence

grew every day worse and worse" (1: 8). At the end of the tale, this father is publicly shamed when he discovers that it is his son who is being led away as a thief: "'I *will* - I tell you, I *will* see the thief!' cried the drunken man, pushing up the boy's hat. It was his own son. 'Lawrence!' exclaimed the wretched father. The shock sobered him at once, and he hid his face in his hands" (1: 43). In the same way, Piedro's father in "The Little Merchants" discovers that it is foolish to believe that nothing much matters when a child is "*but a child*" (2:53). Piedro is led away to prison at the end of the tale, with his father likewise having learned that "it was scarcely reasonable to expect, that a boy who had been educated to think that he might cheat every customer he could in the way of trade, should be afterwards scrupulously honest in his conduct towards the father whose proverbs encouraged his childhood in cunning" (2: 67).

Similarly, "The Good French Governess",[12] which appears in Moral Tales, traces how the exemplary Madame de Rosier re-educates both the Harcourt children *and* their mother. This lady, the text tells us, "had good abilities, but, as she lived in a constant round of dissipation, she had not time to cultivate her understanding, or to attend to the education of her family" (2:99). By the end of the tale, Mrs. Harcourt has undergone a transformation which precisely echoes that of Lady Delacour in Belinda: she learns, that is, to see through the artificial pleasures of the social whirl and abandons them for the more permanent attractions of domestic life. Crucially, Edgeworth's tale emphasises that this is neither a sudden nor a painless transformation on Mrs. Harcourt's part, and the fact that it at first involves some very real difficulties for the mother is central to the text. Mrs. Harcourt is engaged in an ontological struggle: she is trying, that is, to cast out the demons that have prompted her to inappropriate behaviour.[13] Thus, Edgeworth observes, Mrs. Harcourt was not immediately "quite so happy as she had expected" when she first decided to stay at home:

> They who have only seen children in picturesque situations, are not aware how much the duration of this domestic happiness depends upon those who have the care of them. People who, with the greatest abilities and the most anxious affection, are unexperienced in education, should not be surprised or mortified if their first attempts be not attended with success. (2: 164)

By the time the tale closes, Mrs. Harcourt's transformation has been successfully completed and, faced with Madame de Rosier's imminent departure, she fears greatly for the future of her children. These fears, the text emphatically declares, however, were

> the best omens for her future success: a sensible mother, in whom the desire to educate her family has once been excited, and who turns the energy of her mind to this interesting subject, seizes upon every useful idea, every practical principle, with avidity, and she may trust securely to her own preserving cares. Whatever a mother learns for the sake of her children, she never forgets.
>
> The rapid improvement of Mrs. Harcourt's understanding, since she had applied herself to literature, was her reward, and her excitement to fresh application. [Her older daughters] were now of an age to be her companions, and her taste for domestic life was confirmed every day by the sweet experience of its pleasures. (2: 223)

To amplify Mitzi Myers's argument, it is clear from each of these examples that "[t]he representation of the child", *or* the parent, "is also a reconstitution of the child", *or* the parent,[14] and that, as such, a powerful wish-fulfilment element invariably informs the writing of *all* children's texts. Whether they function as "a locus for personal longing", or as a site for "reformist fantasy" (52), such works do not merely represent the world, they seek to (re)create it: specifically, they try to persuade the reader to extra-textually replicate the (idealized) vision of reality that the author has produced. If this recognition clearly has several important consequences for Edgeworth's tales for children and adolescents, it in the first place calls attention to Richard Lovell Edgeworth's singular emphasis that his daughter's readers will find neither fantasy nor illusion in her books. As I have already noted in my introduction, Richard Lovell Edgeworth insists in his prefaces to these works that they are the direct result of careful observation of (his) children; they contain, he avers, *useful* lessons *faithfully* drawn from real life.

In order to underpin this argument, Richard Lovell Edgeworth calls attention to the compositional details of The Parent's Assistant, emphasising, for instance, that the text is

the immediate result of a real-life mother's educational experiments. Remarking that while it "seems . . . a very easy task to write for children", he notes that only those

> who have been interested in the education of a family, who have patiently followed children through the first processes of reasoning, who have daily watched over their thoughts and feelings; those only who know with what ease and rapidity the early associations of ideas are formed on which the future taste, character, and happiness, depend, can feel the dangers and difficulties of such an undertaking. (1: vi)

Effectively, Richard Lovell Edgeworth argues that Edgeworth is only able to write the text that follows because of the prior efforts of the second Mrs. Edgeworth. From 1776, he tells the reader, a "register" was kept in which were noted observations regarding the education of the Edgeworth children, and "[t]hese notes have been of great advantage to the writer of the following stories" (1:vii-viii). In this sense, then, the preface to The Parents' Assistant anticipates the argument that we have already seen informs the preface to Practical Education: as Richard Lovell Edgeworth would have it, Honora Edgeworth 'mothered' both books.

Edgeworth further facilitates this argument of her father's by taking great pains to link the didactic lessons of her texts to the experiences of real-life (Edgeworth) children. To this end, she repeatedly uses footnotes in her stories, and the cumulative effect of this is that the factual reality of the fiction she is creating is effectively underlined. When the heroine of "Simple Susan"[15] tries to bake bread just like her mother, for example, a footnote to the text observes, "This circumstance is founded on fact" (1: 171). Charles Howard's observation in "The Good Aunt"[16] that diamonds should be used to weigh diamonds so "'then changes in the weight of the air would not signify one way or the other'", a footnote tells us, was likewise "literally made by a boy of ten years old" (1: 243). Similarly, when the fictional Frank in Early Lessons[17] spends an hour and a half putting a jigsaw together, the reader is told that he is merely emulating a real-life "boy of four years old, [who] spent, voluntarily, above an hour and a half, in attempts to put together a joining map" (1: 186). With instances such as these in her stories, Edgeworth underlines the credibility of what she is relating and, by implication, her own credibility as a writer of educational texts. More than this, however, these footnotes also help her to impress the efficacy of the didactic theories that she is unfolding upon her readers. They suggest that

what the reader is reading has already been proven in the Edgeworth household, so that he or she can have perfect confidence that what he or she is reading *can* be reproduced.

This strategy has a further consequence for Edgeworth's texts, of course, in that it also helps to break down the division that exists between the tale and the reader. In "Frank", for example, a footnote is appended to the story of how Henry lends his brother his "'box full of little bricks'" (1: 191). This observes that "[t]hese little bricks were made of plaster of Paris", and it details their physical dimensions (1: 192). In so doing, Edgeworth's footnote renders these bricks peculiarly real for the reader: it implies that the bricks truly exist somewhere outside of the fictional sphere and that readers can similarly reproduce them in their own homes. Edgeworth takes this blurring of fiction and reality a step further in "Eton Montem",[18] a three-act play in The Parents' Assistant. In one part of the play, two characters, Louisa and Violetta, are engaged in activities related to the reading of Edgeworth's "The Little Merchants". Louisa is drawing a sketch of "'The Little Merchants'" because it is "'a story which Violetta was reading'" and she asked Louisa "'to try to draw the pictures of the little merchants for her'" (3: 292). By enclosing one piece of fiction in another, Edgeworth promotes the breaking-down of the distance that exists between the fictional characters and the children who read, or act out, the tale. In so doing, her writing expertly illuminates the efficacy of Alan Richardson's argument that the ultimate aim of such fiction was to 'manage' the child both within and outside the text. As he puts it,

> By drawing the child reader into a fictional world, and then inscribing it (and teaching it to inscribe itself) with a series of moral narratives geared to developmental stages, the children's book was designed to have a material effect on the middle-class child it typically portrayed; it simultaneously represented and attempted to embody in its readers, the bourgeois vision of the child as innocent and manageable. The goal this genre set itself was one of reforming the child in every sense - capitalizing on the alleged textual quality of the child's mind to make word become flesh and flesh become word. (141)

In Edgeworth's texts, this making of word into flesh and flesh into word has a strangely cyclical nature: the Edgeworth children have already become words in texts and the aim of these texts is to make flesh of these words once more.

As I noted in my introduction, the recognition of this compulsion in Edgeworth's

work for children and adolescents raises some intriguing points for the reader. Firstly, by implying in his prefaces that these tales are based upon real life, Richard Lovell Edgeworth does not admit that the 'reality' upon which the didacticism of his daughter's texts rests is in itself a type of fiction, or romance, in that is explicitly designed to convince the reader of the happy effects of his educational experiments upon his family. The Edgeworths thus assert in Practical Education, for example:

> Amongst a large family of children, who have never been tormented with artificial trials of temper, and who have been made as happy as it was in the power of their parents to make them, there is not one ill-tempered child. We have examples everyday before us of different ages from three years old to fifteen. (1: 171)

As Coleridge's letter to his wife reveals, however, at least one acquaintance of the Edgeworth family insisted that "'the Edgeworths were most miserable when Children'", and Edgeworth family correspondence, indeed, hints at the essential loneliness and pain of Edgeworth's early life.[19] Similarly, Richard Lovell Edgeworth's "'vapouring about [his children's] *Happiness*'", as Coleridge so eloquently puts it, makes no mention of any pedagogical failures. Most obviously, it carefully excludes any mention of the disastrous effects of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's educational experiments with Richard, his eldest child (1764-96).[20] In this context, it can patently be argued that the version of Edgeworthian childhood that Edgeworth unfolds in her texts is *aspirational* as well as selective. Its primary ambition, it is clear, is to persuade the reader that Richard Lovell Edgeworth's paradigm of education is necessarily efficacious and that it must be reproduced. As such, the didactic level of these works revolves around one central (romanticized) message: namely, that the reader who faithfully replicates the theories unfolded in the texts will inevitably (re)produce an ideal (adult or) child.

Despite this emphasis, though, Edgeworth's tales for children and adolescents are not simply didactic set pieces and do much more than merely rehearse Richard Lovell Edgeworth's pedagogical achievements and theories. Their overt ambition, yes, is to turn

words into flesh, but they covertly intimate Edgeworth's perception that this process will have profoundly detrimental effects upon the child or adolescent's passions and imaginative life. What all of the children in Edgeworth's texts in the first instance discover, therefore, is that they can never be entirely sure of the affection and approval of their parents. This affection and approval, the tales intimate, is not an unconditional gift by a parent to its offspring: it is, instead, something that the child or adolescent has to earn. As we shall see, all of Edgeworth's writing for children and adolescents thus directly equates the child's or adolescent's efforts towards self-improvement with the securing, or otherwise, of parental affection, and it requires no great leap of imagination to trace the origins of this equation back to the childhood experiences of their author. In a letter to her Aunt Charlotte Sneyd in 1780, for example, Edgeworth writes, "I have lately received so much pleasure, from the approbation my friends have bestowed on my conduct, that I hope it will determine me to use every effort, to improve myself, to oblige them, by assiduously attending to whatever they recommend to me".[21] Implicitly, Edgeworth here demonstrates the extent to which she has internalised her father's maxim that, in order to be happy, she must first of all be good and useful, and it is, finally, precisely this ideological formation that informs all of her texts for children and adolescents.

In a similar fashion, it is not difficult to argue that the responses of Edgeworth's children and adolescents to the various rational mothers of her texts have their origins in her responses to the second Mrs. Edgeworth, the implied 'mother' of these works. Upon marrying Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Honora Sneyd effectively 'inherited' Edgeworth, along with the three other surviving children of her husband's first marriage. While this cannot have been an easy task, Honora's letters make clear that she was herself a strict disciplinarian, with very firm views as to how children should be raised. Writing to one of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's sisters, Mrs. Margaret Ruxton, for instance, she argued,

> It is my opinion that almost everything that education can give, is to be given before the age of 5 or 6 - therefore I think great attention & strictness should be shewn before that age; particularly, if there is anything refractory or rebellious in the disposition, that is the time to repress it, & to substitute good habits, obedience, attention, & respect towards superiors.[22]

As the editors of A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth with a Selection from Her Letters would have it, Edgeworth was from her very earliest days conscious of the superiority of both Richard Lovell Edgeworth and her first stepmother. They insist that Edgeworth "recollected all her life the minutest advice which Mrs. Honora Edgeworth gave to her. She felt great awe of her at the time, but she was long afterwards sensible of her justice, and of the habits of exactness and order in which she trained her".[23] This analysis of Edgeworth's relationship with her first stepmother is carefully worded, however, and it is tempting to suggest that Edgeworth herself provided a much more faithful (re)appraisal of this relationship in her writing. As Marilyn Butler notes, for example, when Edgeworth produced Helen, her last substantial piece of adult fiction, she subsequently revealed that she drew a *very* particular moral from this novel:

> 'talented mothers should take care not to make their children afraid of them so as to prevent them from telling the truth & trusting them with their faults & secrets at the time when youth most wants anothers counsel & assistance. In short the moral of Lady Davenant's character is that talents should make themselves objects of Love not fear.'[24]

Coolly rational mothers, much like Honora Edgeworth, feature throughout Edgeworth's writing, and Edgeworth overwhelmingly associates them with childhood suffering in her texts. Such mothers inevitably subject their children to very real mental and sometimes physical pain in the interests of cultivating their rational minds. It would be far better, Edgeworth seems to imply, if such mothers concentrated first of all upon *loving* their children, thereby making allowances for the power and the pleasure of the child's imaginative life. In order to illustrate what I am suggesting here, I am first of all going to refer to the "Rosamond" series of tales, which contains, perhaps, the most (in)famous of all of Edgeworth's mothers. This lady tries to persuade her "impetuous, fallible" daughter

that she should be governed by her reason,[25] insisting that Rosamond will suffer greatly in the future if she does not learn to regulate her actions and thoughts. What the "Rosamond" series reveals, however, is that Rosamond suffers greatly *as a child* as a consequence of her mother's efforts, and the recognition that this may in the end prove counter-productive is central to Edgeworth's texts.

The most celebrated of all these stories is "The Purple Jar"[26], where Rosamond and her mother take a walk together through the streets of London. Rosamond's eyes light upon first one object and then another as they pass by a succession of shop windows, and, being a typical child, she wants to buy *everything* that she sees. Exasperated by her mother's insistence that nothing that she desires is useful, Rosamond finally pleads with her mother to let her buy a purple jar that she has spied in a chemist's window. Rosamond's mother responds that her daughter cannot be sure she "'should like the purple vase *exceedingly*, till [Rosamond has] examined it more attentively'" (2: 7). In other words, she tries to use reason to control Rosamond's imagination and thereby introduces a distinctly utilitarian view of reality into Edgeworth's text. Significantly, Rosamond next tries to justify the purchase of the purple jar by reshaping her desire so that it more nearly resembles that of her mother. Pointing out that she will be able to use the emptied out jar as a flower pot, she counters her mother's elevation of utility over beauty by insisting that something that is beautiful can also be of use.

This elevation of utility over beauty, or, of reason over the imagination, is replicated throughout the "Rosamond" series, and the didactic implication of the tales is that crucial gender issues *always* simmer beneath the heroine's choices. Every such choice faces Rosamond with a crucial decision: specifically, whether to become more like her mother or to cling, instead, to the inappropriate delusions of the imaginative life. In light of this recognition, the choice that Rosamond makes in "The Two Plums"[27] is of particular importance, for, faced with choosing between a "housewife" in which she can

keep her needles and a stone which has been painted to resemble a plum, Rosamond symbolically chooses the housewife (2: 29-30). This, she insists, will be "'most *useful*'" to her, as it will help her to "'cure'" herself of her "'little faults'" (2: 29-30). If Rosamond's choice on the one hand illustrates that she is learning that she must suppress her imaginative desire, it on the other clearly signals that she is beginning to perceive *why* her mother is encouraging her to use her reason to govern her actions and thoughts. As a future wife and mother, Rosamond is starting to appreciate that she must make choices that will suit her for her future role in society; she must learn, that is, to accommodate her 'self' to limitations of domestic life.

Although Edgeworth's writing intimates that both parents must carefully supervise their daughter's rite of passage towards responsible womanhood, the pointed emphasis of the "Rosamond" series is that this duty in the first instance devolves upon the mother. As such, the tales examine in particular how Rosamond's mother rationally instructs her daughter, preparing her to replicate *her* rational self. In "Rosamond's Day of Misfortunes"[28], for instance, Rosamond's mother warns her daughter that she "'will not gain any thing by ill-humour" (2: 52). She thereby rehearses the Friend's argument in Letters for Literary Ladies and effectively equates a woman's command of her temper to future profit or loss.[29] Rosamond's tardiness in getting out of bed precipitates a succession of misfortunes and, realizing that she will be late for breakfast, she grows increasingly out of sorts. When she does finally make a belated appearance in the breakfast room, however, Rosamond remembers her mother's advice, summons up all of her powers of self-control, and is consequently praised by her father for her ability to "'command'" her temper (2: 54). When Rosamond later discusses the day's events with her mother, this lady rehearses an argument that clearly illustrates her perception of her particular duties as a patriarchal agent. Her ambition (and function) as a mother, she observes, is to help Rosamond "'to manage [herself] so as to make [her] wise, and good, and happy'", but, "'unless [she]

knows what passes in [Rosamond's] little mind", she cannot complete this process (2: 61). Significantly, the tale concludes by revealing what the child *gains* by voluntarily submitting to this process of rational instruction: Rosamond is praised by her mother for having the good sense to free a robin that she has saved, and the text significantly observes that her "mother stroked her daughter's hair upon her forehead as she spoke, and then gave her two kisses" (2: 76).

Overwhelmingly, the "Rosamond" tales therefore demonstrate *and* interrogate both sides of the process through which a daughter is educated to become more like her mother, and the series recognizes that the child will inevitably suffer mentally, and sometimes physically, before the completion of this transformation. *All* of the choices that Rosamond makes in the series are in the first instance predicated upon what she learns in "The Purple Jar",[30] that her mother will allow her to suffer pain in order to cultivate her reason is an essential point in the text. Having taken the jar home, Rosamond empties it of its contents, and is amazed to discover that it was but "a plain white glass jar, which had appeared to have that beautiful colour, merely from the liquor with which it had been filled" (2: 13). Not surprisingly, Rosamond bursts into tears when she makes this discovery, but it is important to note that her disappointment arises *directly* out of her efforts to please her mother: before the jar was emptied out, it was beautiful, and it was this beauty, and not its utility, that Rosamond craved. Further, before she purchases the jar for her daughter, Rosamond's mother warns her that its purchase will mean that she will not be able to have for another month the new pair of shoes that she so badly needs. The text then observes, "many were the difficulties and distresses, into which [Rosamond's] imprudent choice brought her, before the end of the month. Every day her shoes grew worse and worse, till at last she could neither run, dance, jump, or walk in them" (2: 15). If this is in itself bad enough, the fact that Rosamond suffers in other ways as well is essential to the text's didactic purpose. The little girl is unable to accompany her mother on walks, and her

father absolutely refuses to take her with her brother on a trip to a glasshouse because she is "'slip-shod'" (2: 16). As a result of the purple jar, Rosamond eventually perceives that her mother will use pain as a learning device, and her reaction to her mother in "The Thorn"[31] reveals how expertly she learns this lesson. In this tale, her mother wishes to use a needle to remove a thorn that has lodged in her daughter's finger, but Rosamond is afraid, and observes that she would prefer if the thorn were not removed. This causes her brother to laugh at her, but their mother stops him, saying: "'Had not we better reason with Rosamond than laugh at her?'" (2: 100). Rosamond's response is entirely significant: "'Yes, mamma, let us reason,' said Rosamond; but she still kept her hand behind her" (2: 100). The mother's argument, of course, would be that she is subjecting her daughter to minor pain now in the interests of preventing her from experiencing much greater suffering later. Either way, the "Rosamond" tales illustrate the heroine's growing perception of the fact that her mother will allow her to be hurt.

This use of pain as a learning device features repeatedly throughout Edgeworth's writing for children.[32] In "Frank",[33] for instance, the hero of the tales is explicitly directed by his parents to associate painful sensations with the lesson that he has learned,[34] and the patent intimation of the text is that physical pain is a useful tool for governing a child's behaviour. Similarly, we have already seen how one point of a text like "The Little Merchants" is that the parent who spares the rod and spoils the child inevitably comes to regret his or her actions. This argument, of course, patently illuminates a contention that is central to Practical Education: namely, that "[t]o make punishment intelligible to children, it must be not only *immediately*, but *repeatedly* and *uniformly*, associated with the actions which we wish them to avoid" (1: 231). If physical pain is detailed in Edgeworth's writing for children, however, so, too, is *mental* suffering, and the poignant lesson that characters like Rosamond or Frank ultimately learn is that they must *negotiate* their way into their parents' affections. The tales therefore stress again and again that, in order to be sure of

the love of his or her parent, a child must first of all be useful; they infer that it is simply not enough to have an affectionate heart.[35]

This emphasis on the child having to *earn* parental approval and affection leads us back to Edgeworth and to her own childhood once more, and it demonstrates the efficacy of Mitzi Myers's argument that, "if educators invent children, children turned educators invent juvenile selves that simultaneously support and subvert parental premises".[36] Writing from "the child's place",[37] Edgeworth thus faithfully rehearses the didactic imperatives that underpin the Edgeworthian system of education, but she also reveals that children inevitably suffer emotionally and physically as a result of this model, both inside and outside of the text.[38] Further, Edgeworth's writing for children affords her another particular privilege: it allows her, that is, to (re)construct (her) childhood in the image of *her* imagination and heart. In the "Rosamond" tales, Myers argues, this means that Edgeworth is able to produce a series of texts in which she is both mother and daughter, and where "the narrative environment" offers her "a way to mother herself more satisfyingly than [she was in] real life".[39] As Myers puts it:

> The maternal writer teases and teaches her juvenile self in the interest of more rational girl readers, but writing as daughter she celebrates that self's imaginative energy and effective needs; better than her mothers real or represented inside the text, the author as mother understands and nurtures the author as daughter. (84)

If the subversive possibilities of such a strategy are clearly enormous,[40] they are in the first instance, perhaps, best illustrated by the way in which Edgeworth represents Rosamond's "all wise, antisentimental [sic] mother" for the reader.[41] Firstly, and as Myers points out, it can manifestly be argued that Honora Edgeworth was "the prototype" for Rosamond's mother in the series; like the second Mrs. Edgeworth, she "appropriate[s] . . . the rational language of the dominant male discourse" in the texts (79, 82). If this 'appropriation' on the one hand immediately allows Edgeworth to satisfy her desire to "consolidate her position with her father", it on the other also helps her to find a seemingly

innocuous but "authorative public voice" (82-83). This voice, as I noted in my introduction, was for a long time spectacularly successful: it convinced readers and critics alike that a compliant Edgeworth merely (re)voiced her father's patriarchal demands. As Myers points out, however, Edgeworth's works also "narrativize female fantasy",[42] and their "rational mother-teachers . . . helped keep alive enlightened notions of female education in the reactionary period of the French Wars".[43] Similarly, and as Nancy Armstrong's reading of the novel suggests, 'self-regulated' women such as Rosamond's mother *did* enjoy (limited) "authority over the field of domestic objects and personnel where [their] supervision constituted a form of value in its own right and was therefore capable of enhancing the value of other people and things".[44] Without the domestic woman, as we have seen, it was believed that "the entire domestic framework would collapse" (83).[45]

The role of the rational mother and, indeed, of the domestic woman in Edgeworth's work is therefore an extremely complicated one, and it represents a very considerable challenge for her reader. The issue at stake is power: do Edgeworth's texts agree that the rational, domestic woman has such authority, or is there an entirely subversive message simmering beneath the didactic surface of her writing? We might usefully recall here once again the letter that Richard Lovell Edgeworth wrote to his daughter from the deathbed of his second wife, Honora.[46] In this letter, I observed, Edgeworth's father told his daughter to cultivate the desire she feels "'of becoming amiable, prudent, and of USE'". It is this (male) creed that ultimately informs all of Edgeworth's writing; for example, it is finally the precise ideological formation that informs Letters for Literary Ladies. In this context, what is most interesting about "Rosamond" and "Frank" is that the demands of this male discourse are typically voiced not by the father in the text, but by the mother, and that the children learn from their *mothers* that only if they are good will they be happy. A striking exception to this occurs in a tale entitled "The Birth Day Present",[47] which appears in The

Parent's Assistant. In this tale, intriguingly, it is Rosamond's *father* who teaches her the true meaning of generosity, telling her that

> 'to make a present of a thing that you know can be of no use, to a person you neither love nor esteem, because it is her birth-day, and because every body gives her something, and because your godmother says she likes that people should be generous, seems to me, my dear Rosamond, to be, since I must say it, rather more like folly than generosity.' (1: 128)

Rosamond is brought to understand that Laura, her sister, displays true generosity when she aids a little lace-maker whose weaving pillow and bobbins have been ruined by a malicious footman. Laura's gift of a half guinea, quietly given, restores the child's means of earning her living. Rosamond says to her father at the close of the tale: "'This is being *really generous*, father, is it not?'" (1: 143). After this tale, and as we have already seen above, it is from her *mother* that Rosamond learns her most difficult lessons.

This, of course, may simply be read as yet another example of the way in which Edgeworth highlights the crucial role that the mother must play in the education of her children, particularly her daughters. At the same time, however, Rosamond's mother teaches what the patriarchy desires, and this 'voicing' of the patriarchy's demands by the mother may be read as a process of virtual 'displacement' on Edgeworth's part. This displacement, I would argue, serves a dual purpose in the texts. In the first place, it allows any resentment towards the lessons learned to be directed away from the father, that is, the patriarchal figure, and displaced, or projected, onto the mother figure instead. This recognition, of course, has a particular significance in light of Edgeworth's own family relationships. At the same time, this displacement simultaneously allows Edgeworth to effectively interrogate the demands of the dominant male discourse without seeming to directly attack the patriarchy itself. In other words, it enables her to critique the patriarchy through its agent.

The indirect attack that Edgeworth launches on the dominant male discourse in these tales is illuminated by the subversive use to which she puts romance in texts such as "Mademoiselle Panache", which are explicitly designed to educate her older female readers.[48] In the two parts of this tale, Edgeworth considers foolish and sensible mothers, and she contrasts the disastrous education that lady Augusta receives from both her French

governess and Lady S, her mother, with Mrs. Temple's careful supervision of Emma and Helen, her daughters. This, obviously, constitutes the didactic level of the tale. "Mademoiselle Panache" also operates on another, subversive level, however, and what is most remarkable for my purposes is the way in which Edgeworth treats romance in the text. On the surface level, the tale attacks romance, revealing how 'improper' reading can adversely affect the formation of the characters of young girls and women. It also illustrates why women who have fed their imaginations upon romance inevitably pose a serious threat to the stability of the social order. At the same time, "Mademoiselle Panache" also demonstrates why women are in the first instance attracted to such reading. Unleashed in the text is the recognition that romance empowers women, so that they may, perhaps, be able to challenge the very foundations upon which the patriarchal order rests by reading 'inappropriate' books. Thus while apparently attacking romance, Edgeworth's tale simultaneously reveals the genre's power: it acknowledges, that is, that romance reading may enable women to force the world to imitate their perceptions.

The first part of the text treats the very early education of Augusta, and of Emma and Helen Temple, and it reveals the error of Lady S's thinking upon education: "'I would work upon a child's sensibility; that's my notion of education,' said lady S*** to Mrs. Temple, affecting a sweet smile. 'Take care of the heart,[49] at any rate - there I'm sure, at least, I may depend on mademoiselle Panache, for she is the best creature in the world'" (2: 238). Very quickly, though, the sensibility of this "best creature in the world" is revealed to be nothing more than pure affectation. Mademoiselle Panache tramples a spider to death in front of Augusta, and the text dryly observes, "So much for a lesson on humanity" (2: 249). The most dangerous aspect of the governess's influence over Augusta, however, is represented by her choice of reading material. Augusta tries to get hold of a romance from her mother's shelves, and Mademoiselle Panache tells her that "'*de row of Romans she forbid to be touch, on no account, by nobody but herself in the house. - You know dis, mademoiselle Augusta. - So, en conscience*'" (2: 251). Augusta ridicules Mademoiselle Panache's tenderness of conscience, telling Helen that the governess "'has had the second volume of that very book under her pillow this fortnight; I caught her reading it one

morning, and that was what made me so anxious to see it; or else, ten to one, I never should have thought of the book; so *en conscience*! Mademoiselle'" (2: 251). There are two points to be made about this extraordinarily significant passage in Edgeworth's text. In the first place, these romances are portrayed in a distinctly negative light. As we shall see from the second part of the tale, Augusta's reading of romance is of immense significance when she reaches womanhood, and it is through this significance that the subversive powers of romance are revealed. The second point that must be made is in relation to Lady S's responsibility to her daughter. Although Mademoiselle Panache acts wrongly in reading these 'forbidden' texts and is, thus, *directly* responsible for Augusta's desire to read romance, Edgeworth's tale indicates that Augusta's mother is even more culpable in the first place by having such inappropriate reading material on her shelves. This amplifies my observation in my previous chapter, where I suggested that an overwhelming argument of not only Edgeworth's work but of much late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century literature is that *generations* of women are invariably affected when a woman reads inappropriate books.[50] Moreover, if Mademoiselle Panache fails her pupil as a governess, Lady S fails Augusta twice over as a mother: firstly, by reading the wrong kind of books herself, and, secondly, by choosing a singularly inappropriate governess for her daughter. It is therefore entirely significant that the young Emma Temple very quickly sees through Mademoiselle Panache and comes to the conclusion that the "governess" had, in fact, been a "milliner" in France (2: 243). Romance reading, the text implies, blunts the individual's powers of perception: a properly educated child is able to see what a mother who has fed herself on romance cannot.

The second part of the tale takes up the story again when the young girls have all become young ladies, and it opens by declaring that "[t]he tendency of any particular mode of education is not always perceived, before it is too late to change the habits or the character of the pupil" (2: 225). Lady S, readers discover, has not reformed as a mother, and the text pointedly observes that she prefers "what is called the world" to the real, permanent pleasures of domestic life (2: 226). She "was fond of company, and fonder of cards; sentimentally anxious to be thought a good mother, but indolently willing to leave

her daughter wholly to the care of a French governess, whose character she had never taken the trouble to investigate" (2: 226). While always intending to remove Augusta from Mademoiselle Panache's care, Lady S never actually does so, and, ultimately, she is unable to act as "part of the money intended for the payment of the governess's salary had been unfortunately lost by the mother at the card-table" (2: 227). Mademoiselle Panache therefore stays until Augusta is eighteen, and "endeavoured, by all the vulgar arts of flattery, to ingratiate herself with her pupil, in hopes that from a governess she might become a *companion*" (2: 227).

The crux of this part of Edgeworth's tale, however, revolves around Mr. Mountague; he is an admirer of Helen Temple's who becomes temporarily blinded by lady Augusta's superficial charms. Mr. Mountague knows Lady S from town as "'a silly card-playing woman'", but his hope is that "'her daughter is as little like her in her mind as in her person'" (2: 238). Revealing that Mr. Mountague is on the point of choosing a wife, Edgeworth uses his deliberations to illustrate the superior claims of a domestic rather than a fashionable education for young girls. She emphasises that Mr. Mountague is horrified when he discovers that Augusta "'has been educated by a vulgar, silly, conceited French governess'", and underlines his mistaken conviction that, because "'[s]he is very young, . . . a man of sense might make her what he pleased'" (2: 252). In this way, Edgeworth reveals that Mr. Mountague labours under a fundamental misconception in his analysis of his future relationship with lady Augusta. His mistaken belief that she will be able to accommodate her tastes to his own, in other words, expertly illuminates the Friend's argument in Letters for Ladies that a man must choose a *rationally* educated woman as his future wife:

> 'The moment a women's wish to please becomes discriminative, the moment she feels any attachment to a man superior to the vulgar herd, she not only ceases to be a coquette, but she exerts herself to excel in everything that he approves, and, from her versatility of manners, she has the happy power of adapting herself to his taste, and of becoming all that his most sanguine wishes could desire.' (2: 260-61)

Augusta's tragedy is that she has *not* been educated in such a way that she can adapt herself to the tastes of the man that she would marry, nor does she recognize the crucial difference between her own affectation and Helen Temple's natural charms. As

Edgeworth's text observes, this complacency represents her "moment of danger. She was little aware, that, when a man of sense began to think seriously of her as a wife, he would require very different qualities from those which please in public assemblies" (2: 269).[51]

In opening Mr. Mountague's eyes to Augusta's true nature, the second part of the tale reaches back to the lessons learned in the first; a caterpillar falls from a rose which Augusta is wearing and, "from habitual imitation of her governess, she set her foot upon the harmless caterpillar, and [it was promptly] crushed" (2: 272). This instant functions as a moment of recognition in Edgeworth's narrative: "lady Augusta's whole person seemed metamorphosed to the eyes of her lover. She ceased to be beautiful: he seemed to see her countenance distorted by malevolence, he saw in her gestures disgusting cruelty; and all the graces vanished' (2: 272). Mr. Mountague is effectively disenchanted at this instant; he perceives that, if he marries Augusta, he will be taking a woman who has modelled her 'self' upon a foolish French governess as his wife. "From imitation", as the text thus pointedly observes, Augusta "learned her governess's foolish terror of insects; and from example, she was also taught that species of cruelty, by which at eighteen she disgusted a man of humanity who was in love with her" (2: 273).

With his eyes newly opened, Mr. Mountague rediscovers his earlier appreciation of Helen Temple, and he traces the origin of her attractions to the home in which she has been raised. He returns to the Temple household and sees "work, books, drawing, writing! he saw every thing had been going forward just as usual in his absence. All the domestic occupations, thought he, which make *home* delightful, are here: I see nothing of these at S-Hall" (2: 277). Mr. Mountague reiterates this emphasis upon the domestic attractions of Helen, and of her family, later in the text in a passage that I quote at length because of the way in which it manifestly rehearses arguments that are put forward in Letters for Literary Ladies and Practical Education. Mr. Mountague recalls, "in the many domestic hours he had spent at Mrs. Temple's" ennui had never been a visitor, and he muses,

> What advantage has a man, in judging of female character, who can see a woman in the midst of her own family, 'who can read her history' in the eyes of those who know her most intimately, who can see her conduct as a daughter and a sister, and in the most important relations of life can form a certain judgement from what she has been, of what she is most likely to be? But how can a man judge what sort of

> wife he may probably expect in a lady, whom he meets with only at public places, or whom he never sees, even at her own house, without all the advantages or disadvantages of *stage decoration*? A man who marries a showy, entertaining coquette, and expects that she will make him a charming companion for life, commits as absurd a blunder as that of the famous nobleman, who, delighted with the wit and humour of Punch at a puppet show, bought Punch, and ordered him to be sent home for his private amusement! (2: 280)

There are two very significant points that must be made about this passage in Edgeworth's text. In the first instance, the tale here insinuates that woman only exists in terms of her relationship to others. What is implied, in a sense, is that a woman's character is never truly her own, that it is inevitably judged in relation to those who surround her throughout her life. This recognition informs not only Edgeworth's work, but also much literature of this period, of course, and I shall treat the issues at stake in greater detail when I consider "Angelina; or L'Amie Inconnue" below. Secondly, like Fanny Burney's Evelina (1778) or any one of Jane Austen's novels, "Mademoiselle Panache" also intimates that, in the choosing of a marriage partner, it is *always* the man who "'has the advantage of choice'".[52] As Edgeworth would have it in this tale, and throughout her writing, the rituals of courtship and wooing are finally representative of nothing less than a marriage market, one in which men control *all* of the transactions.[53]

Once we recognize this, it becomes easier to understand Mr. Mountague's reaction when he discovers Augusta in possession of "one of the very worst books in the French language; a book which never could have been found in the possession of any woman of delicacy - of decency. [He] stood for some minutes in silent amazement, disgust, and we may add, terror" (2: 282-83).[54] Echoing Hannah More's argument that certain works "should not be so much as named among" women (1: 45), Edgeworth's treatment of Augusta's subsequent adventures illustrates her perception of the reasons why men are so terrified when women read such texts. Eventually rejected by Mr. Mountague, Augusta coquettes and then elopes with Mr. Dashwood, the "coxcomb" tutor of her brother (2: 228). She leaves a note for Mademoiselle Panache, instructing her to "'[e]xcuse'" her to her mother: "'*you* can best plead my excuse'" (2: 304). This instruction of Augusta's on the one hand may simply be read as a piece of cruelty on her part, for Mr. Dashwood had led Mademoiselle Panache to believe that it was *she* who had captured his affections. On

the other, however, Augusta's observation also obliquely recalls the fact that the governess singularly failed to properly regulate either her own reading or that of her charge; Augusta's point, perhaps, is that Mademoiselle Panache will immediately understand her actions because she will instantly recognize that the girl is merely replicating a plot device that is standard to romance texts. If Practical Education asserts, as we have seen, that "[w]omen, who have been much addicted to common novel-reading, are always acting in imitation of some Jemima, or Almeria, who never existed (1: 296), "Mademoiselle Panache" reveals the reasons *why* women are drawn to such reading. By acting in imitation of some Jemima or Almeria, Augusta effectively empowers herself; she turns her 'self', that is, into "'AUGUSTA DASHWOOD'", a woman whose new (marital) identity transcends the limitations of her (patriarchal) existence (2: 304). Augusta's marriage to Dashwood thus illustrates the reasons why men view romances with such terror: they inspire women to challenge the family line, to cut across class barriers and, potentially, to undermine the entire social order.

In this context, Lady S's reaction when she finally reads her daughter's note is entirely significant: her swoon illustrates her perception that she has spectacularly failed in her duties as a patriarchal agent. Rather than carefully supervising her daughter, Lady S instead left Augusta to her own (and her governess's) devices. This meant that Augusta was not only exposed to inappropriate books, but also that the way was clear for her to use their example to (re)negotiate her life. The text thus observes,

> Where was lady S- all this time! Where? - at the card-table, playing very judiciously at whist. With an indolent security, which will be taught incredible by those who have not seen similar instances of folly in great families, she let every thing pass before her eyes without seeing it. Confident that her daughter, after having gone through the usual routine, would meet with some suitable establishment, that the settlements would then be the father's business, the choice of jewels hers, she left her dear Augusta, in the mean time, to conduct herself; or, what was ten times worse, to be conducted by mademoiselle Panache. Thus to the habitual indolence, or temporary convenience of parents, are the peace and reputation of a family secretly sacrificed. (2: 294-95).

Effectively painting Lady S here as a type of female Nero, the insinuation of Edgeworth's narrative is that Augusta's mother foolishly played at cards while the reputation of her family went up in flames around her. Mr. Mountague's "terror" at discovering Augusta in

possession of a romance is in this way revealed to have been startlingly prophetic: Augusta's reading finally undermines the stability of not only her family line, but also, by extension, that of the entire patriarchal order.

In "Mademoiselle Panache", Edgeworth therefore clearly echoes Charlotte Lennox's strategy in The Female Quixote: she derides romance fiction, while simultaneously revealing both the genre's power and the reasons why it is so attractive to women. Edgeworth perhaps even more effectively demonstrates this power and this attraction in "Angelina; or L'Amie Inconnue", which appears in her Moral Tales.[55] Again, the essential (subversive) point of this tale is that its heroine transforms her 'self' through her reading of romance texts. Insisting in the first instance that Anne Warwick's susceptibility and lack of commonsense is the direct result of "certain mistakes in her education", Edgeworth's text once more demonstrates how important it is for young girls to receive proper instruction in early life (2: 10). "She had passed her childhood with a father and mother, who cultivated her literary taste, but who neglected to cultivate her judgement", it notes, "her reading was confined to works of imagination; and the conversation which she heard was not calculated to give her any knowledge of realities" (2: 10). Apart from allowing his daughter's imagination to become 'inflamed' by her reading of inappropriate texts, Angelina's father also commits a fundamental error of judgement by appointing Lady Diana Chillingworth as her guardian. Unlike Lady Frances Somerset, her sister, Lady Diana is "a lady who placed her whole happiness in living in a certain circle of high company in London" (2: 10). She purses, in other words, a fashionable rather than a domestic life. Disgusted by Lady Diana's lifestyle, Anne is thus rendered peculiarly vulnerable when she one day chances upon "a new novel, called 'The Woman of Genius'" at a circulating library (2: 10). Charmed by the character of Araminta, the novel's heroine, Anne is delighted to be "informed, by the preface, that the story was founded on facts in the life of the authoress herself",[56] and Araminta and the newly styled

"Angelina" are soon corresponding (2: 10). Just like Arabella in The Female Quixote, Angelina's renaming of her 'self' and her subsequent adventures are the direct manifestation of her desire to create her own significance. As she puts it in the note which she leaves for her guardian when she runs away to find Araminta in Wales, her actions are prompted by the fact that it is her "'*unalterable determination* to *act* and *think* upon every occasion for [herself]'" (2: 12).

There are obviously many similarities between The Female Quixote and "Angelina; or L'Amie Inconnue" and Edgeworth's narrative deliberately draws the reader's attention to this fact when Angelina discovers a similarity between her servant girl, Betty Williams, and Sancho Panza. "[H]er own more striking resemblance to the female Quixote never occurred to our heroine", the text dryly observes, "so blind are we to our own failings" (2: 65). Further, Edgeworth's tale mimics Lennox's novel by first piling up and then debunking romance conventions, a strategy later utilised by Austen in Northanger Abbey. Upon her journey to Wales, Angelina "had the misfortune – and it is a great misfortune to a young lady of her way of thinking – to meet with no difficulties or adventures – nothing interesting upon her journey" (2: 13). Instead, the text dryly observes, she "arrived, with inglorious safety, at Cardiffe [sic]" (2: 13). Similarly, Edgeworth observes that Angelina is distressed when the merry playing of a harper at an inn at which she stops on her way breaks "'the illusion'" that she is weaving around herself, and that she feels worse still when she discovers that the gentleman in question is a "'mere modern harper'" who is "'not even blind'" (2: 14-15). Angelina's most startling and upsetting discovery, of course, is eventually revealed to be the fact that she has all along been hastening towards an entirely romanticized destination, and this is underlined by Edgeworth when she notes that Angelina immediately "hit[s] herself a violent blow" as she enters Araminta's cottage (2: 23). "As with the low doorway of . . . her romanticized destination", as Myers puts it, "reality keeps cracking [this] would-be heroine on the

head".[57] The "charming pictures" that Angelina has being forming of her relationship with Araminta are thus inexorably revealed to be pure fantasy, and she is ultimately disgusted to discover that there is not a trace of the "'elegant delicacy'" that she had confidently expected to find in her "'unknown friend!'" (2: 18, 70).

While there are obviously clear resemblances between "Angelina; or L'Amie Inconnue" and The Female Quixote, there are at the same time some very striking differences between the two texts. Firstly, and as Myers also observes, Angelina is unlike Arabella in that she does not "simply translate everyday events into romantic incidents" (26). Instead, "[s]he seizes the initiative and makes things happen", so that, "still more" than is the case with Lennox's heroine, she "structure[s] a self through – and not just despite – her indulgence in popular reading" (26-28). Rather than existing in a state of passive misery and disgust in Lady Diana's home, Angelina acts as her own agent: specifically, she sets off in search of Araminta and, she believes, a better world. Similarly, the motive that impels Angelina's adventures is entirely different to that which impels those of Arabella: unlike Lennox's heroine, Myers points out, Angelina "seeks a mother, not a lover – a nurturing figure who will help her achieve her full maturity rather than sweeping her off her feet" (27). The fact that Angelina is absolutely correct in her assessment that she needs such a mother-figure is made abundantly clear in Edgeworth's narrative, for a primary emphasis of the text is that Lady Diana miserably fails in her duties to her ward. After Angelina runs away, for example, Lady Diana admits to her sister that her charge used to talk "'some nonsense about her hatred of the forms of the world, and her love of liberty, and I know not what'", and she also acknowledges that she knew that Angelina had "'some female correspondent, to whom she used to write folio sheets, twice a week'" (2: 4). Lady Diana, however, simultaneously reveals that she failed in her duty to inspect these letters: "'in town'", she insists, she "'could not possibly have leisure for such things'" (2: 4). The fact that Lady Diana was constantly "'engaged'" in London, the text

intimates, was primarily responsible for Anne Warwick's transformation into Angelina; this circumstance, it avers, was the entirely foreseeable outcome of Lady Diana's failure to regulate and correct the "'oddities'" of her ward (2: 4). When she does finally meet up with Lady Frances, therefore, Angelina immediately recognizes in this woman the mother figure for which she has been seeking. "[U]nder the friendly and judicious care of lady Frances Somerset", the text observes, "she acquired that which is more useful to the possessor than genius – good sense. Instead of rambling over the world in search of an *unknown friend*, she attached herself to those, of whose worth she received proofs more convincing than a letter of three folio sheets, stuffed with sentimental nonsense" (2: 96-97).

While this argument in the text immediately appears to complete Edgeworth's attack upon romance, there are some intriguing, subversive points to be discerned in the narrative. In the first place, it must be reiterated that Angelina's first steps away from her unsuitable guardian are precipitated entirely because of her reading. Inspired by romance texts, she sets out in search of Araminta, hoping to find a mother-figure who will not be "'almost always out . . . or dressing, or at cards'" (2: 84). While the romantic illusion that she has constructed about Araminta is eventually dispelled, the fact remains that Angelina's adventures *do* enable her to transform her existence; they lead, specifically, to that moment in the text when the rational Lady Frances takes control of her life. Secondly, Araminta's role in the tale is much more ambivalent that it at first appears, and Edgeworth uses this character to release some extremely subversive voices into her narrative. These not only hint at the limitations that Angelina will necessarily experience by embracing a rational existence, but also intimate that the apparently ridiculous Araminta has in fact empowered herself through her reading of romance texts. On the surface, Araminta thus appears to be a purely stereotypical figure, one whose significance would have been immediately understood by Edgeworth's readers. Araminta, the text observes, was "a

woman, with a face and figure which seemed to have been intended for a man, with a voice and gesture capable of setting even man, 'imperial man,' at defiance" (2: 67). In their reading of Belinda, Colin B. Atkinson and Jo Atkinson point out that Araminta is in fact "a forerunner" of Harriet Freke, who appears in Edgeworth's 1801 novel of manners.[58] This character debates women's rights and wears men's clothes, and the Atkinsons contend that she would very quickly have been identified as "dangerous" by the reader of Edgeworth's text:[59] the "most obvious outward manifestation of the adoption of masculine attributes - and hence probably usurpation of prerogatives and powers - was women's wearing of male dress" (102, 104). While she does not actually adopt male attire, Araminta's 'masculine' attributes are emphatically stressed in Edgeworth's narrative, and it is also made quite clear that Araminta's firm intention is to wear the trousers in her and Nathaniel Gazabo's marriage. As such, and on the didactic level, Araminta's character manifestly functions as a site wherein Edgeworth peculiarly encodes cultural anxieties regarding women; specifically, the fear that the male prerogative will be weakened in the face of growing calls for women's rights.

In this context, Edgeworth's portrayal of Araminta reveals the dangerous challenge that romance reading poses to the patriarchy by demonstrating how the empowered Araminta skilfully (re)negotiates the terms of her marriage. Before she will marry Nathaniel Gazabo, Araminta insists that her future husband must solemnly promise never to contradict any of her opinions; he must leave her "'entirely at liberty to act, as well as to think, in all things as [her] own independent understanding shall suggest'"; agree to be guided by her "'in all things'"; and, finally, must promise to "'love and admire'" her for all of his life (2: 68). By insisting that Nathaniel must swear to comply with all of her conditions or she will "'never be [his] Araminta'", Araminta in fact uses sleight of hand to conceal the fact that she firmly intends to remain her own 'property', even *after* she becomes a wife (2: 68). It can therefore be argued that Araminta's romance inflamed

imagination enables her to obtain exactly the type of power that Angelina desired when she fled from her guardian's home. Angelina, we observed, expressed her "'*unalterable determination* to *act* and *think* upon every occasion for [herself]'" (2: 12). This is also Araminta's desire, and it is precisely what she secures in her marriage.

Further, Araminta's arguments also powerfully illustrate the reasons why Mr. Mountague is so terrified when he discovers Augusta in possession of inappropriate reading material: namely, they demonstrate that women learn to speak another, non-patriarchal language by reading romance books. When she writes to Angelina to encourage her to leave Lady Diana, Araminta uses the language of sensibility, or of romance, to undermine the patriarchal boundaries that enclose her young friend. She encourages the girl to (re)negotiate the language of law, or, of man, by encouraging Angelina to replicate a romance plot. "'The words *ward* and *guardian* appal my Angelina'", she observes, "'but what are legal technical formalities, what are human institutions, to the view of shackle-scorning Reason? - Oppressed, degraded, enslaved - must our unfortunate sex for ever submit to sacrifice their rights, their pleasures, their *will*, at the altar of public opinion'" (2: 8). In other words, Araminta's reasoning reveals why men are so terrified when woman read romance texts: the language of romance, she demonstrates, refuses to recognize the (legal) boundaries with which men try to protect their patriarchal prerogative. Romance, she suggests, is a law unto itself.

Crucially, Araminta's arguments further imply that women to a large part only observe such 'male' boundaries in the first place because of their fear of public opinion, and this point is peculiarly illustrated by Angelina's adventures when she first sets out in search of her female correspondent. Although a gentlewoman born and bred, Angelina rapidly realizes that her identity is not fixed; who she is, she discovers, depends entirely upon her relationship to others. A shopkeeper who spies her unprotected state therefore takes her for "'a girl of the town'", and she asks her, "in a saucy tone", whether she wants

anything else, "'Rouge, perhaps?'" (2: 39-40). Similarly, in the home of a cheese monger, Dinah Plait, John Barker, a Quaker, mistakes Angelina for a pauper. Upon leaving, he thus "drop[s] his purse into [Angelina's] lap" (2: 43). Upset, Angelina insists to Dinah that "'[t]here has been some strange mistake, - I am not a beggar'" (2: 43). The point that Edgeworth's text is here making, of course, is that Angelina *is* a prostitute, or a beggar, or anything else that others believe her to be precisely because she appears to be unprotected.[60] As Mrs. Porett puts it to the pupils of her academy for young girls, Angelina's danger is that she "'is too young to know how quickly, and often how severely, the world judges by appearances'" (2: 54). It is Lady Frances's recognition of this that prompts her to tell Angelina near the end of the tale that it is essential that others are informed that Angelina is now in her care so as to prevent a possible scandal (2: 85). In this sense, it can be argued that what finally divides Angelina from Araminta is that the latter remains true to her determination to create her own significance. Unlike Angelina, Araminta insists on making herself: she defines how she will live and who she will be. Angelina, on the other hand, lacks the courage to pursue such a course, and she agrees to accept the rational Lady Frances's direction. In so doing, Angelina tacitly agrees to continue to accommodate her 'self' to the expectations of others and, thereby, to embrace the limitations of a rational, domestic life.

Despite the fact that the conclusion of "Angelina; or L'Amie Inconnue" appears to satisfy the didactic imperatives that impel all of Edgeworth's writing, the manner in which Edgeworth chooses to conclude her tale curiously disturbs the overt message of the text. "[W]e have now, in the name of Angelina Warwick", she notes, "the pleasure to assure all those whom it may concern, that it is possible for a young lady of sixteen to cure herself of the affectation of sensibility, and the folly of romance" (2: 97). Firstly, the tale's insistence that Angelina "cure[d] herself of . . . the folly of romance" covertly challenges the basic didactic premise upon which all of Edgeworth's texts are overtly based. Overwhelmingly,

Edgeworth's works imply that education *always* maketh the man, or woman, and that a proper, early education is therefore positively essential if the individual is to enjoy happiness in later life. The ending of "Angelina" appears to disrupt this smooth assertion, as Angelina successfully remakes herself despite her disastrous early education and her love for inappropriate texts. As Myers likewise observes, this emphasis also distinguishes Angelina from Arabella in The Female Quixote. Unlike Lennox's heroine, Angelina does not require "a clergyman's lecture" in order to reform her life (27). Further, the fact that Edgeworth refers to her reformed heroine as 'Angelina Warwick' is also significant: it intimates that Angelina's romance-inspired adventures have enabled her to turn herself into a fully-rounded individual, one whose reason has not entirely subjugated the powers of her imagination and heart.

As all of this demonstrates, Edgeworth's treatment of romance in her writing for children and adolescents is extraordinarily complex. On the one hand, she overtly derides what she defines as the delusions of romance, insisting that children and young adults must be persuaded to embrace an existence that is predicated upon reason and logic. On the other, she constructs a romanticized version of her own childhood and adolescence in her texts in order to support this argument, thereby revealing not only her perception of the limitations of a purely rational existence, but also of the peculiar power and necessity of the imaginative mind. By framing texts like The Parent's Assistant and Early Lessons within a greater Edgeworthian romance, after all, Edgeworth and her father necessarily admit a crucial recognition into her writing: specifically, they acknowledge that romance reading can be efficacious in certain circumstances providing that the reader is carefully supervised. It is in this context, I noted in my introduction, that Edgeworth and her father carefully qualify their treatment of romance in Practical Education. Works such as Robinson Crusoe are not "dangerous" for female readers, they aver, because these never will be in the position to indulge their taste for exotic adventures or travel (1: 336). Boys

will, though, and so Practical Education consequently insists that colonial romances *must* be withheld from young men destined for careers in the professions. "The taste for adventure is absolutely incompatible with the sober perseverance necessary to success in . . . [the] liberal professions", it avers, and will merely distract the individual from his studies and uselessly "torment" his imagination and heart (1: 336).

Edgeworth illustrates the issues that are at stake here in Frank: A Sequel to Frank in Early Lessons (1822),[61] where the young hero's father tries to impress upon his son that it is absolutely essential that he applies himself to the study of Latin as "'a man cannot be of what are called the liberal professions'" without it (1: 52). Frank allows himself to be distracted by his cousin, Mary, who is reading "'Verses, supposed to have been written by Alexander Selkirk, during his solitary abode in the island'", and the boy remarks that it is a remarkable coincidence that she should be reading this text, as he had just been thinking that he would "'play at Robinson Crusoe when [he] went out'" (1: 65). Having spent the day trying to build a Robinson Crusoe island, complete with parrot, in the garden, Frank is horrified when he hears his father returning. As the text puts it, he "would have given up parrot and arbour, and island and all, for five minutes more time" (1: 77). Unable to properly repeat the lesson that he had been told to learn, Frank is disgraced in the eyes of both his father and his mother. Despondent, he and Mary remember that they have left the parrot in the garden and they go out to retrieve her: "Poll was sitting silent and moping, but the moment she saw Frank, she screamed out something like '*Robinson! Robinson Crusoe*!'" (1: 85). The text underlines the point that is being made by wryly observing: "'Ah! all in vain now!'" (1: 85).[62]

Significantly, I noted, the Edgeworths further qualify their interdiction against colonial romances in Practical Education, insisting that they *ought* to be read by the boys and young men who will serve in Britain's army or navy. The specific aim of the education of such individuals is to *encourage* emulation because, unlike girls, for instance,

these will be able one day to replicate what they have read. If this argument here and throughout Edgeworth's writing in the first instance merely illustrates the wider pedagogical contention that informs her work, namely, that girls should receive a different education to that of boys, it also demonstrates that this gendered distinction is fundamentally designed to facilitate the continuance of the patriarchal prerogative. The desires of such male readers, after all, are released for a *very* particular purpose: specifically, to enable them to remake the world in the light of their *patriarchal* image. The fact that Edgeworth attempts to harness the power of romance in order to facilitate this ambition is therefore extraordinarily important, and it is my intention to devote my next chapter to a consideration of this aspect of her work.

Chapter 3:

Raising the Chivalrous and Martial Spirit of Britain: Romance and Empire in Edgeworth's Texts.

The navy of England has been rendered superior to that of all other nations . . . by inspiring sailors with a love of their country and a thirst for glory.[1]

So far, I have been arguing that Edgeworth's work *overtly* condemns the reading of romances because the reader imbibes a false view of reality from such reading, and is invariably inspired to attempt to replicate this delusion outside of the book. For the good of society as a whole, Edgeworth insists, the reading habits of young girls *and* boys must be carefully supervised; they *must* be encouraged to read only those texts that contain useful lessons faithfully drawn from real life. Yet, Edgeworth's interdiction against romance is qualified by her insistence that boys who are destined for careers in either the army or navy should read narratives of adventure and colonisation. Inspired by such reading, she intimates, these young men will wander all over the face of the earth, and they will engage in adventures which will ultimately prove to be to Britain's national and imperial advantage.

In this way, Edgeworth's work explicitly anticipates that the reading of texts like Robinson Crusoe will necessarily lead to travel on the part of the reader, but, unlike conservative writers like Hannah More, she imbues this trajectory with a positive value. More's argument in her Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education is that, at "this moment of alarm and peril", young persons "should be put on their guard against a too implicit belief in the flattering accounts . . . of some of the countries newly discovered" (1: 4, 192). Similarly, she warns, as *all* "General Histor[ies], Natural Histor[ies], Travels, Voyages, Lives, Encyclopedias [sic], Criticism, and Romance" may eventually prove to be

nothing less than "vehicles" of ideological invasion, readers should beware of indiscriminately admiring or replicating such texts (1: 31-32). The unwitting reader, More fears, may find him or herself beguiled by a work that functions as what Gary Kelly would call an account of "political tourism";[2] one, that is, which ingenuously confounds generic (and political) boundaries in the interests of disseminating the 'poison' of revolutionary France.[3] In contradistinction to this, Edgeworth insists that the young men who will be directly engaged in Britain's national and imperial expansion can safely read and replicate accounts of travel and colonising romances. Such readers will be immune to ideological contamination, she intimates, as all of their adventures will be informed by their perception of the a priori superiority of the British nation and race. In this context, Edgeworth's sentiments clearly have much in common with those expressed by William Godwin in his essay entitled "Of History and Romance", which he produced in 1797 but never published.[4] In the essay, Godwin observes not only that "[t]he study of individual men can never fail to be an object of the highest importance", but also that

> [i]t is only by comparison that we come to know any thing of mind or ourselves. We go forth into the world; we see what man is; we enquire what he was; and when we return home to engage in the solemn act of self-investigation, our most useful employment is to produce the materials we have collected abroad, and, by a sort of magnetism, cause those particulars to start out to view in ourselves, which might otherwise have lain undetected. (361)

Like Godwin, Edgeworth similarly believes that romance-inspired travellers will "go forth into the world" already anticipating their "return home"; their journeys, she is convinced, will merely throw into sharper relief aspects of their British selves that "might otherwise have lain for ever undetected".

Edgeworth's effort to reshape and regulate the power of romance in this fashion fulfils two crucial purposes in her writing: it facilitates both national and imperial expansion, while proffering the means through which the mercantile and colonial ambitions that fuel this expansion can be disguised and controlled. For this reason,

Edgeworth's use of romance illustrates the efficacy of Edward Said's argument that "[n]either imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination".[5] It is in the context of the "ideological formations", or, as I would have it, the *romances*, that are at work in Edgeworth's work that the particular attention that she pays to texts like Robinson Crusoe is so important, for, as numerous critics have noted, Defoe's hero is ultimately a conqueror of other peoples and lands. As such, the novel concerns itself with much more than recounting how Robinson Crusoe survives being shipwrecked and castaway on an island: it also details precisely *how* he makes himself the incontrovertible "prince and lord" of all that he sees.[6]

Indeed, the force of the colonizing mission, or impulse, that impels Defoe's text eventually prove to be too powerful to be contained within a single novel, and so it instead spills out and into other works. In this way, Robinson Crusoe can clearly be read as the precursor to a long line of (colonizing) children's texts, which, as Jacqueline Rose contends, reaches its peak in the mid-to-late nineteenth century's preoccupation with "fictitious romance[s] for boys . . . [which complete] the transition into narrative of that conception of the world in which discovering, or seeing, the world is equivalent to controlling, or subduing, it".[7] This emphasis, of course, confers a privileged position upon the observer: specifically, it intimates that his gaze is *necessarily* representative of a superior way of life.

As the text of Edgeworth's that is perhaps most concerned with this notion of discovering and then subduing the world, I have already noted that Essays on Professional Education positions Robinson Crusoe at the beginning of a long list of reading that is recommended to the future soldier or sailor. Significantly, however, the subsequent texts that Edgeworth recommends to these readers encode her conviction that, if such readers are

eventually to survey other people and lands, careful steps must be taken to inform and regulate their vision. Edgeworth is thus emphatic that these readers should move on to other "accounts of shipwrecks and hair-breadth scapes, voyages and travels" after Defoe's novel, and, further, that they should allow "[s]tories of giants, and genii, and knights and tournaments, and 'pictured tales of vast heroic deeds,' [to] feed [their] fancy" (137). Having imbibed these works, she argues, these readers will discover that "[f]rom what is grand in fiction, it is easy to lead to what is great in history"; specifically, she anticipates that they will move with ease "from the knights of romance and chivalry, to the heroes of biography and real life" (146).

This "transition", as she calls it, is crucial to Edgeworth's purpose, for it facilitates her contention that her romance-inspired readers will eventually 'burn' to emulate *real-life* noble acts (146).[8] Unlike the hero of Don Quixote de la Mancha (1605-15), for instance, who is only at the very last able to perceive the difference between what is real and what is the product of imagination, Edgeworth's point is that her readers will not waste their time chasing chimeras. Instead, she avers, they will *evolve* as readers and positively ache to recreate deeds drawn from Britain's glorious and honourable past. In light of this, she insists, "[t]he heroic actions of . . . soldiers and seamen, every instance of bravery and virtue in any rank of life, should be held up to the [particular] admiration" of the young men in Britain's naval and military academies:

> What can more strongly excite to glory than the admirable life of Nelson! his disdain of money, his perseverance, his enthusiastic love for his friends, his devoted attachment to his country, and his freedom from professional jealousy. Perhaps no character is more truly British, than his and that of Trowbridge [sic]. (176-77)[9]

Similarly, Edgeworth maintains that future soldiers and sailors should be encouraged to "celebrate great victories, and commemorate, by festivals, those days which our national heroes have rendered glorious to their country" (176). In this way, she effectively tries to transform romance into the primary inspirational force that impels both empire and nation:

she intimates that the initial reading of young soldiers and sailors should necessarily move them to "love" and wish to (honourably) serve the British nation and race. Edgeworth's strategy here has much in common with that of Edmund Burke in his Reflections on the Revolution in France. Mourning the passing in France of the "pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal", Burke argues,

> Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. . . . The precept given by a wise man, as well as a great critic, for the construction of poems, is equally true as to states. *Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunto*. There ought to be a system of manners in every nation which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely. (171-72)

Edgeworth's point is that "[t]he love of our country is a rational and salutary principle, which may, and in military education ought to be infused early as a prejudice" (141).

If the inculcation of this "prejudice" is to be successful, however, it is positively essential to Edgeworth's purpose that a way is found to disguise and control the pecuniary realities that impel Britain's national and imperial expansion. To this end, she attempts to construct the notion of an abstract British 'virtue', or 'honour', which will regulate the less appealing aspects of Britain's colonial and imperial life. While this ambition of Edgeworth's is everywhere implicit in her Essays on Professional Education, it peculiarly manifests itself at one crucial point in her text. In the chapter devoted to the legal profession, she observes, "There is perhaps a portion of what men of the world call romance in all public virtue. But this romance, if it be such, is far preferable to the selfish, cold, narrow-minded, venal habits, which are contracted by those who believe neither in public nor in private virtue" (403). This significant moment in the text has profound implications for *all* of Edgeworth's work, for, overtly, and without reservation, it admits that she is trying to construct an *aspirational* notion of Britain in her writing. Similarly, it further acknowledges that public and private virtue, or honour and mercantile ambition, are usually diametrically opposed, but, and this is what is most important, it proffers the power

of romance as the means through which this conflict can be avoided and the demands of both honour and mercantile ambition can be satisfied and reconciled.

Edgeworth's overall aim in this regard is clarified by her treatment of the types of rewards and punishments that should be utilised by military schools. Whatever is used, she argues, should

> never be of a pecuniary nature. Honour should be the great reward; and disgrace, or the fear of disgrace, the only punishment. In a commercial nation like this, it is peculiarly necessary to guard against that mercenary spirit, which is incompatible with the generous martial character. When every thing is reduced to a monied rate, honorary distinctions lose their value and power over the human mind; and, instead of noble enthusiasm in the course of virtue and freedom, a calculating, selfish temper prevails; the people are debased and enslaved; mercenary troops fight their battles without the ardour of freemen, and at last a nation, incapable of defending even its darling wealth, falls an easy prey to the bold invader. To prevent such a catastrophe, a commercial country should take every possible means of inspiring the youth, who are to form their armies and navies, with a love of honour. (175-76)

This is a powerful passage in Essays on Professional Education, and it contains sentiments that resonate throughout Edgeworth's writing.[10] Haunted by pecuniary terms, it in the first instance makes manifest the cultural tensions that are inevitably caused within a commercial economy. It also reveals, however, that Edgeworth's response to this tension is to produce a definition of England, or, a national 'romance', which both diffuses and contains the potential threat posed by the "mercenary spirit". Her vision, in other words, is of an 'England' and an English 'greatness' in which national and personal 'honour' are protected from the sordid realities that inform mercantile and colonial aspiration.

What Edgeworth is in fact aiming at is perfectly exemplified by the character of Joshua Crumpe, who appears in "The Contrast" in Popular Tales.[11] In this tale, Joshua distinguishes himself from his mercenary relations who are all eagerly anticipating the death of Mrs. Crumpe, a rich elderly lady. "[W]ith the true spirit of a British merchant", Joshua "declare[s] that he [is] as independent in his sentiments as in his fortune", and, unlike his relatives, he does not plague the dying woman (3: 91). Upon Mrs. Crumpe's death, it is discovered that she has left everything to Joshua precisely because of this

exemplary behaviour. As the sole heir, Joshua once more emphasizes his non-mercenary spirit when he announces that he will "'keep up to the notion [he has] of the character of a true British merchant'" by giving each of his relations a thousand pounds (3: 150).

There are obviously considerable difficulties attendant upon this desire to conflate personal or national honour and mercantile and/or colonial ambition; difficulties which are similarly encoded in Don Quixote de la Mancha, where the desire of Cervantes's hero for fame and fortune is portrayed as being inextricably linked to the concept of serving "the public good" and of "redressing all kind of grievances" (25). Notwithstanding this emphasis, the text is unable to avoid the fact that colonial ambition at least partly impels the aspirations of its hero: Don Quixote, after all, not only wishes to right wrongs and to win the hand of Dulcinea del Toboso, but also anticipates making himself the ruler of a conquered land. In the context of what I am arguing, though, what is most interesting and significant in Cervantes's text is that this implicit colonial desire on the part of Don Quixote is made the explicit, ruling passion of Sancho Panza, his servant. It is therefore emphasised that Don Quixote's primary motivation is to act always in a manner that is consistent with his idea of honour, while Sancho Panza's overwhelming ambition is to secure the island that his master promises him "might be won in the turn of a hand, and he [Sancho Panza] be left governor thereof" (63).[12] While mercantile and colonial ambition are thus revealed to be at least partially responsible for the adventures of Don Quixote and his squire, Cervantes effectively tries to ring fence 'honour' from the less romantic realities of pecuniary aspiration by stressing the superior character of his hero. Unlike Sancho Panza, Cervantes avers, the romance-inspired Don Quixote is not primarily concerned with financial reward; instead, his principal ambition is to lead an honourable life.

This theme of a disinterested ambition is crucial to Edgeworth's use of romance in her writing, and it is one of the central premises upon which Essays on Professional Education finally rests. As we have already seen, for example, it is this that is proposed as

the means through which to preserve the moral purity of the young men who are destined for a life in the army or navy. While this is in itself significant, Edgeworth's wish to preserve the young men in the naval and military academies from the taint of mercenary desire represents but one part of her overall ambition in her writing. The other is symbolized by her evident anxiety to create a greater, 'national' romance of Britain in her work, one that will guarantee the incontrovertible moral purity of the *entire* British nation, thereby justifying and excusing its colonisation of other peoples and lands. This strategy in Essays on Professional Education and throughout Edgeworth's work clearly reflects that of Defoe in Robinson Crusoe: as he would have it, Friday is fortunate that Robinson Crusoe made him his slave.

Gary Kelly's arguments are also useful here, as they illuminate the particular late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century concerns that inform this emphasis in Edgeworth's text. Kelly points out that the perceived need in England for a decisive national identity in the aftermath of the French Revolution was paramount and that this identity was "defined not so much from within the 'nation' but from external, global and historical, Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary struggles against France, America, Russia, and other rivals".[13] Thus, "[t]he 'nation' was constituted as its 'destiny' to rule and civilize alien peoples throughout the world, to 'protect' them from themselves and from predatory neighbours. This imperial 'mission' was not separate from the 'national' identity and interest, or an extension of them, but essential to inventing and sustaining them" (185). Suvendrini Perera makes a similar observation in her study of how the novel "prepared for, or made possible a climate for receiving or accommodating, empire".[14] She notes,

> If location and national identity were formative forces in the various subgenres of the nineteenth-century novel, a major source of this nationalizing imperative was a sense of moral distinctiveness as the colonialism of previous decades developed into a full-blown doctrine of empire based on the cultural – rather than the military – superiority of Britain. (37).

Essays on Professional Education patently demonstrates this "nationalizing imperative", and it expresses, in the clearest possible terms, the sentiments of cultural rather than military superiority that were to become increasingly prevalent by the end of the nineteenth century. As Edgeworth's text would therefore have it, Britain's army and navy exist only because of the presence of the French across the English channel: "Since England has a military nation, a nation military *en masse* to contend with, she must herself become military, as far as it is necessary for self-preservation and independence" (188). Unlike the French, Edgeworth emphasizes, the English "fight on the most legitimate and most noble cause, not to subdue other nations, but to defend our own", and her contention is that this fight is more than justified because of England's unassailable superiority: "Has any people upon Earth any thing more valuable to defend than we have? - Equal laws, secure property, personal liberty, and freedom of opinion. . . . we may therefore defy our enemies, if we have energy and unanimity among our people" (219-20). This argument of course, is not peculiar to Edgeworth's writing.[15] As John Barrell notes, for instance, much literature of this period insists that the English are "*by nature*, the most tenacious of liberty among all the civilized nations", having, "as it were, a characteristic inherited disposition to be free".[16] Crucially, Edgeworth yet again draws upon the power of romance in order to support this ideological formation in her text, insisting that the deliberate cultivation of that fiction that conflates 'honour' with commercial aspirations is positively essential to the continuance of the British way of life. As she puts it,

> So far as hope of prize money, or of sharing the fund at Lloyd's can *imp* the flights of ambition, the nation is safe: but when England shall have shut up all the ships of the world in their respective ports, the hopes of prize money must sink; the funds at Lloyd's will fail; and the British empire may perhaps find too late, that no mercenary rewards can supply the place of military enthusiasm, and the love of glory. (222)

The conflation here of nation and empire is repeated throughout Essays on Professional Education, and it is of crucial significance in terms of the greater national and

imperial ambitions that inform Edgeworth's work. Chapter V, "On the Education of Country Gentlemen, or of Men intended for Private Life", for example, points out that the life of such gentlemen "'is assuredly the happiest life in the world'" linked, as it is, to "their independence of mind; and . . . their maintaining [of] what is called *independent fortunes"* (278). Edgeworth's insistence upon the necessity of preserving this independence of fortune, of course, represents yet another manifestation in the text of her idea of an honour that is separated from the taint of pecuniary ambition and, again, it is gradually revealed to be essential not only to the stability of the nation, but also to the future prosperity of Britain's wider imperial project:

> Every generous heart must wish, that the gentry of the British empire may preserve that independence, which has made them the envy of foreigners, and what is far more desirable, has rendered them honourably and truly happy. What condition can indeed be more desirable than that of a true English country gentleman; a man in the full enjoyment of personal, civil, and intellectual liberty . . . (316)

In placing the English country gentleman at the very heart of both nation and empire, Edgeworth's further point is that it is also essential he be acquainted "with all that passes in the British parliament, with domestic and foreign politics, and some general principles by which he can reason for himself on public affairs" (293).

Edgeworth's preoccupation with the country gentleman in Essays on Professional Education is extremely important; in the first place, it clearly demonstrates the degree to which she is drawing upon, and developing, *early*-eighteenth-century notions in her text. As Barrell points out, commentators at the beginning of the century were particularly preoccupied with the concept of the "comprehensive view of the [landed] gentleman" (35). The independent situation of such men, they insisted, rendered them peculiarly disinterested and, thus, *astute* observers of the state of Britain and British affairs. By the time Edgeworth came to produce Essays on Professional Education, however, writers such as Daniel Defoe, Richard Steele, and Bernard Mandeville had worked to detach the definition of 'gentleman' from the concept of property ownership. Landowners, they

perceived, necessarily had "a political interest", and one that was not inevitably "identical with the permanent interests of the state" (39). Indeed, for his part, Barrell contends that "the possibility of a comprehensive understanding [of society] has disappeared" by the end of the eighteenth century; this, he insists, was "perhaps the crucial issue between Burke and Paine, as Burke argues that no one man is in a position to grasp . . . the proper order of government and the function of established institutions, and so to demand that they be changed" (49).[17]

Edgeworth's treatment of the country gentleman clearly refutes such a view, and it reworks and develops an older, pre-revolutionary vision of the propertied gentleman and (re)presents him to the reader as the effective guardian of the national and imperial order.[18] "[O]ne of the best chances for restoring a national spirit of independence and honest patriotism", according to Edgeworth, is to educate country gentlemen "to understand and to pursue their real interests, and the interests of their country" (293). To this end, such men should acquaint themselves with *all* ranks of people, "but chiefly [with] the middle and lower classes" (298). They should also conduct agricultural experiments "for the advantage of their tenants, for the benefit of their estates, and of their country" (303). As Edgeworth would to all intents and purposes have it here and throughout her work, the country gentleman symbolizes *and* regulates Britain's honour; his person synecdocheally reflects the condition of Britain and of the British way of life. In The Absentee, for example, Edgeworth notes that the education of Mr. Berryl, the hero's friend,

> fitted him exactly for the station which he was destined to fill in society – that of *a country gentleman*; not meaning by that expression a mere eating, drinking, hunting, shooting, ignorant, country squire of the old race, which is now nearly extinct; but a cultivated, enlightened, independent English country gentleman – the happiest, perhaps, of human beings. (5: 40)

Significantly, when "called upon to give her decisive judgement between a town and a country life", Mr. Berryl's future wife, Miss Broadhurst, declares "she should prefer a country life, as much as she should prefer Robinson Crusoe's diary to the journal of the

idle man in the Spectator" (5: 40). In so doing, she effectively links the country gentleman to romance, thereby exposing the imaginative nature of this emphasis in Edgeworth's work. In order to maintain both his own honour *and* that of his nation, Edgeworth therefore insists that the country gentleman must steadfastly refuse to succumb to the temptations of either city or court. These temptations are expensive, she observes, and, as he is unable to "stoop" to trade, he would have to sell his vote and engage in dubious parliamentary activity in order to support them (279). "Instead of being their country's pride and the bulwark of her freedom", profligate country gentlemen would "become the wretched slaves of a party, or the despicable tools of a court" (279).

To the underline the point that she is making, Edgeworth significantly contrasts the policy of King James I on this matter with that of "Lewis the Fourteenth, and the [other] arbitrary monarchs of France" (315). King James, she notes, was astonished that country gentleman should choose to leave behind their spheres of influence in order to embrace court life. "It is singular", she remarks, "that a sovereign, who was fond of arbitrary power, should . . . have given advice, which tended to secure the independence and freedom of a large class of his subjects, and, through their means, probably of the whole body of the nation" (315). The French Kings, on the other hand, drew "round them all the gentry and nobles of the kingdom, to make the luxuries and pleasures of a court and of a capital city necessary to their existence, to inspire them with a taste for expence beyond what their private fortunes could afford, and thus to render them dependant on the sovereign for places and pensions to support their extravagance" (316). In this way, Edgeworth indicates that the country gentleman *must* take steps to protect himself from financial profligacy. Excessive expenditure is a *national* as well as a personal menace, she warns, and it threatens to undermine the very fabric of Britain's social and political life: "[t]he great, the brilliant, and the solid virtues of integrity, patriotism, and generosity, cannot long subsist, unless they be supported and protected by the seemingly insignificant

and homely habits of prudence and economy" (279-80).

Although she is here explicitly addressing her remarks to the country gentleman, Edgeworth's arguments have a far wider significance in terms of her desire to disguise and control all of the pecuniary, mercantile desires that impel national and imperial expansion. "In every rank and situation", she observes,

> there is a certain style in living, in houses, equipage, furniture, which is usual to persons of that class. Whoever in any of these things vies with persons of a superior station, and passes the bounds of his rank and fortune, may be justly accused of being luxurious and extravagant. Those who consider the wealth of nations as the first object, are right in wishing to encourage this species of luxury, and to speak of it as tending only to the quick transfer of property and division of estates; but those who consider the happiness of nations as an object far preferable to their wealth, will wish rather to preserve their moral independence, which must be sacrificed in the indulgence of these tastes for extravagance. (281)

Again, this stress upon the need "to preserve" the "moral independence" of the British populace is directly related to Edgeworth's conviction that it is necessary to construct the notion of an abstract 'honour' in Britain. This honour, she hopes, will control the pecuniary realities that impel national and imperial expansion, and disguise the less salubrious aspects of Britain's colonial and imperial life. By educating their children properly, Edgeworth insists, parents can ensure that they will later avoid "that petty emulation in expense which ruins the happiness of families, and prepares the destruction of kingdoms" (282). The text asserts that the pursuit of money and of the "luxury" that it can buy is not wrong *as such*; an assertion, of course, that is entirely necessary if mercantile expansion is not to be endangered. Instead, such acquisitive desires only become harmful when they spiral out of control and prompt the individual to aspire to a standard of living that is beyond his or her "station". This, the text avers, will necessarily lead the individual to compromise his or her, "moral independence", and this, in its turn, will erode the very fabric of Britain's socio-political life.

In placing the English country gentleman at the very heart of the nation, however, Edgeworth contends that it is positively essential that he should guard against becoming "a

fixture in his own house; he should occasionally visit friends in different parts of the empire, and of Europe at large, that he may change the habitual course of his ideas, and that he may avoid acquiring local prejudices" (314). Once more, this argument in Essays on Professional Education is important for several reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates yet again that Edgeworth is drawing upon early-eighteenth-century notions by insisting that the country gentleman must make himself thoroughly familiar with other races and lands. This assertion also manifests itself in Richard Steele's definition of the gentleman in a 1713 edition of The Guardian, for example, where he similarly argues that such a man "'should be no Stranger to Courts and to Camps; he must travel to open his Mind, to enlarge his Views, to learn the Policies and Interests of foreign States, as well as to fashion and polish himself, and to get clear of National Prejudices; of which every Country has its Share'".[19] In the first instance, this insistence can be linked to my earlier point regarding the early-eighteenth-century's preoccupation with the "comprehensive view of the gentleman"; in order for a view to be properly comprehensive, after all, it must gaze upon the widest possible representation of human life. Barrell for his part contends that it this, perhaps, that is "the crucial theme" of Tobias Smollett's The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748): the hero's peripatetic experiences, he notes, give him " a more comprehensive grasp of the society he lives in, than a gentleman brought up in more fortunate circumstances could have acquired" (196).

Secondly, this argument in Edgeworth's work is significant because it illuminates her conviction that the country gentleman will play his part in helping Britain to 'appropriate' the wealth and ideas of other races and lands. Like the soldier and sailor, she insists, he, too, will cast an acquisitive (colonial and imperial) eye over all that he sees. This anticipation of the appropriation of the physical resources and cultural wealth of other nations is a theme that recurs throughout Edgeworth's work and, in this context, it might be useful to draw here again upon Suvendrini Perera's arguments. In light of the

"nationalizing imperative" that she argues is discernable in the various sub genres of the early-nineteenth-century novel, Perera contends that there was also a process of 'incorporation' at work in which other nations, such as India, were *incorporated* into the British historical narrative (37-38). James Mill's 1815 essay, "On Education", she notes for example, "cites as a blueprint for general education in England a plan originally developed by Baptist missionaries in India" (38). As Mill's essay addresses matters as diverse as the solar system and geography, Perera's argument is that it finally amounts "to no less than a cultural remapping of the cosmos, with geographical, historical, and theological 'compendiums' of knowledge converging to establish England in its proper place of absolute centrality" (38-39).

This 'absolute centrality' of England is decisively encoded within Essays on Professional Education. It manifests itself in the country gentleman's journey out from the heart of the empire and home again, and in the voyages and travels that Edgeworth anticipates will be undertaken by the future sailor or soldier. It also, of course, patently informs the journeys abroad that the text argues are absolutely essential for the education of a future statesman or prince. Thus, Edgeworth insists, the young statesman "must . . . study mankind. He must see his own and foreign countries. . . . He must make himself acquainted with the government, views, policy, resources, habits, education, and institutions of every country he visits" (436-37). Similarly, if the nation is at war, the young prince "should serve abroad. The British empire affords generals, who are inferior to no men in education, and a camp has ever been the nursery of great princes" (484). In times of peace, on the other hand, the prince should travel and "acquire more knowledge of men and manners; of the real state of his own and foreign countries, their resources, opinions, and customs; than he possibly could from books" (484-85).[20]

As is the case with the young soldier or sailor, the young statesman's or prince's travels, Edgeworth insists, will convince him of the incontrovertible superiority of his

native land. Like all British travellers, she intimates, these will perceive "that the misfortunes, which have befallen the countries of Europe, must be attributed to their political corruption, their party struggles, the errours [sic] of judgement of their rulers, or their total want of integrity; [and] to the duplicity and ineptitude of those, who call themselves negotiators and diplomatists" (448). Similarly, the young statesman or prince will learn to count himself lucky that

> [t]hough England is a commercial nation; and though the maxims of the trading part of the community have insensibly risen with their riches, and mixed with those of our aristocracy, yet there still exists a large portion of liberal disinterested virtue in these countries [sic], which the great motives, and great occasions of the times must call forth to public service, and public admiration. (451)

This passage in Edgeworth's text is clearly idealized, demonstrating yet again that her desire is to cultivate the (romantic) notion of the existence of an entirely disinterested British honour or virtue in her readers. This ambition is highlighted by the fact that she further insists that only those who believe that "the reward of 'an honest fame'" is "the most glorious of all rewards" should step forward to "become Minister[s] of the British Empire!" (453-54). Men such as these commit themselves to the "exertions" and "sacrifices" of an entirely noble existence (454).

All of this patently amplifies my earlier comments regarding Edgeworth's use of romance in Essays on Professional Education, for her argument once more is that reading will be the primary inspiration for all of these travels. As she so eloquently puts it in relation to the young statesman, he must study mankind *"[a]fter* having studied books" (436) (My emphasis). Similarly, Edgeworth further intimates that the first books that such a young man reads should be romances, or, in other words, texts that will 'inspire' his "noble ambition . . . to serve, [and] to save his country" (411). So inspired, these readers should move on next to the perusal of history and geography, and "the geography of a statesman", she insists, "must comprise more than a mere knowledge of countries and nations" (424). Instead, this individual must study a distinctly colonial or imperial

geography: one that teaches him, that is, that geographical "statistics" are not necessarily ""fixed, immutable, immortal words"" (424).[21]

The preoccupation of Essays on Professional Education with the need for the individual to acquaint himself with the "facts", "figures", and "resources" of other lands may clearly be related to the British nation's increased concern with the process of surveying throughout the eighteenth century. For her part, Katie Trumpener connects the measuring and mapping of land in Britain and Ireland in the name of agricultural improvement with the development of government ordnance surveying, and she argues that this is "clearly linked to the consolidation of British military control in Scotland and Ireland, North America and India".[22] Moreover, and echoing Perera's arguments, Trumpener contends, "In domestic as in overseas territories under occupation, such surveys functioned quite explicitly as acts of incorporation" (25). For example, she notes, the final third of Arthur Young's landmark text, A Tour in Ireland, with General Observations on the Present State of That Kingdom: Made in the Years 1776, 1777, and 1778 (1780),

> sketches a pioneering political economy of Ireland, illustrating the effects of absenteeism and analyzing the causes of political unrest, advocating large-scale bog reclamation and economic union with Britain, and calculating the advantages of both for Anglo-Irish landowners. The book's first five hundred pages, in contrast, consist of virtually raw data, reproducing in minute detail Young's notes from three years of fact-finding travel, farm for farm and field for field. (37-38)[23]

In Essays on Professional Education, reading is always the first step that must be taken towards such "acts of incorporation", and this is why Edgeworth's insistence that future soldiers or sailors should move on to the study of travel accounts after Robinson Crusoe is so important. By the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, as John Brewer points out, this species of literature was "a well-established genre, closely connected, through its emphasis on first-hand experience, with a tradition of history writing that ran all the way back to Herodotus and Thucydides".[24] While people have

always travelled and recorded those travels for a variety of reasons, Percy G. Adams observes, "a chief, if not the chief, reason for traveling [sic] has been for trade", and this imperative took on a greater consequence after 1600 as the competition between European nations for the control of other markets and lands became more intense.[25] In this context,

> just as trade inspired businessmen and ministers of state to send out expeditions overseas or embassies to other nations, the books and letters produced by these groups made it easier for others to follow but [also] inspired a longing for exotic goods that quickly became necessities. As a result, accounts written by men engaged in such travel were often propagandistic. . . . As propaganda for international trade and for colonization, travel accounts had no equal. (77)

Although the recreational and educational qualities of travel literature continued to be of significance, the important point is that these were increasingly subsumed into the greater service of nation and empire. For example, records of long voyages were so much in demand in the eighteenth century "that the British Admiralty followed the practice of confiscating all journals written on government-sponsored sailing expeditions so that an official version could be produced by careful editing" (42).

For Edgeworth, Trumpener suggests, travel writing finally "represents literary work of the highest political consequence",[26] and it is certain that a text like "To Morrow" in Popular Tales expertly illustrates the primary significance of accounts of voyages and travels.[27] Overtly, this tale warns against the dangers of procrastination, and it this bad habit that causes Basil, its hero, much personal distress and suffering. At the same time, the tale also examines how the shortcomings of the individual can adversely affect the spread of empire, and it intimates that every individual must properly conduct his (or her) self abroad in order to facilitate the expansionist ambitions of the British nation. The father of one of Basil's college friends secures for him a place at the British embassy in China, and Basil's father significantly consents to this journey only "upon condition that [he] should promise to write a history of [his] voyage and journey, in two volumes octavo, or one quarto, with a folio of plates" (3: 229). Basil begins by literally missing his boat to

China, and his poor organisational skills, coupled with his predisposition to procrastination, dog every step of his adventures. In the first instance, he leaves behind him on the ship on which he eventually does sail the notebooks in which he intended to record his observations, and is thereby reduced to jotting down rough notes on random scraps of paper. Secondly, having won the confidence of a French Jesuit Mandarin, Basil fails to capitalise on the singular advantage he enjoys of having "a companion who was able and willing to instruct [him] in every minute particular of the manners, general principle of the government and policy of the people" (3: 241). Although himself aware that this circumstance ideally places him to engage in the kind of minute observation of the "views, policy, resources, habits, education, and institutions" of a country in which Britain, and her empire, are keenly interested, Basil disgracefully throws this opportunity away. Instead, he is responsible for an accident with gunpowder that results in the British embassy being ordered to leave China and, in this way, he *directly* damages the expansionist interests of the British race.

Basil's *indirect* effect upon the future of England's expansion is equally as serious, however, and it is represented by his failure to produce an account of either his time in China or of his voyage. Such texts are inordinately valuable, the tale implies, as they function as the tools that facilitate Britain's wider imperial project. Basil's failure in this regard is made even more pointed due to the closeness of his friendship with the French Jesuit Mandarin. This individual represents a society that amassed, as Percy G. Adams notes, an "unbelievably large body of letters, journals, and summaries of travels written, collected, and published . . . between 1540, the date the Society [of Jesus] was chartered, and 1773, when it was dissolved by papal decree" (55). Basil's friendship with the French Jesuit Mandarin therefore amounts to a virtual apprenticeship to one who is a master in the art of travel writing; a master, moreover, who has a potentially vast network of contacts at his command. Furthermore, the former Jesuit also represents a body of men "who were

assigned early in the eighteenth century to survey much of China" (65). Through his friendship with this individual, Basil is in theory ideally placed to either access this information or to ascertain how best such information can be obtained. His failure to capitalize on this relationship is compounded by his ultimate inability to produce any account of his travels at all, for "Sir George Staunton's history of the Embassy to China, in two volumes quarto" finally beats his half-hearted scribbling to the presses (3: 266). In this way, Edgeworth intimates how an individual's failings may seriously compromise the colonial and imperial ambitions of the British race.

This recognition in the first instance leads us back to the greater preoccupation with education that frames all of Edgeworth's work, but it especially illuminates her anxiety to promote the education of the professional classes. Professional men like Basil, she insists, will be peculiarly implicated in Britain's national and imperial expansion, so they must be carefully educated so that their very persons are symbolic of the irrefutable superiority of the British nation. This will directly facilitate Britain's colonisation of other peoples and lands, as these will perceive that they are in fact *lucky* to be colonised by such a superior race. This strategy of explanation and of justification of the presence of the coloniser, as Alan Richardson points out, is a consistent feature of those texts that adopt and adapt the themes of racial superiority that underpin Robinson Crusoe's adventures. "Even in children's texts which explicitly condemn slavery", he notes, "the Crusoe scenario typically includes a justification of European colonialism based on superior technology and the moral qualities that presumably go with it, such as industriousness and intellectual curiousity".[28]

Richardson's further point is that "[t]he figurative equation of children (especially poor children) and 'primitives' is all too common within the educational discourses of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (156-57). This first of all underpins Jacqueline Rose's arguments concerning the process through which the colonizer discovers and sees

the native in order to finally control and subdue him, but it also reveals that not only race, but also class and gender issues variously inform Edgeworth's texts. Drawing upon Rousseau's strategy in Émile, Rose argues that the usual first step in such figuring is to heap onto the child the responsibility for saving humanity from the degeneracy of modern society; a notion of childhood that manifests itself where Rousseau sets up childhood in his text "as a primitive state where 'nature' is still to be found if only one gets to it in time" (44). Childhood is thus transformed into "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 *infantilised*" (50). This has the result that, "[a]t this level, children's fiction has a set of long-established links with the colonialism which identified the new world with the infantile state of man. . . . the child is assumed to have some special relation to a world which – in our eyes at least – was only born when we found it" (50).[29]

While Alan Richardson focuses in particular upon the class issues that are raised by such figuring, Gary Kelly observes that "the late-eighteenth-century cultural revolution" in fact grouped together "women, children, the lower classes, and the peoples Britain seemed destined to protect and 'civilize'" (183). "[T]hese groups", he argues, "were often treated in the same way or made figures for each other as intellectual inferiors, social dependents, and moral wards of a professional middle class figured as a professional European or British man" (183). This theme of the lower classes portrayed as either children or savages surfaces repeatedly in Edgeworth's work, but it is nowhere more strikingly illustrated, perhaps, than in the chapter devoted to the country gentleman in Essays on Professional Education. Explicitly, the members of the lower classes are here equated with savages, and savages, in their turn, are depicted as childlike and in need of the 'parental' guidance of their superior (colonial) lord. Urging the country gentleman to engage in agricultural experiments for the good of his country, Edgeworth insists that, with careful encouragement, he can overcome "what is called obstinacy in the lower classes" (305).

What is most remarkable about this argument is that Edgeworth's text proceeds from the members of the lower classes to native savages and all without missing a beat. Squires, the text therefore asserts, must make it their business to study the accounts of missionary societies; they must familiarize themselves, that is, with precisely *how* these societies succeeded, or otherwise, in (re)educating the (childlike) natives of other lands. One such account is represented by that of the Methodist South Sea Missionaries, who

> began by preaching to the poor savages of things which they could not comprehend, and who blamed them for not having habits, which they had no means and no motive to acquire. The South Sea auditors, though naturally gentle and docile, proved stubborn, profligate, and thievish under these tutors; of whom, in their broken English, they acutely said, 'Massas give us a great deal of good talkee, but very little of knives and scissars.' (305-06)

On the other hand, the Quaker missionaries, "in promoting the improvement and gradual civilization of the North American Indians[,] . . . found savages averse from all sorts of labour" (306). The Quakers endeavoured to lead by example, cultivated ground for themselves, "and, without exhorting the natives to industry, showed them its advantages" (306). Although Edgeworth's argument concludes by asking whether, if this can be achieved "among ignorant and prejudiced tribes of savages", what may not be achieved among the "civilized inhabitants" of England, the text's initial response to these "civilized inhabitants" is to categorize them alongside savages or North America's native race (307).

While this is a particularly striking example of the 'figuring' of the lower classes in a text of Edgeworth's, *all* of her work is ultimately involved in a process that tries to (re)shape and contain the lower orders. In the broadest sense, the key to this containment is *always* the construction of an educational romance, which impresses upon the individual the benefit of being educated for his or her 'station' in life. This anxiety of Edgeworth's does not limit itself to the lower orders, of course: her further point is that the acquisitive desires of the middle and upper classes must also be contained. In this context, as we have seen, Edgeworth argues that these desires are not wrong as such: they only become so once they encourage the individual to forget his or her 'place'. Once again, Edgeworth assigns a crucial role to woman in this regard, asserting that it is primarily woman's responsibility to act as a check upon such acquisitive compulsions. As she puts it in Practical Education,

"[e]conomy is in women an essential domestic virtue": "young women, when they see in stubborn figures what must be the consequence of getting into situations where they must be tempted to exceed their means, will probably begin by avoiding, instead of braving, the danger" (2: 701, 705).

All of these themes are expertly illustrated by Edgeworth in "Madame de Fleury", which was published in the 1809 series of Tales of Fashionable Life. The overall purpose of this text, the preface tells us, is "to point out some of those errours [sic], to which the higher classes of society are disposed",[30] but the crucial point of Madame de Fleury's story is that it illustrates how she, an upper class woman, helps to contain the acquisitive desires of the lower orders. In founding a school for lower class girls, Madame de Fleury is therefore careful to ensure that the education that her pupils receive is in strict accordance with their prospective future situations. Although one of the brightest of her pupils is Victoire, Madame de Fleury takes steps to ensure that the girl's talent for poetry is positively discouraged. Indeed, all of her young pupils are

> educated in private, and by slow and sure degrees, to be . . . good, useful, and happy member[s] of society. Upon the same principles which decided Mad. de Fleury against encouraging Victoire to be a poetess, she refrained from giving any of her little pupils accomplishments unsuited to their situation. Some had a fine ear for music, others showed powers of dancing; but they were taught neither dancing nor music - talents which in their station were more likely to be dangerous than serviceable. They were not intended for actresses or opera-girls, but for shop-girls, mantua-makers, work-women, and servants of different sorts; consequently they were instructed in things which would be most necessary and useful to young women in their rank of life.[31]

In this way, Madame de Fleury's school guards against the inculcation of inappropriate or overly acquisitive desire in its pupils, and the relationship between the upper and lower classes is carefully managed.

"Out of Debt Out of Danger", on the other hand, provides a colourful illustration of what happens when woman gives way to rampant acquisitive desires, and the fact that this threatens both nation *and* empire is central to Edgeworth's text.[32] Leonard Ludgate, a haberdasher's son, rejects his late father's maxim of "'Out of debt out of Danger'", replacing it, instead, with "'Spend today, and spare tomorrow'" (1: 267). He also ignores

his father's conviction that "Miss Belle Perkins [was] a would-be fine lady, whom he advised his son never to think of for a wife", and the couple soon marry (1: 268). Leonard and his new wife immediately embark upon a spendthrift lifestyle that very quickly leads them into financial difficulties, and this culminates in Leonard being sent to the gallows for having passed counterfeit notes. Although Leonard and Belle each play their part in their eventual ruin, Edgeworth intimates that Belle's sin is by far the greater. By encouraging her husband to move into a fine house, and by piling up ever more debts in her relentless quest to keep up with their fashionable neighbours, Belle singularly fails to manifest any traces of "domestic virtue". Indeed, Leonard asserts as much himself when he is finally arrested: "'Cursed, cursed woman! you have brought me to the gallows, and all for this trumpery!' cried he, snatching her gaudy hat from her head, and trampling it under his feet. 'For this - for this! you vain, you ugly creature, you have brought your husband to the gallows!'" (1: 323).[33]

Crucially, "Out of Debt Out of Danger" also indirectly indicates why unbridled economic excess poses a threat to national and imperial expansion by tracing the wider (colonial) implications of Belle's inability to discharge her financial obligations. Called upon to settle a debt by an upholster, who is, significantly, "'fitting out one of his sons for the East Indies'", Belle persuades one of his employees, Lucy, to leave her wages on his hands for another month (1: 291). At the end of that time, Belle tells her former companion, she will certainly be in a position to pay. Two months pass, however, and Lucy resolves to call on Belle, for her imminent marriage means that she really needs her wages. As the text pointedly observes, "she wished to put into her husband's hands the little fortune which she had hardly earned by her own industry" (1: 299). In this way, Edgeworth demonstrates that the effects of Belle's extravagance reach out far beyond her own home, and she simultaneously reiterates her point about how important it is for the individual to preserve his or her financial (and moral) independence.[34] The profligate

Belle, she reveals, adversely affects not only her own home, but also the future prosperity of Britain's colonial and imperial project.

The details of "Out of Debt Out of Danger", or "Madame de Fleury", therefore demonstrate the efficacy of Gary Kelly's argument that, throughout the nineteenth century, "women were increasingly defined as the ideological and cultural foundation of society, state, nation, and empire, in fact serving the interests and identity of the professional middle class and their allies in other classes" (173). They also, however, help to clarify Edgeworth's evident anxiety to offer a *romanticized* version of education, one that will diffuse and contain the potential social problems caused by the newly upwardly mobile masses. As Essays on Professional Education would have it, education is in this way transformed into a tool that regulates the individual even as it empowers him; it intimates that he can enjoy all of the advantages of social advancement *so long as* he continues to respect the boundaries that have traditionally delineated the social classes. Recounted in the text, thus, is the story of a Yorkshire country gentleman who foolishly put himself into debt in order to procure a statue of Venus. Edgeworth remarks, "It is true, that the understanding cannot in any class of man be too much enlarged; but it may be too much refined; it may be misapplied to subjects of little use to the possessor, in the situation in which he is destined to live: this must lead to the neglect of substantial duties, consequently to the degradation of the character of the individual" (288).

These several themes recur throughout Edgeworth's work, but, in order to illustrate further how romance and an appropriate education are linked by her in the service of both nation and empire, I wish to turn next to "Lame Jervas", and to examine how the principles of romance which are detailed in Essays on Professional Education manifest themselves in this instance of her clearly imperial and colonial writing. As one of Edgeworth's Popular Tales, I would argue that "Lame Jervas" is part of a text that is itself predicated upon a very specific didactic promise. Aimed at the less "polite" classes, it 'promises' these lower

classes that their newly obtained access to books and education will offer them the means through which they can become upwardly mobile. At the same time, it also tries to guarantee the stability of society by persuading these newly-empowered readers that their interests continue to be bound up with their proper observance of the existing social order. "Lame Jervas" thus traces the hero's relentless social climb, and his equally relentless acquisition of property, while simultaneously underlining the fact that the English way of life guarantees such opportunities to all who similarly apply themselves and work hard.

Alan Richardson for his part reads "Lame Jervas"[35] as "an educational romance", whose "discursive center resides in the treatment of property" (225-26).[36] If this tale is an educational romance, however, it is manifestly a colonial and imperial one as well, for the hero has to travel to India to acquire his property. Jervas begins his working life as a virtual child-slave in the Cornish tin mines and his desire for property is first awakened when he is convalescing following an accident in the mine. He remembers that he "'began to desire to have . . . a little garden, and property'" of his own for which he knew that he must "'work hard'" (1: 14). While indicating that *all* may desire to acquire property, the text takes pains to link this desire to the continued regulation of the social order. Jervas therefore significantly takes his first steps towards amassing his fortune when he protects his master's property from the designs of dishonest miners who seek to conceal their discovery of a load. For this, his master financially rewards him, and he is also taken out of the mine and placed under the care of Dr. Y, who oversees his future education. What Jervas's schooling makes clear, however, is that education is both an empowering and a regulating tool. When he begins to have visions of earning his living by writing, Dr. Y tells Jervas it was "'not likely'" that he should "'either earn [his] bread or equal those who had enjoyed greater advantages of leisure and education'" (1: 34). In other words, Dr. Y informs Jervas that his education will only take him so far: he must still remember his 'place'.

A lot of hard work and honesty later, Jervas eventually ends up in India where he works firstly as an assistant in Dr. Bell's school in Madras, and then in Tippoo Sultan's court where he is asked to instruct Prince Abdul Calie, the Sultan's eldest son. Jervas notes that the prince was "'of a most amiable disposition, unlike the imperious and capricious temper which [Jervas] had remarked in his father. Prince Abdul Calie had been, when he was about twelve years old, one of the hostage princes left with Lord Cornwallis, at Seringapatam'" (1: 78). In this manner, Edgeworth's text directly links Prince Abdul's superior qualities to his earlier English education. The superiority of the English system which offers the benefits of such education to 'all' is further underlined when Jervas observes, "'Thus an obscure individual, in a country like England, where arts, sciences, and literature are open to all ranks, may obtain a degree of knowledge which an eastern despot, in all his pride, would gladly purchase with ingots of his purest gold'" (1: 80). Equally, the opportunities through which Jervas amasses his subsequent wealth are also the result of the English system. The Sultan first asks him "'to visit the tin-mines in his dominions, to instruct his miners how to work them, and to manage the ore according to the English fashion'" (1: 84). Having made a success of this, Jervas is made responsible for one of the largest of the Sultan's diamond mines in Golconda. Jervas's eye is always to the future, however, and so the text emphasises that he carefully manages whatever he earns: "'The five years salary due to me by the East India Company, which I had never touched, I had put out at interest at Madras; where sometimes the rate was as high as twelve per cent . . . I was in a fair way to get rich'" (1: 91-92).

The narrative device with which Edgeworth frames this text renders the moral of the tale peculiarly effective. Jervas returns a wealthy gentleman to Cornwall and, at a celebration that his former master organizes in his honour, relates his own story to his former workmates. In this way the moral of Edgeworth's text is expertly illustrated: it implies that *all* who 'hear' Jervas's story can similarly transform their lives. From here,

perhaps, we can trace Edgeworth's anxiety to assert that the tale is no mere fantasy or romance. Of his voyage to India, for example, Jervas asserts, "'I am sorry that I have not for your entertainment any escape or imminent danger of shipwreck to relate'" (1: 67). Similarly, he emphasises that he has no "'wonderful adventures'" to recount of his time in Madras, as he only led "'a quiet regular life'" (1: 67). What Edgeworth is attempting, of course, is to convince her readers that "Lame Jervas" is *not* a romance. Instead, she implies, it is an instructional text, whose moral is carefully drawn from real life.

There are some fundamental points which must be made about this 'rags-to-riches' story, points which are directly implicated in Edgeworth's treatment of both nation and empire in her texts. In the first place, and as I have indicated above, Jervas's rise in the world is inextricably linked to the rise of the British Empire. It is a director of the East India Company who secures for him his position with Dr. Bell in Madras, and Dr. Bell's asylum for orphans, the text observes, is "'an establishment which is immediately under the auspices of the East India Company, and which does them honour'" (1: 61-62). This, as Albert Memmi would have it, illustrates but one example of the process that supports ongoing colonization. Of the future colonizer, Memmi notes, "One protector sends him, another welcomes him, and his job is already waiting for him".[37] Through his faithful service of the East India Company, Jervas amasses, or appropriates, a personal fortune while at the same time assisting in the spread of British interests in India. It is therefore significant that Jervas essentially replicates with his pupils in Madras the type of education that he himself received at the hands of Dr. Y in England. This preceptor taught Jervas that education can take the individual only so far and that the social status quo must at all times be maintained. In teaching the native orphans, Jervas similarly instructs them in the art of being docile and obedient subjects who will accept and serve the British presence in India. Once again, education acts as a tool of regulation.

Jervas's desire for property in this tale also mirrors that of the British nation itself

and, while it is portrayed as both admirable and justifiable, the Tippoo Sultan's ambition to profit from his diamond mines is portrayed as a different case entirely. The fact that it is in the supervision of the *draining* of these mines than he employs Jervas, however, invites the making of a comparison in the text between the Sultan's project and the question of Britain's own long-standing preoccupation with bog reclamation. As Katie Trumpener points out, the bog is "the locus of a long-running struggle between improvers and nationalists, beginning already with the Elizabethan colonization and settlement of Ireland" (46). "When bogs are cleared in an imperial context", she observes, "the activity openly augurs exploitation, not regional economic salvation . . . . [T]he empire can be profitable only because it siphons off profits from the peripheries and redirects them into the home economy" (51). The reality of this "exploitation" is what Edgeworth's text seeks to avoid, and so the Tippoo Sultan's desires, which precisely parallel British desires to "siphon off" the wealth of India, are portrayed in "Lame Jervas" as resting upon unrestrained greed and blatant injustice. Further, the obvious correlation that can be made between the slaves in the Sultan's mines and those in the tin mines of Jervas's Cornish master is never admitted by the text, and it actually deflects potential criticism away from the owner of the Cornish mines and on to his workers. Thus, although Jervas was a child slave from about the age of five or six and had, as he tells us, "'a hard life of it'", his insistence is that his "'good master . . . never knew anything of the matter; but [Jervas] was cruelly used by those under him" (1: 8-9). In this way, the Cornish mine owner is cleared of any responsibility for a system of mining that clearly exploited people in the same manner as that of the Tippoo Sultan. As the text would have it, Jervas suffers as a consequence of the avarice of the master's lower class hirelings, and not as a result of the master's own desire to extract the maximum profit from his holdings.

In his introduction to Albert Memmi's text, Jean-Paul Sartre points out that the economic wealth of any colonizing nation will finally rest upon the systematic exploitation

of native labour. He argues, "the colony sells produce and raw materials cheaply, and purchases manufactured good at very high prices from the mother country. This singular trade is profitable to both parties only if the native works for little or nothing".[38] This recognition is one that Edgeworth is anxious to avoid in "Lame Jervas", and so she steps back from the painful fact that the wealth of the British nation and empire rests upon slave labour. Instead, she attempts to produce a (romantic) vision of an English greatness, which guarantees fair treatment and justice to all walks of life. What she is aiming at is similarly encoded in the sentiments expressed by the English visitor to Prussia in "The Prussian Vase" in Moral Tales. Observing the reluctance of the workers who are forced to toil for King Frederick, he remarks, "'Tis the way with all slaves. Our English manufacturers . . . work in quite another manner - for they are free'" (1: 176). It is also echoed in the trip that Rosamond makes to a cotton manufactory in Continuation of Early Lessons (1814).[39] The factory to which her father takes his children is a model establishment "managed by a very sensible, humane man, who did not think only of how he could get so much work done for himself; but he also considered how he could preserve the health of the people, who worked for him, and how he could make them as comfortable and happy as possible" (1: 259). This is far removed from the reality of Jervas's childhood as a worker. He was, he recalls, "'[b]uried under ground in a mine . . . from [his] infancy, [so that] the face of nature was totally unknown to [him]'" (1:25). When Jervas is taken out of the mine as a result of protecting his master's property from the dishonest miners, he emerges into a world that he has *literally* never seen before. He thus stuffs his hat "'with weeds, and . . . all sorts of wild flowers'" and his coat and waistcoat pockets with "'pebbles, and fungusses'" (1: 28).

In his concern for the slaves of the Tippoo Sultan, Edgeworth indicates that Jervas's attitude *precisely* reflects that of any Englishman who finds himself in a similar situation in a foreign land. Jervas thus endeavours to secure the release of the slaves from

the sultan's diamond mines to the great puzzlement of Omychund, a Hindu merchant: "'They are not Europeans. What concern are they of yours?'" (1: 102). It is evident from the text that Edgeworth's anxiety is to counter Omychund's further observation to Jervas that, "'[o]nce in your native country, you will dream of them no more. You will think only of enjoying the wealth you shall have brought from India'" (1: 102). As Edgeworth tries to have it, Britain's desire to accumulate, or to appropriate, wealth overseas is absolutely untainted by either greed or injustice: it is *always* secondary to the overwhelming desire of Britons to bring enlightenment to the inferior native. This leads us back once more to not only how texts like "Lame Jervas" work to base Britain's empire upon moral and cultural superiority, but also to the part that they simultaneously play in assisting the process of incorporation and appropriation in which the British nation is ultimately engaged. This recognition adds an extra dimension to Edgeworth's insistence in Essays on Professional Education upon the need to thoroughly master all of the details pertaining to other races and cultures, and it ultimately represents the manifestation in her work of one part of the ideological forces that underpin the spread of empire. By learning everything possible about the facts, figures, and resources of other nations, the would-be colonizer at the same time begins to appreciate how to reshape this information in his favour. In this context, Edgeworth's emphasis is that understanding the 'other' represents a vital first step in the process of colonization.

This particular reality, I would suggest, peculiarly manifests itself at that point in Essays on Professional Education where Edgeworth considers whether or not a young man destined for the bar should acquaint himself with foreign languages. Her conclusion is that this is in fact positively crucial, as legal men will directly facilitate colonial and imperial expansion by helping Britain to 'master' the native's words. In the main part of her text, Edgeworth thus refers to Sir William Jones, oriental scholar and judge of the high court of Calcutta, observing, "How far it would be worth while for young lawyers to study the

Sanscrit [sic] or Arabic with the hope of becoming judges in India, is a speculation foreign to this essay" (341). While significantly insisting that this is a *speculation* that is foreign to her essay, Edgeworth amplifies her argument in an appendix to her text. Here, she quotes the remarks of one of Sir William's biographers who observed that the eminent judge and scholar learned Sanskrit and Arabic in order "'to promote the administration of justice in India, by detecting the misrepresentations of the Hindu or Mahommedan laws, and by correcting the impositions in the form of administering oaths to the followers of Brahma and Mahommed'" (498). Although in his case referring specifically to the novel, the arguments that Edward Said advances about how "the structure of attitude and reference raises the whole question of power [in the text]" can also be usefully be applied to what is at stake at this instance in Essays on Professional Education.[40] Novels, Said asserts,

> participate in, are part of, contribute to an extremely slow, infinitesimal politics that clarifies, reinforces, perhaps even occasionally advances perceptions and attitudes about England and the world. It is striking that never, in the novel, is that world beyond seen except as subordinate and dominated, the English presence viewed as regulative and normative. (89)

In both "The Little Merchants" and "The Prussian Vase", as we have already seen, Edgeworth inscribes this interpretation of the English presence as both regulative and normative, where the gaze of an English visitor imposes strict justice upon a foreign scene. What Essays on Professional Education to all intents and purposes implies is that Sir William Jones's presence in India offers a similar guarantee to the native; native law benefits enormously, Edgeworth avers, as Sir William's ability to detect and correct misrepresentations means that it is possible to administer the code much more effectively. My arguments here echo those that Gary Kelly advances in relation to Elizabeth Hamilton's brother, Charles, who went to India in 1772. Charles Hamilton, Kelly argues, was part of the "professional middle-class cultural revolution, led by Sir William Jones and his fellow Orientalists in the Asiatic Society at Calcutta, and dedicated to reform of both colonial administration and the empire's subject peoples" (128). Like Jones, Hamilton was

an Oriental scholar, and he was "given five years' leave in England by Warren Hastings to translate the Persian code of Islamic law for use by the colonial administration" (128). Kelly concludes that Hamilton's approach to the Indian law code "implicitly subordinates the Islamic law code itself to the superior viewpoint of an implied reader who will be applying the code mitigated by the reason and moderation of the benevolent imperialist"(130).[41]

Hiding behind the apparently disinterested "reason and moderation of the benevolent imperialist" are the harsher realities of a rampant mercantile and colonial desire, of course, and it is these unappealing realities that compel Edgeworth to harness the transformative power of romance throughout her writing. Edgeworth's strategy in Essays on Professional Education, as we have seen, is to try to reshape this aspect of the British presence overseas so that it rests upon a cultural and moral rather than a military superiority. In this way, the true desire of British power in relation to the native is concealed, and it is less difficult for the colonizer to both justify and engage in the appropriation, or incorporation, of the wealth of other lands. In this context, it may be useful to quote from the entry for Sir William Jones in the Dictionary of National Biography. This notes, "As a great jurist Jones understood that the power of England in India must rest on good administration, and that the first requisite was to obtain a thorough mastery of the existing systems of law in India, and to have them codified and explained".[42] Thus, "he decided to prepare a complete digest of Hindu and Muhammadan law, as observed in India; and to assist him in the colossal labour he collected round him learned native pundits and Muhammadan lawyers" (x: 1064). Such mastering and effective rewriting of native law patently smoothes the way for Britain's appropriation and incorporation of the resources of other nations; as the Dictionary of National Biography significantly observes, for instance, Jones "was on terms of intimate friendship with the successive governors-general of India, . . . and the directors of the East India Company . . .

recognized the value of his labours" (x: 1064). It also, however, represents but one part of that process through which the colonizer attempts to transform what Albert Memmi calls "*The Usurper's Role*" (118). In pursuit of this ambition, Memmi notes, the colonizer "endeavors [sic] to falsify history, he rewrites laws, he would extinguish memories - anything to succeed in transforming his usurpation into legitimacy" (118). In other words, and in my terms, he constructs an elaborate romance of a real versus an imaginary power,[43] which leaves the way clear for him to transform the geographical statistics that Edgeworth insists are only supposedly "fixed, immutable, immortal words".

It is therefore highly appropriate that Essays on Professional Education demonstrates Edgeworth's perception that words themselves will play a vital role in facilitating this process of appropriation. "Brian Edwards, in the preface to his History of Jamaica", she observes, "mentions, that an English judge, in trying a cause relative to the produce of a West India plantation, was utterly at a loss to know, what was meant by *molasses*" (352).[44] The inability of the judge to understand this one word, she implies, seriously endangered Britain's chances of extracting the maximum profit from Jamaica. In order to successfully appropriate from the native, Edgeworth insists, it is first of all necessary to master the language of his race. This immediately amplifies my earlier comments regarding Edgeworth's treatment of Sir William Jones's (linguistic) career as an oriental scholar and jurist, but it also illuminates my greater argument regarding why she is so emphatic that harnessing the power of romance will immeasurably facilitate Britain's colonial and imperial expansion. As she would have it, the (transformative) power of romance transcends *all* barriers, including, by implication, those of idiom or race. By harnessing the power of colonising romances, Edgeworth's work insists, Britons will therefore facilitate their very particular ambition: specifically, they will succeed in imposing their vision of reality across the face of the earth.

My intention in this chapter has been to begin to examine the ways in which

Edgeworth attempts to reshape romance in the interests of both nation and empire. To this end, I have concentrated mainly upon Essays on Professional Education, and I have suggested that it is in this, perhaps Edgeworth's most blatant text of empire, that she most clearly reveals the principles of romance upon which much of her work finally rests. In this context, it might be argued that my approach in this chapter has been to read Edgeworth's harnessing of the power of romance as an example of what Northrop Frye terms "kidnapped" romance: romance, that is, that is used as a tool of ideology in the service of the "ascendant values" of a particular social order.[45] Such a reading is entirely possible, particularly given the fact that Edgeworth's own membership of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland itself lends an extra dimension to any consideration of how she treats the idea of the British nation or empire in her texts. After all, each of the complex ideological formations that impels her work ostensibly facilitates one greater didactic contention: namely, that the colonizing British are necessarily representative of a superior morality and way of life. While this emphasis in Edgeworth's work is obviously important, it should not be allowed to efface other, more ambivalent instances in her texts, which appear to hint at some of the harsher realities of Britain's mercantile and colonial expansion. I have touched lightly upon such a moment in "Lame Jervas", where I commented upon Edgeworth's anxiety in relation to the issue of slavery and the fact that much of Britain's wealth finally rested upon slave labour. If this recognition causes Edgeworth difficulty in this tale, it presents her with a near insurmountable obstacle in "The Grateful Negro". In this text, she must somehow reconcile Britain's involvement in slavery and the slave trade with her romance of the British nation's incontrovertible honour or virtue. It is to this dilemma, and its effects upon Edgeworth's treatment of romance, that I will next turn my attention.

Chapter 4:

Edgeworth and Liberty, or, Romance as a Tool of Colonial and Imperial Ideology.

Glorious privilege! Why should it not be extended to all her dominions.[1]

The last chapter traced the ideological formations, or romances, with which Edgeworth seeks to construct a vision of British moral and cultural superiority in her work, and it showed how her representation of national identity is primarily predicated upon her concept of Britain's disinterested 'honour' or 'virtue'. According to Edgeworth, Britain's national and imperial expansion is impelled by altruistic rather than pecuniary considerations, and Britons principally engage in colonisation so as to share the benefits of their superior way of life with other peoples and lands. In this context, she avers, *each* of the men who contributes to Britain's expansionist project will ultimately prove to be nothing less than "a noble adventurer, [or] a righteous pioneer";[2] inspired by "noble ambition",[3] he will help to spread the light of Britain's munificence across the face of the earth.

This emphasis in Edgeworth's work is clearly important for several reasons, but it in the first instance demonstrates why her (re)construction of both nation and empire is so heavily dependent upon her use of romance as a narrative form. As I noted in my introduction, critics like Gillian Beer point out that romance is by definition a *prophetic* genre: that is, it allows the author, or reader, to deny the reality in which he finds himself and to instead impose his romanticized or idealized perceptions upon what he sees.[4] It is in this context, I argued, that Don Quixote insists upon "'imagin[ing]'" that Aldonza Lorenzo/Dulcinea del Toboso is "'exactly as [he] say[s], without addition or diminution'", for example, and, similarly, it is why he defends his as yet unperformed exploits to Sancho Panza by emphasising that he "'look[s] upon [them] as already done'" (289). By behaving

at all times *as if* what he envisions *is* real, Cervantes's hero anticipates making what he envisions *become* real; to put this another way, he simultaneously refuses to acknowledge *and* endeavours to close the gap that exists between his "transfiguring imagination"[5] and life.

Michael McKeon observes, however, that, in order this may be accomplished, Don Quixote first of all constructs an elaborate theory of reality, "arguing that things 'are' what they appear to be only by virtue of having been transformed from their true, romance state by an enchanter".[6] There are numerous consequences to this strategy, but McKeon contends that it particularly facilitates Don Quixote's ambition to propound what he calls a "conservative interpretation of history"; to insist, in other words, "that it would be of inestimable benefit [to Spain] if the Golden Age of knight-errantry" were brought back (285). "'I [do not] set myself up for a wise man, being really not so'", Don Quixote remarks to Sancho Panza, "'all I aim at is, to convince the world of its error in not reviving those happy times, in which the order of knight-errantry flourished'" (528). "[S]ince I have been a knight-errant'", he insists, "'I am become valiant, civil, liberal, well-bred, generous, courteous, daring, affable, [and] patient'", and his implication, of course, is that so will *all* who follow his example (492).

If this emphasis on the one hand immediately appears to facilitate the arguments of critics who maintain that Don Quixote finally functions as a social visionary in Cervantes's narrative, on the other it supports the contentions of those who insist that Don Quixote's desires are not primarily altruistic. For example, McKeon argues that an important point about Don Quixote is that he is not a don at all but a "*hidalgo*", or "'gentleman'",[7] and that, as such, he is attracted to chivalric romances because he anticipates that they will enable him "to reconcile . . . the requirements of aristocratic ideology" with the lowly circumstances of his birth (284). "'Doubt it not Sancho'", Don Quixote observes, "'knight-errants do rise, and have risen to be kings and emperors'", and, plainly, this is

precisely what he believes will happen to him once he can impress the fame of his exploits upon a suitable monarch and his daughter:

> 'For you must know . . . there are two sorts of lineages in the world. Some there are, who derive their pedigree from princes and monarchs, whom time has reduced, by little and little, until they have ended in a point, like a pyramid reversed: others have had poor and low beginnings, and have risen by degrees, until at last they have become great lords. So that the difference lies in this, that some have been what now they are not, and others are now what they were not before; and who knows but I may be one of the former, and that upon examination, my origin may be found to have been great and glorious; with which the king, my father-in-law, that is to be, ought to be satisfied: and though he should not be satisfied, the infanta is to be so in love with me, that, in spite of her father, she is to receive me for her lord and husband, though she certainly knew I was the son of a water-carrier; and in case she should not, then is the time to take her away by force, and convey her whither I please; and time or death will put a period to the displeasure of her parents.' (178-79)

Don Quixote's skilful use of romance in this way allows him to (re)write both his future and his past, but an important point is that it simultaneously enables him to impress upon Sancho Panza *his* version of the social order. As he would have it, he acts as he does in order to fulfil his (natural) duties and obligations and, for his own good and that of Spain as a whole, Sancho Panza *must* embrace his master's (feudal) view of life. "'[I]n all the books of chivalry I ever read'", he observes,

> 'I never found that any squire conversed so much with his master as you do with yours. And really I account it a great fault both in you and me; in you, because you respect me so little; in me, that I do not make myself respected more. . . . [T]here ought to be a difference between master and man, between lord and lackey, and between knight and squire.' (168)

Similarly, Don Quixote counters Sancho Panza's inquiry regarding how he shall be paid "'if perchance the time of . . . favours should not come'", observing that squires of old did not receive "'stated wages'" (169). Rather, they "'relied on [their masters'] courtesy'" and so, he infers, must Sancho Panza (169). In this context, Don Quixote demonstrates the efficacy of Diane Elam's contention that romance frequently functions "as a narrative veil that hides 'the language of ideology'":[8] through his use of romance, Cervantes's hero disguises the feudal connotations of his discourse and persuades Sancho Panza that he

should embrace his master's view of the world. What Don Quixote ultimately reveals, therefore, is that romance is an incredibly powerful ideological weapon: it allows the individual who controls it to "'imagine that everything is exactly as [he] say[s]'", or, as I argued in my introduction, to impress upon others a complex "medley . . . of truth and lies" (226, 489).

In light of this recognition, Edgeworth's use of romance in her work takes on an added significance, for it enables us to appreciate better the extent to which her preoccupation with the concepts of 'nation' and national 'identity' is both informed by, and contributes to, the prevailing ideological debates of the time at which she was writing. As critics such as Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh point out, for example, the period between 1780 and 1830 witnessed unparalleled overseas expansion by Britain, with the result that, by 1820, roughly one quarter of the world's population was under British control.[9] Alongside this, Britain experienced very real socio-political difficulties during this era,[10] particularly as contemporaries increasingly began to question whether the methods that facilitated this expansion were consistent with the supposed moral and cultural superiority of the British nation and the British way of life. Inevitably, writers like Edgeworth became crucially implicated in this debate, and their works played a vital role in creating, reflecting, or *disguising* those ideologies that either facilitated, or interrogated, Britain's expansionist project.[11]

One of the most wrenching aspects of this debate revolved around slavery, of course, as pro-abolitionists vied with the defenders of the plantocracy in order to expose the true implications of this facet of Britain's colonial life. While abolition was "a persistent and significant literary concern" from the 1750s onwards,[12] Katie Trumpener points out that the issue took on a particular significance

> [f]rom the American Revolution onward . . . [for] abolitionist attention to the empire automatically invoked the problem of domestic freedoms and political institutions. In the 1790s, while the conservative wing of the British abolitionist

> movement slowed its pressure on the government in the interests of domestic stability, radical abolitionists helped to establish the Corresponding Societies and modeled them on abolitionist organizations. In their admiration of the political independence effected by the American Revolution (despite its concession to slaveholding interests), as well as in their deployment of a Painite rhetoric of the rights of man, British Radicals often drew parallels between domestic and imperial despotism.[13]

This had the result that "[t]he rhetoric of the interdependence of domestic and colonial interests" became used "across the political spectrum, by defenders of plantocracy as well as by radical abolitionists", Trumpener argues (164). In this context, a text like Jane Austen's Mansfield Park (1814) requires an "historicizing reading", which "might well see its [famous] moment of silence about the slave trade as politically hard-hitting rather than evasive, a moment at which Austen's reader will know to fill in contemporary debates about abolition" (163).[14] Singling out Edward Said's analysis of Austen's novel for particular criticism, Trumpener contends that his readings are "neither broad nor narrow enough in their scope. Oddly foreshortened, they lack historical, political, and generic context; [his] Mansfield Park continues to stand in splendid isolation from its immediate surroundings" (163).[15] In contradistinction to this, Trumpener insists that the moment of silence in Mansfield Park *must* be read in context of the wider fiction of the period: "Indirection . . . is the key to Austen's treatment of abolitionist concerns and what gives the novel its subtlety and its power" (175).

My intention in this chapter is to subject Edgeworth's treatment of slavery to just such an "historicizing reading", and to argue that she responds to such awkward textual silences evasively, introducing extremely complex ideological formations, or romances, into her writing. Fashioned from the disparate strands of the abolition debate, these romances are manifestly intended to reconcile Britain's supposed moral and cultural superiority with the nation's economic dependence upon the slave trade and slave labour. Although variously informed, we shall see that these romances all have one thing in common: namely, they seek to sustain the fiction of Britain's moral pre-eminence by

stressing the *paternalistic* nature of the nation's relationship to slavery. Thus it is, for example, that "Lame Jervas" draws particular attention to its hero's efforts to secure the release of the Tippoo Sultan's slaves. Unlike the despotic potentate, it observes, Jervas is able to perceive not only the sensibility of the slaves, but also that they have a moral right to be free. Ultimately, this emphasis allows Edgeworth to elevate Jervas (and Britain) over the Tippoo Sultan (and Mysore), as it intimates both the moral superiority of Jervas and of the British way of life. Recalling the moment of the slaves' release, Jervas therefore significantly observes, "'never will the expressions of joy and gratitude be effaced from my memory, which lighted up the black faces of these poor creatures! who, say what we will, have as much sensibility, perhaps more, than we have ourselves'" (1: 106).

Crucially, Edgeworth is only able to sustain this argument in "Lame Jervas" by carefully excluding from her tale the true nature of Britain's relationship to slavery. At the time that Popular Tales was published, Britain still controlled "well over half the Atlantic slave trade", but this fact is resolutely ignored, or silenced, in her text.[16] Similarly, Edgeworth has her hero impress upon Saheb, a native boy, that there are "'no slaves'" in England and that, "'as soon as any slave touched the English shore, by our laws, he obtained his freedom'" (1: 112). In the first place, this represents an extremely romantic reading of the celebrated Mansfield Judgement of May 14th, 1772,[17] and it completely ignores the vast numbers of slaves that laboured upon Britain's colonial plantations. Although it is possible for Edgeworth to sustain this stance in "Lame Jervas", it is patently impracticable in a text like "The Grateful Negro", where the slaves in question labour for Britons in the West Indies. Here, as in "The Two Guardians", one of her Comic Dramas in Three Acts of 1817,[18] Edgeworth is positively compelled to confront the darker side of Britain's colonial and imperial expansion. While the issues at stake in this confrontation manifest themselves differently throughout her writing, they are nowhere more clearly revealed, perhaps, than in Continuation of Early Lessons. In this text, Harry and Lucy read

Anna Laetitia Barbauld's Hymns in Prose for Children (1781),[19] and Harry's quoting aloud of his favourite hymn introduces into Edgeworth's text arguments that challenge Britain's colonizing prerogative: "'"Negro woman, who sittest pining in captivity, and weepest over thy sick child; though no one seeth thee, God seeth thee; though no one pitieth thee, God pitieth thee: raise thy voice, forlorn and abandoned one: call upon him, from amidst thy bonds, for assuredly he will hear thee'" (2: 148).

Like Edgeworth in "Lame Jervas", Barbauld here explicitly acknowledges and underlines the sensibility of the native other, but, unlike Edgeworth, she goes further, and links the desire that impels national and imperial expansion to native suffering. By echoing the opening line of William Cowper's famous poem "Verses, Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk, During His Solitary Abode in the Island of Juan Fernandez" (1782) at the beginning of her next verse,[20] Barbauld therefore engages with the type of colonizing romances that propel the expansionist project, while simultaneously exposing the connections that exist between these formations and the perpetuation of the slave trade and slavery: "'Monarch, that rulest over a hundred states, whose frown is terrible as death, and whose armies cover the land, boast not thyself, as though there were none above thee – God is above thee; his powerful arm is always over thee! And, if thou doest ill, assuredly he will punish thee'" (2: 148-49).

Percy G. Adams ably demonstrates the complexities of the relationship between colonizing romances and slavery in his consideration of the extensive use that Daniel Defoe makes of travel accounts in his fiction. He points out, for instance, that Woodes Rogers's The Cruising Voyage round the World (1712) "provided a chief impetus for Defoe's ambitions to open a British South Sea trade, but it also contains the first and basic account of the most famous of all real island castaways, Alexander Selkirk".[21] Underlining the fact that it is Selkirk's name, and not Crusoe's, that appears in the title of Cowper's celebrated poem, Adams contends, "Cowper's notion of the solitary ruler could have come

from Woodes Rogers, who not only tells how the crew nicknamed Selkirk 'Governour' but suggests that he was also 'absolute Monarch of the island'" (131).[22] In this way, Selkirk's real-life adventures are revealed to variously inspire Rogers's journal, Defoe's novel, Cowper's poem, and Barbauld's hymn.[23] Unlike the other three, however, Barbauld's intention is not so much to stimulate colonial and imperial ambition, as it is to ensure that the fruits of its manifestation do not subsequently compromise the moral integrity of the British nation and race.

Although Harry's quoting of Barbauld's hymn raises the spectre of slavery in Edgeworth's text, it simultaneously provides her with the means through which to sustain the romance of Britain's moral and cultural superiority. Effectively, what Barbauld's hymn suggests is that the colonizing process is not in itself immoral; it only becomes so once the colonizer fails to exercise the type of moral integrity that ought to be expected of a representative of the British race. This argument also infuses "The Colonists" and "The Kidnappers", two of the tales that appear in Evenings at Home; or, The Juvenile Budget Opened (1782-6).[24] Produced for children by Barbauld and her brother, Dr. John Aikin, this was a text that Edgeworth and her family "admire[d] . . . extremely".[25] In "The Colonists",[26] Mr. Barlow plays a game with his children, casting himself as "'the founder of a colony'" and his sons as the representatives of different trades and professions who are coming to offer their services (348). When one son offers himself as a soldier, Mr. Barlow observes, "We are peaceable people, and I hope shall have no occasion to fight. We mean honestly to purchase our land from the natives, and to be just and fair in all our dealings with them" (351). This emphasis in "The Colonists" amplifies the moral of "The Kidnappers",[27] wherein Mr. B. reads his children a narrative from "'Churchhill's Voyages'" that recounts how Danish sailors kidnapped Greenlanders and brought them to Denmark as slaves (117). Noting that the Danes justified this by arguing that they instructed their captives in Christianity and then sent them back to their own country,

Mr. B. argues that this can be a good thing only "if it were done by proper means; but to attempt it by an act of violence and injustice could not be right; for they could teach them nothing good by themselves setting a bad example; and the poor people were not likely to learn willingly from those who had begun by injuring them so cruelly" (118). Of colonization by force, Mr. B. observes, "a more impudent mockery of all right and justice cannot be conceived" (119). If one obvious implication of Barbauld and Aikin's texts is that Britain ought to be "just and fair" in all of her dealings with native peoples, another is that this inevitably reaps the would-be colonizer a verifiable reward. In "The Colonists", Mr. B. observes, "William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, followed that plan; and when the Indians were at war with all the other European settlers, a person in a Quaker's habit might pass through all their most ferocious tribes without receiving the least injury" (351).

In this way, Barbauld and Aikin reveal that their ambition in Evenings at Home is to construct a paradigm of colonization that simultaneously defends Britain's economic interests while protecting the moral integrity of the nation. In their tale entitled "Master and Slave",[28] they present their readers with a dialogue between a plantation-owner and a slave who has made two attempts to escape. The point of the text is to demonstrate that benevolence succeeds far better than cruelty in a colonial situation, and, moreover, to illustrate that a liberated workforce is the best guarantee of a colony's economic and social stability. In this context, the slave emphasizes, "It is impossible to make one who has felt the value of freedom acquiesce in being a slave", thereby revealing the fundamental difficulty that confronts any colonial power (416). Eventually having convinced his master to give him his liberty, the slave goes on to insist:

> Now I am indeed your servant, though not your slave! And as the first return I can make for your kindness, I will tell you freely the condition in which you live. You are surrounded by implacable foes, who long for a safe opportunity to revenge upon you and the other planters all the miseries they have endured. The more generous their natures, the more indignant they feel against that cruel injustice which has

> dragged them to perpetual servitude. You can rely on no kindness on your parts to soften the obduracy of their resentment. You have reduced them to the state of brute beasts, and if they have not the stupidity of beasts of burden, they must have the ferocity of beasts of prey. Superior force alone can give you security. As soon as that fails, you are at the mercy of the merciless. Such is the social bond between master and slave! (417)

This argument in Barbauld and Aikin's work, namely, that the social bond between master and slave demands renegotiation if only on the grounds of the security and economic well-being of the colony, is rehearsed repeatedly in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century texts. In his The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African. Written by Himself (1789),[29] for example, Olaudah Equiano contends that the practice of leaving plantations in the hands of overseers is singularly self-defeating. The cruelties of these men, who are "for the most part persons of the worst character of any denomination of men in the West Indies", inevitably drive the slaves to "retaliate on their tyrants!" (105). Benevolent gentlemen planters who reside on their plantations, on the other hand, invariably find that "benevolence [is] their true interest" (105). Equiano focuses upon the inevitable anxiety of the colonizer, insisting that equitable treatment of native workers would do much to diffuse the undercurrent of fear that informs colonial life: "Are you not hourly in dread of an insurrection? . . . by changing your conduct, and treating your slaves as men, every cause of fear would be banished. They would be faithful, honest, intelligent and vigorous; and peace, prosperity, and happiness would attend you" (112).

When we consider how Edgeworth (re)reads this master/slave relationship in her work, it rapidly becomes apparent that her texts are hugely influenced by the ideological formations, or cultural romances, with which the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century British nation tried to (re)negotiate its relationship to slavery. While these romances are exceedingly complex, they all draw upon what Moira Ferguson defines as "stereotypes of slaves and slavery, as well as Africans and Africa, that had become part of

an orthodox perspective during one hundred and fifty years of anti-slavery protest".[30] In Oroonoko or The Royal Slave: A True History (1688), for instance, Aphra Behn constructed "a paradigm of slavery, aspects of which became constitutive elements in colonial discourse for the next century and a half until the Emancipation Bill passed in 1834" (49). "First of all, Behn affirms an abolitionist and emancipationist perspective in Oroonoko's famed speech" (49), where the noble-born slave questions by what right the British colonists in Surinam condemn their slaves to a lifetime of labour and suffering:

> '[W]hy . . . my dear friends and fellow sufferers, should we be slaves to an unknown people? Have they vanquished us nobly in fight? Have they won us in honourable battle? And are we, by the chance of war, become their slaves? This would not anger a noble heart, this would not animate a soldier's soul. No, but we are bought and sold like apes, or monkeys, to be the sport of women, fools and cowards, and the support of rogues, runagades, that have abandoned their own countries, for raping, murders, thefts, and villainies. . . . shall we render obedience to such a degenerate race, who have no one human virtue left, to distinguish them from the vilest creatures?'[31]

Although this emotive speech prompts the slaves to rebel, they ultimately prove unfaithful to Oroonoko, and, rather than risk further punishment by the British, they abandon him and return to their masters. This circumstance underpins what is an essential point in Behn's text, namely, that Oroonoko is an *exceptional* savage. As such, even he becomes convinced and "ashamed" of "the rashness and inconsiderateness of his action . . . in endeavouring to make those free, who were by nature slaves, poor wretched rogues, fit to be used as Christians' tools", and he announces that "he had rather die than live upon the same earth with such dogs" (130-31). Oroonoko, Ferguson therefore contends, "ends up implicitly privileging plantocratic ideology, inflaming Eurocentric attitudes toward Africans, and bolstering the colonial status quo" (49).

The terms of the "colonial discourse" that Behn produced in Oroonoko manifest themselves in ways of varying importance throughout Edgeworth's work. Like Oroonoko, for example, the slave-hero of "The Grateful Negro" is also a Koromantyn negro who is (re)named Caesar by his white masters, and his function in the narrative is similarly that of

"the sanctified hero, the slave-icon idealized by scared Britons" (Ferguson 233).[32] In contradistinction to Behn, however, Edgeworth's evident ambition to produce a *consistent* defence of Britain's colonial prerogative fundamentally transforms her text, so that it functions as something much more significant than the story of one grateful, but exceptional, slave.[33] Instead, "The Grateful Negro" operates as an elaborate romance, which is manifestly intended to impress upon the reader that it *is* possible to reconcile the notion of Britain's superiority with the realities of colonial life. Thus, although the tale is 'named' for the grateful Caesar, it primarily revolves around the benevolent planter, Mr. Edwards. An enlightened gentleman, he is at first unable to understand why the terms of the Mansfield Judgement are confined to England. If it is on economic grounds, he argues, why cannot the goods in the colonies "'be produced by freemen, as well as by slaves? If we hired negroes for labourers, instead of purchasing them for slaves, do you think they would not work as well as they do now? Does any negro, under the fear of the overseer, work harder than a Birmingham journeyman, or a Newcastle collier, who toil for themselves and their families?'" (3: 178). By the time the text closes, however, Mr. Edwards has learned precisely why freedom is a "'Glorious privilege'" that cannot be summarily "'extended to all [of England's] dominions'": he realizes, that is, that the presence of the British colonizer is absolutely *necessary* in order to regulate the worst excesses of native life (3: 179).

As in Aphra Behn's Oroonoko, the question of how to manage the evident intelligence and sensibility of the native/slave is one of the primary concerns in "The Grateful Negro", and it is in this context that Edgeworth presents two types of plantation owners to her reader. On the one hand, there is the benevolent Mr. Edwards, and, on the other, the negligent Mr. Jefferies, who "considered the negroes as an inferior species, incapable of gratitude, disposed to treachery, and to be roused from their natural indolence only by force: he treated his slaves, or rather suffered his overseer [Durant] to treat them,

with the greatest severity" (3: 171). Originally owned by Mr. Jefferies, Caesar and Clara, his betrothed, are seized along with other of the plantation owner's goods in order to help discharge his debts. Bought by Edwards, Caesar finds himself in the service of a man who "treated his slaves with all possible humanity and kindness", and the text stresses that this benevolence has an immediate and identifiable impact upon the slave (3: 172). Thus, when Edwards shows Caesar the cottage and provision grounds that will be his, calling him his "'good friend'" and stressing that he can henceforth work hard without the fear of either his earnings being taken from him or of his being sold, it notes that "tears gushed from his eyes. Tears which no torment could have extorted!" (3: 182). Trusted later by Edwards with a sharp knife in order to trim the branches of a tamarind tree that overhangs his cottage, Caesar falls to his knees on the planter's departure "and, in a transport of gratitude, swore that, with this knife, he would stab himself to the heart, sooner than betray his master!" (3: 197).

This avowal is of particular importance in a text that is evidently preoccupied with the dangers of native rebellion, and Edgeworth stresses the sincerity of Caesar's emotional response to Edwards by emphasizing that it transcends even the loyalty that he feels for Hector, his particular friend and fellow-slave, who was brought with him on the same ship from Africa. Hector is one of the main conspirators in the plot against the planters on the island, and the cruelties he has suffered as a slave have left him incapable of understanding Caesar's loyalty to the master whom he now calls his "'benefactor . . . [and] friend!'" (3: 186). The several conflicts that torment Caesar are carefully detailed in the tale,[34] with the text noting in one instance how his "mind was divided, between love for his friend [Hector], and gratitude to his master: the conflict was violent, and painful. Gratitude at last prevailed: he repeated his declaration, that he would rather die than continue in a conspiracy against his benefactor!" (3: 187). For his part, Alan Richardson emphasizes the comparison that can be made here between Caesar and Lame Jervas, contending that

"[c]olonialism, property, and the shift from horizontal to vertical allegiance, from solidarity with fellow laborers to identification with the master's interest" are obvious features of both of these tales.[35] While this is true, the greater significance of Edgeworth's treatment of this "shift from horizontal to vertical allegiance" in "The Grateful Negro" is that it demonstrates why native "identification with the master's interest" is positively essential in a colonial situation where the threat of rebellion is ever-present. More than this, and echoing the sentiments of either Barbauld and Aikin's "Master and Slave", or, Equiano's Interesting Narrative, Edgeworth's assertion is that benevolence always succeeds far better than despotism in securing such identification.

This emphasis in "The Grateful Negro" plainly accounts for Edgeworth's treatment of the miserable career of the negligent, and insensitive, Mr. Jefferies. By failing to properly fulfil his moral responsibilities to his slaves, this planter exposes the entire colony to danger. His indifference facilitates the cruelties of Durant, his overseer, whose actions are inevitably self-defeating.[36] Thus, Durant's ill treatment of the slaves "made him constantly suspicious: he dreaded that the slaves should combine against him" (3: 188). This fear compels him to treat the slaves ever more cruelly, and this leads to the eventual rebellion upon the Jefferies estate. The greater point that Edgeworth is making is underlined, firstly, by the fact that the intended rebellion does not confine itself to this one plantation alone, and, secondly, by the further recognition that only for Mr. Edwards the insurrection would have spread over the entire island:

> [Durant] was the principal object of [the slaves'] vengeance: he died in tortures, inflicted by the hands of those who had suffered most by his cruelties. Mr. Edwards, however, quelled the insurrection before rebellion spread to any other estate in the island. The influence of his character, and the effect of his eloquence upon the minds of the people, were astonishing: nothing but his interference could have prevented the total destruction of Mr. Jefferies, and his family; who, as it was computed, lost this night upwards of fifty thousand pounds. (3: 209-10)

In its turn, Mr. Edwards's intervention is in itself only possible as a result of his benevolent treatment of his slaves. The fact that this secures their loyalty is repeatedly noted in the

text,[37] but it manifests itself most significantly where Caesar decides to turn his back on freedom and instead warn his master of the impending rebellion:

> The principle of gratitude conquered every other sensation. . . . His heart beat high at the idea of recovering his liberty; but he was not to be seduced from his duty, not even by this delightful hope: nor was he to be intimidated by the dreadful certainty that his former friends and countrymen, considering him as a deserter from their course, would become his bitterest enemies. (3: 197)

Unable to recover his losses, or to conquer his fear of future insurrection, Jefferies returns with his family to Britain, and continues to "[rail] at the treachery of the whole race of slaves" (3: 210). In so doing, the planter demonstrates his final inability to learn from his experiences on the island, for he fails to appreciate that it was his negligence and Durant's ill treatment that provoked the rebellion. This emphasis obviously echoes my earlier observations regarding the implications that Barbauld's hymn has for the colonizing process, but it also indicates the extent to which "The Grateful Negro" itself functions as a plantocratic romance, which is intended to demonstrate for the reader how to secure the status quo in the colonies. Early in her story, Edgeworth treats at length the benevolence of Mr. Edwards, noting how he

> treated his slaves with all possible humanity and kindness. He wished that there was no such thing as slavery in the world; but he was convinced, by the arguments of those who have the best means of obtaining information, that the sudden emancipation of the negroes would rather increase than diminish their miseries. His benevolence therefore confined itself within the bounds of reason. He adopted those plans, for the melioration of the state of the slaves, which appeared to him the most likely to succeed without producing any violent agitation, or revolution. (3: 172-73).

A footnote attached to this important passage states that "these ideas are adopted – not stolen" from a text by entitled The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies (1793) by Bryan Edwards (3: 173). Critics who comment upon the part played by Edwards's work in Edgeworth's tale in general confine themselves to remarking upon the liberal use that she makes in one of her footnotes to his consideration of "OBEAH PRACTICE"[38] in Jamaica (3: 189-192). I will be elaborating

upon this myself below, but what I want to underline here is that Edgeworth does more than "adopt" Edwards's ideas into her text: she draws upon them to the extent that they become the very bones upon which she constructs her plantocratic romance.[39] For example, the "The Grateful Negro" argues that it is positively immoral for a slave to be seized in order to help discharge the debts of his or her master. A slave such as this, the text notes, often finds himself sold on to strangers, sometimes ending up as a labourer in the mines of Mexico, "and all this without any crime or imprudence on his part, real or pretended. He is punished because his master is unfortunate!" (3: 174). This preoccupation is clearly modelled upon that of Edwards. His text observes that this practice in the West Indies "unhappily . . . occurs every day";[40] the slave "is punished because his master is unfortunate" (2: 141).

The greater import of Edgeworth's reliance upon The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies, however, lies in the fact that Edwards's text is itself a carefully constructed romance, or fiction, which aims to prove that the "independent spirit" of the West Indian planters is entirely representative of the greater superiority of the British race (2: 8). As such, Edwards's strategy echoes that of Richard Lovell Edgeworth in his prefaces to his daughter's works. He insists, in other words, that the text that follows is the result of "personal knowledge and actual experience" and that it is faithfully drawn from real life (1: xiv). Edwards's particular desire in writing his text, he avers, is to counteract "the malignant and unmerited aspersions which are daily and hourly thrown upon the planters, for supposed improper and inhuman treatment of their African labourers" (1: xvii). The unwarranted result of such "false" accusations is that the planters' "characters" and "honour" have been "most cruelly traduced" (2: xvii-xvii). While this is in itself bad enough, Edwards's further point is that this circumstance has had profoundly detrimental national and imperial implications. Britons have allowed themselves to forget that the West Indies "are become the principal

source of the national opulence and maritime power" and, as such, that "these little dependencies" are crucially implicated in the stability and prosperity of British life (1: 450).[41] For the good of the nation, Edwards implies, readers of his text must correct their mistaken impressions about slavery: specifically, they must recognize that the irrefutable integrity of the British colonists *entitles* them to keep slaves.

In order to support his argument, Edwards draws upon many of the prevailing cultural romances with which the British nation tried to justify and excuse its career as an owner and trader of slaves. For instance, he contends that most Africans were already enslaved in Africa, an argument typically advanced by proponents of slavery.[42] He further insists, "a good mind may honestly derive some degree of consolation in considering that all such of the wretched victims as were slaves in Africa, are, by being sold to the Whites, removed to a situation infinitely more desirable, even in its worst state, than that of the best and most favoured slaves in their own country" (2: 99). This contention, namely, that being enslaved to whites is far superior to anything that the native might have experienced in his or her own land, represents a crucial part of the (pro-slavery) colonial discourse upon which Edwards finally pins his text. As I shall demonstrate in detail below, it also informs Edgeworth's treatment of slavery. Edwards's avowal, however, is that this recognition has even been made by "The Reverend Society established in Great Britain for propogating the Gospel in foreign parts" (2: 34). This "venerable society", he notes, holds

> a plantation in Barbadoes under a devise of Colonel Codrington;[43] and they have found themselves not only under the disagreeable necessity of supporting the system of slavery which was bequeathed to them with the land; but are induced also, from the purest and best of motives, to purchase occasionally a certain number of Negroes, in order to divide the work, and keep up the stock. They well know that moderate labour, unaccompanied with that wretched anxiety to which the poor of England are subject, in making provision for the day that is passing over them, is a state of comparative felicity: and they know also, that men in savage life have no incentive to emulation: persuasion is lost on such men, and compulsion, to a certain degree, is humanity and charity. (2: 34-35)

This significant passage in the text further demonstrates Edwards's anxiety to

distance the West Indian plantocracy from the worst charges of the abolitionists. He contends that the society's holdings in Barbadoes are effectively 'accidental'; they were *bequeathed* the Codrington estates. This, he argues, has been the unfortunate lot of many of the planters: "Much the greatest part of the present inhabitants of the British West Indies came into possession of their plantations by inheritance or accident" (2: 34).[44] Edwards stresses that thus many planters, "unacquainted with local circumstances, and misled by the popular outcry, have humanely given orders to emancipate all their slaves, at whatever expence; but are convinced that their benevolent purposes cannot be carried into effect consistently even with the happiness of the Negroes themselves" (2: 34). He professes that he, too, was once in favour of the complete suppression of the "reprobated commerce" of the slave trade, but that a "fuller enquiry and better information" has lead him to "fear that a direct and sudden abolition by one nation alone, will not serve the purposes of humanity in Africa" (2: 105). If Britain abolishes its part in the trade, an "excess of 38,000 of these miserable people (the present annual export in British shipping) [will be] thrown upon the market" (2: 101). The inevitable result of this, Edwards emphasises, is that either the Dutch or the French "will encrease their trade in proportion to the encreased supply, or, having the choice and refusal of 38,000 more than they have at present, will become more difficult to please; confining their purchases to such only as are called prime slaves" (2: 101-02). For humanitarian reasons, then, Britain must not abolish slavery; its part in the trade guarantees old and sick slaves a better life.

All of the complex ideological formations in The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies contribute to one greater argument in Edwards's text: namely, that however abhorrent slavery may be in theory, in practice it has always existed. Amelioration, and not abolition, thus represents the best way for Britain to regulate her involvement in the keeping and trading of slaves:

> Perhaps, like pain, poverty, sickness, and sorrow, and all the various other calamities of our condition, [slavery] may have been originally interwoven into the constitution of the world, for purposes inscrutable to man. Of this I am certain, that an immediate emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies, would involve both master and slave in one common destruction. Thus much however is allowed; the miseries we cannot wholly remove, we may in some cases mitigate: We may alleviate, though we cannot cure. (2: 138)

It is upon this plantocratic romance that Edgeworth ultimately constructs "The Grateful Negro", and *her* Mr. Edwards therefore adopts the ameliorative schemes recommended by his namesake in real life. These include paying the slaves wages for their extra labour, securing to them the cottages in which they live and the provision grounds with which they supply their table, and guaranteeing that property they might amass will never be taken from them (3: 173-75).[45] What is obvious in first Edwards's and then in Edgeworth's text, however, is that all of these schemes are rooted in something much more than philanthropic ambition: each one is also manifestly intended to contribute to both the future profit *and* the security of Britain's colonial presence in the West Indies. For this reason, then, Edwards's text observes that the practices it describes are "calculated to awaken a spirit of emulation and industry, which the dread of punishment can never produce" (2: 139). "The Grateful Negro" echoes these sentiments, insisting "[t]hose who are animated by hope can perform what would seem impossibilities, to those who are under the depressing influence of fear" (3: 173). Similarly, Edwards argues that the system whereby a slave's cottage and provision ground is secured to him is "universally allowed to be judicious and beneficial; producing a happy coalition of interests between the master and the slave" (2: 123). In recognition of this, the slaves of Edgeworth's Mr. Edwards have "their property . . . secured to them by the prudence as well as by the generosity of their master" (3: 175).

Edgeworth's insistence upon this need for a prudent benevolence on the part of the planter/colonizer is clearly drawn not only from her reading of Edwards's text, but also from the terms of the wider colonial discourse that surrounded slavery from the late

seventeenth century onwards. It also, however, illustrates the efficacy of Terry Eagleton's contention that

> [f]or any state, the greatest test of its hegemonic powers is posed by its colonial subjects. For though hegemony is not just a cultural affair, there is no doubt that culture is vital to its workings; and winning the consent of men and women to be governed is a more precarious business when there is an embarrassing cultural rift between rulers and ruled.[46]

Edwards wins this consent because, firstly, he recognizes his slaves' sensibility, and, secondly, puts into practice schemes explicitly designed to ameliorate the conditions in which they live. In reality, of course, the schemes that Bryan Edwards suggests and Edgeworth adopts expertly illustrate what Albert Memmi identifies as the paternalistic, or, "charitable racism" with which the colonizer typically treats the colonized (142). This type of racism, Memmi argues, is impelled by the colonizer's desire to ensure the continued profitability of the colonial relationship and, as such, it is entirely dependent upon the colonized's on-going co-operation with the colonizing project. In looking after the colonized, in granting him wages, the colonizer, Memmi observes for example, always insists that "these are gifts and never duties. If he recognized duties, he would have to admit that the colonized have rights" (142). It is precisely this rationale that underpins Edgeworth's treatment of slavery in her work, and this in the first place demonstrates the extent to which her texts are informed by the arguments of those who sought to defend slavery on economic grounds. It also illustrates the logic that informs her evident anxiety to re-shape the sensibility of the native, so that, rather than being a moral right, freedom becomes a *gift* that the colonizer can bestow or withhold. As I have already intimated, this is exactly what Mr. Edwards discovers in "The Grateful Negro". Native sensibility, he comes to realize, must never be left entirely to its own devices; it must continue to be carefully regulated by Britain's moral and cultural pre-eminence.

It is in this context that Edgeworth systematically reshapes what is in fact a fight for freedom in her text until it represents nothing so much as the manifestation of an infernal

desire upon Britain's West Indian estates. As she would have it, the slaves' rebellion effectively constitutes a demonic attack upon the sanctity of Britain and the British way of life. Edgeworth's strategy here again owes much to Bryan Edwards, particularly to his analysis of the part played by "OBEAH PRACTICE" in the 1760 slave rebellion in Jamaica (2: 88). This uprising, he avers, was primarily due to "the influence of the professors of the *Obeah Art*" (2: 91). These "induce[d] a great many of the Negroe slaves in Jamaica to engage in the rebellion" and, like all negroes who find themselves "invested with command, [they gave] full play to their revengeful passions; and exercise[d] all the wantoness of cruelty without restraint or remorse" (2: 91, 74). By figuring obeah in this fashion, Edwards succeeds in demonising a vital part of native culture, and he implies that the 1760 rebellion had less to do with the colonists' behaviour than with the deluded actions of a superstitious race.

If this emphasis peculiarly facilitates Edwards's ambition to conclusively demonstrate that the benevolence of the British planter will necessarily protect him from the effects of such demonic power, it is unable to totally disguise the fact that the institution of slavery will always provide reason enough for insurrection. Edwards's first reference to the 1760 rebellion is thus preceded by his observations regarding the Koromantyn or Gold Coast slaves: "there cannot be a doubt that many of the captives taken in battle, and sold in the European settlements, were of free condition in their native country, and perhaps the owners of slaves themselves" (2: 59). In light of this, Edwards acknowledges,

> It is not wonderful that such men should endeavour, even by means the most desperate, to regain the freedom of which they have been deprived; nor do I conceive that any further circumstances are necessary to prompt them into action, than that of being sold into captivity in a distant country. I mean only to state facts as I find them. Such I well know was the origin of the Negro rebellion which happened in Jamaica in 1760. (2: 59)

This, of course, blatantly contradicts his contention that Africans are somehow unaffected

by slavery:

> Although there is something extremely shocking to a humane and cultivated mind, in the idea of beholding a numerous body of our unfortunate fellow creatures, in captivity and exile, exposed naked to public view, and sold like a herd of cattle, yet I never could perceive . . . that the Negroes themselves were oppressed with many of those painful sensations which a person unaccustomed to the scene would naturally attribute to such apparent wretchedness. The circumstance of being exposed naked, is perhaps of little account to those who were never sensible of the necessity or propriety of being clothed. (2: 116)

Edwards brings this part of his argument to a distinctly colonial conclusion by insisting that prospective slaves are typically eager to be sold after their long voyage from Africa. When buyers are few, he observes, they present themselves "with cheerfulness and alacrity for selection, and [appear] mortified and disappointed when refused" (2: 118).

The recognition that even the most ignoble savage yearns for freedom, however, undermines the prevailing implication of his text, which is that amelioration is an effective *guarantee* against revolution. The 1760 rebellion, he notes, "arose at the instigation of a Koromantyn Negro of the name of Tacky . . . [and on the plantations involved] . . . I do not believe that an individual amongst [the slaves] had received the least shadow of ill treatment from the time of their arrival there" (2: 59-60). Edwards observes that he can personally attest to this in the case of the estate belonging to one of his relatives, Zachary Bayly:[47]

> I can pronounce of my own knowledge that [these slaves] were under the government of an overseer of singular tenderness and humanity. His name was Abraham Fletcher, and let it be remembered, in justice even to the rebels, and as a lesson to other overseers, that his life was spared from respect to his virtues. The insurgents had heard of his character from the other Negroes, and suffered him to pass through them unmolested. (2: 60)[48]

Where Edwards is unable to argue, as in the case of Abraham Fletcher, that benevolence *inevitably* affords the planter some protection from the worst excesses of the native slaves, he carefully excludes from his text the reality that the actions he is describing in fact represent the struggle of an oppressed people for freedom. Instead, he emphasizes the horrors visited upon the white population by the rebels, noting that at one overseer's house

colonists found "eight or ten White people . . . in bed, every one of whom [the rebels] butchered in the most savage manner, and literally drank their blood mixed with rum. . . . In one morning they murdered between thirty and forty Whites, not sparing even the infants at the breast, before their progress was stopped" (2: 60-61). Significantly, these graphic descriptions precede Edwards's account of the barbaric punishments meted out to the leaders of the rebellion, and are obviously partly intended to justify the ferocity of the colonists' reprisals. One rebel, he notes, was chained to an iron stake on the ground and burned alive: "He uttered not a groan, and saw his legs reduced to ashes with the utmost firmness and composure; after which one of his arms by some means getting loose, he snatched a brand from the fire that was consuming him, and flung it in the face of the executioner" (2: 61).[49] By stressing here that the native slave does not feel pain, or fear death, in the same way as his white master, Edwards encodes a two-fold inference in his text. Firstly, he intimates that the Africans are savages whose barbarity is beyond anything that could be imagined by his readers.[50] This barbarity, by implication, excuses any methods adopted by the whites in order to secure the stability of colonial life. Secondly, Edwards also implies that the worst treatment of the white planters is as nothing compared to what the Africans experience in their own countries. To support this, he appends a footnote to the text, which details how one of his slaves expressed a preference for Jamaica rather than her native land: "[asked by Edwards] which country she liked best, Jamaica or Guiney? She replied, that Jamaica was the better country, '*for that people were not killed there as in Guiney at the funeral of their masters*'" (2: 63).

The overwhelming significance of Edwards's description of both the atrocities committed by the rebels and, in particular, of the scarcely credible fortitude with which their leaders met their deaths, is that they combine to effectively undermine the humanity of the slaves and the moral integrity of their rebellion. When this is added to his interpretation of the infernal part that "*Obeah art*" played in inspiring the insurrection,

Edwards effectively succeeds in demonising both Africans and that part of their culture that enables them to mount some resistance to the colonizing British race.[51] Not surprisingly, Edgeworth replicates Edwards's treatment of obeah in "The Grateful Negro", rehearsing his arguments that the practice of this art represents a fundamental threat to not only the British colonists' continued ability to extract a profit from their plantations, but also to Britain's continued presence in the West Indies. First of all, she appends a long footnote drawn from Edwards's history to her text, and this includes the account of a planter in Jamaica who was initially unable to discover why a large number of his slaves was falling into a mysterious illness and dying. One slave finally confides to his master that it was all due to the malevolent influence of an obeah woman, whose house the planter subsequently pulls asunder. The text notes, "'The total of his losses, in the course of about fifteen years preceding the discovery, and imputable solely to the *Obeah practice*, he estimates, at least, at one hundred negroes'" (3: 192). Having indicated that obeah is in fact an efficacious practice that poses an insidious danger to the entire colonial project, Edgeworth, like Edwards, chooses to respond by demonising this aspect of the enslaved natives' culture. She thus disguises the moral connotations of the Africans' insurrection, and implies that it is the colonist's (Christian) duty to banish this malicious art from the face of the earth.

In this context, Edgeworth's tale stresses that Esther, "the chief instigator of [the] rebellion", was considered a "sorceress" by the African slaves, and, further, that she "had obtained by her skill in poisonous herbs, and her knowledge of venomous reptiles, a high reputation among her countrymen (3: 190-92). Esther is, in fact, repeatedly 'named' as a sorceress throughout the "The Grateful Negro" and is portrayed as the visible manifestation of the infernal part of native life. When Caesar finds Clara an apparent corpse on the ground of Esther's habitation, the text therefore notes, "[t]he sorceress had thrown her into a trance, by a preparation of deadly nightshade. The hag burst into an

infernal laugh, when she beheld the despair that was painted in Caesar's countenance" (3: 204). Similarly, when Caesar pretends to yield to the rebels' cause, it observes, "The sorceress clapped her hands, with infernal joy in her countenance" (3: 206). The climax of this negative figuring of the native and, consequently, of the natives' rebellion occurs where Edgeworth describes Mr. Edwards's arrival at the rebel's hut: "[The planter] looked through a hole in the wall; and, by the blue flame of a cauldron, over which the sorceress was stretching her shrivelled hands, he saw Hector and five stout negroes standing, intent upon her incantations. These negroes held their knives in their hands, ready to dip them into [a] bowl of poison" (3: 208).[52] It is, of course, entirely significant that Mr. Edwards has to peer "through a hole in the wall" in order to view the insurrectionists: the final implication of the text is that his exemplary gaze confers order upon all that he sees.

This (re)figuring of the native other in "The Grateful Negro" ultimately provides Edgeworth with the means through which she is able to argue for the continued (ameliorative) presence of the British in the West Indies. Her argument, which manifests itself in all of her work, is that the native's freedom is a privilege best managed by a benevolent colonizer. The several steps that contribute to this romance are perhaps best illustrated in "The Two Guardians" (1817), where Edgeworth transforms the British prerogative to grant or withhold the native's freedom into a type of magic that is far greater than obeah power. Published ten years after the abolition of Britain's slave trade and seventeen years before the slaves on British colonial plantations were finally freed, the play relates the story of St. Albans, a young, rich, West-Indian planter who comes to London with his mother in order to settle the final details concerning his guardianship until he comes of age. The two possible candidates for the position of acting guardian are Mr. Onslow, a quiet country gentleman, and Lord Courtington, who lives with his family at the very heart of fashionable society. One of the first actions that St. Albans performs shortly after arriving in England, however, is to free his native slave, with Edgeworth once more

encoding an oblique reference to the Mansfield Judgement within her text. St. Albans thus tells Quaco there are "[n]o slaves in England. From the moment that you touched English ground, Quaco, you ceased to be a slave" (160). When Quaco is later left alone, he celebrates his newfound freedom with a song that praises British superiority, transforming it into a type of magic that directly challenges obeah power. Again, the song amplifies Edgeworth's wider point: namely, that nobly inspired Britons inevitably project their imaginations upon reality, thereby transforming it as a result of their innate virtue and benevolence:

> 'Freedom! freedom! happy sound,
> Magic land this British ground;
> Touch it slave, and slave be free,
> 'Tis the Land of Liberty.
>
> Indian *Obee's* wicked art,
> Sicken slow poor negro's heart,
> English *Obee* makes the slave
> Twice be young, and twice be brave.
>
> Quick the magic, strong the pow'r –
> See man changing in an hour!
> For the day that makes him free,
> Double worth that man shall be.
>
> Massa, grateful Quaco do
> Twice the work of slave for you;
> Fight for Massa twice as long;
> Love for Massa twice as strong.' (162-63)

As well as setting Quaco free, St. Albans also pays him the value of his "former labor", but he at the same time urges his erstwhile slave not to let the money spoil him (161). Don't, he insists, "spend [it] in drinking. . . . Shew me, Quaco, that you are a reasonable being, and fit to be free" (162). Once more, Edgeworth's insistence is that the native does not enjoy an unconditional right to freedom and, moreover, that the freeing of slaves need not necessarily pose a threat to the economic stability of Britain's empire. The freed native will do twice the work of a slave, she avers, and this freedom will be directly linked to the native's continued submission to the moral superiority of his or her (British)

master and the British way of life. Again, this represents another part of the colonial discourse surrounding slavery at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. For example, having literally bought his freedom from Robert King, his master in the West Indies, Olaudah Equiano recalls that his immediate desire was to make his way to London. Pressed by King to remain in his service, however, Equiano notes that "gratitude bowed [him] down", so that he felt compelled to make several more voyages on behalf of the trader (138). In "The Two Guardians", Quaco's acceptance of his liberty is revealed to be explicitly conditional, as he accepts his freedom only once he is assured that he can remain in the service of St. Albans. This serves a crucial (colonial) function in Edgeworth's narrative: specifically, it allows her to imply that even a child-like native is capable of recognizing the incontrovertible superiority of his British master and of the British way of life:[53]

> Quaco: (*Clapping his hands and capering.*) Free! Free! Quaco? – But no, Massa – (*Changing his tone, and kneeling to his master*) – me will be Massa's slave alway.
>
> St. Alb.: My servant, henceforward – not my slave. Now if you stay with me, it is from choice. – You may go when, and where you please – you may chuse another master.
>
> Quaco: Quaco never have no other massa. – Good massa – love him - kind to Quaco, from time leetle piccinini boy. – Oh, let Quaco stay wid massa.[54]
>
> St. Alb.: Stay, and welcome, my faithful fellow, - but remember you are at liberty. (160-61)

In granting the native's sensibility, and his freedom, in "The Two Guardians", Edgeworth therefore skilfully perpetuates that process through which he or she is necessarily figured as childlike and dependent. Thus, while Quaco demonstrates both a singular sensibility and a capacity for rational thought,[55] he effectively remains in the same position at the end of the play as he was at the beginning: he still serves a West Indian planter. As Anne K. Mellor has it:

> By constantly contrasting Quaco's loyalty, compassion, and rectitude to the cruel duplicities of the young lords and ladies 'of fashion', Edgeworth insists on the moral superiority of the 'childlike' black to the self-indulgent cruelties of the

> spoiled European youths . . . At the same time, she defines Quaco as *only* a child, one who eagerly seeks to sustain his dependence upon his superior white master.[56]

This emphasis upon the slave's refusal to leave the service of his or her (English) master also manifests itself in one of Edgeworth's Moral Tales. In "The Good Aunt",[57] the exemplary Mrs. Howard sells her property in the West Indies, as she "did not particularly wish to be the proprietor of slaves" (1: 236). She also gives orders that the oldest of the negroes on her plantation should be freed and some provision provided for them. When Augustus Holloway causes a coach to be over-turned,[58] a "'mulatto woman'" is injured, and she eventually proves to be Cuba, one of Mrs. Howard's former slaves (1: 269). Not having received the land provided for by Mrs. Howard's instructions, she has come to London in search of her former mistress. At the tale's close, Cuba decides not to return to the West Indies, and elects to remain, instead, in Mrs. Howard's employ. Tracing the connection that can be made here between "The Grateful Negro" and Barbauld and Aikin's "Master and Slave", Moira Ferguson suggests, "Edgeworth's young readers learn [from Cuba] that slaves work willingly when freed in London as well as in the Caribbean" (234). The greater significance of Cuba's actions, however, is that once again Edgeworth intimates that the native other will inevitably appreciate the superiority of his or her British master, and, as a result, desire to remain in that master's employ for the rest of his or her life.

This argument within these texts demonstrates how closely Edgeworth draws upon the ideological formations, or romances, with which merchants, traders, and planters sought to defend Britain's relationship to slavery. Although nearly thirty years separate the two works, for example, the central contention of "The Two Guardians" clearly echoes that of Thomas Bellamy's pro-West Indian planters play, The Benevolent Planters, which was first performed in 1789. In Bellamy's work, Anne K. Mellor points out, Oran, a slave, is reunited with his beloved Selima through the actions of his generous owner, Godwin, and

master and the British way of life. Again, this represents another part of the colonial discourse surrounding slavery at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. For example, having literally bought his freedom from Robert King, his master in the West Indies, Olaudah Equiano recalls that his immediate desire was to make his way to London. Pressed by King to remain in his service, however, Equiano notes that "gratitude bowed [him] down", so that he felt compelled to make several more voyages on behalf of the trader (138). In "The Two Guardians", Quaco's acceptance of his liberty is revealed to be explicitly conditional, as he accepts his freedom only once he is assured that he can remain in the service of St. Albans. This serves a crucial (colonial) function in Edgeworth's narrative: specifically, it allows her to imply that even a child-like native is capable of recognizing the incontrovertible superiority of his British master and of the British way of life:[53]

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he declares "'under subjection like yours, SLAVERY IS BUT A NAME'" (313). This romance, which links the (freed) native's sensibility to his/her inevitable desire to remain in the service of the (British) master, obviously infuses "The Two Guardians", but Godwin's reuniting of Oran and Selima is also mirrored by Edgeworth in "The Grateful Negro", where Caesar actually begs Mr. Edwards to purchase both himself and his beloved Clara: "'Will you be my master? Will you be her master? Buy both of us. You shall not repent of it. Caesar will serve you faithfully'" (3: 177). Caesar's entreaties imply that to serve Edwards is to be a slave in name only, and this constitutes the reason why he finally refuses to participate in the slaves' rebellion.

In weaving a complex plantocratic romance around Britain's relationship to slavery in the West Indies, Edgeworth's manifest ambition is to diffuse and contain the deep-rooted fears of the British colonizer. The well-treated native, she asserts, will positively *refuse* to rebel against his British master, as he will recognize that he is in fact fortunate to serve a representative of such an honourable nation and way of life. This emphasis, as critics observe, had a very particular significance for a British nation still reeling from the implications of the 1791 slave rebellion in the French colonies on San Domingo. As Moira Ferguson has it, "San Domingo itself – the word, the geographical territory, its alleged inhabitability, its progress – became synonymous with Anglo-Africanist barbarity that terrified most Britons, regardless of abolitionist commitment" (230). Suvendrini Perera for her part agrees, arguing that it is to "[t]he terrifying possibility of a Haiti-style rebellion in the English slave colonies" that "The Grateful Negro" finally "bears witness" (20).

While all of this is obviously important, I would argue that Edgeworth's work is finally haunted by the prospect of a far closer rebellion: specifically, one by *Ireland's* discontented native race. After all, Edgeworth and her family directly experienced such an insurrection in 1798, so it is hardly surprising that "the theme of colonist insecurity"[59] informs her Irish fiction *and* her letters.[60] Although it is true that the Edgeworths emerged

effectively unscathed from the United Irishmen's rebellion, they were forced to flee to Longford for protection, and did experience days of real anxiety and danger. Only a fortunate delay prevented them from being blown up with an ammunition cart,[61] for example, and, at one point, an angry mob threatened Richard Lovell Edgeworth's life.[62] Similarly, the psychological impact of what the Edgeworths experienced in 1798 cannot be underestimated, and their shock is best illustrated, perhaps, by Edgeworth's expression of her inability to believe in what had transpired: "It all seems like a dream", she wrote to her cousin, Sophy, shortly after returning to Edgeworthstown, "a mixture of the absurd, the ridiculous and the horrid".[63]

While Edgeworth is keen to stress in her father's Memoirs that his response to 1798 was entirely pragmatic,[64] my next chapter will demonstrate that hers was extraordinarily complex. In the first instance, it manifested itself in her (redoubled) efforts to '(re)write' Ireland:[65] that is, to produce a romance of both nation and national identity that would diffuse and contain the socio-political difficulties of Irish life. Secondly, it was hugely informed by her greater ambition to celebrate Richard Lovell Edgeworth's achievements in her work: specifically, to convince her readers that his theories would *necessarily* offer the means through which to secure national and imperial reform. In advancing this argument, however, my intention is not to suggest that Edgeworth merely functioned as her father's Sancho Panza.[66] As my next chapter will show, yes, she faithfully rehearsed Richard Lovell Edgeworth's theories in her work, but, in so doing, she simultaneously encoded her perception that these would ultimately prove entirely quixotic.

Chapter 5:

Edgeworth's Irish Romances.

The advantage of the residence of proprietors upon their estates in Ireland can be fully understood only from the example or evidence of those, who have had actual experience on the subject.[1]

In my previous chapters, I have examined in detail the romances, or colonizing fictions, with which Edgeworth infuses her work in order to facilitate British national and imperial expansion. These romances, I have suggested, seek to disguise the darker side of Britain's colonial desire by emphasizing that such expansion is necessarily predicated upon the greater moral and cultural superiority of the British nation. The native other, Edgeworth's texts imply, *inevitably* benefits from the presence of the *British* colonizer; the texts emphasise that the worst excesses of the British colonial presence are as nothing compared to the barbarities of the native cultures that it replaces. The truth of this, as Edgeworth would have it, manifests itself firstly in the native's instinctive recognition of the British colonizer's innate superiority, and, secondly, in the freed native's reluctance to leave the service of his or her British master. By figuring the colonial relationship in this way in her work, Edgeworth facilitates her greater contention that liberty is actually a privilege and not a right, and that, as such, it remains forever in the gift of the morally superior colonizer. The native who refuses to accept this version of the colonizing process, and who attempts to secure his or her emancipation, thus commits an incontrovertibly immoral act; one constituted by Edgeworth in her texts as nothing less than the manifestation of a demonic desire.

As numerous critics point out, Edgeworth's treatment of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is necessarily influenced by her analysis of the social and

that romance is less concerned with representing reality than with (re)creating it, but it also demonstrates why greater attention still needs to be paid to the significance of the *mode* that Edgeworth chooses in order to represent her family in her writing. In her reading of The Absentee, for example, Mary Jean Corbett identifies what she calls the "familial plot" in this tale, suggesting how this narrative device is central to Edgeworth's study of the evils of absentee landlordism in Ireland.[5] Corbett's contention is that "in order to achieve narratively and ideologically the 'harmonious alignment' between unequal partners with which the novel concludes, Edgeworth must also reform the families from which [the] would-be rulers of Ireland spring: she must establish modes of legitimate and normative behaviour for women and men" (877). Drawing upon Edmund Burke's analysis in his Reflections on the Revolution in France of the need to reform and thence maintain "proper familial relations",[6] Edgeworth, Corbett concludes,

> rewrites politics precisely as a familial plot: The Absentee represents the struggle for imperial hegemony within the discursive terms of family and romance. . . . In Edgeworth's view, the rehabilitation of Ireland depends on the presence of its rehabilitated patriarch and his earnest son, who would jointly recognize that their 'duty and interest' coincide with the proper supervision and regulation of their tenants; their own subsistence and their tenants' – as well as their mutual security – rest on the father being restored to his proper place. (877, 883, 893).

"[R]omance" for Corbett here simply denotes rituals of courtship and wooing,[7] and so her reading of the familial plot in Edgeworth's Irish fiction is reductive for two reasons. Failing in the first instance to acknowledge that Edgeworth does not merely rewrite politics as *a* family plot, but, rather, as *her* family plot, it also fails to consider the fact that she draws heavily upon romance conventions in order to 'saturate' her texts with a deliberately *imprecise* version of her family's past.[8] Fashioned from both Edgeworth family history and the history of Edgeworthstown and its environs,[9] this version is crucial to Edgeworth's purpose, for it allows her to imply that, like Castle Rackrent, *each* of her Irish texts is finally a "plain round tale" that is "taken from the life".[10] Concentrating in particular upon Richard Lovell Edgeworth's 1782 return Ireland, Edgeworth uses romance in order to

(re)present this essentially familial event to her readers as an archetypal quest with apocalyptic implications for national and imperial reform. By coming "home", she avers, her father (re)discovered not only the truth of his (Protestant Ascendancy) identity, but also the ontological nature of, and the solution to, the socio-political difficulties threatening to destabilize national stability in Ireland and the future of Anglo-Irish affairs.[11] In order to diffuse and contain these difficulties, Edgeworth insists that her readers *must* replicate Richard Lovell Edgeworth's example, and she intimates that this is particularly important for Ireland's Protestant Ascendancy class. By absenting themselves from Ireland, she intimates, these have effectively 'forgotten' their original identity, so, in order to recover it, they must emulate Richard Lovell Edgeworth and return to their estates.

As Northrop Frye points out, though, "all memory is selective",[12] and so what the Irish Tales ultimately reveal is that what Edgeworth represents as an act of ontological remembrance on her father's part was actually an act of self-creation, one which enabled Richard Lovell Edgeworth to distance himself from both his own and his ancestors' failings and to simultaneously reconstitute his relations with the native Irish race.[13] Rather than recovering an 'original' identity, we shall see that Glenthorn, Colambre, and Ormond all strike out on a decisively new path from that of their ancestors and, as Castle Rackrent demonstrates, Edgeworth's perception is that this is entirely necessary in order to diffuse the socio-political difficulties of Irish life.

Treating of these difficulties in a 1797 pamphlet entitled A Letter to the Right Hon. the Earl of Charlemont, on the Tellograph and on the Defence of Ireland,[14] Edgeworth thus rehearses the contention that is central to all her Irish fiction,[15] and she implies that these are in the first place symptomatic of what we might term the ontological blindness of the colonizing (English) race. Noting that "the West Indies . . . are obviously in the eyes of the [British ministry], the most valuable appendages of the British empire", her suggestion is that the English are only able to sustain this belief by refusing to gaze directly upon their

neighbour, by persisting in viewing Ireland, instead, only "accidentally . . . by reflection" (37, 39). Condemning those, like Gibbon, who dismiss Ireland as "'a remote and petty Province'" in Britain's empire, she insists, "Old prejudices in nations as well as in individuals, remain, in the mind and influence the conduct long after the circumstances, in which they originated, are changed. – A century ago, Ireland was a burthen to England, now she is her most useful ally" (39-40). Here, and throughout her writing, Edgeworth casts the difficulties in the Anglo-Irish relationship in terms of identity; she emphasises that time and circumstances have substantially altered the nature of Ireland's relationship to England, but that England and the English have proved incapable, or unwilling, to admit of this change.

As a mode, of course, romance is peculiarly concerned with identity; indeed, I noted in my introduction that Frye goes so far as to suggest that identity effectively constitutes 'reality' for this narrative form. The typical romance comes into being precisely because of the hero's or heroine's sense of ontological confusion, he argues, and it ceases to be when the identity of the hero or heroine has been (re)established within the text. To this end, Frye contends, "Most romances end happily with a return to the state of identity, and begin with a departure from it"; the mode is inevitably concerned with fluidity or dislocation, and traces what he terms "a cyclical movement" between two ontological states.[16] Ennui, The Absentee, and Ormond lend themselves most obviously to Frye's model, but it is my contention that *each* of Edgeworth's Irish texts finally has its origins in her perception of the need to (re)establish identity in Ireland; each, that is, is primarily impelled by her conviction that the identity of the nation has itself been confounded. In working out this argument in her writing, Edgeworth further contends that the fact that Ireland's *national* identity has been confused has led, in its turn, to the confounding of the identities of the *individuals* and *classes* that make up the nation, and it is this confusion, she avers, that has engendered the social and political difficulties that

threaten to overwhelm Anglo-Irish affairs. In considering these difficulties in her texts, Edgeworth traces the origin of this confusion back to that process through which England initially facilitated and justified the colonisation of its near neighbour. Her intimation, as we shall see, is that, in order to satisfy its colonial desire, England *deliberately* transformed Ireland and the native Irish into a 'changeling' nation and race. One of Edgeworth's several ambitions in each of her Irish texts, therefore, is to clarify for the reader, in particular, the English and Protestant Ascendancy reader, the precise nature of Ireland's national identity; another is to identify the duties and obligations of the several classes that constitute the nation. This clarification is positively essential, for, in Edgeworth's paradigm of Anglo-Irish relations, it is only when each class in Ireland reassumes and properly discharges its responsibilities that social and political stability can be guaranteed. Once this moment is reached, Edgeworth's texts assume that the (colonized) native Irish will inevitably realize that they are better off under their Protestant Ascendancy superiors, while the members of this latter (colonizing) class will simultaneously discover that the properly managed 'otherness' of the native Irish tenant represents no threat to national or imperial affairs.

These complex arguments clearly inform and impel all of Edgeworth's Irish work, but they are rendered peculiarly explicit in the Essay on Irish Bulls, the 1802 text that, according to Edgeworth, represents the most perfect example of her literary partnership with her father.[17] In this text, it rapidly becomes apparent that the Edgeworths' patent ambition is to delineate and, thus, to obviate the several prejudices that exist between Ireland and England, thereby facilitating an ideological reformation in Anglo-Irish relations. Addressing themselves in the first instance to their readers in England, Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth begin by identifying language as a primary site for the inculcation of prejudice, emphasising that the ridicule heaped upon the Irish for their efforts to speak or write English is singularly ill founded. English is to the Irish "a

foreign language", they point out, "it is scarcely within the limits of probability, that they should avoid making blunders both in speaking and writing".[18] Much more significantly, they also propound the theory that the very characteristics for which the Irish are ridiculed are not actually peculiar to the inhabitants of Ireland; they suggest that they may, indeed, be the manifestations of the original, *displaced* identity of the English race. In truth, their recognition, which clearly echoes that of Jonathan Swift and others before them, is that the English, as Declan Kiberd might have it, may have projected onto their near neighbours "those elements which [they] denied or despised in themselves".[19] Tracing the etymology of Irish Bulls, the Edgeworths therefore observe, "We have a papal bull, and John Bull, the representative of the majesty of the people of England. It is a curious coincidence, that the name of that species of blunder, which is peculiar to the Irish, should be, to a letter, the same as the distinguishing appellation of the english [sic] nation" (11). "It would be absurd", they suggest, "to suppose, that John Bull could ever have been subject to blunder; although there is a passage in a letter of Swift's, obscurely hinting at some such idea: - 'I have it in contemplation,' says Swift, 'to write an essay on english [sic] bulls and blunders'" (12). The Edgeworths thought of Swift that he either "believed that bulls were of english [sic] origin", or, he "was guilty of a barbarism in language" (12).

What Edgeworth and her father are finally insinuating, of course, is that the etymology of *any* bull is so uncertain that it is impossible to definitely attribute the origins of any blunder to one particular nation. Pointing to Horace Walpole, they note how he "records in his Walpoliana an irish [sic] bull, which he pronounces to be the best that he had ever heard – 'I hate that woman,' said a gentleman, looking at a person who had been his nurse, 'I hate that woman; for she changed me at nurse'" (21). In this, the Edgeworths observe, "such is the confusion of ideas, that . . . even personal identity is confounded" (21). In tracing the implications of this bull in their text, the Edgeworths' desire, clearly, is to convince their readers that this apparent bull is not only representative of one of the

greatest of all metaphysical wonders, but also that it is, further, entirely "destitute of originality", and "by no means unprecedented in France, England, or ancient Greece; and consequently [that] it cannot be an instance of national idiosyncracy [sic], or an irish [sic] bull" (24). Quoting John Locke's observation in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690) that "'[p]ersonal identity consists not in the identity of substance, but . . . in the identity of consciousness'", they contend that the Irishman's ostensible blunder encodes the indisputably tenuous grasp that *any* individual has upon the 'reality' of his formative identity (22). They write:

> We may presume our Hibernian who was changed at nurse, was so like his foster brother, that the identity of substance could not easily be ascertained by his parents during his infancy; and when he arrived at man's estate, his own consciousness could not reach to the time when the act of changing at nurse was performed; consequently there was no continuity of identity between the infant who was changed at nurse, and the man who hated the nurse for perpetrating the change; ergo, the Irishman could not confound that which did not exist as to him, viz. identity. (23-24)

As I shall demonstrate below, Edgeworth reserves her fullest treatment of this metaphysical conundrum for Ennui, that great Irish Tale wherein she painstakingly unfolds the consequences of her hero's *literal* changeling status.

What is crucial for my purposes, however, is the fact that the Essay on Irish Bulls finds "a similar [ontological] blunder in Spain, in the time of Cervantes", recounting Sancho Panza's observation to the Duchess in Book Two of Don Quixote: "'I myself am that very squire of his, who is mentioned, or ought to be mentioned, in that history, *unless they have changed me in the cradle*'" (24-25).[20] As a narrative device, as I have already suggested, the importance of the changeling cannot be underestimated, particularly in romance where the hero's or heroine's desire to untangle his or her confounded identity frequently compels the fiction. As an aid to colonisation, it is positively crucial, for, as the Essay on Irish Bulls reveals, such confounding or stereotyping of the native other *directly*

facilitates colonial and imperial expansion. I quote the following passage at length because of its significance:

> That species of monopolising pride, which inspires one nation with the belief that all the rest of the world are barbarians, and speak barbarisms, is evidently a very useful prejudice, which the English, with their usual good sense, have condescended to adopt from the Greeks and Romans. They have applied it judiciously in their treatment of France and Ireland. The maxim, that one Englishman can beat ten Frenchman, has undoubtedly gained many a battle both by sea and land; it forms a sort of succedaneum for the belief in predestination, which operates on the imagination of mahometan soldiers, as opium does on their physical powers, creating supernatural strength and courage. But it is a refinement of this sort of policy, to instil into a nation the belief, that they are superior in intellectual abilities to their neighbours. Impute a peculiar incurable mental disease to a given people, show that it incapacitates them from speaking or acting with common sense, expose their infirmities continually to public ridicule, and in time probably this people, let their constitutional boldness be ever so great, may be subjugated to that sense of inferiority, and to that acquiescence in a state of dependance, which is the necessary consequence of the conviction of imbecility. (19-20)

There are several important points to be made here. In the first place, the Edgeworths' arguments clearly illuminate the contentions of Gary Kelly, Suvendrini Perera, and others, who contend that late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Britain defined its 'national identity' in terms of its "Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary struggles against France, America, Russia, and other rivals".[21] As we saw in chapter three, this meant that the British nation was increasingly "constituted" in terms of its "'destiny' to rule and civilize alien peoples throughout the world, to 'protect' them from themselves and from predatory neighbours" (Kelly 185). While admitting that the ability of one nation to undermine or to 'change' the ontological integrity of another plays a crucial role in facilitating national and imperial expansion, the Edgeworths' point is that the English are profoundly mistaken in continuing to apply this strategy "judiciously" to Ireland as well as France. Unlike the French, the Irish are now allies, not rivals, and should no longer be treated as an inferior race. However useful this (colonizing) strategy may once have been, the Edgeworths argue that the time has now come for England to admit a crucial fact: namely, since the passing of the Act of Union, Ireland has constituted a part of Britain's

greater, imperial identity, and so it is in fact counter-productive for the English to continue to treat their near neighbour as an alien nation:

> Whatever might have been the policy of the english [sic] nation towards Ireland, whilst she was a separate kingdom, since the union it can no longer be her wish to depreciate the talents, or ridicule the language of Hibernians. One of the Czars of Russia used to take the cap and bells from his fool, and place it on the head of any of his subjects whom he wished to disgrace. The idea of extending such a punishment to a whole nation was ingenious, and magnanimous: but England cannot now put it into execution towards Ireland. Would it not be a practical bull to place the cap and bells upon her own imperial head? (307-08)

At this moment, the Edgeworths appear aligned with contemporary theorists who maintain that the success of any colonizing project is invariably dependent upon the colonizer's powers of *(mis)*representation. In his study of Irish writing since 1790, for example, Seamus Deane suggests that, while Jonathan Swift's analysis of the relationship between England and Ireland resulted in his identification of "an impasse" in British-Irish relations, "[Edmund] Burke expanded that local instance into a crisis in the relationship between two modes of civilisation".[22] For Burke, Deane argues, "Ireland was . . . that part of the British polity most vulnerable to the radical ideas of the Enlightenment and revolution precisely because it had never known under British rule the virtues of the ancient civilization that had collapsed in France" (16). Extending this analysis, he contends,

> For over a century after Burke, the same ambiguity prevailed – between the representation of a country that is foreign and unknown, in which the conditions are phantasmagoric, especially to the English reader, and a country that is, at the same time, part of the British system, perfectly recognizable and part of the traditional world that the French Revolution had overthrown. (17-18)

In other words, Deane suggests that, by (mis)representing Ireland, by refusing to view its cultural and linguistic 'difference' as the manifestations of an unfamiliar, but entirely authentic identity, England succeeded, instead, in stressing the 'unreal' or "phantasmagoric" nature of its near neighbour. This, he avers, made possible its further insistence that "[r]eality will be restored to that phantasmal country only through the

introduction into of that kind of civic stability which is characteristically British" (18).

Edgeworth's Irish writing is manifestly predicated upon such ideological formations, for she similarly insists that the reformation of Ireland will only be accomplished once the nation's native inhabitants are brought to more nearly resemble an English form. Each of her Irish tales similarly stresses the phantasmogoric nature of Ireland,[23] insisting that visitors must protect their 'selves' when they visit this fantastic place. In this context, a cursory reading of Edgeworth's work might lead the unwary reader to deduce that she merely rehearses long-standing (English) arguments about what Thomas Flanagan terms the "amazing absorptive powers" of Ireland; that process, that is, through which successive *English* visitors to the island inevitably came to appear more Irish than the Irish themselves (4). England, increasingly frustrated by this, made "[a] number of attempts . . . in turn desultory, sullen, and ferocious, to halt these transformations, and always with the intention of keeping the cultures separate" (4). The crucial point about Edgeworth's treatment of this issue in her work, though, is that it reveals her keen perception that such "transformations" are primarily contingent upon the colonizing process itself; as she would have it, the identity of any individual is necessarily changed the moment he decides to embrace the colonizer's life. It is in *this* context, then, that the Edgeworths argue in their Essay on Irish Bulls that "[t]he maxim that one Englishman can beat ten Frenchman . . . forms a succedaneum for the belief in predestination, which operates on the imagination of mahometan soldiers, as opium does on their physical powers, creating supernatural strength and courage" (19-20). Their recognition is that the would-be conqueror, or colonizer, inevitably changes his 'self' *as well as* that of the colonized in order to facilitate his desire to conquer, or colonize, other lands.

In order to further illustrate what I am arguing here, it might be helpful to refer once more to Don Quixote, and to Cervantes's careful treatment of Sancho Panza's

colonial desire in Book Two of that text. As I have already demonstrated in my third chapter, one of Cervantes's most significant observations in this novel is that reading romance facilitates colonial expansion: his suggestion is that it leads *directly* to the manifestation of expansionist desire. Sancho Panza puts it this way to Don Quixote: "'[I]f your worship reflects, you will find it was your worship that put me upon the scent of governing; for I know no more of the government of islands than a bustard'" (828). In tracing how Sancho Panza eventually secures his 'island', however, Cervantes places a singular emphasis upon the concept of identity in his narrative, and he intimates that the entertaining of such desire necessarily poses a fundamental threat to the integrity of the squire's ontological condition, or self. Thus it is, for example, that the bachelor Sampson Carrasco doubts Sancho Panza's assertion that he will never forget his humble origins should he be so fortunate as to secure his island. Discounting the squire's insistence that "'Sancho [he] was born, and Sancho [he] intend[s] to die'", the scholar points out, "'honours change manners; and it may come to pass, when you are a governor, that you may not know the very mother that bore you'" (549-50). He anticipates, in other words, that, as a governor, Sancho Panza may forget, or more properly perhaps, that he may *wish* to forget his original status.

This recognition also informs the eminently sensible advice with which Don Quixote furnishes Sancho Panza before he sets out for his island; advice, as Northrop Frye observes, that allows "possibly the greatest figure in the history of romance [to recover] his proper function as a social visionary" (179). Having firstly instructed the future governor to "'fear God; for, to fear Him is wisdom, and being wise, you cannot err'", Don Quixote thence urges him:

> '*Consider who you were*, and endeavour to know yourself, which is the most difficult point of knowledge imaginable. The knowledge of yourself will keep you from puffing yourself up, like the frog, who strove to equal herself to the ox; for the consideration of your having been a swineherd in your own country will be, to the wheel of your fortune, like the peacock's ugly feet.' (820) (My emphasis)

Don Quixote's insistence that Sancho Panza must try to remember who he *was* once he becomes a governor charges Cervantes's text with the recognition that the satisfying of hegemonic desire invariably precipitates a transformation of the newly-empowered individual; specifically, that it usually results in that individual's determination to 'change' or, more properly perhaps, to 'aggrandize' his original 'status'. An essential point of Don Quixote, therefore, is that Sancho Panza subsequently proves himself a good governor precisely because he resists such temptation. Upon arriving at his island, he thus refuses to (re)style himself a 'don', insisting, "'Don does not belong to me, nor ever did to any of my family: I am called plain Sancho Panza; my father was Sancho, and my grandfather a Sancho, and they were all Panzas, without any addition of Dons or Doñas'" (839). Continuing to remember who he 'was' once he finds himself a governor renders Sancho Panza *capable* of identifying with his subjects; the former squire governs well because he forever perceives that "'while we are asleep, the great and the small, the poor and the rich, are all equal'" (828). It is as a result of this identification, the text implies, that Sancho Panza is able to discharge his duties with "'discretion'", putting his subjects' interests before his own and resolutely "'[touching] no fee . . . nor any bribe'" (892-93). Upon leaving his island, he is able to observe to his assembled erstwhile officials: "'Gentlemen . . . naked was I born, and naked I am; I neither win nor lose; I mean, that without a penny came I to this government, and without a penny do I quit it, the direct reverse of the governors of other islands'" (907).

As a direct descendent of settlers herself, it is clearly not Edgeworth's intention to persuade either her English or, more importantly, her *Protestant Ascendancy* readers that they should replicate Sancho Panza's action and leave the island of Ireland, nor is it her ambition to convince them that they should put the governance of Ireland back into native hands. She does, however, desire to *remind* these readers that they, like

Cervantes's squire, must exercise a greater ontological awareness in dealing with their 'subjects'; at the very least, Edgeworth intimates, they must identify their *interests* with those of the native Irish and render themselves capable of perceiving the necessarily reciprocal nature of Anglo-Irish affairs. In order to facilitate this ambition, Edgeworth skilfully draws upon what Frye terms the "motif of amnesia" in romance: namely, that "break of consciousness" that "often begins" the typical romance narrative (102). To this end, she suggests that her English and, more particularly, her Protestant Ascendancy readers are not *wilfully* neglectful of Ireland, and that they have, instead, merely *forgotten* their duties and obligations as a governing class. Rewriting Richard Lovell Edgeworth's experiences with his tenants in her fiction, Edgeworth effectively attempts to remind the would-be-rulers of Ireland that, in order to be successful, they must first of all manifest a similarly superior ontological form. As I noted in my introduction, her emphasis in 'her' volume of her father's memoirs is that such integrity will *inevitably* be recognized and appreciated by the native Irish. Richard Lovell Edgeworth's tenants immediately recognized that he was "a good landlord . . . [and] *a real gentleman*", Edgeworth avers, and this ability to "distinguish . . . from every pretender to the character" is peculiar to the native Irish race (2: 37). In this context, Brian Hollingworth argues, Richard Lovell Edgeworth is manifestly the true "hero of [Edgeworth's] Irish novels"; he is "the prototype" for all of the "just, percipient, improving landlord[s]" in her fiction, who are "rewarded for [their] many virtues by . . . contented and grateful" tenants.[24]

Although Edgeworth is keen to stress the benevolent and paternal aspects of this relationship, the Memoirs clearly reveals that colonial and pedagogical preoccupations informed Richard Lovell Edgeworth's endeavours to 'touch' his tenants' "hearts" (2: 39). Stressing that he "took especial care, that they should be convinced of his strictness in punishing, as well as of his desire to reward", Edgeworth observes,

> This sort of power to encourage and reward, in the hands of the landlord, is advantageous in Ireland. It acts as a motive for exertion; it keeps up the connexion and dependance, which there ought to be between the different ranks, without creating any servile habits, or leaving the improving tenant insecure as to the fair reward of his industry. (2: 31, 26-27)

Amplifying my analysis of how she treats Mr. Edwards's relationship with his slaves in "The Grateful Negro", Edgeworth thus figures the landlord/tenant relationship in Ireland in implicitly colonial terms throughout her writing, and she casts the former in the role of a benevolent patriarch who has a duty to educate, reward, and *punish* his childlike dependents. As Seamus Deane puts it, although Edgeworth

> was not the first novelist to have chosen Ireland as her 'scene' . . . she was the first to realize that there was, within it, a missionary opportunity to convert it to Enlightenment faith and rescue it from its 'romantic' conditions. She defined that opportunity, as did so many others, as an educational one. Irish national character was to be brought to school. (32)

One of Edgeworth's first attempts to "bring Irish national character to school" is represented by "The White Pigeon", one of her lesser-known tales for young children that was published in The Parents' Assistant in 1796.[25] Here, in miniature, are discovered the terms of the familial and colonial romance that frames and impels all of her more celebrated Irish fiction. On the simplest of levels, this text tells the story of Brian O'Neill, an exemplary young Irish boy who lives with his equally commendable parents in a little town called Somerville in Ireland. Given a pigeon as a present, Brian's treatment of the bird renders it so tame that "it would hop about the kitchen, and eat off the same trencher with the [family's] dog" (3: 34).[26] Learning of the discovery that pigeons can be used to carry messages, Brian hopes to earn money for his parents in this manner. The son of Mr. Cox, an alehouse keeper, steals the pigeon, however. This boy's intention is to use the bird in order to convey messages for a gang of thieves. Once released, the pigeon returns to Brian, and he discovers from the message attached to the bird's leg that the gang intend to rob the home of Mr. Somerville to whom the town of Somerville "belongs" (3: 25). Brian and his father alert the landowner, the plan is foiled, the gang is caught, and Mr.

Somerville rewards Brian's father by making him the master of the town's new inn, the White Pigeon. In so doing, Mr. Somerville remarks to Brian: "'And I wish him joy of having such a son as you are. Those who bring up their children well will certainly be rewarded for it, be they poor or rich'" (3: 41).

Ostensibly nothing more than a story designed to demonstrate, firstly, that obedient children are inevitably rewarded, and, secondly, that parents must properly educate their children, "The White Pigeon" not only rehearses the terms of the colonial and familial discourse that impels all of Edgeworth's Irish writing, but it also intimates why the construction of this discourse is peculiarly facilitated by her use of the romance form. If an essential point of this text is that Mr. Somerville's benevolent paternalism legitimises his presence in Ireland, another is that it also enables him to impose his "transfiguring imagination" upon his environs:[27] it allows him, that is, to confer an *English* appearance upon his estates:

> The little town of Somerville, in Ireland, has, within these few years, assumed the neat and cheerful appearance of an English village. Mr. Somerville, to whom this town belongs, wished to inspire his tenantry with a taste for order and domestic happiness, and took every means in his power to encourage industrious well-behaved people to settle in his neighbourhood. (3: 25).

Patently informing all of Edgeworth's Irish fiction, this theme expertly illuminates what we might term the *aspirational* nature of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's relationship with his tenants. It intimates, that is, that he treated them with benevolence in the *anticipation* of their reform. It is for this reason that Edgeworth places such a particular emphasis upon what we might term the 'ontological foresight' of her father in her volume of his memoirs, insisting that, "even" in 1782, he "foresaw, and foretold, the happy change, which increasing intercourse with other countries, improving education, and the consequent progress of the diffusion of knowledge, would in a few years produce in Irish society" (2: 13). Edgeworth's fiction manifestly draws upon precisely this ideological formation, and it asserts that all of Ireland's landlords, or rulers, will similarly reap the rewards of their

"transfiguring" labours. The potentially rebellious native Irish will be contained, it avers, by treating them from the first *as if* they had already been changed. Recalling the alarms caused by Defender activity in the late 1780s and early 1790s, Edgeworth thus emphasises in A Letter to the Right Hon. the Earl of Charlemont, on the Tellograph and on the Defence of Ireland:

> [Richard Lovell Edgeworth] built and improved . . . [and] employed numerous tradesmen and labourers, *as if* the country were in perfect security; and in the dreadful scenes which afterwards occurred [in 1792], [he had] the satisfaction to say no tenant on [his] estate was ever convicted or even accused – nor has a defender been found; even amongst [his] workmen. (3) (My emphasis)

Edgeworth echoes these sentiments in "The White Pigeon", insisting that Mr. Somerville's survival is a *direct* result of the ontological foresight he employs in conducting his affairs. In this context, Brian and his father clearly represent the first examples of the various loyal native servants with whom Edgeworth populates her later Irish fiction. They also, of course, symbolize her original fictional incarnations of the several faithful retainers who came to the assistance of the Edgeworth family at various times during the course of its colonial career.[28] Their presence in this text, like that of Jimmy Riley in Ennui, or of Moriarty Carroll in Ormond is crucial, for, as Tom Dunne points out, "it was important for Edgeworth's [didactic] purpose to show the capacity of the native Irish for loyalty, if treated properly" (17).[29] By convincing the natives and their masters that *all* of their interests *necessarily* coincide, Edgeworth's assertion here and throughout her work is that an increasingly defensive Protestant Ascendancy class can pave the way for social and political stability in Ireland. An essential point of the Irish Tales, as Seamus Deane therefore suggests, is that "Irish Protestants have to be recuperated from a long degradation which has led to their impoverishment and irresponsibility. So restored, they will redeem the other Irish from their native and unreliable, if endearing, romanticism" (33).

The preface to Castle Rackrent anticipates this 'redemption', and it insists that all

of Ireland's native inhabitants will cheerfully submit to such reform. The native Irish, it emphasises, will *uncomplainingly* cast off their former "consciousness", and willingly embrace the "habits" of a "new" life (1: 7). As Catherine Gallagher puts it, the final intimation of the preface is that, "[u]nlike the Irish gentleman in the bull, these future former Irishmen will hold no grudge against anyone for having 'changed' them, and their laughter at their own dispossession will convince everyone of their complete complicity" (294). The preface thus observes,

> There is a time, when individuals can bear to be rallied for their past follies and absurdities, after they have acquired new habits, and a new consciousness. Nations as well as individuals gradually lose attachment to their identity, and the present generation is amused rather than offended by the ridicule that is thrown upon its ancestors.
>
> Probably we shall soon have it in our power, in a hundred instances, to verify the truth of these observations.
>
> When Ireland loses her identity by an union with Great Britain, she will look back with a smile of good-humoured complacency on the sir Kits and sir Condys of her former existence. (1: 7)

For her part, Marilyn Butler contends that this "was probably written" by Richard Lovell Edgeworth, "though perhaps with [Edgeworth's] assistance",[30] and this would certainly account for the curious tension that exists between the claims of the preface and the subsequent content of the text. The final point of Castle Rackrent, after all, is that the members of the O'Shaughlin family never succeed in properly inhabiting their new consciousness, preferring to cling, instead, to the lineaments of a by-gone feudal life. Like each of the Irish Tales, as we shall see, Castle Rackrent on the one hand rehearses Richard Lovell Edgeworth's vision of Ireland, while on the other it implies that this vision may be defective. Despite all well-meaning protestations to the contrary, it insists, the native Irish may prove to be entirely incorrigible, and it may not be possible to repair the 'tainted' identity of the nation's ruling (Ascendancy) class. Contrary to the didactic assertion of the preface, Castle Rackrent is therefore finally haunted by Edgeworth's recognition that the passing of the Act of Union in Ireland may prove to be a detrimental act; one that will

"retard" rather than "hasten . . . the melioration of [the] country" (1: 54).

Although Castle Rackrent and each of the Irish Tales is obviously concerned with the need to effect the reformation of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, it is, thus, entirely significant that Edgeworth chooses not to address this issue *directly* in her writing, concentrating, instead, upon apostate *native* families in each of her tales. While Castle Rackrent manifestly draws upon episodes drawn from Edgeworth family history, for example, Edgeworth chooses to *displace* the worst excesses of her ancestors onto the O'Shaughlin/Rackrents, representatives of Ireland's native race. In this context, the O'Shaughlin/Rackrents function as the effective *changelings* of Castle Rackrent, having heaped upon themselves the less salubrious aspects of the Edgeworth family's early Irish life. As W.J. McCormack would put it, this is a skilful piece of "authorial self-exculpation" on Edgeworth's part, for it allows her to tell, but simultaneously to disguise her family's (colonial) history.[31] For instance, McCormack points out that Castle Rackrent "is almost innocent of sectarian allusion", while The Black Book of Edgeworthstown, from which Edgeworth drew many of her details, pays considerable attention to the marriage of Francis Edgeworth and Jane Tuite, his Catholic wife (104). During the rebellion of 1641, The Black Book notes not only how MacBrian Ferrall come to the aid of the young Edgeworth heir and his mother, but also that "the old castle of Crannelagh" was saved from certain destruction when Catholic rebels happened upon Jane's picture in the house.[32] Noting that a one hundred and seven year old former servant of the family ostensibly told this tale to Richard Edgeworth, Edgeworth's grandfather, McCormack argues,

> The value of a narrator, less than ingenuous, in holding together the details of a family's varied generations, was evident to Maria Edgeworth whenever she consulted The Black Book. And it is the mode of narrative, the semblance of history together with the discreet silences, which is significant rather than the reportage of betting coups and drinking bouts. (105)

Marilyn Butler puts it this way: "Maria Edgeworth was telling not just a family chronicle but her own family chronicle [in Castle Rackrent]; or rather she was not telling it, but

conveying it circuitously to the reader via the profoundly unreliable Thady".[33]

If all of this were not enough, the fact that the Rackrents are also apostates renders them changelings twice in the novel. Originally descended from "the kings of Ireland", they have "by [an] act of parliament . . . take[n] . . . the surname and arms of Rackrent" (1: 10). This change of name, religion, and political allegiance amounts to the family's virtual renunciation of the fundamental pillars of its identity; their apostasy represents the O'Shaughlins' assumption of an inauthentic 'self'. Edgeworth of course, repeats this substitution of apostate changelings for Protestant Ascendancy families in each of her Irish Tales. In Ennui, it is stressed that the aristocratic Glenthorns were O'Shaughnessys "before they stooped to be *lorded*",[34] and the hero, as I have already intimated, discovers that he has himself been *literally* changed at nurse. King Corny and Father Jos look "with horror . . . [and] contempt" upon Sir Ulick O'Shane's apostasy in Ormond,[35] while the very title of The Absentee itself explicitly condemns apostate families who abandon their true selves, as well as their Irish estates, in order to affect a pseudo "'*Henglish*'" identity (5: 6).[36]

The changeling device allows Edgeworth to develop her arguments of the Letter and the Essay on Irish Bulls: namely, that nothing less than a profound ontological confusion is threatening the Ascendancy's pre-eminence in Ireland, the Anglo-Irish relationship, and, ultimately, the future of Britain's imperial affairs. As critics such as Tom Dunne point out, it also allows her

> to distance [her own class] from the patent evils of the system she described, while making the point that a native Irish landlordism, even if superficially anglicised, could neither improve the lives of the people, or cope with their subversiveness. This cleared the way for the main theme of her later novels, that an improving paternalistic English landlordism, which would challenge peasant indolence and dishonesty, while harnessing peasant loyalty and appreciation of even-handed justice, was the only path to the achievement of a peaceful and prosperous colony.[37]

The changeling device has a further, crucial significance, of course: it enables Edgeworth to express how profoundly complicated the transformation of individual or of *national*

identity is. Its outcome is *always* far from certain, she avers, and is particularly so in Ireland given the peculiar (colonial) tensions that inform Irish life. In this regard, the healing "polarization" that Edgeworth aims to effect between Ireland's ruling class and its lower orders is both "shaken with irony" and aspirational; it is "energized more by . . . desire" than by the perception of what has truly been achieved.[38]

As I have already noted above, therefore, an essential point of Castle Rackrent is that successive Rackrents cling to their notion of the family's 'true' identity, even when it is plainly in their interests to submit to ontological reform. Sir Patrick, the family's first apostate, or changeling, thus hastens his death *and* the decline of his family's fortunes by adhering to his concept of the O'Shaughlins' pre-apostate, feudal life. Rather than reforming his 'self', he wastefully expends his time, his energy, and his resources, mounting lavish "entertainment" and, fittingly, this "hospitality is, literally, the death of him",[39] for he dies as a result of dashing off "'a bumper toast'" at table (1: 10-11). In this context, the sentiment that Sir Condy has inscribed upon the "handsome marble stone" that he erects to "his great ancestor" is entirely appropriate: Sir Patrick Rackrent did, indeed, "'[live] and [die] a monument of old Irish hospitality'" and of Irish life (1: 24).

Patrick's successor, the litigious Sir Murtagh, and his "Skinflint" wife, pursue a course directly opposite to that advocated by Edgeworth's father in administering their affairs (1: 12). Sir Murtagh engages in endless, unproductive lawsuits, and he and his wife together delight in "driving and driving, and pounding and pounding, and canting and canting, and replevying and replevying" their unfortunate tenants (1: 12). *Their* successor, Sir Kit, in two ways fails himself and the Irish nation. Initially adopting the lifestyle of an absentee, he "live[s] away to the honour of his country abroad", leaving the Rackrent demesnes in the hands of an agent who "ferreted the tenants out of their lives" (1: 15-16). Returning home, he brings with him a singularly unsuitable "*Jewish*" wife who views her husband's estates with a mixture of ill-disguised amusement and disgust (1: 18).

Recounting how she dismissed the bog of "'Allyballycarricko'shaughlin'" as "'a very ugly prospect'", for example, Thady Quirk, the family's steward, also notes how "she fell to laughing like one out of their right mind" at its name (1: 19). Unlike Cecilia Delamere in Ennui, Grace Nugent in The Absentee, or Florence Annaly in Ormond, as we shall see, the emphasis of Castle Rackrent is that this pseudo-matriarchal figure[40] has no natural understanding of, or affection for Ireland, and that she is, as a result, incapable of contributing to its reform. In Edgeworth's terms, this is particularly catastrophic; in her paradigm of Anglo-Irish relations every marriage made in Ireland must reflect and contribute to the greater, harmonious Union that should exist between the Irish and the English nations.

Edgeworth's treatment of the final Rackrent, Sir Condy, is particularly significant, as it expertly illustrates the (subversive) contention that manifests itself in all of her Irish writing. In tracing Sir Condy's demise, Edgeworth simultaneously traces her perception that Ireland's is a peculiarly *attractive* ontological power and her conviction that the members of the Protestant Ascendancy class may not be able to resist its temptations, *even* if they reform. As a representative of "a remote branch of the [Rackrent] family", Condy is never expected to inherit and he consequently receives an early education that is entirely inappropriate to his eventual status (1: 25). By spending his childhood "running through the streets of O'Shaughlin's town, and playing at pitch and toss, ball, marbles, and what not, with the boys of the town", Condy cultivates inappropriate associations (1: 25). In particular, he becomes *too* friendly with Thady's son, Jason, who, for Edgeworth, clearly symbolizes the predatory native Irish race. If the part that Jason ultimately plays in Condy's demise is significant, so, too, is the emphasis that Edgeworth places upon Thady's subversive power throughout her story. The old steward, she implies, effectively engages in an 'ontological seduction' of the young Condy, inculcating in him the desire to replicate his ancestors' feudal behaviour. Thady thus observes,

> As for me, [Condy] was ever my white-headed boy: often's the time when I would call in at his father's, where I was always made welcome; he would slip down to me in the kitchen, and love to sit on my knee, whilst I told him stories of the family, and the blood from which he was sprung, and how he might look forward, if the *then* present man should die without childer, to being at the head of the Castle Rackrent estate. (1: 25)

Although Edgeworth intimates that Thady's efforts were assisted by "[t]he old people [in the neighbourhood who] always told [Condy] he was a great likeness of sir Patrick; which made him first have an ambition to take after him, as far as his fortune should allow", it is entirely significant that it is primarily the old steward's influence that directly *and* indirectly affects the destiny of the future heir (1: 26). As Catherine Gallagher puts it, "the last of the Rackrents is Thady's creature, an imitation Sir Patrick produced by the servant who is supposed to 'belong' to the family" (297). In the first instance, then, it is *because* Thady has been filling his head with stories since childhood that Condy becomes increasingly certain that he will inherit, and this, in its turn, leads him to abandon the studies through which he could have become his family's saviour. Further, an essential implication of Edgeworth's text is that Condy's fortune *doesn't* "allow" his endeavours to replicate his ancestor, so he effectively bankrupts himself, financially and ontologically, by succumbing to the influence of his steward. When he does finally 'become' Sir Condy, as Thady observes, he finds himself unable to "command a penny of his first year's income; which, and keeping no accounts, and the great sight of company he did, with many other causes too numerous to mention, was the origin of his distresses" (1: 26). For once the notoriously ambiguous steward is here telling the *literal* truth: it *is* Condy's "embarrassed situation" and his inability to confront it that facilitates Jason Quirk's creeping ascendancy over the Rackrent possessions (1: 26). Rather than trying to remedy his *present*, Edgeworth intimates that Sir Condy instead chooses to take refuge in his (mythic) past, an act that eventually enables Jason to (inappropriately) occupy his former master's status.

Reviving "the family intimacy that had been in sir Patrick's time" with the

"Moneygawls of Mount Juliet's town", Condy worsens his already disastrous situation by marrying Isabella Moneygawl (1: 27). An affected, self-dramatizing woman, this Lady Rackrent spends "as if she [has] a mint of money at her elbow", and turns Castle Rackrent "topsy-turvy" (1: 30). If his wife's inability to control her excesses contributes to the Rackrents' demise, so, too, does the fact that Sir Condy ill advisedly puts himself forward as a candidate in a local election. This attempt to aggrandize his 'self' has a catastrophic effect upon his resources, for, in the first instance, "all the gentlemen of [Sir Condy's election] committee, who managed all for him, and talked how they'd bring him in without costing him a penny . . . forgot to pay their subscriptions . . . so [that] all was left at his door" (1: 36). Similarly, Sir Condy's ontological resources are also weakened, for he ultimately discovers that he is *less* of a man for having left his estates. As Thady puts it, he "was very ill used by the government about a place that was promised him and never given, after his supporting them against his conscience very honourably, and being greatly abused for it, which hurt him greatly, he having the name of a great patriot in the country before" (1: 37). The overall implication of the text, of course, is that it is, finally, *Ireland* that suffers because Sir Condy cannot resist the temptation to indulge in what he perceives as an opportunity for self-aggrandizement. Thady's description of an abandoned Castle Rackrent is, as a result, hugely important, and symbolizes much more than the Rackrents' abandonment of their estates:

> There was then a great silence in Castle Rackrent, and I went moping from room to room, hearing the doors clap for want of right locks, and the wind through the broken windows, that the glazier never would come to mend, and the rain coming through the roof and best ceilings all over the house for want of the slater, whose bill was not paid, besides our having no slates or shingles for that part of the old building which was shingled and burnt when the chimney took fire, and had been open to the weather ever since. (1: 36)

Having finally lost the control of Castle Rackrent to Jason, however, Condy nonetheless persists in his allegiance to his notion of his family's original status. Although this identity has essentially facilitated his destruction, it is still, in Condy's eyes, his

authentic 'self'. For this reason, Condy shocks Thady with his desire to see his funeral; to bring, in other words, his replication of Sir Patrick's adventures to their logical conclusion. "'Thady,' says he, 'all you've been telling me brings a strange thought into my head; I've a notion I shall not be long for this world any how, and I've a great fancy to see my own funeral afore I die'" (1: 46). Assured by the old steward that his funeral will be "'as great . . . as ever sir Patrick O'Shaughlin's was, and such a one as that had never been known in the county afore or since'", Condy pretends to die, cheerfully anticipating the fine stories of 'himself' that will be told by those who mourn him (1: 46). As Thady observes, though, Sir Condy finds 'his' wake intensely disappointing; in the first instance, it is nearly the *literal* death of him, for he finds himself smothering under the great coats that have been casually thrown by mourners upon the supposed corpse. Secondly, buried beneath these coats, Condy complains to Thady that he is unable to hear "'a word of all they're saying of the deceased'" (1: 47); an extremely comical observation, this also denotes Condy's increasingly fractured sense of 'self'. Finally, and as Thady remarks, "[S]ir Condy was rather upon the sad order in the midst of it all, not finding there had been such a great talk about himself after his death as he had always expected to hear" (1: 47). In other words, having clung to the lineaments of an assumed (and mythic) ontological condition, Condy at the last discovers that this identity is wanting, or, more properly perhaps, he realizes he has failed to properly inhabit his assumed state.

Forced from Castle Rackrent by Jason, Condy finds himself in exile in the estate lodge, where he discovers the "great horn . . . that used to belong originally to the celebrated sir Patrick, his ancestor" (1:52). Significantly, Thady recalls that "his honour was fond often of telling the story that he learned from me when a child, how sir Patrick drank the full of this horn without stopping, and this was what no other man afore or since could without drawing breath" (1: 52). Eventually succumbing to the desire to recreate this mythical feat, one (ironic) intimation of Edgeworth's text is that Sir Condy finally

succeeds in his ambition to replicate Sir Patrick *precisely*: he kills himself, that is, by replicating the very act through which Sir Patrick died. Another, however, is that this circumstance is the entirely predictable outcome of Thady's ontological seduction of the young heir; Sir Condy dies, that is, because, from childhood, the steward has persistently encouraged him to replicate his ancestor's life.

Having lingered for five days and nights in a fever after this act of foolish intemperance, Sir Condy recovers his senses for just long enough to ask Thady "'where are all the friends?'" (1: 53). Realizing that none are coming, he poignantly remarks, "'Gone, hey? Ay, Sir Condy has been a fool all his days'", and Thady makes clear that these were "the last word[s]" his master spoke before his demise (1: 53). On the one hand illustrating for the final time Condy's fractured sense of self, this comment also represents Edgeworth's expert summing up of the fatal flaw of this character in her story. At the very last, Condy expresses his realization that 'Sir Condy' has all along been a fool, or more properly perhaps, that he has made himself into somebody else's creature as a result of his ill-advised desire to replicate Sir Patrick's life. Mercifully for Condy, the laws of metaphysics prevent him from witnessing the final consequence of his (mis)spent existence, and so he never sees that "[h]e had but a very poor funeral" (1: 53). In a nation where the turnout at one's funeral was of considerable importance, this sad fact serves as the ultimate comment upon the way in which this last Rackrent has pitifully (mis)managed the ontological affairs of his family. As Julian Moynahan observes, it represents "the last disaster in the going down of the Rackrent line".[41]

If Edgeworth's treatment of the Rackrents' continuing adherence to their O'Shaughlin identity conflicts with the preface's confident assertion that, in the light of the Act of Union, the native Irish will willingly submit to the erasing of their original identity, it also illustrates her perception that the passing of this piece of legislation may have an effect *directly* opposite to that which its supporters intended. In tracing the gradual

ascendancy of the Quirks, Edgeworth intimates that, by seeking to once again transform the native Irish, the English and the Protestant Ascendancy may too late discover that they are simply further empowering an already powerful and subversive race. Thus, while the question of Thady's loyalty to the Rackrents or otherwise continues to vex Edgeworth's readers, I would suggest that one certainty of the text is that the steward, unlike his masters, is immediately capable of appreciating the benefits of ontological reform. Recounting the career of Sir Murtagh, Thady recalls how he

> used to wonder to see [him] in the midst of the papers in his office! Why he could hardly turn about for them. I made bold to shrug my shoulders once in his presence, and thanked my stars I was not born a gentleman to so much toil and trouble; but sir Murtagh took me up short with his old proverb, 'learning is better than house or land.' (1: 13)

By (indirectly) revealing the way in which Jason gradually secures his ascendancy over his family's erstwhile masters, Thady (implicitly) admits that he fully understood the ontological import of Sir Murtagh's observation. He points out:

> Jason Quirk, though he be my son . . . was a good scholar from his birth, and a very 'cute lad; I thought to make him a priest, but he did better for himself: seeing how he was as good a clerk as any in the county, the agent gave him his rent accounts to copy, which he did first of all for the pleasure of obliging the gentleman, and would take nothing at all for his trouble, but was always proud to serve the family. (1: 16)

Encoded here, of course, is the realization of the colonizer's ultimate fear: namely, that the colonized will eventually usurp the colonizer's place as a result of his colonial education. It is this perception, I would argue, that lends such peculiar import to Thady's observation that he "love[s] to look upon" Sir Patrick's portrait (1: 10). W.J. McCormack argues that this comment is important because it begs the question as to where the portrait hangs "*now*" (114), but of much more significance, surely, is where is *Thady*? By having the old retainer insist that Sir Patrick's picture is "now opposite" to him, is Edgeworth inviting us to perceive that Thady has usurped his old master's place? (1: 10). It is precisely this (colonial) anxiety that finally informs the 'editorial afterward' that concludes

the tale, I would suggest, for this recognizes that the enactment of the Act of Union may result in profound ontological slippage:

> It is a problem of difficult solution to determine, whether an Union will hasten or retard the melioration of this country. The few gentlemen of education, who now reside in this country, will resort to England: they are few, but they are in nothing inferior to men of the same rank in Great Britain. The best that can happen will be the introduction of British manufacturers in their places. (1: 54)

As well as anticipating that the Union will cause widespread confusion in Ireland, Edgeworth reveals her fear that this confusion will ultimately prove to be to the Protestant Ascendancy's disadvantage. Rather than facilitating the 'remaking' of the native Irish, she implies, the Union may simply ensure that it is the Protestant Ascendancy and the English who are instead 'remade': "Did the Warwickshire militia, who were chiefly artisans, teach the Irish to drink beer? or did they learn from the Irish to drink whiskey?" (1: 54).

This disturbing possibility is present in each of Edgeworth's Irish Tales, but nowhere more clearly, perhaps, than in Ennui, which revolves around the profoundly complicated implications of the hero's *literal* changeling status. Bred up as "the only son and heir of the earl of Glenthorn", Edgeworth's native Irish hero gives up this identity once he realizes that it is not rightfully his possession (1: 161). Instead, he sets out to reform his 'Christy O'Donoghoe' self, and uses a distinctly Edgeworthian model of education in order to reform his life. Having eventually proved himself to be of truly exemplary character, Glenthorn/O'Donoghoe mutates once more by the end of Edgeworth's narrative, this time "'tak[ing] and bear[ing] the name and arms of Delamere'" following his marriage (1: 306). On the one hand merely illustrating the alacrity with which he facilitates his union to Cecilia Delamere, this act on the other hand also symbolizes the efficacy of his reformation. The new 'Mr. Delamere' is entirely worthy of his Ascendancy bride, the text avers, *and* of the chance that he is ultimately given to (re)occupy the lineaments of his former life. If this appears to merely faithfully rehearse the didactic contentions that impel

all of Edgeworth's writing, we shall see that Ennui also lends itself to another, more subversive reading. Drawing upon and developing the themes of Castle Rackrent, this text similarly intimates that it may not be possible for the Ascendancy to control the educated native Irish; by the end of the tale, after all, *another* "Anglo-Irish estate has fallen into Irish hands".[42]

Purporting to represent the "MEMOIRS OF THE EARL OF GLENTHORN", the opening of Edgeworth's narrative recalls the inappropriate early life and education of the hero, and it claims that these have together combined to render him incapable of properly discharging the duties and obligations of his aristocratic station (1: 161). "Bred up in luxurious indolence", Glenthorn observes, "I was surrounded by friends who seemed to have no business in this world but to save me the trouble of thinking or acting for myself; and I was confirmed in the pride of helplessness by being continually reminded that I was the only son and heir of the earl of Glenthorn" (1: 161). Recalling the observation in the Essay on Irish Bulls that "*nobody* is a word of very uncertain significance, varying according to time, place, and circumstance", Edgeworth's intimation here is that Glenthorn's time, place, and circumstances have essentially stripped him of his identity (4). Although as an earl he *should* be somebody, the intimation of the text is that he occupies the mere outward trappings of his elevated status. Lady Geraldine's comment later in the narrative upon her mother's desire to 'match' her with Glenthorn is, therefore, singularly appropriate. "'Mamma", she observes, "'wants me to catch somebody, and to be caught by somebody; but that will not be; for, do you know, I think somebody is nobody'" (1: 212). As Catherine Gallagher argues,

> This remark agrees with the first-person narrator's judgement of his own youthful self: an aristocratic upbringing ha[s] made him selfishly indolent and disdainful of all sorts of 'business,' characteristics that in turn [prevent] his personality from solidifying into anything definite. Ignorant and purposeless, Glenthorn is 'nobody' in the first part of the book because he is unrealized and unsituated . . . He has, in other words, no character. (300-01)

In order to give Glenthorn 'character', Edgeworth uses romance conventions to send him on a journey, and this manifestly reworks the ramifications of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's 1782 return home. Northrop Frye's reading of romance, as I noted in my introduction, suggests that its heroes, or heroines, typically exist to symbolize a contrast between two worlds. There is an idyllic world and a demonic or night-world, he argues, and most romances culminate in "a return to the idyllic world, or to some symbol of it like a marriage" (54). While Edgeworth clearly draws upon such a paradigm in Ennui, The Absentee, and Ormond, my argument is that she uses this model to symbolize a contrast between, not two worlds, but two ontological states. In tracing the adventures of her heroes, her ambition is to impress the superiority of her father's identity upon her readers, and to convince them that they must replicate his example in order to facilitate their own and their nation's reform. Edgeworth therefore uses romance in order to impart to her readers her perception that Ireland can function as either an idyllic or a demonic realm; the difference, as she would have it, depends upon the condition of the *individual's* self. In this context, then, we might argue that Castle Rackrent finally differs from the other three Irish Tales in that it effectively functions as an 'inverted' romance; one where the Rackrents' fundamental lack of integrity, coupled with their inability to reform, plunges them into an underworld life.

This recognition that Ireland can represent either an idyllic or a demonic world first manifests itself in Ennui when Edgeworth introduces Ellinor, Glenthorn's old Irish nurse, into the tale. By suddenly appearing upon his English estates, Ellinor *immediately* prevents the earl from committing suicide, thwarting his resolution to "shoot [himself] at the close of the day" (1: 170). At the same time, she is herself nearly responsible for his death, causing the horse that he is riding to plunge and throw him. Throughout Ennui Ellinor, like the nation that she so clearly represents, may either heal or injure the earl; she has the capacity to either restore his 'self' or to destroy his peace of mind and reputation.

Describing how she alone of his servants evidenced "an agony of grief" when he pretended to be dead following his fall, Glenthorn therefore intimates that Ellinor succeeded in piercing the shell of his essential alienation (1: 172). "I did not understand one word she uttered, as she spoke in her native language", he observes, "but her lamentations went to my heart, for they came from hers. She hung over me, and I felt her tears dropping upon my forehead. I could not refrain from whispering, 'Don't cry – I am alive'" (1: 172). "The strong affections of this poor woman", he continues, "touched me more than anything I had ever yet felt in my life" (1: 172). Edgeworth, however, echoes her treatment of Thady Quirk's influence upon Sir Condy in Castle Rackrent, and she indicates that, in nursing Glenthorn back to health following his accident, Ellinor at the same time 'infects' him with an inappropriate admiration of his ancestors' feudal situation. Glenthorn thus recalls,

> When she sat up with me at nights, she talked on eternally . . . She was inexhaustible in her anecdotes of my ancestors, all tending to the honour and glory of the family; she had also an excellent memory for all the insults, or traditions of insults, which the Glenthorns had received for many ages back, even to the times of the old kings of Ireland; long and long before they stooped to be *lorded*; when their 'names, which it was a pity and a murder, and moreover a burning shame, to change, was O'Shaughnessy.' She was well stored with histories of Irish and Scottish chiefs. The story of O'Neill, the Irish black-beard, I am sure I ought to remember, for Ellinor told it to me at least six times. Then she had a large assortment of fairies and *shadowless* witches, and *banshees*; and besides, she had legions of spirits and ghosts, and haunted castles without end, my own castle of Glenthorn not excepted, in the description of which she was extremely eloquent; she absolutely excited in my mind some desire to see it. (1: 175)

As well as implying here that Ellinor essentially functions as a repository wherein are stored the lineaments of the O'Shaughnessy family's original identity, or "repressed collective unconsciousness", as Katie Trumpener would have it,[43] Edgeworth's further intimation is that, like Thady in Castle Rackrent, the old nurse effectively *reminds* Glenthorn of the pre-apostate, native Irish condition of his family. "[A]s the embodiment of an earlier, now-lost cultural epoch" (197), Ellinor's ambition is to use Glenthorn to avenge what she perceives as an ontological crime, or "murder", and, in so doing, to bring *her* version of the O'Shaughnessy family back to life (1: 175). Insisting that he "was only

a lord . . . in England; but [that he] could be all as one as a king in Ireland", Ellinor tries to tempt Glenthorn back to Ireland, impressing him "with the idea of the sort of feudal power [he] should possess in [his] vast territory, over tenants who were almost vassals, and amongst a numerous train of dependents" (1: 175). Although she succeeds in exacting "a vague promise" that he will "*sometime or other*, visit Glenthorn Castle", it is not until Glenthorn attends a boxing match and witnesses the demise of Michael Noonan, an "unfortunate Irishman", that Ireland is finally "recalled to [his] thoughts" (1: 175, 182). Persistently remarked in Ennui, as in The Absentee and Ormond, forgetfulness represents Edgeworth's skilful use of what Frye terms "the motif of amnesia" in her writing (102). As she would have it, Ireland's absentee rulers are not *wilfully* negligent; instead, they have suffered a "break in consciousness", and have temporarily 'forgotten' their duties (Frye 102). Once reminded of these duties, Edgeworth implies, the Ascendancy will cheerfully embrace them, as they will perceive that their true destiny lies 'at home'.

Describing his eventual return to his Irish estates, Glenthorn therefore stresses the therapeutic nature of his journey. Ireland, like Ellinor, reawakens his essential sensibility, and immediately restores him to himself:

> [T]hough I complained bitterly, and swore it was impracticable for a gentleman to travel in Ireland; yet I never remembered to have experienced, on any journey, less ennui. . . . I am convinced that the benefits some patients [receive] from a journey is in an inverse proportion to the ease and luxury of their mode of travelling. When they are compelled to exert their faculties, and to use their limbs, they forget their nerves, as I did. Upon this principle I should recommend to wealthy hypochondriacs a journey in Ireland, preferably to any country in the civilized world. I can promise them, that they will not only be moved to anger often enough to make their blood circulate briskly, but they will even, in the acmè of their impatience, be thrown into salutary convulsions of laughter, by the comic concomitants of their disasters: besides, if they have hearts, their best feelings cannot fail to be awakened by the warm, generous hospitality, they will receive in this country, from the cabin to the castle. (1: 187-88)

The nearer Glenthorn draws to his Irish 'dominions', however, the greater grows his perception that he is entering a phantasmagoric environ, one that will challenge his very identity, or state. "As we approached my maritime territories", he notes,

> the cottages were thinly scattered, and the trees had a stunted appearance; they all slanted one way, from the prevalent winds that blew from the ocean. Our road presently stretched along the beach, and I saw nothing to vary the prospect but rocks, and their huge shadows upon the water. The road being sandy, the feet of the horses made no noise, and nothing interrupted the silence of the night but the hissing sound of the carriage-wheels passing through the sand. (1: 189)

Glenthorn's sense of the desolate, magical nature of the place is further underlined for him (and his reader) by the fact that the postilions whom he has hired in Dublin express themselves no less amazed than he by their environs. "'[T]his *bees* a strange Irish place'", observes one to the other, "'with no possible way o' getting at it, as I see'" (1: 189). "Dismayed and helpless", it is only with the aid of a passing "Irish carman" that Glenthorn and the postilions finally reach Glenthorn Castle, which "seemed to rise from the sea, abrupt and insulated, in all the gloomy grandeur of ancient times" (1: 189).

Upon entering the castle, Glenthorn immediately undergoes a sort of 'ontological transportation'. "[T]he multitude of servants and dependants" who rushed to greet him, he notes,

> gave me an idea of my own consequence beyond any thing which I had ever felt in England. These people seemed 'born for my use': the officious precipitation with which they ran to and fro; the style in which they addressed me; some crying, 'Long life to the earl of Glenthorn!' some blessing me for coming to reign over them; all together gave more the idea of vassals than tenants, and carried my imagination centuries back to feudal times. (1: 190)

Edgeworth's first point, of course, is that Glenthorn at first positively delights in his newfound identity; the feudal responses of his tenants, she implies, enable him to efface the 'nothingness' that has previously (negatively) defined his sense of self. Her second point, though, is that this strategy is informed by his reading of Gothic romances, for the fact that he draws upon such works in order to reconstitute his self is made abundantly clear in the text. Having feasted upon "one of the most profusely hospitable suppers that ever was prepared for a noble baron, even in the days when oxen were roasted whole", Glenthorn recalls that he retired to a "state tower . . . hung with magnificent tapestry . . . [that] was so like a room in a haunted castle, that if I had not been too much fatigued to

think of any thing, I should certainly have thought of Mrs Radcliffe" (1: 190-91). In Edgeworth's terms, Glenthorn's revelation of his predilection for the works of Ann Radcliffe is highly significant, for it helps to explain the remarkable ease with which he is ontologically seduced by Ellinor and his native Irish tenants. The fact that Glenthorn's imagination has been inflamed by his reading is made peculiarly clear when he describes his sensations the next morning upon looking out of his window: "the whole prospect bore an air of savage wildness. As I contemplated the scene, my imagination was seized with the idea of remoteness from civilized society: the melancholy feeling of solitary grandeur took possession of my soul" (1: 191).

The efforts of Mr. M'Leod and, ultimately, of Lord Y to reform Glenthorn are nothing less than an ontological battle, one in which each man plays battles to cast out native demons from the soul of the earl. For M'Leod, this proves a particularly problematic conflict, for Glenthorn is at first deeply suspicious of his agent, believing his "aim [is] to cheat [him] out of [the] power" that properly belongs to himself (1: 195). Although M'Leod's steady and disinterested conduct gradually satisfies him that this is not the case, on Glenthorn's part at least the relationship continues to be strained. Having initially rejoiced in an authority "seemingly next to despotic", Glenthorn is amazed to discover "that the feeling of benevolence is a greater pleasure than the possession of *barouches*, and horses, and castles, and parks – greater even than the possession of power" (1: 193-94, 198). Having "tasted [this] species of pleasure", he is "angry" with M'Leod, "irritated" and frustrated by the perpetual "'*doubt*[s]'" that the agent casts on his ill-considered schemes (1: 199).

As is the case with Lord Y later in the narrative, M'Leod's ultimate function in Ennui is to demonstrate for Glenthorn and the reader why the assumption of an implicitly *Edgeworthian* identity is absolutely necessary in order to control the potentially rebellious native Irish race. Doubting like Richard Lovell Edgeworth "'whether any thing effectual

can be done till [the native Irish] have a better education'", M'Leod's desire is "'to teach men to see clearly, and to follow steadily, their real interests'"; an imperative, Edgeworth intimates, which applies to landlords just as much as their tenants (1: 202-03). Upon visiting M'Leod's holdings, Glenthorn thus discovers from his agent precisely what can be accomplished in Ireland, and is exposed, clearly, to an *idyllic* view of Irish life. Realizing that M'Leod and his wife have "actually created a paradise amid the wilds", he observes, "There was nothing wonderful in any thing I saw around me; but there was such an air of neatness and comfort, order and activity, in the people, and in their cottages, that I almost thought myself in England; and I could not forebear exclaiming, - 'How could all this be brought about in Ireland!'" (1: 220). Intimating yet again that Ireland and the native Irish must be brought to more nearly resemble the English in order to satisfy their (colonial) overlords' British sensibilities, Edgeworth here rehearses the same ideological formations as in the Essay on Professional Education, where she details the efforts of the Quakers and the South Sea Missionaries with native races. M'Leod insists that he and his wife succeeded with their tenants "'[c]hiefly by not doing and not expecting too much at first'" (1: 220). They instructed the native Irish by way of "'example'", he avers, leading where they "'could not have driven'" (1: 220-21). Recognizing that they "'could not expect to do much with the old, whose habits were fixed'", M'Leod's and his wife's primary concern has been "'to give the young children better notions'" (1: 221). Admitting that their endeavours have taken some twenty six years, he remarks, "'in that time if we have done any thing, it was by beginning with the children: a race of our own training has now grown up, and they go on in the way they were taught, and prosper to our hearts' content, and, what is better still, to their hearts' content'" (1: 221). As in "The White Pigeon" or "The Grateful Negro", the colonial imperative framing Edgeworth's narrative here is devastatingly apparent, and it is this fact that inspires Thomas Flanagan's contention that Ennui finally illustrates how the Edgeworths "conspired" in the "defeat" of their way of

life (84-85). "Only that bloodless paragon, M'Leod, could find nourishment in a social program which runs so athwart the temper of an entire people as that of which he is the mouthpiece" (85).

The fact that it is not Mr. M'Leod, but Lord Y[44] who completes Glenthorn's ontological reformation is highly important, of course, particularly as this takes place only *after* the 'earl' discovers the truth about his changeling status. In the first instance demonstrating that Edgeworth is only able to sustain the didactic theories of her father in her fiction by resorting to romance, the text of Ennui intimates that she is herself peculiarly conscious of this fact. On several occasions, the narrative seems deliberately designed to anticipate and to diffuse the criticism of the reader. At the beginning of the chapter immediately following his discovery that Ellinor is his mother, for example, Glenthorn observes, "The romance of real life certainly goes beyond all other romances; and there are facts which few writers would dare to put into a book, as there are skies which few painters would venture to put into a picture" (1: 268). Similarly, before Lord Y introduces him to the woman who will eventually become his wife, Glenthorn overhears a conversation during which his future mother-in-law ponders the improbabilities of his changeling status. "'Can you conceive it?'" the elderly lady remarks, "'Changed at nurse! One hears of such things in novels, but, in real life, I absolutely cannot believe it'" (1: 289).

The overwhelming consequence of Glenthorn's discovery that he has, unwittingly, contributed to the crime that has "'wronged, and robbed'" the true Lord Glenthorn of his "'rightful inheritance'", or status, however, is that it allows Edgeworth to plunge her hero into a crisis from which he recovers only once he follows Lord Y's instructions as to how he should reconstruct his entire existence (1: 267). Following Ellinor's revelation that she is his "'lawful mother'",[45] Glenthorn finds himself faced with the ultimate metaphysical dilemma: namely, he must decide whether to continue "[t]o be or not to be lord Glenthorn", or, instead, to "act honestly and honourably, and to relinquish what [he] could

no longer maintain without committing injustice" (1: 266, 272-73). Having made the "virtuous decision" to inform Christy O'Donoghoe of their mutually confounded identities, he once more "'change[s] places'" with the rightful earl, and is thence plunged into a world which is to him chaotic and which he experiences *and* expresses in explicitly ontological terms (1: 273-74). Travelling for the first time in his life without attendants, for example, he reveals that he was amazed to discover that he was both his 'self' and his servant now that he was no longer an earl:

> I once caught myself saying of myself, 'that careless blockhead has forgot my nightcap.' For some time I was liable to make odd blunders about my own identity; I was apt to make mistakes between my old and my new habits, so that when I spoke in the tone and the imperative mode in which lord Glenthorn had been habituated to speak, people stared at me as if I was mad, and I in my turn was frequently astonished by their astonishment, and perplexed by their ease of behaviour in my presence. (1: 284)

At this point, Edgeworth introduces Lord Y into her narrative. Her message is clear: all of Glenthorn's difficulties can be effaced if he assumes an Edgeworthian self. Presenting himself in person to answer the Lord's letter of enquiry about his former tutor, Glenthorn eventually enlightens him as to his new circumstances, and is for two reasons surprised and pleased by the nobleman's response. Firstly, Lord Y insists that he is already aware of Glenthorn's "'real character'", having "'learnt it from [Mr. Cecil Devereux,] a particular friend of mine, of whose judgement and abilities I have the highest opinion'" (1: 287). This gentleman,

> 'repeated an assertion, that was supported with much energy by the charming lady Geraldine, that lord Glenthorn had *abilities to be any thing he pleased*; and the high terms in which they spoke of his talents, and the strong proofs they adduced of the generosity of his character, excited in [Lord Y's] mind a warm desire to cultivate his acquaintance.' (1: 287)

I will be returning to the significance of Cecil Devereux and, even more particularly, of Lady Geraldine later in this chapter, but for now I merely want to note that Edgeworth's emphasis here supports her ostensible *didactic* contention regarding the essential malleability of the native Irish race. Although it is true that neither Mr. Devereux nor Lady

Geraldine are aware of Glenthorn's true condition when they discuss him with Lord Y, an essential point of Edgeworth's text is that they not only admire the integrity of his character, but also perceive that this character can be transformed. Upon discovering that Glenthorn is, in fact, a penniless native Irish man, Lord Y is still entirely confident that it will prove possible for him to transform the former earl and to efface the lineaments of his original, *native* station.

Crucially, Lord Y provides Glenthorn with not only the means, but also the *motive* for submitting to this ontological process; he introduces him to Cecilia Delamere, "'the heir at law'" to the Glenthorn estate, and convinces Glenthorn that, if he reforms himself, he could hope to make her his wife (1: 289). In choosing a husband, Lord Y observes, Cecilia's "'disposition and excellent understanding will . . . direct her preference to the essential good qualities, and not to the accidental advantages, of the candidates for her favour'"; the nobleman believes, that is, that Glenthorn can totally transform his 'self' and obliterate forever the insignificance of his original station in life (1: 293). "'[Y]ou have now the most powerful of motives, and in proportion to your exertions will be your success'", he notes, "'In our country, you know, the highest offices of the state are open to talents and perseverance; a man of abilities and application cannot fail to secure independence, and obtain distinction'" (1: 293). Patently rehearsing a theme that we have already seen is central to tales like "Lame Jervas", for example, the effect that this advice has upon Glenthorn is underlined by Edgeworth in her narrative. Lord Y's observations "made a great and ineffaceable impression upon my mind", Glenthorn declares, and

> From this day I date the commencement of a new existence. Fired with ambition, - I hope generous ambition, - to distinguish myself among men, and to win the favour of the most amiable and the most lovely of women, all the faculties of my soul were awakened: I became active, permanently active. The enchantment of indolence was dissolved, and the demon of ennui was cast out for ever. (1: 294)

In tracing the evolution of Glenthorn's "new existence", Edgeworth shows her hero this time *voluntarily* plunging himself into a state of nothingness with the clear intention of

'remaking' himself in order to win Cecilia Delamere's hand. Observing that he has "no more wonderful incidents to relate, no more changes at nurse, no more sudden turns of fortune", Glenthorn insists that he henceforth pursued a steady course in order to effect the final transformation of his self and his affairs (1: 294). "I am now become a plodding man of business", he notes, "poring over law-books from morning till night, and leading a most monotonous life" (1: 294). Persevering "resolutely" in his legal studies, Glenthorn's friendship with Lord Y also impresses upon him what he *could* have accomplished while he occupied his aristocratic station (1: 294). Taken by the nobleman to visit his estates and those of his friends, Glenthorn becomes "convinced that much may be done by the judicious care and assistance of landlords for their tenantry" (1: 296). "I saw this with mixed sensations of pleasure and of pain", he remarks, "for I reflected how little I had accomplished, and how ill I had done even that little, whilst the means of doing good to numbers had been in my power" (1: 296).

Although his regrets are many, Glenthorn's regular correspondence with Mr. M'Leod convinces him that his efforts are proving far more successful that those of the true earl. Learning from M'Leod that Glenthorn Castle has become "a scene of riotous living", Glenthorn imparts to his reader his perception that the former Christy O'Donoghoe's difficulties are primarily caused by the affectation of his wife, for her (fatal) desire is to replicate 'her' version of her family's original status:

> [Lady Glenthorn] filled the castle with tribes of her vagabond relations; she chose to be descended from one of the kings of Ireland; and whoever would acknowledge her high descent, and whoever would claim relationship with her, were sure to have their claims allowed, and were welcome to live in all the barbaric magnificence of Glenthorn Castle. Every instance that she could hear of the former lady Glenthorn's extravagance or of mine – and, alas!, there were many upon record, she determined to exceed. (1: 297)

Manifestly condemning both her hero's former existence *and* the native Irish identity that Ellinor would have had him adopt when he was still an earl, Edgeworth impresses upon the reader her own and her father's perception that it is necessary to remain ontologically alert

when dealing with the (predatory) native Irish race. As well as decking herself out "in the most absurd manner", the text therefore notes that Lady Glenthorn often "indulged in the pleasures of the banquet, till, no longer able to support the regal diadem, she was carried by some of the meanest of her subjects to her bed" (1: 298). Although comical, Edgeworth's narrative intimates that this Lady Glenthorn's affection finally has disastrous implications; "[t]he thefts committed during these interregnums were amazing in their amount", it observes, "and the jewels of the crown were to be replaced as fast as they were stolen" (1: 298).

By tracing the entwined fates of Glenthorn and his foster-brother in her narrative, Edgeworth brings to their logic conclusion the didactic assertions that have framed and impelled her tale. Unlike Glenthorn, who eventually triumphs in his desire to "'[make] a lawyer of himself'", Christy O'Donoghoe's lack of education means that is he never able to come to terms with his new-found status (1: 298). This, Edgeworth avers, leads *directly* to the branch of the Glenthorn family that he (unwillingly) represents losing forever its authority over its part of the Irish nation. Derided by those about him "as a mean-spirited *cratur*", and mocked because he has "no notion of living like a prince", Christy finds himself

> scarcely considered as the master of [his] house: he lived by the fireside disregarded in winter, and in summer he spent his time chiefly in walking up and down his garden, and picking fruit. He once made an attempt to amuse himself by mending the lock of his own room door; but he was detected in the fact, and exposed to such loud ridicule by his lady's favourites, that he desisted, and sighing said to Mr M'Leod – 'And isn't it now a great hardship upon a man like me to have nothing to do, or not to be let do any thing? If it had not been for my son Johnny's sake, I never would have quit the forge; and now all will be spent in *coshering*, and Johnny, at the last, will never be a penny the better, but the worse for my consinting to be lorded . . .' (1: 298)

In other words, Christy's inability to overcome his ontological confusion renders him incapable of holding on to what he should always have possessed, whereas Glenthorn's essential malleability means that he is eventually able to reverse his misfortunes and to

legitimately occupy his former status. Through his marriage to Cecilia Delamere, as I have indicated, he thus aligns himself with the "'heir at law'" to his former possessions, and this ultimately enables him to once more (re)occupy all of his former (e)states (1: 289).

After years of perseverance, Glenthorn eventually succeeds in distinguishing himself at the bar, completing what Lord Y calls his "'trial'" and winning the nobleman's "'free and full approbation to address [his] ward and relation, Cecilia Delamere'" (1: 306). On an allegorical level, this union is hugely important in Edgeworth's narrative, clearly symbolizing the greater union that she believes *should* exist between the Irish and the English race. In order to overcome his future mother-in-law's objections, as I have noted, Glenthorn significantly agrees to "'take and bear the name and arms'" of his future bride (1: 306). While ostensibly illustrating nothing more than the complacency with which Glenthorn acquiesces to the transformation of his identity in order to facilitate his marriage, this act also simultaneously illuminates the more subversive connotations of Edgeworth's narrative. By taking Cecilia's name, after all, Glenthorn (indirectly) brings his native mother's plans to fruition: he 'murders' his self, that is, in order to '(re)take' the true earl's life.

Upon receiving a letter from his grieving foster brother, Glenthorn learns that the O'Donoghoes have destroyed themselves as a result of their inability to come to terms with their true condition. "'The castle's burnt all down to the ground'", Christy writes, "'and my Johnny's dead, and I wish I was dead in his place'" (1: 308). For her part, Edgeworth could not make the significance of the circumstances surrounding Johnny's death clearer for her reader. Christy observes,

> 'The occasion of his death was owing to drink, which he fell into from getting too much money, and nothing to do – and a snuff of a candle. When going to bed last night, a little in liquor, what does he do but takes the candle, and sticks it up against the head of his bed, as he used oftentimes to do, without detriment, in the cabin where he was reared, against the mud wall.' (1: 308)

The fact that Johnny forgets whom *and* where he now is leads *directly* to the death of this future Earl of Glenthorn: he dies precisely because he adheres to the lineaments of his former status. Observing that the candle set fire to a curtain and then Johnny's bed, the heartbroken Christy informs Glenthorn, "'before he waked at all, it appears the unfortunit *cratur* was smothered'" (1: 308). Although Christy manages to save himself and his wife, neither 'Lady Glenthorn's' relations *nor* any of the family's servants did anything to assist them. No one, Christy recalls, "'thought . . . to save any thing at all, but just what they could for themselves'" (1: 308). Observing that "'there's nothing remaining of the castle but the stones'", Christy therefore writes "'to beg'" his foster brother, '"being married . . . to miss Delamere, that is the *hare* at law, [to] take possession of all immediately, for I am as good as dead, and will give no hindrance'" (1: 308). Explicitly, Christy is here offering Glenthorn his material and his ontological 'holdings'; he is intimating that he will vacate *all* of his (e)states if his foster brother comes back.

By having Christy plead with her reformed hero to "' come to reign over us again'", Edgeworth appears to immediately satisfy the familial and colonial imperatives that frame this text and all of her Irish writing (1: 308). She implies that would-be rulers of Ireland *must* replicate Glenthorn's example by assuming the lineaments of an Edgeworthian identity, and insists that this will inevitably efface questions of legitimacy in Ireland and facilitate the nation's reform. In order to facilitate this argument, Edgeworth once more draws upon the amnesia motif of romance, and she intimates that *all* of Ireland's inhabitants will soon learn to forget the difficulties of their past. The members of the Protestant Ascendancy will cheerfully embrace the lineaments of their reformed (Edgeworthian) identities, she avers, and, dazzled by its evident superiority, the native Irish will forget that they were ever anything more than the willing subjects of this class. When Glenthorn initially informs his foster brother that he is, in truth, "'of a *ra-al* good *ould* family born'", Christy at first crucially mistakes his meaning (1: 274). Believing that is

referring to the O'Donoghoe family's Milesian identity, he insists that he neither thinks upon, nor mourns, the passing of this life:

> 'Och!' said he, laughing and scratching his head, 'your honour's jesting me about them kings of Ireland, that they say the O'Donoghoes was once: but that's what I never think *on*, that's all idle talk for the like of me, for sure that's a long time ago, and what use going back to it? One might as well be going back to Adam, that was the father of all, but which makes no differ now.' (1: 274)

Similarly, when Christy writes to beg Glenthorn to return to Ireland, he not only insists, as we have seen, that he will be no "'hindrance'", but also that he will "go back to [his] forge, and, by the help of God, forget at [his] work what has passed'" (1: 308). This emphasis in Ennui manifestly rehearses the didactic implications of the preface to Castle Rackrent: it intimates that, in the light of the post-Union dawn, the native Irish are cheerfully casting off their former (unreformed) state.

Despite this particular argument in Edgeworth's narrative, *Glenthorn's* reactions following his discovery that he is not the rightful earl engage with, and destabilize, the didactic imperatives that impel her story. Rejecting the suggestion of Christy O'Donoghoe's wife that he could continue to live with the new earl and his family at Glenthorn Castle, Glenthorn manifests a significant reluctance to live as a 'subject' upon his former holdings. "'If your honour could live on here, and share with us'", Christy observes, "'But I see your honour's displeased at my naming *that*'" (1: 277). Similarly, in tracing the difficulties and regrets that he encounters in coming to terms with his 'new' condition, Glenthorn expresses his desire to once more enjoy the privileges, and, pointedly, the *power* of his former status. "[R]eview[ing] the whole of my past life", he observes,

> I considered . . . how little advantage I had derived from my education, and from all my opportunities of acquiring knowledge. It had been in my power to associate with persons of the highest talents, and of the best information, in the British dominions; yet I had devoted my youth to loungers, and gamesters, and epicures, and knew that scarcely a trace of my existence remained in the minds of those selfish beings, who once called themselves my friends. I wished that I could live my life over again; and I felt that, were it in my power, I should live in a manner very different from that in which I had fooled away existence. (1: 283)

In point of fact, of course, Glenthorn here reviews an "existence" that was never truly his own; to put this another way, he explicitly mourns and desires to (re)live the Earl of Glenthorn's life. The fact that he eventually satisfies this ambition raises a very significant question for the reader of Glenthorn's "Memoirs": namely, how truthful is his representation of his life? Although the explicit emphasis of his text is that he "endure[d]" the "pains" of reform in order to win Cecilia Delamere's "applause", his musings following the first "twelvemonth" of his marriage intimate that his may be an act of singularly duplicitous narration (1: 303, 307). Significantly noting that it was neither Cecilia nor Lord Y, but, rather, Mr. Devereux and Lady Geraldine who "first awakened my dormant intellects, made me know that I had a heart, and that I was capable of forming a character for myself", Glenthorn further admits, "The loss of my estate continued the course of my education, *forced me to exert my own powers*, and to rely upon myself" (1: 307) (My emphasis). Immediately raising the question of the expediency of Glenthorn's relationship with Cecilia, this also helps to account for the peculiar tension that informs his depiction of Lady Geraldine in his narrative. If Cecilia *is* his projected reader, it is much more understandable that Glenthorn should seek to efface the extent to which he was both attracted and influenced by Lady Geraldine; for Cecilia's sake, he must insist that it was *she* who first truly captivated him and inspired his reform.

In this context, then, Glenthorn insists that he was not only caught off guard by the "singularities" of Lady Geraldine's "character", but also that he was prompted to act *despite* himself by this "representative of an ancient house" (1: 212). As he would have it, he was unwillingly intoxicated by Lady Geraldine's peculiar powers and this unfortunately played into the hands of their matchmaking friends and relations. Strolling together one day through the grounds of Ormsby Villa where they were staying, Glenthorn recalls that he and Lady Geraldine were locked by others into "the temple of Minerva" in the villa's grounds (1: 237). Conscious that such "locking-up" usually ends "in matrimony", Lady

Geraldine assured Glenthorn she had no suspicion of his having played any part in the ""vulgar manoeuvre"" (1: 238). Although he has previously declared his determination not to be ensnared by Lady Geraldine, Glenthorn remembers that he immediately forgot all of his "prudential arrangements", and suddenly found himself "at her ladyship's feet, and making very serious love" (1: 238). With one eye on Cecilia, his projected reader, however, he protests that he was not responsible for this behaviour; it all transpired "before [he] knew where [he] was" (1: 238).

Despite his protestations throughout his narrative, the overwhelming implication of Glenthorn's 'memoirs' is that he *was* seriously attracted to Lady Geraldine, and that this attraction was to a large part due to her ability to peculiarly touch his *Irish* heart. Although he doesn't admit this directly, Glenthorn's intimation is that he was attracted to Lady Geraldine *because* she so eloquently represented Ireland and the Irish way of life. Recalling their first meeting, Glenthorn recalls how the manifest originality of Lady Geraldine's character encouraged him to consider her "with more attention than I had ever bestowed on any other woman. The words *striking – fascinating – bewitching*, occurred to me as I looked at her and heard her speak" (1: 211). "[P]ositively determined not to like her, [as he] dreaded so much the idea of a second Hymen",[46] Glenthorn nonetheless admits that "fresh singularities" in Lady Geraldine's character continued to strike him (1: 211-12). The fact that Lady Geraldine continually succeeded in prompting him to act despite himself nonetheless alarmed Glenthorn; as he puts it, "A slight degree of fear of lady Geraldine's powers kept my attention alert" (1: 211).

"Confident of her talents, conscious of her charms, and secure of her station, lady Geraldine", according to Glenthorn, "gave free scope to her high spirits, her fancy, and her turn for ridicule. She looked, spoke, and acted, like a person privileged to think, say, and do, what she pleased" (1: 212). What 'pleased' Lady Geraldine, of course, was to expose the affectation of others; in particular, to reveal the foibles of those who would denigrate

their own country. "[A]mongst the company of Ormsby Villa", Glenthorn thus observes, were

> a Mrs Norton and lady Hauton . . . whom I had never met in any of the higher circles in London, who were persons of no consequence and of no marked character in their own country, [who] made, it seems, a prodigious *sensation* when they came over to Ireland, and turned the heads of half Dublin by the extravagance of their dress, the impertinence of their airs, and the audacity of their conduct. (1: 226-27)

By coming to Ireland, Edgeworth implies, Mrs. Norton and Lady Hauton succeed in (re)defining their selves at the expense of others; they profit by the gullibility of those who are predisposed to believe that the Irish are a necessarily inferior race. Unlike the rest of the company, Lady Geraldine's powers of perception allow her to see through Mrs. Norton and Lady Hauton's affectation. Perceiving that, although these "'have made such a noise in Ireland, [they] have been little heard of in England'", she insists that the Irish should not "'abase'" themselves by seeking a "'pattern'" of these English ladies (1: 229, 227). "'O! my dear countrywomen'", she observes, "'let us never stoop to admire and imitate these second-hand airs and graces, follies and vices. Let us dare to be ourselves!'" (1: 229). This in the first instance immediately illustrates a theme that is central to all of Edgeworth's writing; in The Absentee, for example, it is the affected Lady Clonbrony's deprecation of Ireland and of all things Irish that prompts the elderly Lady Oranmore to an eloquent defence of her country (5: 48). Lady Geraldine's exclamation also has a further significance in that it once again intimates that Glenthorn's is a peculiarly receptive (native Irish) "heart" (1: 229). Noting that his eyes were "fixed upon [Lady Geraldine's] animated countenance" as she was speaking, Glenthorn observes, "I believe, I continued gazing even after her voice ceased" (1: 229). Transfixed by Lady Geraldine at this instant, Glenthorn insists that she "wakened dormant feelings in [his] heart" (1: 229). Like Ellinor before her, in other words, Lady Geraldine "made [Glenthorn] sensible that [he] had a[n] [Irish] soul, and . . . was *superior* to the puppets with whom [he] had been classed" (1: 229) (My emphasis).

Edgeworth is clearly unable to countenance the proposition of a union between this lady and her hero in her narrative, however, for, as Marilyn Butler points out, Lady Geraldine's name not only "links her to the Fitzgeralds or Geraldines, for centuries the dominant aristocratic family in the Irish Midlands, where the Edgeworths lived", but also acts as "a reminder of the highest-ranking United Irishman, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who died in prison after his capture in the 1798 rebellion".[47] In order to facilitate her ambition to produce an image of Ireland where such uncomfortable reminders of the nation's (rebellious) past are effaced, or disguised, Edgeworth sends Lady Geraldine off to India with Cecil Devereux, and this clears the way for Glenthorn and Cecilia's eventual marriage. In effecting this union in her text, Edgeworth therefore ostensibly satisfies the colonial imperatives that impel all of her writing, and she implies that, in order to secure socio-political stability in Ireland, the nation's rulers must resist the (sometimes alluring) remnants of the past and submit to a process of Edgeworthian reform. While appearing to facilitate the didactic imperatives that impel the text, the conclusion of Ennui nonetheless challenges the very efficacy of this vision, and it reveals Edgeworth's peculiar awareness of the seductive power, and duplicity, of the native Irish race. Thus it is that, although Glenthorn emphasises that his "passion for the amiable and charming Cecilia was . . . motive sufficient to urge [him] to persevering intellectual labour" following Lady Geraldine and Cecil Devereux's departure to India and the loss of his estates, he himself appears to doubt the permanence of his transformation (1: 307). Immediately before he receives the letter wherein Christy begs him to return to Ireland, for example, Glenthorn wonders what the outcome would be if he were plunged once more into his former life: "Whether, if I were again a rich man, I should have sufficient voluntary exertion to take a due portion of mental and bodily exercise, I dare not pretend to determine, nor do I wish to be put to the trial" (1: 307). Similarly, when he notes that he and his wife will return to Ireland when the Glenthorn castle is finished "rebuilding", it is significant that Glenthorn

can only "flatter" himself that he "shall not relapse into indolence" upon his return (1: 308). In truth, the recognition that Glenthorn has already proven himself to be peculiarly susceptible to ontological temptation cannot be effaced from his narrative, and this disturbs the ostensible didactic conclusion of the text.

A similar tensions disrupts the didactic message of The Absentee, which, like Ennui and Ormond, revolves around the hero's return to his Irish home. Newly come down from his college at Cambridge, Lord Colambre rejoins his parents in London, and at once perceives that confusion of identity is responsible for his family's prolonged absence from their Irish estates. Impelled by her desire to convince the circles in which she moves that she is truly "'*Henglish*, born in *Hoxfordshire*'", Lady Clonbrony insists upon remaining in London, and "works . . . hard, and pays . . . high" as a result of her affectation (5: 5-6). Not noticing "that the renegado cowardice with which she denied, abjured, and reviled her own country, gained [her] nothing but ridicule and contempt", Lady Clonbrony is also blind to the fact that her husband is being turned into a "'[n]othing, [or] [a] nobody'" as a result of her "*Londonomania*" (5: 8, 6, 153). Divorced from the time, place, and circumstances that truly define him, Lord Clonbrony is being slowly effaced by London life:

> Whilst lady Clonbrony, in consequence of her residence in London, had become more of a fine lady, lord Clonbrony, since he left Ireland, had become less of a gentleman. Lady Clonbrony, born an Englishwoman, disclaiming and disencumbering herself of all the Irish in town, had, by giving splendid entertainments, at an enormous expence, made her way into a certain set of fashionable company. But lord Clonbrony, who was somebody in Ireland, who was a great person in Dublin, found himself nobody in England, a mere cipher in London. (5: 20)

Colambre grows increasingly alarmed by his discoveries, particularly when he witnesses the effects of an affectation similar to that of his mother's on the family and fortune of Mr. Berryl, his Cambridge friend. Following the death of his father, the new Lord Berryl is horrified to discover that he has been left nothing more than the outward

trappings of his aristocratic status. "[W]ithout any income", he is unable to properly discharge his duties and obligations, and must choose between ignoring his father's "just debts" or letting "his mother and sisters starve" (5: 44). Pointedly, the text draws the moral that

> [a]ll this evil had arisen from lady Berryl's passion for living in London and at watering places. She had made her husband an ABSENTEE – an absentee from his home, his affairs, his duties, and his estate. The sea, the Irish Channel, did not, indeed, flow between him and his estate; but it was of little importance whether the separation was effected by land or water – the consequences, the negligence, the extravagance, were the same. (5: 44)

Although we shall see below that his return to Ireland is crucially impelled by his complicated relationship with Grace Nugent, his mother's ward, Colambre's journey 'home' is in the first place informed by his sense of ontological crisis or alienation. All too conscious of the difficulties of his father, he needs to discover for himself whether he too "'shall . . . be an absentee'" (5: 9).

Clearly representing one of Edgeworth's more detailed (re)workings in her fiction of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's 1782 return to Ireland, Colambre's return 'home' in The Absentee is likewise compelled by his conviction that a precise correlation necessarily exists between his own and his nation's identity. Thus he observes to his mother, he returns to Ireland "'[n]ot merely because it is my native country – but I wish to go thither – I desire to become acquainted with it – because it is the country in which my father's property lies, and from which we draw our subsistence'" (5: 59). To put this another way, he returns because he is beginning to believe, like Edgeworth's father, that "if it [is] in the power of any man to serve the country which [gives] him bread, he ought to sacrifice every inferior consideration, and . . . reside where he [can] be most useful".[48] For Colambre, as for Richard Lovell Edgeworth, the man and the nation are inextricably connected; each needs the other in order to survive.

Upon arriving in Dublin, Colambre is fortunate to make the acquaintance of Sir

James Brooke, " a very gentlemanlike, sensible-looking" English officer whose long experience of Ireland ideally places him to give the young traveller a crucial insight into Irish life (5: 64). Having it "in his power . . . to save [the young lord] from the common error of travellers - the deducing [of] general conclusions from a few particular cases, or arguing from exceptions, as if they were rules", Sir James persuades Colambre to reject his parents' "[mis]representations of [Dublin] society" and to assess "the reality" for himself (5: 65). Failing to observe "any of that confusion of ranks or predominance of vulgarity, of which his mother had complained", Colambre shares a story with Sir James that his mother had told him, but "without *giving up his authority*" (5: 66). Upon a visit to Dublin Castle, Lady Clonbrony told her son, she once had the misfortune to accidentally tread upon the "train" of a "lady" (5: 66). This individual angrily rebuked her for this offence in "a strong brogue", and Lady Clonbrony was later amazed to discover that this person was "a grocer's wife" (5: 66). Admitting that the story may be true, Sir James's argument is that it is representative of a very particular instant in Irish history: specifically, of that moment when the passing of the Act of Union temporarily disordered Irish affairs. As such, the story should be viewed as "one of the extraordinary cases which ought not pass into a general rule, - that it was a slight instance of that influence of temporary causes, from which no conclusion, as to national manners, should be drawn" (5: 66). Following the enactment of the Union, Sir James admits, "'most of the nobility and many of the principal families among the Irish commoners, either hurried in high hopes to London, or retired disgusted and in despair to their houses in the country. Immediately, in Dublin, commerce rose into the vacated seats of rank; wealth rose into the place of birth'" (5: 66). Echoing the sentiments of the preface to Castle Rackrent and of the Essay on Irish Bulls, this English officer further insists that the *eventual* results of the Act of Union justified its *immediate* effects. "'[N]ow it's all over'", as he puts it, "'we may acknowledge, that, perhaps, even those things which we felt most disagreeable at the time were productive of

eventual benefit'":

> 'That part of the Irish aristocracy, who, immediately upon the first incursions of the vulgarians, had fled in despair to their fastnesses in the country, hearing of the improvements which had gradually taken place in society, and assured of the final expulsion of the barbarians, ventured from their retreats, and returned to their posts in town. So that now . . . you find a society in Dublin composed of a most agreeable and salutary mixture of birth and education, gentility and knowledge, manner and matter; and you see pervading the whole new life and energy, new talent, new ambition, a desire and a determination to improve and be improved – a perception that higher distinction can now be obtained in almost all company, by genius and merit, than by airs and address . . .' (5: 66-67)

Armed with the benefit of Sir James's observations, Colambre properly commences his journey. He makes the acquaintance of the sister of Nicholas Garraghty, one of Lord Clonbrony's agents, and discovers that affectation is not confined to those of high birth. During a visit to the "villa" of this "grocer's lady", Colambre therefore realizes that his mother's inappropriate aspirations are precisely reflected by those of Mrs. Raffarty and her friends:

> It was the same desire to appear what they were not, the same vain ambition to vie with superior rank and fortune, or fashion, which actuated lady Clonbrony and Mrs. Raffarty; and whilst this ridiculous grocer's wife made herself the sport of some of her guests, lord Colambre sighed, from the reflection that what she was to them his mother was to persons in a higher rank of fashion (5: 68-69, 72).[49]

Disgusted by what he has seen of Dublin's mercantilist class, Colambre begins to lose sight of Sir James's warning that a traveller should never judge by exceptions as if they were rules, and it is this that renders him peculiarly vulnerable when he encounters Lady Dashfort and her daughter. "'[C]ounterfeits'" both, these "dangerous ladies" represent a very real threat to Colambre, for they seek to impose an inauthentic view of reality upon the young lord and to thereby frustrate his desire to become properly (re)acquainted with Ireland and the native Irish (5: 78, 76). Countering Colambre's insistence that he is quite safe from their influence as his "'heart is engaged'", Sir James warns his friend that this precise circumstance would render it peculiarly "'lady Dashfort's sport, and lady Isabel's joy'" to ensnare him (5: 75). "'[T]he fairer, the more amiable, the more beloved'"

Colambre's mistress, he notes, "'the greater the triumph, the greater the delight in giving pain'" (5: 75). While believing himself to be immune to their power, Colambre instead falls inexorably under their spell. Drawing him out "in defence of his beloved country, and [giving] him opportunities of appearing to advantage", Lady Dashfort perseveres, until, "exceptional as it was altogether, [her] conversation . . . [became] entertaining to him; and though he could never esteem, or feel in the least part interested about her, he began to allow that she could be agreeable" (5: 79-80). Lady Isabel for her part affects a "dignity, grace, and modesty" that convinces Colambre "that it was impossible all that he had seen could be acting. 'No woman, no young woman, could have such art'" (5: 76-77).

In making the acquaintance of the Dashforts, Colambre's powers of deduction are thus sorely tried, and his initial inability to see through their 'drama' has potentially disastrous implications:[50]

> It was [Lady Dashfort's] settled purpose to make the Irish and Ireland ridiculous and contemptible to lord Colambre; to disgust him with his native country; to make him abandon the wish of residing on his own estate. To confirm him an absentee was her object, previously to her ultimate plan of marrying him to her daughter. Her daughter was poor, she would therefore be glad to *get* an Irish peer for her; but would be very sorry, she said, to see Isabel banished to Ireland; and [Isabel] declared she could never bring herself to be buried alive in Clonbrony Castle. (5: 83)

While professing herself a friend to Ireland, Lady Dashfort seizes upon every opportunity to do or say "something to depreciate the country, or its inhabitants, in [Colambre's] estimation" (5: 84). Adept at "all the arts of misrepresentation", Lady Dashfort "knew how, not only to seize the ridiculous points, to make the most respectable people ridiculous, but . . . how to select the worst instances, the worst exceptions; and to produce them as examples, as precedents, from which to condemn whole classes, and establish general false conclusions respecting a nation" (5: 84). Introducing Colambre to Lord and Lady Killpatrick, she provides the young lord with the example of resident Irish landlords "who had lived always for the fashionable world, [and] had taken little pains to improve

the condition of their tenants" (5: 85). Trailing him in and out of the miserable hovels upon the Killpatrick estate, Lady Dashfort exposes Colambre to the "most self-sufficient ignorance, and the most illiberal spirit" of the Killpatrickstown "*squireens*", and therefore gradually satisfies her ambition "to weaken his enthusiasm" for his native land (5: 84, 86).

Potentially much more disastrous for Colambre, however, is the fact that the Dashforts also mount an insidious assault upon the character of Grace Nugent; this is the young woman whom he loves and who is, as a result, partly responsible for his decision to return to his native land. "[R]eceived" into the Clonbrony family when she was left an orphan, an essential point of The Absentee is that Grace secures Colambre's affection *precisely* because of her lack of affectation (5: 35). "[Q]uite above all double dealing", Grace "had no mental reservation – no metaphysical subtleties – but, with plain, unsophisticated morality, in good faith and simple truth, acted as she professed, thought what she said, and was that which she seemed to be" (5: 36). Increasingly convinced of his love for Grace, Colambre nonetheless believes a union with her to be impossible. Lady Clonbrony, the text notes,

> had too good an opinion of [her son's] understanding – to say nothing of his duty to his family, his pride, his rank, and his being her son – to let such an idea cross her imagination. As to her niece; in the first place, she was her niece, and first cousins should never marry, because they form no new connexions to strengthen the family interest, or raise its consequence. (5: 36)

Similarly, Colambre perceives that Grace is for her part "so well apprised, and so thoroughly convinced" of Lady Clonbrony's opinion, "that she never for one moment allowed herself to think of lord Colambre as a lover. Duty, honour, and gratitude – gratitude, the strong feeling and principle of her mind – forbade it" (5: 36). In returning to Ireland, Colambre is therefore impelled not only by his desire to decide for himself whether he will emulate his father's absentee example, but also by his ambition to thwart his mother's matchmaking plans. Aware that she is intent on marrying him to Miss Broadhurst, an English heiress, Colambre admits to the "'dreadfully shocked'" Lady

Clonbrony that his "'affections are engaged to another person'", but insists that he "'shall not take any step'" without his parents' consent (5: 57). In the meantime, he declares, he will reside upon his father's Irish estates.

Perceiving Colambre's affection for Grace, Lady Dashfort traces her own genealogy for the young lord, expressing a false desire to pass over one "'little blot'" in her family's "'scutcheon . . . that prudent match of great uncle John's . . . [whereby he married] into *that* family [the St. Omars], where, you know, all the men were not *sans peur*, and none of the women *sans reproche*'" (5: 86). Insisting that the maiden name of Grace's mother was not Reynolds, as Colambre believes, but St. Omar, Lady Dashfort thus not only implies that Miss St. Omar was never married, but also succeeds in linking Grace to a Catholic, Jacobite past. As W.J. McCormack points out, the name Nugent in itself implies "an Irish, aristocratic, Jacobite background" (142), while that of St. Omar recalls the town of St. Omer in Northern France, the site of a Jesuit College.[51] Colambre already has "the greatest dread of marrying any woman whose mother had conducted herself ill", so, as Lady Dashfort has anticipated, he is devastated by the apparent implications of Grace's lineage (5: 88). Lady Clonbrony's answer to her son's letter of enquiry reveals that Grace's "'mother's maiden name was *St. Omar*; and there was a *faux pas*, certainly'", but, knowing that "[n]othing could be more disadvantageous to Grace than to have [this story] revived'", the Clonbronys "'kept it secret'" (5: 96). At this moment, all of Colambre's "hopes, [and] plans of future happiness" appear to be irrevocably "shaken to their very foundation"; feeling as he does, he cannot take such a wife (5: 88).

It is for this reason that the presence of Count O'Halloran in The Absentee is so important, for this "old man who spends his days hunting the traditional game of the island and his nights poring over its great names and monuments represents an ideal past. . . . [and] an Ireland which can and does give Colambre strength and direction".[52] Thus it is the Count who weakens the Dashforts' influence over Colambre, by causing Lady Dashfort

to reveal that she is entirely unmoved by the report of a gross insult that an English officer of her acquaintance has paid to the elderly Lady Oranmore and her daughters. Having passed off his mistress as his wife to Lady Oranmore, this officer allowed her ladyship to "send her carriage for this woman . . .[so] that she . . . dined at [the] Oranmore [home]" (5: 97). By insisting that she will pretend to be "'shocked! shocked to death!'" at this piece of effrontery, the text notes that Lady Dashfort in fact makes "a great mistake" (5: 98). At this instance, it observes, Colambre's "eyes began to open to lady Dashfort's character; and he was, from this moment, freed from her power" (5: 98). Very shortly after this incident, Colambre is similarly made aware of the duplicity of Lady Isabel, when he accidentally overhears a conversation that she has with Elizabeth, "one of the young ladies of the [Killpatrick] house" (5: 98). Admitting that she has only "'flirted'" with a certain Lord de Cressy in order "'to plague his wife'", Isabel's insistence is that her detestation of this lady is such "'that, to purchase the pleasure of making her feel the pangs of jealousy for one hour, look, I would this moment lay down this finger and let it be cut off'":

> The face, the whole figure of lady Isabel, at this moment, appeared to lord Colambre suddenly metamorphosed; instead of the soft, gentle, amiable female, all sweet charity and tender sympathy, formed to love and to be loved, he beheld one possessed and convulsed by an evil spirit – her beauty, if beauty it could be called, the beauty of a fiend. (5: 98)

Patently functioning as what Frye would term "recognition scenes" in the narrative, these episodes illustrate why Edgeworth's depiction of the Dashforts in The Absentee is so important (136). In the first instance, while the heroes and heroines of romance typically exist to symbolize a contrast between two worlds, so, too, it must be remembered, do the *villains*. Clearly representing the 'demonic' realm in The Absentee, the Dashforts' desires are implicitly satanic; their ambition is to drag Colambre into an 'underworld' existence by preventing him from getting a proper view of the Irish nation and race. Manifestly supporting Frye's argument that the "standard escape device of romance is that of escape through a shift of identity" (136), Colambre therefore begins his ascent from the lower

world represented by the Dashforts and, indeed, by his father's 'bad agent', Nicholas Garraghty, only once he sees through the formers' machinations:

> Lord Colambre, to the utter astonishment and disappointment of lady Dashfort, and to the still greater mortification of lady Isabel, announced this night that it was necessary he should immediately pursue his tour in Ireland . . . . [W]hen he was gone, lady Dashfort exclaimed, 'That man has escaped from me.' (5: 99).

Colambre resolves to "to make himself amends for the time he [has] lost [with the Dashforts], by seeing with his own eyes, and judging with his own understanding, of the country and its inhabitants, during the remainder of the time he was to stay in Ireland", and, significantly, he elects to travel "*incognito*" through his father's estates (5: 100-01). By *voluntarily* suspending his identity, his ambition is to render himself more capable of perceiving how he may contribute to his own and his nation's reform. Moving between the two parts of his father's patrimony, Colambre in due course receives a valuable existential lesson; he learns, that is, what constitutes a good or a bad agent, and, in so doing, he begins to perceive the type of landlord that he and Lord Clonbrony should *become*. Upon the Colambre estate, he is first of all impressed by the exemplary Mr. Burke, who practices Richard Lovell Edgeworth's model of landlord/tenant relations upon this part of Lord Clonbrony's holdings. As an Irish inn-keeper intimates, Mr. Burke "'encourage[s] the improving tenant; and show[s] no favour or affection, but justice, which comes even to all, and does best for all at the long run; and [resides] always in the country'" (5: 103). Further, he calls for "'no duty work[,] . . . no presents, nor *glove money*, nor *sealing money* even'", and is scrupulously fair when demanding rent or negotiating a lease (5: 103). The Clonbrony part of his father's estates, Colambre discovers, are on the other hand entirely mismanaged by the symbolically named "'[O]ld Nick'" Garraghty and his brother, "'St. Dennis'" (5: 109). As McCormack and Walker point out, "'Old Nick' is a familiar, euphemistic name for Satan", and "St. Dennis" stands for "Dennis, the first bishop of Paris, [who] was beheaded in the 3rd century; in legend, he walked some distance after he was

decapitated, carrying his head in his hands" (309). "Given the contemporary war with France, and the revolutionary turmoil of the previous two and a half decades", they observe, "France's patron saint and the devil might well be brothers, just as they stand for the evil administration (and likely collapse) of Irish landlordism" (309). Together, Colambre realizes, Old Nick Garraghty and his brother have combined to drag down the Clonbrony part of his father's patrimony, and condemned his unfortunate tenants to an underworld life. Clonbrony therefore functions as

> 'the picture . . . of that to which an Irish estate and Irish tenantry may be degraded in the absence of those whose duty and interest it is to reside in Ireland, to uphold justice by example and authority; but who, neglecting this duty, commit power to bad hands and bad hearts – abandon their tenantry to oppression, and their property to ruin.' (5: 125)

Returning home just in time to prevent Nicholas Garraghty from defrauding his father,[53] Colambre shares with his family the lessons of his fateful journey, and he impresses upon his mother in particular the fact that affectation has national as well as personal consequences. He notes,

> 'We have forced our way into [London society's] frozen circles; we have been permitted to breathe in these elevated regions of fashion; we have it to say, that the duke of *this*, and my lady *that*, are of our acquaintance. – We may say more: we may boast that we have vied with those whom we could never equal. And at what expence have we done all this? For a single season, the last winter (I will go no farther), at the expence of a great part of your timber, the growth of a century – swallowed in the entertainments of one winter in London! Our hills to be bare for another half century to come! But let the trees go: I think more of your tenants – of those left under the tyranny of a bad agent, at the expence of every comfort, every hope they enjoyed! – tenants, who were thriving and prosperous; who used to smile upon you, and to bless you [and Lord Clonbrony] both!' (5: 154)

Likewise drawing Lady Clonbrony's attention to how her "*Londonomania*" has affected his father, Colambre insists it has

> 'forced [Lord Clonbrony] away from [his] home, deprived [him] of his objects and his occupations, compelled [him] to live in London, or at watering-places, where he could find no employments that were suitable to him – set [him] down, late in life, in the midst of strangers, to him cold and reserved – himself to proud to bend to those who disdained him as an Irishman – is he not more to be pitied that blamed for . . . the degradation which has ensued?' (5: 154)

Emphasising that Lady Clonbrony's efforts have won her nothing but ridicule from those whom she most desires to impress, Edgeworth uses the amnesia motif of romance to diffuse the socio-political difficulties threatening the Irish nation. Colambre begs his mother to "'restore'" her husband to his proper condition, inferring that, if she 'remembers' her duties to the Clonbronys' tenants, it will be easy for the family to efface the mistakes of their past (5: 154). The native Irish are "'an unsophisticated people . . . [with] grateful hearts'", he notes, and these long remain "'warm with the remembrance of [the] kindness'" of past times (5: 155). Patently intended to diffuse the several anxieties of Edgeworth's Protestant Ascendancy readers, Colambre's insistence is that the Clonbronys may be assured of the loyalty of their tenants despite years of ill treatment and neglect. His emphasis is that the tenants are "'still blessing [his mother] for favours long since conferred'", and have effectively forgotten everything except her kindness and their desire "'to see [her] once more'" (5: 155). Countering Lady Clonbrony's assertion that she "'thought all in Ireland must have forgotten me, it is now so long since I was at home'", Colambre avers, "'You are not forgotten in Ireland by any rank, I can answer for that'" (5: 155).

Having used romance in order to impress both her hero *and* her reader with the undesirable nature of the absentee existence, Edgeworth further uses the genre's conventions to clear up the shadow hanging over Grace Nugent's 'past'. Although more than ever convinced of his love for Grace, Colambre cannot bring himself to marry her so long as he believes that her mother was not *sans reproche*. Rather than join his family on their return to Ireland, he therefore resolves to join the army and travel. Crucially, Colambre's plans are transformed by the unexpected appearance of Count O'Halloran in London. Like Thady in Castle Rackrent, or Ellinor in Ennui, he, too, has marvellous powers of recollection, and his memories finally prove that Grace Nugent is in fact an entirely suitable prospective bride for Colambre. Recalling his "particular regard" for

Captain Reynolds, "a young English officer who had been at the same time with him in the Austrian service", Count O'Halloran tells his astonished friend that this gentleman "'privately married . . . a miss St. Omar'", and that there was definitely documentary proof of this marriage (5: 173). In the type of set-piece so beloved of romances, Colambre and Sir James Brooke subsequently recover the marriage certificate of Grace's mother and father; it has been languishing for years tied up in "a bundle of old newspapers at the bottom of a trunk" (5: 176). As a result of this, Grace is revealed to be not only "'legitimate'", but also the heiress of the vast estate of the English "Ralph Reynolds"; in other words, she is discovered to be the type of young lady who would make an eminently suitable marriage partner for *any* young lord (5: 195, 176).

As Mary Jean Corbett observes, an essential point about this revelation in The Absentee is that it demonstrates that Grace's "ties to Ireland" are "based less in biology than in [what McCormack calls] 'early association'",[54] a fact that helps to explain, perhaps, why Edgeworth's narrative so quickly dismisses the prospect of Colambre and Miss Broadhurst's "'projected'" marriage (5: 55). Unlike Grace, Miss Broadhurst is not particularly attached to Ireland and so, in Edgeworth's terms, she is not in a position to properly promote the future harmony of Anglo-Irish relations. In choosing a bride, Edgeworth insists, Colambre must look to the state of his future wife's national affections, rather than to that of her bank balance; in other words, he must satisfy himself that his choice of bride is a true "'friend'" to Ireland in her heart (5: 59). With Grace by his side, Edgeworth intimates, Colambre will be ideally placed to help shape Ireland's future, as neither he nor the future Lady Clonbrony will ever "'forget'" their sense of "duty and patriotism" to that nation following their marriage (5: 59, 9).

By concluding The Absentee with a "LETTER" purportedly written by a native Irish man to his brother in London, however, Edgeworth introduces some incredibly subversive resonances into her text (5: 199). Firstly, and most obviously, Larry Brady's

'narration' of the Clonbronys' 'homecoming' reveals the aspirational nature of Edgeworth's narrative; in other words, it expertly demonstrates the reasons why Edgeworth draws so heavily upon romance conventions in order to convince her readers that *all* of Ireland's absentee landlords will be joyfully welcomed 'home' by the native Irish race. Reflecting Frye's contention that "[t]he closer romance comes to a world of original identity, the more clearly something of the symbolism of the garden of Eden reappears, with the social setting reduced to the love of individual men and women within an order of nature which has been reconciled to humanity" (149), Larry thus describes a scene where the Clonbronys are welcomed back to Ireland by *nature* as well as their tenants. He observes in his letter,

> 'we all got to the great gate of the park before sunset, and as fine an evening as ever you see; with the sun shining on the tops of the trees, as the ladies noticed; the leaves changed, but not dropped, though so late in the season. I believe the leaves knew what they were about, and kept on, on purpose to welcome them; and the birds were singing, and I stopped whistling, that they might hear them; but sorrow bit could they hear when they got to the park gate, for there was such a crowd, and such a shout, as you never see – and they had the horses off every carriage entirely, and drew 'em home, with blessings, through the park.' (5: 201)

If all of this clearly demonstrates the colonial anxiety that impels Edgeworth's narrative, so, too, does the fact that Colambre's symbolic marriage with Grace is never actually accomplished within the text. Instead, Larry relates to his brother the *dream* that he has had of this union:

> 'Oh! how I hope what I guess will come true, and I've *rason* to believe it will, for I dreamt in my bed last night it did. But keep yourself to yourself – that miss Nugent (who is no more miss Nugent, they say, but miss Reynolds, and has a new found grandfather, and is a big heiress, which she did not want in my eyes, nor in my young lord's), I've a notion, will be sometime, and may be sooner than is expected, my lady viscountess Colambre – so haste to the wedding.' (5: 203)

Larry's insistence that he has only *dreamed* of Colambre's marriage to Grace effectively suspends the vision of harmonious landlord/tenant relations towards which Edgeworth works in her narrative; to all intents and purposes, it comes to exist only in the native Irish man's dream-like state. This in the first place demonstrates *Edgeworth's* awareness that

the paradigm that she is unfolding is both aspirational and conditional upon the complicity of the native Irish, but I would suggest that it also intimates her perception that, in order to govern successfully, the Ascendancy and the English will have to acknowledge and *respect* the peculiar power of their dependents. Although from here it is but a short step to the processes of 'identification' and union that Edgeworth promotes throughout her writing, her protracted treatment of her protagonists' marriage in The Absentee illuminates her awareness that, for the English at least, these may exact too high of an ontological price. By delaying Colambre and Grace's marriage, after all, Edgeworth also delays the consummation of their union; in romance terms, she further "postpone[s] [Grace's] first sexual act" (Frye 72-73). In so doing, Edgeworth protects her heroine from what Frye calls "the annihilation of . . . identity" that follows the loss of virginity; she ensures that Grace preserves her virgin (English) state (86). This "refusal to conclude with wedding bells", as McCormack puts it, "avoids easy sentiment and acknowledges the persisting difficulties in bringing Catholic and Protestant, Jacobite and Williamite, together" (165), but it also demonstrates Edgeworth's perception that the English may not be prepared to take the final step that is necessary in order to promote a truly successful (national) 'marriage'. In order for such a union to be accomplished, *both* partners must be willing to compromise and, despite their protestations to the contrary, Edgeworth intimates, the English are still not ready to willingly embrace the lineaments of Irish life.

Edgeworth develops these several themes in Ormond, which is her last 'great' Irish text. Written during the final illness of her father, it is clear from the memoirs and her letters that the production of this novel was, for Edgeworth, a highly charged affair.[55] Knowing that this tale would *literally* be the last that she would put into his hands, she intended it to function as tribute to his vision, one that would finally impress upon her reader the incontrovertible efficacy of his paradigm of Anglo-Irish relations. Ormond, an ill-educated, English foundling, only achieves moral and ontological maturity once he

replicates Richard Lovell Edgeworth's example, and his romance journey therefore serves as Edgeworth's last great fictional vindication of her father's life.

Left "at nurse in an Irish cabin", Ormond is taken as a young child into the home of the apostate Sir Ulick O'Shane; twin events, the text implies, which combine to adversely affect his development (5: 11). "'[N]ever the same man'" since he "'*conformed*'", Sir Ulick engages in constant acts of cynical self-creation, and is, thus, an entirely unsuitable guardian, for either Ormond *or* the Irish race (8: 29).[56] Arguing "that there was no use in giving Harry Ormond the education of an estated gentleman, when he was not likely to have an estate", Sir Ulick allows the boy to grow up "with all the faults that were incident to his natural violence of passions, and that might necessarily be expected from his neglected and deficient education" (8: 11). More than this, he also exposes Ormond to 'ontological contamination' by allowing him to spend huge tracts of his childhood upon Cornelius O'Shane's *determinedly* Irish estates. Treated as the "prince presumptive" of the Black Islands, Ormond is clearly in danger of being overwhelmed by "[K]ing *Corny*" and his dependents (8: 35, 29). These "proclaim" him as their future ruler, that is, *because* they expect him live out their expectations of his future life (8: 30). "When he was invested with [a] petty principality", Edgeworth therefore observes,

> it was expected of him to give a dinner and a dance to the island: so he gave a dinner and a dance, and every body said he was a fine fellow, and had the spirit of a prince. 'King Corny, God bless him! couldn't go astray in his choice of a favourite – long life to him and Prince Harry! and no doubt there'd be fine hunting, and shooting, and coursing continually. Well, was not it a happy thing for the islands, when Harry Ormond first set foot on them? From a boy 'twas *a*sy to see what a man he'd be. Long may he live to *reign* over us!' (8:49)

Upon the Black Islands, the text pointedly observes, an inappropriate "love of popularity seize[s]" Ormond, blinding him to the fact that "[t]o be popular among the unknown, unheard-of inhabitants" of the islands could not "be an object to any man of common sense" (8: 50). Nonetheless, "the fact was as is here stated; and let those who hear it with a disdainful smile, recollect that whether in Paris, London, or the Black

Islands, the mob are, in all essential points, pretty nearly the same" (8: 50).

This last point is crucial, of course, for it expertly illustrates a contention that is central to this text and all of Edgeworth's writing. As she traces Ormond's wanderings between Castle Hermitage, the Black Islands, and Paris, Edgeworth simultaneously impresses upon her readers her conviction that an individual's ontological recovery is dependent upon the essential integrity of his character rather than upon his location; *any* place, she insists, can either impede or facilitate his reform. When he was a carefree child with no responsibilities, Edgeworth intimates, Ormond did, indeed, find an idyllic world upon the Black Islands. "The hunting and shooting, and the life of lawless freedom he led on the Islands, had been delightful", and he did not *then* perceive the danger of *unreservedly* believing King Corny to be "the richest, the greatest, the happiest of men" (8: 36). As he grows up, though, Ormond's relationship to Corny inevitably changes, so that even *he* begins to perceive that there may be demons lurking upon the Black Islands estates. Following his accidental wounding of Moriarty Carroll,[57] for example, Ormond becomes increasingly aware of his need to "'improve'" himself, and, when he is banished to the Black Islands by Sir Ulick, he begins "to question the utility and real grandeur of some of those things which had struck his childish imagination" (8: 27, 37). Doubting, for example, "whether it were worthy of a king or a gentleman to be his own shoemaker, hatter, and tailor", Ormond in other words begins to perceive that Corny should exercise a greater self-consciousness in dealing with his subjects; specifically, that he should conduct himself as befits his station (8: 37). Although it is not explicitly stated in the text, Ormond's sentiments here also represent an oblique criticism of King Corny as a ruler. As Adam Smith points out in his An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776): "It is the great multiplication of the productions of all the different arts, in consequence of the division of labour, which occasions, in a well-governed society, that universal opulence which extends itself to the lowest ranks of the people".[58] "Every

workman has a great quantity of his own work to dispose of . . . and every other workman being in exactly the same situation, he is enabled to exchange a great quantity of his own goods for a great quantity, or, what comes to the same thing, for the price of a great quantity of their theirs" (115). This, in its turn, leads to the 'diffusion' of "a general plenty . . . through all the different ranks of . . . society" (115). Edgeworth manifestly draws upon Smith's arguments in her depiction of King Corny in Ormond, intimating that, by acting as his own shoemaker, hatter, and tailor, King Corny is effectively clinging to a version of his 'self' that will prove ultimately detrimental to his island race.

Ormond is likewise enlightened as to the true nature of Castle Hermitage, when the revelation that he has inherited "a very considerable property" prompts Sir Ulick to recall his ward to his estate (8: 126). "After having lived so long in retirement" upon the Black Islands, Castle Hermitage at first appears an "'earthly Paradise'" to Ormond, until, that is, he begins to perceive that each of its inhabitants variously affects an inauthentic form (8: 130-31). "During the course of the first three weeks", he is "three times in imminent danger of falling in love", but frees himself from the power of the Misses Darrell and Miss Lardner once he sees through their affectation (8: 132). Of much more consequence for Ormond, however, are the concerted, but subtle efforts that Sir Ulick makes to secure an ascendancy over his young ward's life. Introducing him "to some of those who had distinguished themselves in political life", Sir Ulick is delighted when he perceives that Ormond is catching "their spirit" and that "the noble ambition" to "distinguish" himself in the world is "rising in his mind" (8: 137). Sir Ulick is intent upon "debasing [this ambition] to servile purposes", and so Ormond will have to free himself of his guardian's influence before he can reach moral maturity (8: 137).

This process takes a long time, and Ormond only truly escapes Sir Ulick's clutches once he satisfies his ambition to live "'independently and happily, with some charming, amiable woman'" upon "'a comfortable house and estate'" (8: 136). Significantly, this

aspiration is crucially informed by his reading. His choice of books, together with the exemplary Lady Annaly's observation that "'far the greatest part of our happiness or misery in life depends upon ourselves'", eventually convinces Ormond that he can transform his existence and lead a useful and happy life (8: 27). Immersing himself at first in The History of Tom Jones (1749), Ormond is initially (inappropriately) "charmed by the character" of Henry Fielding's hero, and he very nearly reaps what Edgeworth intimates are the *inevitably* bad rewards of trying to live out this text (8: 51). "[W]ith his head full" of the novel", he is "prone to run into danger . . . and rashly ready to hurry on [Peggy Sheridan,] an innocent girl to her destruction" (8: 52). Although prevented from seducing Peggy by the discovery that she is the sweetheart of Moriarty Carroll, the text emphasises that this is a solitary example of good behaviour and that "no other scrap of good can be found of which to make any thing in his favour for several months to come" (8: 54). It observes,

> Whether Tom Jones was still too much, and lady Annaly too little, in his head - whether it was that king Corny's example and precepts were not always edifying – whether this young man had been prepared by previous errors of example and education – or whether he fell into mischief, because he had nothing else to do in [the] Black Islands; certain it is, that from the operation of some or all of these causes conjointly he deteriorated sadly. He took to 'vagrant courses,' in which the muse forbears to follow him. (8: 54)

Fortunately for Ormond, Lady Annaly sends him a box of books, and Samuel Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison (1753) "completely counteracted in his mind the effects of his late study" (8: 56). "[I]nspired" with what the text significantly denotes as "virtuous emulation", Ormond resolves "to be a *gentleman* in the best and highest sense of the word":

> In sir Charles Grandison's history he read that of a gentleman, who, fulfilling every duty of his station in society, eminently *useful*, respected and beloved, as brother, friend, master of a family, guardian, and head of a large estate, was admired by his own sex, and . . . loved, passionately loved, by women – not by the low and profligate, but by the highest and most accomplished of the sex. (8: 56)

Clearly rehearsing themes that we have seen are central to all of Edgeworth's writing, this

species of reading predisposes Ormond to appreciate Dr. Cambray's careful guidance, and consequently, to perceive the *national* significance of Sir Herbert Annaly's paradigm for landlord/tenant reform.[59] An essential point of Ormond is that, like Edgeworth's father, Lady Annaly's son "governed neither by threats, punishments, abuse, nor tyranny; nor yet did he govern by promises nor bribery, *favour* and *protection*, like Sir Ulick" (8: 161). Treating his tenants, instead, "as reasonable beings, and as his fellow-creatures, whom he wished to improve, that he might make them and himself happy", Sir Herbert thus identifies his interests with those of his tenants and, "[b]y the sacrifice of his own immediate interest, and by great personal exertion, strict justice, and a generous and well secured system of reward . . . produced a considerable change for the better in the morals and habits of the people" (8: 161-62).

The fact that Sir Herbert's efforts are explicitly informed by the "domestic happiness" that he enjoys with his mother and sister at Annaly is similarly crucial to Edgeworth's narrative (8: 159). As we have already seen in relation to Castle Rackrent, Ennui, and The Absentee, Ormond *must* endeavour to recreate this domestic happiness in *his* home, and must, therefore, exercise extreme discretion in choosing his future wife. In this context, King Corny's daughter is profoundly wrong for Ormond, firstly because she has been "'engaged'" by her father to "'White Connal, of Glynn – from her birth'" (8: 36), and secondly because her early education has been entirely mismanaged. As a result of her determination that she and her niece should one day reside in Paris, "*Mademoiselle*" O'Faley,[60] the text implies, has effectively rendered Dora a changeling (8: 59). Specifically, she has effaced the innocent young Irish girl who once existed and put a French coquette in her place. Although he has long nursed an (ill-advised) affection for Dora,[61] it is thus significant that even Ormond is capable of perceiving that she is "'much changed for the worse'" and was "'a hundred times more agreeable when she was a child'" (8: 71).

Following White Connal's untimely death in a riding accident, Dora's fundamental lack of character means that she is easily persuaded to accept the hand of his "'twin brother'", Black Connal, in marriage (8: 85). Like Mademoiselle O'Faley, this gentleman has been tremendously affected by his love for France, and he overpowers Dora by playing upon her inability to distinguish between real and inauthentic behaviour. Never joining her in conversation, he

> with the most scrupulous deference . . . stopped short in the middle of his sentence, if she began to speak. He stood aside, shrinking into himself with the utmost care, if she was to pass; he held the boughs of the shrubs out of her way, but continued his conversation with mademoiselle all the time. When they came in from their walk, the same sort of thing went on. 'It really is very extraordinary,' thought [Dora]: 'he seems as if he was spell-bound – obliged by his notions of politeness to let me pass incognita.' (8: 92)

When she is appealed to by her niece for guidance, Mademoiselle O'Faley places a very *French* interpretation upon Monsieur de Connal's actions:

> 'The young ladies in Paris [pass] for nothing, scarcely ever appearing in society till they are married, the gentlemen have no intercourse with them, and it would be considered as a breach of respect due to a young lady or her mother to address much conversation to her . . . [T]heir marriages are all made up by the father, the mother, the friends – the young people themselves never speak, never know nothing at all about each one another, till the contract is sign: in fact, the young lady is the little round what you call cipher, but has no value in société at all, till the figure of de husband come to give it the value.' (8: 93)

Although Dora retorts, "'I have no notion of being a cipher . . . I am not a French young lady, monsieur de Connal'", the fact that she is in imminent danger of becoming such a lady is to central to Edgeworth's text (8: 93). As a result of the foolish affectation of Mademoiselle O'Faley on the one hand, and the machinations of Monsieur de Connal on the other, Dora, it intimates, is on the point of being irrevocably "metamorphosed" from an "Irish country girl . . . into a French woman of fashion" (8: 194). To put this another way, she is on the verge of being estranged from her true self and plunged into the underworld.

Perceiving that the "softness of [her] manner [towards him], [and] the improvement of [her] temper . . . might be transient as passion", Ormond therefore loses Dora to

Monsieur de Connal with little regret (8: 85). "She was not that superior kind of woman which his imagination had painted, or which his judgement could approve in a wife" (8: 85). Increasingly convinced that he has found this ideal in Florence Annaly, Ormond's appreciation of this lady's authenticity is a crucial point in Edgeworth's text. Florence, it notes,

> was beautiful, but not one of those beauties who strike at first sight. Hers was a face which neither challenged nor sued for admiration. There was no expression thrown into the eyes or the eyebrows, no habitual smile on the lips – the features were all in natural repose; the face never expressed any thing but what the mind really felt. (8: 151)

Like Grace Nugent, in other words, Florence is exactly what she appears to be, and, with such a bride by his side, Ormond could confidently look forward to a felicitous marriage. Before he can accomplish his union with Florence, however, Ormond has to undergo one more trial: namely, he has to visit the de Connals in Paris and prove that he can withstand the dangers of *ancien régime* France. Mistakenly believing that Florence has rejected his written proposal of marriage, Ormond joins Dora and her husband, and, at first, he is overly confident of his ability to resist the temptations of their (demonic) environs. "[A]bsolutely dazzled by the brilliancy of Dora's beauty", Ormond begins

> almost to doubt whether nature or art prevailed. Now he felt himself safe at least, since he saw that it was only the coquette of the Black Islands transformed into the coquette of the hotel de Connal. The transformation was curious, was admirable; Ormond thought he could admire without danger, and, in due time, perhaps gallant with the best of them, without feeling - without scruple. (8: 193-94)

Carefully managed by Monsieur de Connal, whose intention is to control Ormond's fortune by making him the lover of his wife, Ormond finds himself increasingly "charmed" by French society (8: 197). Constantly in Dora's company, he begins to "[dread] lest his principles should not withstand . . . temptation" (8: 201). "Every thing seemed to smooth [his] slippery path . . . the indifference of [Dora's] husband – the imprudence of her aunt . . . the general customs of French society – the peculiar profligacy of the society in which he happened to be thrown" (8: 203).

This latter distinction is vital, of course, for, just when he is on the point of being overwhelmed by Paris's demonic world, Ormond makes the acquaintance of the Abbé Morellet,[62] and this gentleman introduces Edgeworth's hero to a different, *idyllic* France. Appropriately, Ormond first makes the acquaintance of the abbé in front of a picture, a circumstance that once again demonstrates how Edgeworth's didactic imperatives are peculiarly facilitated by her expert use of romance conventions. As I pointed out in my first chapter, pictures, tapestries, and statues are staples of romance stories, usually appearing near the *beginning* of narratives in order to indicate the threshold of a romance world. In drawing upon this device in Ormond, Edgeworth crucially situates her hero's (pictorial) encounter with the Abbé Morellet near the end of her text. Ormond's genuine reaction to the painting distinguishes him in relation to the affectation of those who surround him and, implicitly, it symbolizes the beginning of his final *ascent* to an upper-world life. The narrative thus observes,

> He was perfectly astonished by the quantity of exclamations he heard at the sight of this picture; the lifting up of hands and eyes, the transports, the ecstasies, the tears - the actual tears that he saw streaming in despite of rouge. It was real! and it was not real feeling! Of one thing he was clear - that this superfluity of feeling or exaggeration of expression completely silenced him, and made him cold indeed: like one unskilled or dumb he seemed to stand. (8: 205)

For Edgeworth, this moment is important for *national* as well as individual reasons: it demonstrates not only Ormond's essential (English) integrity, but, by extension, the inferiority of France. Pointedly, the text describes what Ormond witnesses as "a display of French sensibility, that eagerness to feel and to excite a *sensation*; that desire to *produce an effect*, to have a scene; that half real, half theatric enthusiasm, by which the French character is peculiarly distinguished from the English" (8: 205). In response to Mademoiselle O'Faley's observation that "'on these public occasions . . . you must always contrive to find [this sensibility] quick at Paris, or after all you will seem but an Englishman'", Ormond not only remarks, "'I must be content to seem and to be what I

am'", but does so, moreover, "in a tone of playful but determined resignation" (8: 205).

As a result of winning the "good opinion and goodwill" of the Abbé Morellet, Ormond begins to remember his true 'self', and this facilitates his final escape from France's demonic regions (8: 206). Apart from introducing him to "the literary men at Paris", the abbé also introduces him to the "no longer dissipated" Marmontel,[63] who is on the point of taking Mademoiselle Montigny, one of the abbé's nieces, as his wife (8: 208). "[A]greeably surprised and touched at the unexpected sight of an amiable, united, happy family, when he had expected only a meeting of literati [,] . . . [t]he sight of this domestic happiness [reminds Ormond] of the Annalys", bringing "the image of Florence to his mind" (8: 209). Coming upon Ormond at "just at the right moment", this image "contrasted with all the dissipation he had seen"; it recalls him to what the text very significantly denotes as "his better self" (8: 209).

Notwithstanding this moment of insight, an essential point of Edgeworth's text is that the influence of the abbé and his friends is not sufficient to complete Ormond's recovery; in order to be properly restored to himself, it avers, he must be once more exposed to the peculiarly healing powers of the Irish nation and race. On the point of seducing Dora, Ormond is thus stopped by the sight of a ring with a twist of King Corny's hair upon her hand. "The full recollection of that fond father, that generous benefactor, that confiding friend, rushed upon his heart", and the ring effectively *reminds* Ormond of his true situation, impressing upon him the proper nature of his relationship to the daughter of his benefactor and friend (8: 214). "'And is this the return I make!'", he observes to Dora, "'Oh, if [King Corny] could see us at this instant!'" (8: 214). Leaving a stricken Dora, Ormond arranges to return to the de Connal household the next day, "with the firm intention of adhering to the honourable line of conduct he had traced out for himself" in his heart (8: 214). Crossing the Pont-Neuf, however, Ormond *literally* runs into Moriarty Carroll, and the dramatic reappearance of this native Irish man peculiarly facilitates the

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working out of Edgeworth's story. Firstly, and most obviously, it is Moriarty who alerts Ormond to the fact that he is in financial danger; there is, he observes, "'great fear of the breaking of sir Ulick's bank!'" (8: 215). Having signed a power of attorney for his guardian the previous day, Ormond immediately realizes that Sir Ulick's intention is to try to save himself by selling "£30,000 out of [his ward's] Four per Cents" (8: 211). Secondly, by causing Ormond's precipitous departure from France, Moriarty effectively acts as his *ontological* saviour. Despite his best intentions, Ormond may not, perhaps, have proved finally capable of resisting the power of Paris; the city, after all, has already had a profound effect upon his outward appearance. When Moriarty collides with Ormond on the Pont-Neuf, therefore, the Irish man is at first unable to recognize his young master; he is, instead, amazed to discover that "'it's the man himself – master Harry! - though I didn't know him through the French disguise'" (8: 214).

Having drawn upon the shipwreck device in order to explain Moriarty Carroll's unexpected appearance in Paris,[64] Edgeworth finally utilises the convention of the missing letter in order to facilitate Ormond and Florence Annaly's union at the end of her tale. Returning to Ireland, Ormond discovers there *was* an answer to his written proposal of marriage, but that the servant had the "'misfortune to lose [it], and . . . thought no more about it till, please your honour, after you was gone, it was found'" (8: 230). Pursuing Lady Annaly and her daughter to where they are residing in Devon, Ormond acquaints them with all that has passed. His account of himself emphasises his perception that he has undergone a severe trial that has tested his resolution, discovering, as a result, that the "paint[ings]" of the "imagination" seldom resemble real life:

> He had, thank Heaven, passed through [a] course of dissipation, without losing his taste for better and happier modes of life. The last few months, though they might seem but a splendid or feverish dream in his existence, had in reality been, he believed, of essential service in confirming his principles, settling his character, and deciding for ever his taste and judgement, after full opportunity of comparison, in favour of his own country – and especially of his own countrywomen. (8: 233)

Naturally delighted with these observations, Florence accepts Ormond's renewed proposal of marriage, and it is agreed that "they should return to Ireland, to Annaly; and that their kind friend, Dr. Cambray, should be the person to complete [their] union" (8: 234). On a didactic level, Ormond's marriage to the exemplary Florence symbolizes the efficacy of his reformation; it indicates that he has made his 'self' worthy of such a wife.

Despite this emphasis, distinctly subversive implications simmer beneath the conclusion of Edgeworth's narrative. Firstly, following Sir Ulick's death, Ormond is petitioned by his son, now *Sir* Marcus O'Shane, to buy Castle Hermitage, but he instead accepts Monsieur de Connal's offer to sell him the Black Islands. "Castle Hermitage was the finest estate, and by far the best bargain", the text notes, but "[w]hile sir Ulick O'Shane's son and natural representative was living, banished by debts from his native country, Ormond could not bear to take possession" (8: 234). This assertion indirectly raises the questions of legitimacy that inform all of Edgeworth's Irish work, particularly given the fact that Ormond is ultimately the son of a *British* army officer who has distinguished himself in his nation's service. When he considers going into the army himself, Ormond thus agrees with King Corny's observation that he "'could not be of the Irish Brigade'", insisting he would "'infinitely prefer . . . the service of [his] own country'": "'I know nothing of my father, but I have always heard him spoken of as a good officer; I hope I shall not disgrace his name. The English service for me, sir, if you please'" (8: 106).

Clearly significant, the true import of Ormond's English origins can only be understood once we recognize that Captain Ormond's career had a peculiarly colonial trajectory. Following his posting to Ireland, after all, he moved on to India, thereby directly facilitating that military process through which England endeavoured to impose its view of reality across the face of the earth. The fact that Ormond refuses to take possession of Castle Hermitage while Sir Marcus is still alive may therefore be read on an

allegorical level: unlike his English father, it implies, Ormond will concern himself with the rights of Ireland's native inhabitants. "[C]onsidered", as he is, "as the lawful representative of their King Corny" by the Black Islanders (8: 234), Ormond's return to the islands may in this context be read as symbolizing not only the return of "legitimate rule in Ireland", but also Edgeworth's perception that this will only be accomplished once the nation's ruling class adopts "a traditional, simpler way of life, closer to the common people".[65]

In terms of my reading, I would suggest that Ormond's decision to return to the Black Islands demonstrates that he is ultimately *captivated* by King Corny's dominions; as Sheelah Dunshaughlin of the islands would put it, he has roamed all over "'*the continent*'" only to discover that his heart is inexorably captivated by these native lands (8: 120). Although the explicit emphasis of Edgeworth's text is that Ormond returns to the islands because he wishes to do "a great deal of good . . . by farther civilising the people", it further significantly observes that he intends to accomplish this "by *carrying on* [King Corny's] improvements" (8: 234) (My emphasis). In a literal sense, then, the conclusion of Edgeworth's text anticipates the *perpetuation* of King Corny's style of monarchy; it intimates that, as the Black Islanders have all along desired, it is not they, but *Ormond* who will be transformed. From here springs the particular importance of the memorial to King Corny that is cut into one of the Black Islands' bogs by Moriarty Carroll. Blazing forth "in large letters of about a yard long[,] the words – 'LONG LIVE KING CORNY'" are forgotten by Moriarty until he and Ormond happen upon them just before the latter leaves the islands after the king's death (8: 120). Sown "with broom-seed in the spring", they are now a symbolic "green" and striking to the eye (8: 120). Effectively "transfigur[ing] the very landscape of the Black Islands, transforming boggy terrain into a site of national memory", as Katie Trumpener contends, these letters also anticipate the final destination of Ormond's journey (64-65). They imply that, as King Corny's heir, Ormond cannot evade

father, and this is nowhere more expertly demonstrated, perhaps, than in her volume of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's Memoirs, where she sums up her assessment of his life. Although completed and published within three short years of his passing, the text makes a startling and an unexpected admission: specifically, it openly acknowledges that, "[f]or many years of his life", Richard Lovell Edgeworth had laboured "under one important mistake" (2: 401). Convinced that if people could be made to see that virtue would make them happy and vice miserable, Edgeworth observes that this encouraged her father to believe that this would *necessarily* lead them to follow virtue and avoid vice. In other words, she intimates that Richard Lovell Edgeworth constructed his educational theories around his belief that humans were ultimately rational creatures. "Hence, both as to national and domestic education", Edgeworth concludes, her father "dwelt principally upon the cultivation of the understanding, meaning chiefly the reasoning faculty as applied to the conduct. But to see the best, and to follow it, are not, alas! necessary consequences of each other. Resolution is often wanting, where conviction is perfect" (2: 401-02). By conflating "national and domestic education" here, Edgeworth illustrates her perception that neither the individual nor the nation can be entirely governed by reason, and this, of course, engages with and destabilizes the didactic theories that ostensibly inform her work. It acknowledges that, in order to govern either an individual or a nation wisely, allowances must be made for the effects of that individual's or nation's passions and emotional life. As she puts it:

> under the influence of any passion, the perception of pain and pleasure alters as much as the perceptions of a person in a fever vary from those of the same man in sound health. The whole scale of individual happiness, as well as of general good and evil, virtue and vice, is often distributed at the very rising of the passion, and totally overthrown in the hurricane of the soul. (2: 402)

At such "perilous, and critical moments", Edgeworth contends, "the conviction of the understanding is, if not reversed, suspended", and so, at such moments, an appeal to the better judgement of such an individual or nation can clearly be of little use (2: 402).

When we try to account for Edgeworth's failure to publish on Irish matters during the 1820s, 30s, and 40s, it is tempting to pursue one of two courses: namely, to argue that this silence can be explained either by the way in which her personal life unfolded following her father's death,[68] or by the fact that she found herself overawed by the increasingly volatile nature of Ireland's political affairs during these years. Critics who adopt the latter course typically quote from her famous letter to her brother, Michael Pakenham Edgeworth, in India, wherein she compares the similarities of their respective (colonial) situations and comments upon the impossibility of "'draw[ing] Ireland as she now is in a book of fiction – realities are too strong, party passions too violent to bear to see, or care to look at their faces in the looking-glass'".[69] While I agree that Edgeworth became ever more disillusioned by Irish politics as the years went by, I do not believe that she had to wait until the advent of Daniel O'Connell's Repeal movement, for example, in order to be convinced "that the ends she sought were a chimera".[70] Rather, as I have argued in this chapter, her use of romance throughout her work finally demonstrates her perception that the image of Ireland that she laboured to produce in her texts would ultimately prove to be an impossible, aspirational vision, and that it would not be possible to reproduce Richard Lovell Edgeworth's (romantic) vision of that nation in real life. Once her father passed away in 1817, it is therefore not surprising that Edgeworth ceased to publish on Irish affairs: now that her father was gone, she could (silently) admit that, if the possibility of creating such an Ireland had ever existed, it had long since passed.

Epilogue.

In 1961, Sir Francis Tuker published The Yellow Scarf, which traces "[t]he story of the life of Thuggee Sleeman or Major-General Sir William Henry Sleeman, K.C.B.[,] 1788-1856[,] of The Bengal Army and the Indian Political Service".[1] A military officer and an employee of the East India Company, Sleeman had the type of colonial career of which Maria Edgeworth would have been proud, being best remembered, perhaps, for breaking the power of the murderous Thuggees and thus restoring the rule of law to upper India.[2] In order to trace Sleeman's adventures, Tuker draws widely upon the publications and papers of this "noble adventurer, [or] . . . righteous pioneer"[3] and, importantly, one extract peculiarly reveals the profound respect that Sleeman had for Edgeworth's writing. Recalling his one-time commanding officer, a Colonel Gregory, Sleeman observes,

> 'He was an old man when I first became acquainted with him. I put into his hands, when in camp, Miss Edgeworth's novels, in the hope of being able to induce him to read by degrees and I have frequently seen the tears stealing down over his furrowed cheeks as he sat pondering over her pages in the corner of his tent. A braver soldier never lived than old Gregory, and he distinguished himself greatly in the command of his regiment, under Lord Lake, at the battle of Laswaree and siege of Bhurtpore. It was impossible ever to persuade him that the characters and incidents of these novels were the mere creation of fancy; he felt them to be true, he wished them to be true, and he would have them to be true. We were not very anxious to undeceive him, as the illusion gave him pleasure and did him good. Bolingbroke says, after an ancient author, 'History is philosophy teaching by example.' With equal truth we say that fiction, like that of Maria Edgeworth, is philosophy teaching by emotion. It certainly taught old Gregory to be a better man, to leave much of the little evil he had been in the habit of doing, and to do much of the good he had been accustomed to leave undone!' (26-27)

This passage is clearly significant for several reasons, but it in the first place demonstrates the incredibly powerful emotional and imaginative responses that Edgeworth's texts were capable of exacting from their nineteenth-century readers. Sleeman's point, after all, is not simply that Edgeworth's novels "taught old Gregory to be a better man", but, rather, that they did so by ensuring that he was first of all *entertained*. As Sleeman would have it, Edgeworth was an edifying author *because* she was an enthralling one, and her ability to

both educate *and* emotionally engage the reader represented her particular talent.

Sleeman's opinion of Edgeworth's work, of course, is in marked distinction to that typically held by late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century readers and critics. In the first place, and as I noted in my introduction, Edgeworth is little remembered at all nowadays outside of academic circles and, if the general reader is aware of her, it is probably but dimly and as the author of Castle Rackrent, which is effectively (mis)represented as the only truly noteworthy example of her writing. If those of us who read and appreciate Edgeworth are to remedy this sad state of affairs, I would suggest, one thing is needful: namely, we must do more to illuminate the extraordinarily complex nature of her texts and draw greater attention to her considerable artistic and imaginative achievements.

For example, Mitzi Myers points out that critics of Edgeworth's tales for children concentrated for far too long upon what they perceived as the defects of these texts, failing to perceive that, "[u]nlike our period, the nineteenth century did not necessarily consider 'didactic' a dirty word and saw no reason why bracing morality and lively amusement shouldn't be the closest of friends".[4] Rather than considering *why* these tales should have proved so "extraordinarily popular in the nineteenth century", in other words, these critics belittled Edgeworth as an artist, and they did not recognize that the way in which she skilfully blends both the didactic and imaginative in her texts as one of her greatest achievements (53). While Myers is for her part particularly concerned with Edgeworth's literature for children, the same point can clearly be made in relation to Edgeworth's texts for adults and adolescents. Overwhelmingly, Edgeworth's critics have typically taken her didacticism too much at face value and, in so doing, have both denigrated her artistic accomplishments *and* failed to perceive that she does much more than merely rehearse the prevailing ideologies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in her work.

Happily, a more balanced approach to Edgeworth's texts has begun to be taken in

recent years, with critics like Claire Connolly, and Jane Spencer, among others, doing much to illustrate the more subversive aspects of her writing. Edgeworth's works, they argue, on the one hand faithfully rehearse the rationalist ideology of both Richard Lovell Edgeworth and the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, while, on the other, they interrogate that ideology and imply that it may finally prove to be found wanting. Nowhere is this more marked, these critics contend, than in Edgeworth's treatment of woman: at the same time as insisting that she *must* cultivate her reason, Edgeworth's texts simultaneously reveal her recognition that this may ultimately confine woman even more closely to the limitations of domestic life. As such, critics like Connolly and Spencer reject those readings of Edgeworth that would cast her simply as what Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace calls 'a daddy's girl' and they insist that she instead managed to encode her own 'voice' in the texts that she produced.[5]

Drawing upon this argument, this dissertation focused upon Edgeworth's use of romance in her work, and it contended that this must be more carefully examined in order to properly appreciate her accomplishments as a writer. Although Edgeworth often derides romance, I have shown that she at the same time draws heavily upon its conventions and, further, that this circumstance must profoundly affect any reading of her writing. In the first place, Edgeworth's texts overtly revolve around one central didactic tenet: namely, that in order to be truly useful and happy, the individual need use only his/her reason in order to govern his/her actions and thoughts. Ironically, by using romance conventions in order to support this argument, Edgeworth simultaneously subverts it: specifically, she reveals not only that the passions and imagination can never be entirely dismissed, but also that they have *value*. Despite their (didactic) protestations to the contrary, Edgeworth's works therefore resonate with the perception that the individual is not a totally rational creature and that, as such, allowances *must* be made for the effects of his/her emotions and imaginative life.

In this context, it is tempting to argue that Edgeworth's use of romance in her work represents nothing more than her willingness to make such allowances for her readers. Rather than merely impressing a dry didactic lesson upon her readers, it might be argued, Edgeworth instead uses romance conventions in order to more gently convince them *why* they must use reason to govern their actions and thoughts. This dissertation has argued that, while this approach is seductive, it can clearly take us only so far: one of Edgeworth's more subversive points, after all, is that it may be romance, rather than reason, than will enable woman to transcend the limitations of domestic life.

While Edgeworth's use of romance is thus extraordinarily complex, my dissertation has demonstrated that it is at all times shot through with her perception that this curiously powerful mode peculiarly facilitates the reader's *or* the author's desire to remake reality in his/her image. Inspired primarily by her ambition to celebrate Richard Lovell Edgeworth's theories and achievements, I have argued, Edgeworth uses romance in an attempt to produce a vision of a very particular 'Britain' and a 'British greatness', one that is founded primarily upon the concept of an abstract 'honour', or 'virtue'. In so doing, her ambition is to both facilitate the desires that impel Britain's national and imperial expansion *and* to regulate those desires *after* they are produced. This latter point is extremely important to Edgeworth because, as the daughter of a Protestant Ascendancy landlord, she is all too conscious of the dangers that unchecked desires pose to colonial life. By drawing cleverly upon romance in her fiction, Edgeworth's ambition is to demonstrate that altruistic motives principally impel Britain's overseas expansion; in other words, she hopes to produce a paternalistic fiction that will prove that native peoples, like the Irish, are in fact *fortunate* to be colonized by representatives of the superior British race. Despite her best intentions, however, Edgeworth's writing reveals her (uncomfortable) realization that what she is producing is, *literally*, a fiction and, in this context, I conclude, it is her profound sense of the Ascendancy's impending doom that finally haunts her Irish work.

Endnotes to Introduction.

[1] Helen Zimmern, Maria Edgeworth, Eminent Women Series (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1883) 129-30.

[2] Joep Leerssen, Remembrance and Imagination. Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996) 42.

[3] For Richard Lovell Edgeworth's account of the circumstances leading up to his marriage to Anna Maria Elers in 1763, see Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Esq., Begun By Himself and Concluded by His Daughter, Maria Edgeworth, 2 vols. (London: R. Hunter, 1820) 1: 87-103. See also Marilyn Butler, Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 21-23.

[4] I am drawing here upon Beth Kowaleski-Wallace's definition of patriarchy, to which I will return in chapter one. Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, "Home Economics: Domestic Ideology in Maria Edgeworth's Belinda" The Eighteenth Century Theory and Interpretation Fall (1988) : 242.

[5] At least one other critic, Mark D. Hawthorne, also argues that Edgeworth

> wrote on two levels. Superficially, she was didactic, purely and simply. . . . Second, she was skillful and subtle, probing the depths of psychology and philosophy with unusual candour. . . . On the first level, she used the novel as a teaching device, the surface embracing her father's dogma. On the second, she advanced her own doubts through structure and symbolism.

Hawthorne's argument differs from mine in that he does not focus upon the romance element in Edgeworth's texts. It is, however, useful for my purposes and I will be referring to it again below. Mark D. Hawthorne, Doubt and Dogma in Maria Edgeworth (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967) 2.

[6] As Marilyn Butler points out: "The public bought [Edgeworth's] novels in large numbers,

ensuring that almost all went into at least three editions within a few years of first appearing. Her publishers paid her up to £2,000 for a single work, a remarkable sum before Scott did even better; Murray offered Jane Austen a conditional £450 for Emma". Appendix B to Butler's text provides an extremely useful overview of both Edgeworth's earnings from her texts and her relationships with her publishers. See Butler, Maria Edgeworth 1, 490-93.

[7] Francis Jeffrey, unsigned rev. of the 1809 series of Tales of Fashionable Life, by Maria Edgeworth, Edinburgh Review (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co.; London: Constable, Hunter, Park, and Hunter, 1809) vol. xiv : 380.

[8] Francis Jeffrey, unsigned rev. of Harrington, a Tale; and Ormond, a Tale, by Maria Edgeworth, Edinburgh Review (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co.; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1817) vol. xxviii : 391-92.

[9] Maria Edgeworth to Francis Jeffrey, December 18th, 1806, draft, quoted in Butler, Maria Edgeworth 272. It is precisely this analysis of her and her father's literary relationship that informs Edgeworth's recollection of the composition of Practical Education (1798) in the Memoirs. She writes, "In [this] work . . . the principles of education were peculiarly his . . . all the general ideas originated with him, the illustrating and manufacturing them [sic], if I may use the expression, was mine" (2: 190).

[10] Frances Edgeworth, A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth, with a Selection from Her Letters, 3 vols. (London: printed by Joseph Masters and Son, 1867).

[11] Marilyn Butler makes a similar point in her biography of Edgeworth. "[T]his was a family Memoir", she observes, "It was written by three women who had lived for many years in the same household as Maria Edgeworth. They meant it as a memorial, which means obviously that it is not the same book that a dispassionate outsider would have written" (5).

[12] Dated May 2nd, 1780.

[13] Edgeworth's mother died when she was only five years old, and, by this time, Richard Lovell Edgeworth had already been away from Edgeworth for over two years, having departed for France in 1771 to further the education of Richard, his eldest child. Upon the death of Edgeworth's mother, Richard Lovell Edgeworth returned home and, within the space of four months, he married Honora Sneyd. In 1775, Edgeworth was sent to Mrs. Latuffière's school in Derby, and then, in 1781, to Mrs. Devis's school in London. Marilyn Butler provides an excellent analysis of Edgeworth's childhood in the first chapter of her biography on the author, but Mark D. Hawthorne makes a particularly significant point about the details of Edgeworth's early life. It was only after the Edgeworth family's return to Ireland in 1782, he observes, that Edgeworth was "influenced daily and directly by [Richard Lovell Edgeworth's] strict rationalism. Not having received even the scantiest rational education, Miss Edgeworth could hardly be expected to fit into her father's notion of the rational being. If anything, her early environment promoted regressions into fanciful and unbridled illusion and romance" (8).

[14] Maria Edgeworth to Honora Edgeworth, March 30th [?], 1776, letter 10 of Women, Education and Literature: The Papers of Maria Edgeworth, 1768-1849, Part 2: Edgeworth Papers from the National Library of Ireland (Marlborough, Wiltshire: Adam Matthew Publications, 1994). Unless otherwise stated, references to Edgeworth letters are to part 2 of this microfilm edition.

[15] Although Honora did write to her stepdaughter, it is clear that she did not do so frequently enough for the lonely child. In one letter, for example, Mrs. Edgeworth observes that illness made her put off writing "till I fear you have begun to think that I forget you as soon as you are out of my sight". Rebuking Edgeworth for having written again, she emphasises that she had "*told*" her stepdaughter that she "would write first". See Honora Edgeworth to Maria Edgeworth, October 10th, 1779, letter 14.

[16] Anne Owens-Weekes advances a similar argument in her consideration of Castle

Rackrent (1800), Edgeworth's most celebrated Irish Tale. Following the Edgeworth family's return to Edgeworthstown in 1782, Owens-Weekes argues, Edgeworth "consciously sought to be in her person and in her work everything [her] father desired, [she] sought intuitively to replace the estimable Honora". The didacticism of Edgeworth's texts, she concludes, thus lies "in the daughter's internalized perception of [Richard Lovell Edgeworth's] values. . . . [It] is the ultimate if indirect result of the neglect and loneliness of Maria's childhood and of the consequent desire never to risk exile again". Ann Owens-Weekes, Irish Women Writers: An Uncharted Tradition (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990) 36-37.

[17] Patrick Murray, "Maria Edgeworth and her Father: The Literary Partnership" Eire-Ireland: A Journal of Irish Studies 6.3 (1971) : 42.

[18] For the details of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's twenty-two children, see Appendix A in Butler, Maria Edgeworth 489.

[19] For Richard Lovell Edgeworth's recollections of this experiment, see Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, Memoirs 1: 273-76.

[20] Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, eds. Jane Desmarais, Tim McLoughlin, and Marilyn Butler, vol. 1 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999) 159.

[21] Practical Education is essentially a text designed to instruct parents in the art of educating their children. The issue is treated as a kind of scientific exercise whereby the child's education is conducted via the parent's observation and instruction. The tone throughout the text is measured and calm, and it presupposes the benevolent participation of an enlightened parent. Essays on Professional Education takes up some of Practical Education's themes, and, like the 1798 publication, it emphasizes the primary importance of a sound early education for children. The text, however, is specifically aimed at fathers and its intention is to help them to choose suitable professions for their sons and then to

educate them properly for the chosen profession. Although originally published under Richard Lovell Edgeworth's name alone, Edgeworth's correspondence makes it abundantly clear that it was she who was the effective author of this text. Writing to her cousin Sophy Ruxton on February 26th, 1805, for example, she observes, "father has excited my ambition to write a *useful* essay upon professional education . . . I have been so touched by his reason or his eloquence or his kindness or all together, that I have thrown aside all thoughts of pretty stories, & put myself into a course of solid reading". Three years later, in a letter dated January 23rd, 1808, Edgeworth expresses her anxiety to Sophy at the thought of the text's impending publication: "I cannot help however looking forward to its publication, & fate with an anxiety & an apprehension I never felt before in the same degree – for consider my father's credit is entirely at stake!". See Maria Edgeworth to Sophy Ruxton, February 26th, 1805, letter 451, and, Maria Edgeworth to Sophy Ruxton, January 23rd [?], 1808, letter 612.

[22] Tales like "The Bracelets" in The Parent's Assistant (1796), or, "The Good French Governess", which is in Moral Tales, also revolve around the types of heroines that are common to all of Edgeworth's writing. See Maria Edgeworth, The Parent's Assistant; or, Stories for Children, 3 vols. (1796; London: Longman and Company, 1845) 2: 1-48, and, Moral Tales for Young People, 9th edition, 2 vols. (1801; London: R. Hunter, 1826) 2: 98-224.

[23] Early Lessons is, in fact, the first of a series of texts for children that Edgeworth produced between 1801 and 1825. Tracing the adventures of Lucy and Rosamond, as well as of Harry and Frank, as they grow up, these books, I shall demonstrate in chapter three, resonate with didactic implications for Edgeworth's young readers. "Forester" appears in Edgeworth's Moral Tales and, as Richard Lovell Edgeworth's preface observes, it details how "a young man who scorns the common forms and dependencies of civil society . . . by improper management, or unlucky circumstances, [might] have become a fanatic and a

criminal". Maria Edgeworth, Early Lessons, 2 vols. (1801-2; London: J. Johnson & Co., 1815); Moral Tales 1: vii, 1-172..

[24] Hannah More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education – with a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune, 2 vols. (1799; Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books, 1995) 1: ix.

[25] Maria Edgeworth, Letters for Literary Ladies, to which is added an Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification (1795; London: J.M. Dent, 1993) 63-77.

[26] Griselda "insisted upon being *consulted*, that is obeyed, in affairs which did not immediately come under the cognizance of her sex". Matters come to a head between Griselda and her husband when the latter tries to win back control in their marriage. Griselda decides to leave her husband and tells him that he must bear the responsibility for all that has occurred: "Blame yourself, not me, for all this. – When we were first married, you humoured, you spoiled me; no temper could bear it. – Take the consequences of your own weak indulgence. – Farewell". Maria Edgeworth, The Modern Griselda. A Tale, 2nd edition, corrected (London: J. Johnson, 1805) 35, 198.

[27] Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Practical Education, 2 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1798) 1: 188

[28] Claire Connolly, introduction, Letters for Literary Ladies, to which is added an Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification, by Maria Edgeworth (1795; London: J.M. Dent, 1993) xvi.

[29] For a reading of Locke's educational paradigm which argues that its possible effects on the female child "have received virtually no attention", see Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 17. A similar reading of Locke is to be found in Caroline Gonda's Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1996) 31.

I will return to Gonda later in my text, particularly her argument that the "education of daughters and the role of the father-daughter bond in that education [became] . . . particularly important in the new order of the sentimental family, a family supposedly not ruled by paternal or marital tyranny but by love" (xv).

[30] Janet Todd's analysis of the way in which excess emotional energy came to be understood as potentially revolutionary is useful here. She argues,

> The fate of sensibility in England is allied to the political situation. In the closing years of the eighteenth century, the English reacted not only to the French Revolution and its aftermath but also to the political and social situation at home. The Anti-Jacobin Review, the new organ of conservative opinion, worked to bind sensibility to radicalism, or 'Jacobinism' as it insisted on calling any reformist view, and it blamed both for the unrest it feared was spreading in England. The radicals, on their side, were just as eager as the conservatives to align sensibility with their opponents, and they attacked as sentimental the reactionary nostalgia and emotional callousness they saw promoted in the Anti-Jacobin.

Janet Todd, Sensibility: An Introduction (London and New York: Methuen, 1986) 130.

[31] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Émile, trans. Barbara Foxley (1762; London: J.M. Dent; Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1993) 393.

[32] Vineta Colby, Yesterday's Woman: Domestic Realism in the English Novel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) 121.

[33] More, Strictures 1: 4.

[34] Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, ed. Miriam Brody (1792; London: Penguin Books, 1975) 83, 88.

[35] As Marilyn Butler observes, the novel writers of the last two decades of the eighteenth century "knew that their heroes and heroines were supposed to offer a moral pattern". John Wilson Croker puts the matter even more succinctly in his review of the 1812 series of Edgeworth's Tales of Fashionable Life: "A novel, which is not in some degree a lesson either of morals or conduct, is, we think, a production which the world might be quite as well without". See Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) 30, and, John Wilson Croker, unsigned rev. of the 1812 series of Tales of

Fashionable Life, by Maria Edgeworth, The Quarterly Review 2nd ed. (1812; London: John Murray, 1814) vol. vii: 331.

[36] Jane Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986) ix.

[37] I will return to this argument in greater detail in my first chapter, where I shall demonstrate how some lines penned by Edgeworth's father peculiarly illustrate the "psychologically compelling themes of obligation" under which Richard Lovell Edgeworth compelled his family to labour throughout his life.

[38] Kowaleski-Wallace, Their Fathers' Daughters x.

[39] Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and, London: Harvard University Press, 1976) 4.

[40] Samuel Johnson, "Rambler No. 4," Saturday, 31st March, 1750, Samuel Johnson: Selected Essays from the Rambler; Adventurer; and Idler, ed. W.J. Bate (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968) 10.

[41] Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language: In which the Words are deduced from their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the best Writers. To which are prefixed A History of the Language, and An English Grammar (1750; London: Times Books, 1983).

[42] Diane Elam, Romancing the Postmodern (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) 4, 7.

[43] Miguel De Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote de la Mancha, tr. Charles Jarvis, ed. E. C. Riley, Oxford World's Classics ed. (1605-15; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 15, 18.

[44] William Congreve, Incognita: or, Love and Duty Reconcil'd. A Novel (1692; Menston, Yorkshire: Scholar Press, 1971) n.p.

[45] Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Story, ed. Michael Gamer (1764; London: Penguin Books, 2001) 9, 13.

[46] Originally published as The Champion of Virtue. A Gothic Story in 1777, the retitled second edition of Reeve's text was published in 1778. Clara Reeve, preface to the second edition, The Old English Baron, ed. James Trainer (1777; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 3.

[47] Walter Scott, Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since, ed. Andrew Hook (1814; London: Penguin Books, 1972) 33, 493-94.

[48] Katie Trumpener, Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire (Princeton, New Jersey and Chicester, West Sussex: Princeton University Press, 1997) 139.

[49] Frye makes the same point in his reading of Waverley. Scott begins his text, he notes,

> by outlining a number of facile romance formulas that he is *not* going to follow, and then stresses the degree of reality that his story is to have. His hero Waverley is a romantic hero, proud of his good looks and education, but, like a small-scale Don Quixote, his romantic attitude is one that confirms the supremacy of real life. (40)

[50] Ian Duncan, Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 10.

[51] Charlotte Lennox, The Female Quixote (1752; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 7.

[52] Ioan Williams, introduction, Novel and Romance 1700-1800: A Documentary Record, ed. Ioan Williams (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970) 5.

[53] Williams's reference is to Clara Reeve's description of such a party in her The Progress of Romance, Through Times, Countries, and Manners; and the History of Charoba, Queen of Aegypt (1785). As she describes it, "Mother, and a select party of relations and friends, used to meet once a week at each other's houses, to hear these stories; - one used to read, while the rest ply'd their needles". Reeve's text is hugely important to any discussion of the novel and romance and I treat it in greater detail below. Clara Reeve, The Progress of Romance, Through Times, Countries, and Manners; and the History of Charoba, Queen of

Aegypt, 2 vols. (1785; New York: The Facsimile Text Society, 1930) 1: 69.

[54] Tobias Smollett, The Adventures of Roderick Random, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé, Oxford World's Classics ed. (1748; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) xxxiv.

[55] Vicessimus Knox, Extract from "On Novel Reading", No. XIV, Essays Moral and Literary, 1778, in Novel and Romance 1700-1800 304.

[56] Mary-Elizabeth Fowkes Tobin makes the same point in her analysis of how Johnson's Rambler No. 4 "launched the debate on the moral propriety of the 'mixed character'". Johnson's argument, she notes, was entirely representative of those reviewers and readers who were

> concerned that impressionable readers would be tempted to imitate the actions and sentiments of the characters depicted in novels, [and so] they argued that protagonists should be completely virtuous and exemplary in thought and deed. They also thought protagonists who combined morally positive and negative traits were particularly dangerous; they worried that these 'mixed characters' would charm readers with their personal beauty and accomplishments, their wit and good-humor [sic], while their lax moral standards would corrupt readers' innocence and virtue.

Mary-Elizabeth Fowkes Tobin, "'The Power of Example': Harry Ormond Reads Tom Jones," Reader: Essays in Reader-Oriented Theory, Criticism and Pedagogy Spring (1988) : 38.

[57] Precisely the same sentiments are expressed by Smollett in his preface to The Adventures of Roderick Random: "Cervantes, by an inimitable piece of ridicule, reformed the taste of mankind, representing chivalry in the right point of view, and converting romance to purposes far more useful and entertaining, by making it assume the sock, and point out the follies of ordinary life" (xxxiv). Hannah More is more circumspect in her analysis of Don Quixote, however. In her Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, she writes,

> That revolution of manners which the unparalleled wit and genius of Don Quixote so happily effected, by abolishing extravagancies the most absurd and pernicious, was so far imperfect, that some virtues which he never meant to expose, fell into disrepute with the absurdities which he did; and it is become the turn of the

present taste to attach in no small degree that which is ridiculous to that which is serious and heroic. (1: 25)

[58] James Beattie, Extract from On Fable and Romance, 1783, in Novel and Romance 1700-1800 320.

[59] George Canning, The Microcosm, 26, Monday, May 14, 1787, in Novel and Romance 1700-1800 341.

[60] Reeve's argument here also plainly echoes William Congreve's 1692 definition of the novel in his preface to Incognita. "Novels", he observes, "are of a more familiar nature [than romances]". They "come near [to the reader] and represent . . . Intrigues in practice, . . . Accidents and odd Events, but not such as are wholly unusual or unpresidented [sic], such which not being so distant from [the reader's] Belief bring also the pleasure nearer" (n.p.).

[61] This emphasis upon the "probable" hugely informs Reeve's analysis of The Castle of Otranto. In her preface to the second edition of The Old English Baron, she argues,

> [Walpole's work] is an attempt to unite the various merits and graces of the ancient Romance and modern novel. To attain this end, there is required a sufficient degree of the marvellous, to excite the attention; enough of the manners of real life, to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic, to engage the heart in its behalf. . . . [The Castle of Otranto] is excellent in the two last points, but has a redundancy in the first; the opening excites the attention very strongly; the conduct of the story is artful and judicious; the characters are admirably drawn and supported; the diction polished and elegant; yet, with all these brilliant advantages, it palls upon the mind . . . and the reason is obvious, the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it intended to excite. Had the story been kept within the utmost *verge* of probability, the effect had been preserved, without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention. (4)

[62] Reeve makes the same point in her preface to The Old English Baron: "Romance displays only the amiable side of the picture; it shews the pleasing features, and throws a veil over the blemishes: Mankind are naturally pleased with what gratifies their vanity; and vanity, like all other passions of the human heart, may be rendered subservient to good and useful purposes" (3). Allowing, however, that the genre "may be abused, and become an instrument to corrupt the manners and morals of mankind", she argues, "so may poetry, so

may plays, so may every kind of composition" (3-4).

[63] Reeve's argument is clearly echoed in Mary Wollstonecraft's observation in A Vindication of the Rights of Women that women who foster "a romantic unnatural delicacy of feeling, waste their* lives in *imagining* how happy they should have been with a husband who could love them with a fervid increasing affection every day, and all day" (117). Her footnote to her text reads: "*For example, the herd of novelists" (117).

[64] Margaret Anne Doody, introduction, The Female Quixote, by Charlotte Lennox (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) xxxi.

[65] In her reading of Don Quixote, Beer argues that Cervantes's text "demonstrates that the transfiguring imagination can force the world to imitate its perceptions; imagination need not always mimic external reality". Gillian Beer, The Critical Idiom: The Romance (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1970) 41.

[66] Momentarily, of course, because Arabella is eventually cured of her love of romance, and marries Glanville, her long-suffering suitor. In so doing, Margaret Anne Doody remarks, Arabella "forgoes her own control of the world, renounces narrative power, and submits to the role of object of the paternal authority which also claims the name of reason" (xxxii).

[67] Patricia Meyer Spacks, Desire and Truth: Functions of Plot in Eighteenth-Century English Novels (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990) 14. Gillian Beer identifies a similar revolutionary dimension in romance, contending that, because the genre is "absorbed with the ideal, [it] always has an element of prophecy. It remakes the world in the image of desire" (79). Thus, fears that "romance would seduce the imagination, as well as mislead, may have been based on a half-acknowledged recognition that women's lives were very circumscribed in their actual possibilities" (53).

Fredric Jameson politicises the argument further when he explores romance "in the context of the gradual reification of realism in late capitalism". "[O] nce again", he argues,

the genre

> comes to be felt as the place of narrative heterogenity and of freedom from that reality principle to which a now oppressive realistic representation is the hostage. Romance now again seems to offer the possibility of sensing other historical rhythms, and of demonic or Utopian transformations of a real now unshakeably set in place.

Fredric Jameson, The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (1981; London: Methuen, 1983) 104.

[68] Laurie Langbauer, "Romance Revised: Charlotte Lennox's The Female Quixote," Novel 18 (1984) : 45.

[69] Further evidence of Edgeworth's reading habits is also provided by the Longford: St. Mel's College: Catalogue of the Library of the Edgeworth Family, which is held on microfilm in the National Library of Ireland. Apparently compiled by Edgeworth herself, possibly in 1831, this list is both incomplete, and clearly selective. It does reveal, however, that Edgeworth numbered Don Quixote and The Female Quixote among her own texts. Longford: St. Mel's College: Catalogue of the Library of the Edgeworth Family, microfilm copy, National Library of Ireland.

[70] Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Ruxton, December 26th, 1809, letter 722.

[71] Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Ruxton, November 3rd, 1803, letter 384.

[72] Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Frances Edgeworth, January 27th, 1835, letter 33 of Ms.Eng.Lett.C.701 of Women, Education and Literature: The Papers of Maria Edgeworth, 1768-1849, Part 1: Edgeworth Papers from the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Marlborough, Wiltshire: Adam Matthew Publications, 1994).

[73] Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Stark, May 14th, 1834, quoted in Frances Edgeworth, A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth 3: 150.

[74] Henry Stephen, unsigned rev. of the 1809 series of Tales of Fashionable Life, by Maria Edgeworth, The Quarterly Review 4th ed. (1809; London: John Murray, 1818) vol. ii: 146.

[75] John Wilson Croker, unsigned rev. of the 1812 series of Tales of Fashionable Life, by

Maria Edgeworth, The Quarterly Review 2nd ed. (London: John Murray, 1814) vol. vii: 329.

[76] Edgeworth seems to contradict this argument later in the text when she argues, "Examples from romance can never have such a powerful effect upon the mind as those which are taken from real life; but in proportion to the just and lively representation of situations, and passions resembling reality, fictions may convey useful moral lessons" (1: 314).

[77] Nancy Armstrong similarly notices the distinction that the Edgeworths make in relation to girls and Robinson Crusoe, suggesting:

> There is . . . a strong possibility that early educational theorists recommended Crusoe over Defoe's other works because they thought women were likely to learn to desire what Crusoe accomplished, a totally self-enclosed and functional domain where money did not really matter. It was no doubt because Crusoe was more female, according to nineteenth century understanding of gender, than either Roxana or Moll that educators found his story more suitable reading for girls than for boys of an impressionable age.

Nancy Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel (1987; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 16.

[78] Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Essays on Professional Education, 2nd edition (1809; London: J. Johnson, 1812) 137.

[79] Beer, The Critical Idiom 9.

[80] My argument here is informed by Gillian Beer's observation that "[t]he novel is more preoccupied with representing and interpreting a known world, the romance with making apparent the hidden dreams of that world" (12).

[81] Éilean Ní Chuilleanáin, introduction, Belinda, by Maria Edgeworth (London: J.M. Dent, 1993) xxiii.

[82] Ní Chuilleanáin, introduction, Belinda xxiii.

[83] This emphasis on 'usefulness' features repeatedly in Edgeworth's work, and will have a particular significance for my reading of Early Lessons.

[84] There is one fairy story, "Rivuletta," in Early Lessons, and the text asserts that "'even in the wildest flights of the imagination, reason can trace a moral'". See Maria Edgeworth, Early Lessons 2: 92-93. Alan Richardson for his part reads "Rivuletta" as "a rational fairy tale" and he argues that "the relation of didactic writers to the fairytale" might best be described as one of "appropriation". See Alan Richardson, Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 115-16.

[85] Quoted in Richardson, Literature, Education, and Romanticism 52.

[86] As the Memoir demonstrates, Edgeworth betrays an overwhelming anxiety to stress the familial and domestic connotations of her father's return to Ireland. She notes, "Things and persons are so much improved in Ireland of latter days, that only those, who can remember how they were some thirty or forty years ago, can conceive the variety of domestic grievances, which, in those times, assailed the master of a family, immediately upon his arrival at his Irish home" (2: 2). Emphasising that Richard Lovell Edgeworth was a man "formed to be loved and respected in Ireland", her insistence is that it was obvious he "might hope to be eminently useful in improving the habits and condition of the lower classes of the people" (2: 4-5). "My father began", she observes, "where all improvements should begin, at home" (2: 5). As my fifth chapter will demonstrate, very particular (colonial) anxieties inform Edgeworth's desire to treat Richard Lovell Edgeworth's return in this manner in her texts.

[87] I am drawing here upon Gillian Beer's observation that "[r]omance is always concerned with the fulfilment of desires" (12).

[88] For instance, Frye argues, "The Quixote who tries to actualize in his life the romances he has been reading is a psychotic, though a psychotic of unusual literary interest" (178). He further "suppose[s] psychosis, or certain forms of it at least, could almost be defined as an attempt to identify one's life 'literally' with an imaginative projection" (178).

[89] I am drawing here upon Michael McKeon's argument that Don Quixote adopts "a quite radical method of 'conciliation'" in order "to accommodate his readings [of romance] to the minimal demands of real life":

> This method is the theory of enchantments, a sophisticated exegetical technique whose great achievement is to close the gap between the a priori pronouncements of romance and the phenomenal appearances of daily life by arguing that things 'are' what they appear to be only by virtue of having been transformed from their true, romance state by an enchanter.

Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) 280.

[90] McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel 281.

[91] The fact that Don Quixote is not a 'don' at all is more widely significant, of course, and I will be treating this issue in greater detail in my fourth chapter.

Endnotes to Chapter 1.

[1] Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Practical Education, 2: 548.

[2] Gary Kelly, Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790-1827 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 165.

[3] Butler, Maria Edgeworth 149, 172-73.

[4] Claire Connolly's note to the text points out: "Edgeworth here is probably referring to 'The Life of the Duke of Burgundy', contained in Madame Le Fite's Contes, Drames, et Entretiens", but that "[t]his particular observation, however, can be found in a poem by Thomas Newcomb, 'An Epistle from the Duke of Burgundy to the French King' (1709) . . . . We are left in no doubt [in this poem] that Queen Anne's triumphs are thanks to her commander and son, just as her French rival's failures are the fault of his wife" (79).

[5] Anne K. Mellor, in her examination of literature of the Romantic period, argues, "To be pleasing to men: this for Rousseau is the ultimate social role of women", and, further, that "[t]ogether Burke, Rousseau and Byron define the hegemonic domestic ideology of the

Romantic period: the construction of the ideal woman solely as daughter, lover, wife and mother, one who exists only to serve the interests of male children and adults, and whose value is equated with her beauty, submissiveness, tenderness and affection". Anne K. Mellor, Romanticism and Gender (New York and London: Routledge, 1993) 109.

[6] Gonda, Reading Daughters' Fictions 30-31.

[7] Richardson, Literature, Education, and Romanticism 172.

[8] Mitzi Myers argues that "the core of [Wollstonecraft's] manifesto remains middle-class motherhood, a feminist, republicanized adaptation of the female role normative in late eighteenth-century bourgeois notions of the female". Mitzi Myers, "Reform or Ruin: 'A Revolution in Female Manners,'" Studies in Eighteenth Century Literature 11 (1982) : 206.

Thus, in A Vindication of the Rights of woman, Wollstonecraft attacks "Rousseau, and most of the male writers who have followed his steps", arguing they "have warmly indicated that the whole tendency of female education ought to be directed to one point - to render them pleasing" (110). At the same time, however, the educated woman remains in position at the heart of the family because Wollstonecraft argues, "the woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practising various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her husband" (113). Although her central argument is that woman and man should be offered equal educational opportunities, Wollstonecraft insists that this would not invert "the order of society, as it is at present regulated": she does "not wish [women] to have power over men; but over themselves" (121, 156).

[9] John Locke, The Works of John Locke, Reprint of 1794 ed., Vol. VIII (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1997) 33.

[10] Kowaleski-Wallace, Their Fathers' Daughters 17.

[11] Alan Richardson advances a similar argument in his analysis of the writings of Locke and Rousseau (62).

[12] Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London relative to that Event in a Letter in intended to have been sent to a Gentleman in Paris, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (1790; London: Penguin Books, 1968).

[13] As Claire Connolly argues in her notes to the text: "In The Fable of the Bees (1714-25) Bernard Mandeville . . . argues that private vices are public benefits. Edgeworth here introduces the domestic woman into the allegory, and thus shifts the emphasis from vice to virtue" (89).

[14] For a similar argument, see Nicola J. Watson, Revolution and the Form of the British Novel 1790-1825: Intercepted Letters, Interrupted Seductions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 73-75.

[15] The name of Edgeworth's heroine is in itself significant, of course. As Watson argues, "the logic of Rousseau's plot [in La Nouvelle Héloïse] came to inform much of the discourse stimulated by the Revolution in England, to the point where even a passing allusion to its heroine, Julie, might operate as a convenient shorthand for multiple anxieties surrounding female sexuality, national identity, and class mobility" (4).

[16] A comparison can be made here between Edgeworth and Wollstonecraft's line of reasoning in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. Wollstonecraft argues "without dreaming of a paradox, that an unhappy marriage is often very advantageous to a family, and that the neglected wife is, in general, the best mother" (115). While Wollstonecraft's point is that a wife who is not preoccupied with her husband can devote herself fully to her children, Edgeworth reshapes the argument so that the wife's constancy as a mother becomes the means by which the errant husband is attracted back to the domestic sphere. As we shall see, Edgeworth rehearses this theme in her portrayal of Lord and Lady Delacour's marriage in Belinda, but it also features in Leonora. In this latter text, Edgeworth's heroine suffers terribly when her romance-loving friend, Lady Olivia, hopelessly ensnares her husband. Despite this, she continues to faithfully and

uncomplainingly discharge all of her duties and eventually opens her husband's eyes to the superior attractions of domestic life. Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, eds. Marilyn Butler and Susan Manly, vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999).

[17] Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, eds. Heidi Van de Veire and Kim Walker with Marilyn Butler, vol. 5 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999) 86.

[18] See, for example, Elizabeth Inchbald's A Simple Story (1791), Mary Hays's Memoirs of Emma Courtney (1796), or Amelia Opie's Adeline Mowbray, or the Mother and Daughter (1805).

[19] In Inchbald's novel, the extravagant behaviour of Miss Milner at first prompts Lord Elmwood to release her from their engagement, and he resolves to depart for Venice. Having conducted herself for days in the face of her former lover's departure, the sight of Lord Elmwood's "large trunks, nailed and corded" reduces Miss Milner to tears. Lord Elmwood chances to come upon her at this instant, and Inchbald observes, "each understood the other's language, without either uttering a word". See Elizabeth Inchbald, A Simple Story, ed. Pamela Clemit (1791; London: Penguin Books, 1996) 168.

[20] Richard Lovell Edgeworth's argument is that, because these "opinions . . . have been fully detailed in a former publication", that is, Letters for Literary Ladies, they are "unwilling to fatigue by repetition, [and] . . . have touched but slightly upon these subjects in [their] chapters on Temper, Female Accomplishments, Prudence, and Economy" (1: viii).

[21] For a discussion of how Joseph Priestley influenced Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Practical Education, and, for Butler's argument that it is "noticeable" that "the long list of books of every subject which [Edgeworth] cites as authorities in the 1798 Practical Education" are "books her father might easily have discovered before 1780 - Burke's On

the Sublime and Beautiful (1756), Kames's Elements of Criticism (1762), and Reynolds's Discourses (from 1769)," see Butler, Maria Edgeworth 62-66.

[22] In May 1793, Dr. Thomas Beddoes was introduced to the Edgeworth family, who, at the time, were staying at Clifton. The thirty three year old Beddoes rapidly fell in love with Anna, Edgeworth's twenty-year-old sister. Beddoes proposed before the Edgeworths returned to Ireland, and Anna accepted. He visited Edgeworthstown in March 1794, and he and Anna returned to Clifton following their marriage. See Butler, Maria Edgeworth 109-11.

[23] Rousseau's argument is that girls "should early be accustomed to restraint. . . . All their life long, they will have to submit to the strictest and most enduring restraints, those of propriety. They must be trained to bear the yoke from the first, so that they may not feel it, to master their own caprices and to submit themselves to the will of others" (398).

[24] Caroline Gonda similarly rejects the argument that would have Edgeworth as a mere "dupe of patriarchal values and the victim of paternal control," contending instead that "it is Edgeworth's insistence on women's agency and women's moral responsibility which, finally, makes it possible for 'her father's daughter' to become her own woman - to exercise an authority of her own" (xvii). Anne K. Mellor, for her part, includes Edgeworth in a list of female authors who "explicitly or implicitly advocated 'family politics' as a political program that would radically transform the public sphere". Mellor, Romanticism and Gender (84).

[25] Heather MacFadyen, "Lady Delacour's Library: Maria Edgeworth's Belinda and Fashionable Reading," Nineteenth Century Literature March (1994) : 425.

[26] As Marilyn Butler observes in her biography of the author, Edgeworth knew little about "English high life" when she wrote Belinda and so relied "heavily" upon Richard Lovell Edgeworth's memories of his youth in England for material (243). This had the effect that many of the incidents that she described "were at least forty years old when the novel came

out" and, consequently, were dismissed as "totally improbable" by some of her readers (243). In a letter to Étienne Dumont, though, Richard Lovell Edgeworth stoutly defended his daughter's depiction of "'the female duel'": he could not only give "'chapter and verse'" for it, he insisted, but also for the efforts of Clarence Hervey and the French officer to win a bet by driving some "'pigs and turkeys'" (243).

[27] An overwhelming argument in Belinda, MacFadyen contends, is that, for "the health of [her] person and of her household", Lady Delacour must "replace her admirers with friends" (431). "Friendship, however, is the product of domestic not fashionable reading" and so Lady Delacour's final reformation is not accomplished until she allows Belinda, and others, to supervise her texts (431).

[28] Once Lady Delacour submits to a physical examination, it is discovered that a surgeon "'is not wanted'", and she is "relieved from those fears from which she had long been oppressed" (295, 297).

[29] Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, eds. Susan Manly and Clíona Ó'Gallchoir, vol. 9 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999) 51.

[30] In their notes to Helen, Susan Manly and Clíona Ó'Gallchoir observe that the text was translated and published in three volumes as Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution in London in 1818. De Staël's observation, they note, was that even remarkable women writers in England "'live in general in great retirement, and their influence is confined to their books'" (9: 374).

[31] "The heroine of Staël's novel of 1807", Manly and Ó'Gallchoir note, "is an artist and poet who lives a highly unconventional and independent life in Rome. The impossibility of being an 'English Corinne' is thematized in the novel, in which the Scottish Lord Nelvil falls in love with Corinne but on his return to England realizes that such a woman is doomed to unhappiness and isolation in his native country" (9: 375).

[32] Lady Davenant differs here somewhat from Lady Delacour. Although she insists that

her daughter is yet "'too young, too innocent, to hear the particulars of [her] history'", Lady Delacour *is* keen to share this history with Helena (281). She thus tells the girl that she "'will hear them all at a proper time from [her] best friend Miss Portman'" (281).

[33] The letter is from Lady Davenant who has accompanied her husband to Russia. Having departed from England before the unfolding of the events that persuaded the General not to sanction Helen and Beauclerc's marriage, Lady Davenant writes in the belief that, by the time she receives the letter, Helen will have married her son-in-law's ward.

[34] Up until this point, Helen has clung to the belief that Cecilia will feel able to tell the General all when they experience their first moments of joy as parents.

[35] There are, of course, striking parallels to be drawn here between Cecilia and Lady Delacour's experiences. When she first unfolds the details of the "misery" of her domestic life to Belinda, for example, Lady Delacour suggests that she owed much of her suffering to her discovery of what she believed to be her husband's true character (6). Having been financially "'dupe[d]'" by Lord Delacour, Edgeworth's emphasis is that Lady Delacour allowed her feelings for her husband to mutate into an compromising "'hate'" (35). This prompted her to abandon her domestic obligations, which in time turned her home into the site that inspired the "'aching void'" in her heart (37).

[36] Lord Beltravers is described as such when Beauclerc, Helen, the General, and Cecilia, visit Old Forest, the estate of the Beltravers family. Convinced by his 'friend' that his desire is to restore the "dilapidated mansion", Beauclerc has promised to loan him money (9: 83). This outrages the General because he perceives that, contrary to Lord Beltravers's assertions to Beauclerc, Old Forest has been brought to ruination by the young lord's debts. The imagery that Edgeworth invokes to describe this visit is extremely significant. Implicitly, the suggestion of her text is that Beauclerc and his party have had a glimpse of an underworld existence; that they are viewing the destructive effects of Beltravers's demonic life.

[37] Awakening the next morning, for example, she wonders whether everything that has transpired is "a dream" (9: 358). More importantly, though, Helen also recognizes that her powers of ontological perception have sharpened: "Characters which she thought she perfectly understood, had each appeared, in these new circumstances, different from what she had expected" (9: 358).

[38] The worthless woman was Lord Beltravers's disgraced, married sister, "'Mad. de St. Cymon'" (9: 75). She was in Florence at the same time as Lord and Lady Davenant and Cecilia, and Lady Davenant would not allow Cecilia to cultivate her acquaintance.

[39] Marilyn Butler, "The Uniqueness of Cynthia Kirkpatrick: Elizabeth Gaskell's Wives and Daughters and Maria Edgeworth's Helen," Review of English Studies 23 (1972) 289.

[40] Mitzi Myers makes a similar point in her reading of Edgeworth's tales for children. Edgeworth's "need to receive and bestow love, was, [Richard Lovell Edgeworth] pronounced, her greatest failing. But as Maria's stories demonstrate to those who see past the preface, and as her letters still more openly proclaim, she herself highly values eagerness of feeling". Mitzi Myers, "Romancing the Moral Tale: Maria Edgeworth and the Problematics of Pedagogy," Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England, ed. James Holt McGavran, Jr. (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1991) 104.

Endnotes to Chapter 2.

[1] Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, Practical Education 1: 8.

[2] The composition and publication details of Edgeworth's texts are complicated. "The Bracelets", for example, was written in the 1780s, but was not published until 1796 in The Parent's Assistant. "The Purple Jar", one of the most celebrated of Edgeworth's tales, was first published in The Parent's Assistant in 1796, and thereafter appeared with the "Rosamond" tales in Early Lessons (1801-2). "Angelina; or, L'Amie Inconnue" began life

as a play early in 1799, but was rewritten to become one of the stories in Moral Tales (1801). See Butler, Maria Edgeworth 155-65.

[3] Maria Edgeworth, Popular Tales, 1804, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1807) 1: 3-113.

[4] My arguments here are also illustrated by Edgeworth's inclusion of "The Little Merchants" in the 1800 edition of The Parent's Assistant. In this tale, which is set in Naples, Edgeworth uses the character of Arthur, an English servant, to emphasise the superiority of England, and to insist that other nations and races will necessarily benefit by being exposed to English customs and culture. Arthur thus champions the hardworking and honest Francisco, and he (unsuccessfully) intervenes "with the cool justice of an Englishman" when Piedro is suspected of stealing wood, pointing out "the excellence of an English trial by jury" (2: 93). Although Arthur implicitly enjoys the position of a privileged observer in Edgeworth's narrative, a crucial point of the text is that he steadfastly refuses to entertain a prejudicial opinion of what he sees. While conscious of the superiority of the nation that he represents, he thus respects the fact that his Neapolitan friends enjoy a different way of life.

[5] Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, abridged ed. (1977; London: Penguin Books, 1979) 258. See also J. H. Plumb, "The New World of Children in Eighteenth-Century England," Past and Present 67 (1975) : 64-93. Plumb observes, "there can be no doubt that the children's world of the eighteenth century – at least for those born higher up the social scale than the labouring poor – changed dramatically" (65).

[6] Mitzi Myers, "Impeccable Governesses, Rational Dames, and Moral Mothers: Mary Wollstonecraft and the Female Tradition in Georgian Children's Books," Children's Literature 14 (1986) : 33.

[7] Richardson, Literature, Education, and Romanticism 24.

[8] I am drawing in particular here upon Alan Richardson's argument that, "[i]n the children's literature which developed during the final decades of the eighteenth century, . . . the child inside the text was to be as manageable as the child outside the text" (145).

[9] Myers, "Romancing the Moral Tale" 100.

[10] Edgeworth, The Parent's Assistant 1: 1-45.

[11] Edgeworth, The Parent's Assistant 2: 49-145.

[12] Edgeworth, Moral Tales 2: 98-224.

[13] Edgeworth expertly illustrates this at one entirely significant moment in the narrative. When her children send her an invitation to stay at home one evening in order to sample radishes that her son, Herbert, has grown, Mrs. Harcourt sends her card with the reply that ""if she had a hundred other invitations, she would accept of his'" (2: 149). Mrs. Grace, her maid, is subsequently amazed when she discovers the feathers with which she has previously dressed the hair of her mistress abandoned on a table. The symbolism of this is unmistakable: Mrs. Harcourt is *literally* changing her feathers.

[14] Mitzi Myers, "Socialising Rosamond: Educational Ideology and Fictional Form," Childrens Literature Association Quarterly 1989 (Summer) : 52.

[15] Edgeworth, The Parent's Assistant 1: 145-255.

[16] Edgeworth, Moral Tales 1: 225-350.

[17] Edgeworth, Early Lessons, 2 vols. (1801-2; London: J. Johnson & Co., 1815) 1: 1-220.

[18] Edgeworth, The Parent's Assistant 3: 225-96.

[19] Marilyn Butler quotes in her biography from a letter written by one of Edgeworth's half-sisters in 1838, wherein she recalls Edgeworth's painful recollection of her early life. Writing to Michael Pakenham Edgeworth, Harriet Butler observes,

> 'Yesterday Maria was talking of her childhood and saying how unhappy she was[.] She remembered in Dublin getting out of a garret window on the window stool when she was about 6 yr [sic] old and some passenger running in and telling the maid of the child's danger and when the maid said as she took her in, "Do you know you might have fallen down and broken your neck and been killed" and

Maria answered "I wish I had – I'm very unhappy" – so piteous the idea of so little a child being so very wretched.' (46-47)

[20] Richard Lovell Edgeworth at first decided to raise his eldest son according to Rousseau's model in Émile. The boy was encouraged to observe and to think for himself, and he spent a great deal of his time with his father. Shortly after travelling to France in 1771, however, Richard Lovell Edgeworth became involved in a project to enlarge the city of Lyons by diverting the Rhone. "Unfortunately for [his] eldest son", as he puts it in his Memoirs, he allowed himself to be "persuaded" to send Richard away to school "without having sufficiently prepared him for the change between the Rousseauen system, and the course of education to which he was to be subject at a public seminary" (1: 353). The probable effects of this abrupt change upon Richard can only be imagined. In any event, and as Marilyn Butler notes in her biography of Edgeworth, Richard Lovell Edgeworth and his second wife effectively gave the boy up as a hopeless case by 1779; he went away to sea, and never returned to Edgeworthstown again during the lifetime of Honora (51).

[21] Maria Edgeworth to Aunt Charlotte Sneyd, October 19th, 1780, letter 34..

[22] Mrs. Honora Edgeworth to Mrs. Ruxton, no date [? 1776], letter 10 A.

[23] Frances Edgeworth, A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth 1: 3.

[24] Maria Edgeworth to Lucy Edgeworth, January 6th, 1836, quoted in Butler, Maria Edgeworth 476.

[25] Butler, Maria Edgeworth 160.

[26] As I have already noted in my footnote above, "The Purple Jar" was originally published in the 1796 edition of The Parent's Assistant and, from 1801, was included in Early Lessons. My references are to the 1815 edition of the latter text.

[27] Edgeworth, Early Lessons 2: 18-32.

[28] Edgeworth, Early Lessons 2: 45-78.

[29] As I noted in my last chapter, a crucial point in the Friend's argument is that the tempers

of young girls must be cultivated so that they learn to be happy in whatever situations they are eventually placed.

[30] In "The Two Plums", as we have seen, Rosamond chooses the useful housewife over a beautiful painted stone, and, in "The Hyacinths", she wisely decides not to pick her hyacinth flowers but to let them die back completely so she can enjoy them again next Spring. See Maria Edgeworth, Early Lessons 2: 108-15.

[31] Edgeworth, Early Lessons 2: 96-107.

[32] This theme is powerfully illustrated in "The Little Dog Trusty" and in "The Orange Man; Or, the Honest Boy and the Thief", for example, both of which are also in Early Lessons. "The Little Dog Trusty" tells the story of two brothers, Frank, who always tells the truth, and Robert, who lies. Edgeworth's text chooses neither to examine why two brothers brought up in an identical fashion should differ so much in terms of character, nor why Robert continues to lie despite the fact that he is always "whipped" for this offence by his father (1: 232). When he is revealed to have lied about the breaking of a basin full of milk, the ferocity with which Robert is punished is made explicit in the text: "So Robert was whipped, till he cried so loud with the pain, that the whole neighbourhood could hear him" (1: 233). An equally decisive and painful punishment is handed out to Ned, one of the two little boys in "The Orange Man; Or, the Honest Boy and the Thief". Unlike Charles, the honest boy of the title, Ned's parents did not "always" punish him "when he meddled with what was not his own" when he was a child and so "so he grew up to be a thief" (1: 236-37). Ned finally gets what the text implies to be his just desserts when he attempts to steal oranges from the panniers of a horse that Charles is minding for its owner. The horse kicks Ned, so much so that he "screamed with the pain" (1: 243). A crowd gathers and, when they find out what has happened, the emphasis of the narrative is that none of the onlookers "pitied Ned for the pain he felt" (2: 244). Instead, the general consensus is that it was "'a lucky kick for him, if it keeps him from the gallows'" (2: 244).

At this moment, Edgeworth's text thus reveals how an individual's childhood suffering may spare him or her from something much worse in later life.

[33] Edgeworth, Early Lessons 1: 1-220.

[34] This first occurs when Frank's eagerness to create a seal out of wax causes him to burn his finger, and his mother tells him: "'you were punished for your carelessness, by having burned your fore-finger'" (1: 41). Frank later breaks a window when he is playing with horse chestnuts. He runs and tells his mother directly, which earns him her praise, but she also reminds him of the painful lesson he has earlier learned, and notes, "'the pain you would feel at your horse-chestnut's being thrown away, would make you remember, I think, not to throw hard things against glass windows again'" (1: 63). Similarly, when Frank develops the habit of fidgeting with his buttons whenever he is trying to recollect something, his parents again use his physical pain as a teaching tool. Following his fall from a swing as a result of this fidgeting, they suggest that Frank associates the pain of this fall with his fidgeting; this, they suggest, should provide a powerful incentive to help him cure himself of this habit (1: 122-24). Intriguingly, Frank's habit of fidgeting is obviously based in part upon a childhood experience of Edgeworth's father. In his Memoirs, Richard Lovell Edgeworth observes,

> While I learned my lesson by rote, I had the trick of standing upon one leg, buckling and unbuckling my shoe. When I came to repeat my lesson, my master insisted upon my standing still and on both legs. My memory was directly at a fault. My associations were broken . . . A *good* whipping, as it is called, cured me of the trick, and of what *appeared to be* obstinacy or stupidity. (1: 47)

[35] In "Frank", for example, the little boy points out to his mother:

> ' . . . you are more glad to have me with you when I am useful to you, as I was yesterday, when I helped you to cut open the leaves of those new books, which you wanted to read - You liked me very much then, when you said I was *useful* to you.'
>
> 'Yes, people like those that are useful to them.'
>
> 'And I like to be liked, mamma, by you, more than by any body, so I will try always to be as useful to you as I can . . .' (1: 135-36)

Similarly, Rosamond echoes these sentiments in "The Two Little Plums", when she

emphasises why she is so determined to cure herself of her "little faults". "'I like to cure myself of my little faults'", she observes, "'I was very happy when you smiled and praised me, mamma, and said, the other day, that you were glad I wished to cure myself of my little faults; and I dare say, mamma, that you would smile a great deal more, and be a great deal more pleased with me, when I really have quite entirely cured myself'" (2: 28).

[36] Mitzi Myers, "The Dilemmas of Gender as Double-Voiced Narrative: Or, Maria Edgeworth Mothers the Bildungsroman," The Idea of the Novel in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Robert W. Uphaus, (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1988) 83.

[37] Myers, "Romancing the Moral Tale" 101.

[38] Mitzi Myers does not focus upon this particular dimension of Edgeworth's writing in her reading of "The Purple Jar", but she nonetheless concludes, "so vivid are Rosamond's eye and voice that Edgeworth's child self and her mature authorial message coexist in a fruitful tension unusual for the Georgian moral tale, so much so that the subplot of the child's perspective balances and partially undoes the surface plot". Myers, "Socializing Rosamond" 56.

[39] Myers, "The Dilemmas of Gender as Double-Voiced Narrative", 76-79.

[40] In her "Romancing the Moral Tale", this recognition prompts Myers to read one of Edgeworth's most famous tales for children, "Simple Susan", as

> a pastoral romance of child empowerment . . . [that is] deeply satisfying to the author herself. Edgeworth as writer-daughter . . . fantasizes a family romance in which she remothers herself by rescuing her parents, in effect giving birth to the familial status, and the ideal self she desires, while creating a textual *locus amoenus* that embodies maternal values and thus remothers her child readers as well. (98-99)

Crucially, Edgeworth presents her readers with a heroine whose character is essentially established, and she infers that love was the primary agent in effecting Susan's maturation. When she symbolically picks up and continues her mother's knitting, Susan thus significantly observes, "'[My mother] taught me to knit, she taught me everything that I

know . . . and, best of all, she taught me to love her, to wish to be like her'". The moral of Edgeworth's tale, clearly, is that *all* mothers should learn from Mrs. Price's example: they should realise that, if they wish to turn their daughters into women like themselves, they must secure their affections first. See Edgeworth, "Simple Susan" in The Parent's Assistant 1: 164.

[41] Myers, "The Dilemmas of Gender as Double-Voiced Narrative" 82.

[42] Myers, "Romancing the Moral Tale" 101.

[43] Myers, "Socialising Rosamond" 54.

[44] Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction 81.

[45] Mary Poovey traces this power to the emergence of the middle class, which "simultaneously enhanced women's position and gave female nature a more strict - if idealized – definition". Poovey, The Proper Lady 10.

[46] Richard Lovell Edgeworth to Maria Edgeworth, 2nd May, 1780, letter 31.

[47] Edgeworth, The Parent's Assistant 1: 118-44.

[48] The first part of "Mademoiselle Panache" is in The Parent's Assistant 2: 222-64. The second is in Moral Tales 2: 225-305.

[49] In Practical Education, Edgeworth and her father argue "to make, what is called the heart, a source of permanent pleasure, we must cultivate the reasoning powers at the same time" (1: 296).

[50] A further, crucial point, of course, is that boys and young men are also adversely affected when women read inappropriate texts. In the first instance, and as we have seen, an overwhelming argument of the literature of this period is that mothers are responsible for supervising *all* of their children's reading, and, as Hannah More puts it, they are also called upon "to banish from their dressing rooms, (and oh, that their influence could banish from the libraries of their sons and husbands!) [inappropriate books]" (1: 31). As my next chapter will demonstrate, however, Edgeworth's emphasis in her work is that the

regulation of the reading-habits of the male is particularly problematic: national and imperial expansion is directly facilitated, she avers, when certain young men and boys read romances.

[51] A similar theme informs Hannah More's Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education. Arguing that "[t]he profession of ladies, to which the bent of *their* instruction should be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers, and mistresses of families", she contends,

> when a man of sense comes to marry, it is a companion whom he wants, and not an artist. It is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and dress, and dance; it is a being who can comfort and counsel him; one who can reason, and reflect, and feel, and judge, and act, and discourse, and discriminate; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his cares, sooth his sorrows, purify his joys, strengthen his principles, and educate his children. (1: 107)

[52]In Northanger Abbey (1818), for instance, Henry Tilney tells Catherine Morland that he considers the "'country-dance as an emblem of marriage'", pointing out that, '"in both, man has the advantage of choice, woman only the power of refusal'". Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey (1818; London: Penguin Books, 1972) 95.

[53] In Practical Education, for example, Edgeworth warns that mothers should be cautious of encouraging their daughters' accomplishments purely with an eye to an advantageous match. Mothers who "speculate on their daughters [sic] accomplishments", she writes, forget that all parents "have been for some years, speculating in the same line; consequently, the market is likely to be overstocked, and, of course, the value of the commodities must fall" (2: 528-29). "In a wealthy mercantile nation", she observes, "there is nothing which can be bought for money, which will long continue to be an envied distinction" (2: 530). For her part, Teresa Michals argues, "Much of [Edgeworth's] fiction, like her management of her family's estate, is an experiment in the principles of free-market capitalism". In Belinda, for instance, "Edgeworth rewrites romance [that is, courtship] as a rational investment in the marriage market, and investment as romance".

Teresa Michals, "Commerce and Character in Maria Edgeworth," Nineteenth Century Literature June (1994) 5, 16.

[54] A similar scene is enacted in Helen, where Edgeworth's emphasis is that her heroine gracefully, and gratefully, submits her reading to the supervision of a representative of the patriarchal order. Having taken up " a volume of [a] novel Lady Castlefort had been reading – 'Love unquestionable'", Helen is "surprised to find it instantly, gently, but decidedly drawn from her hand: she looked up – it was Beauclerc. 'I beg your pardon, Miss Stanley, but –.' 'Thank you! thank you!' said Helen; 'you need not beg my pardon.' (152-53). Again, Edgeworth here rehearses an argument that has earlier informed her narrative: she implies that, as was the case with Lord Davenant and his wife, Beauclerc stoops down to educate Helen and, further, that the young girl looks up to his efforts to regulate her reading.

[55] Edgeworth, Moral Tales 2: 1-97.

[56] While Edgeworth's text tacitly derides this assertion of Arabella's, it is worth remembering that Richard Lovell Edgeworth makes precisely such emphatic declarations in his prefaces to his daughter's texts.

[57] Mitzi Myers, "Quixotes, Orphans, and Subjectivity: Maria Edgeworth's Georgian Heroinism and the (En)Gendering of Young Adult Fiction," Lion and the Unicorn: A Critical Journal of Children's Literature June (1986) : 26.

[58] Colin B. Atkinson and Jo. Atkinson, "Maria Edgeworth, Belinda and Women's Rights," Eire-Ireland: A Journal of Irish Studies Winter (1984) : 103.

[59] Their point, in fact, is that the eighteenth-century reader would recognize this "quite early . . . sooner than would a modern reader" (102).

[60] This 'status anxiety' is a recurring theme in the work of female authors. In Evelina (1778), for example, the heroine is separated from her party during a visit to Marybone-gardens, and finds herself "in the midst of a crowd, yet without party, friend, or

acquaintance". Her unprotected status encourages "impertinent witticisms, or free gallantry" from male bystanders, and when Evelina seeks "'protection'" from some ladies, she discovers that she had "sought protection from insult, of those who were themselves most likely to offer it!". See Fanny Burney, Evelina (1778; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1982) 233.

[61] Maria Edgeworth, Frank: A Sequel to Frank in Early Lessons, 3 vols. (London: R. Hunter, 1822).

[62] Like Frank, the hero of "Forester" in Moral Tales allows himself to be (temporarily) seduced by romance, and the emphasis of the text is that this threatens his ability to properly fulfil his duties as a gentleman in later life. The text notes, "His love of independence was carried to such an extreme, that he was inclined to prefer the life of Robinson Crusoe in his desert island, to that of any individual in cultivated society". So it is, for example, that while Henry, his guardian's son, applies himself to trying to find out why the canaries belonging to a female acquaintance of the family keep dying, Forester takes "a book" and immerses himself "deep in the history of a man, who had been cast away, some hundred years ago, upon a desert island". When he is recalled to the present, Forester reacts "as if he had just awakened from a dream", and Edgeworth's text traces how he is gradually persuaded to abandon his scorn for "the common forms and dependencies" of ordinary life. See Maria Edgeworth, Moral Tales 1: 1, 27, vii.

Endnotes to Chapter 3.

[1] Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Essays on Professional Education 221. As I noted in my introduction, Edgeworth's father was originally credited as the sole author of this text.

[2] I am drawing here upon Gary Kelly's reading of the works of Helen Maria Williams (1762?-1827). Taken together, Kelly contends, Williams's texts effectively represent accounts of "political tourism", which are ultimately framed in terms of romance. Her

Letters Written in France, in the Summer of 1790, to a Friend in England; Containing, Various Anecdotes Relative to the French Revolution; and Memoirs of Mons. And Madame du F-. . . (1790) adopts "[t]he overall form . . . [of] a romance journey from the narrator's 'proper' sphere of home, family, and friends to the apparently unfamiliar and public-political domain, concluding with her imminent return home, more aware of the difference between 'home' and 'not home', between Revolutionary France and unrevolutionized Britain". Similarly, Williams's 1798 text, A Tour in Switzerland; or, A View of the Present State of the Government and Manners of those Cantons: with Comparative Sketches of the Present State of Paris, Kelly notes, "incorporates travel-writing, the most important and widely read form of non-fiction prose at the time, into Williams's project of feminizing politics and the Revolution". See Gary Kelly, Women, Writing, and Revolution 35, 39, 69. For a brief overview of Williams's life and works, see "Helen Maria Williams," Dictionary of British Women Writers, ed. Janet Todd (London: Routledge, 1989), 720-22.

[3] More persistently figures inappropriate texts as 'poison' throughout Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education. "Rousseau", she observes, for example, "was the first popular dispenser of [that] concentrated drug, in which the deleterious infusion [is] strong, and the effect proportionably [sic] fatal" (1: 32). This anxiety in More's text, of course, is representative of the wider cultural and ideological concerns of this period. For instance, Seamus Deane argues Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France "claims that, after 6 October 1789, when the modern world appeared, France became the foreign country *par excellence* . . . filled with a missionary spirit to convert or pervert all Europe to its model". As I noted in my introduction, women were seen as particularly susceptible to such 'perversion' due to their reading. See Seamus Deane, Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 7. For an analysis of how "the fate of sensibility in England is allied to the political

situation", see Todd, Sensibility: An Introduction 112.

[4] This previously unpublished essay is appended to the Penguin Classic's edition of Things As They Are; Or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams (1988). In his introductory remarks to the essay, Maurice Hindle observes that Godwin's "manuscript note" to the title of the piece indicates that it "was produced 'while the Enquirer (1797) was in the press, under the impression that the favour of the public might have demanded another volume'". William Godwin, "Of History and Romance," Things As They Are; Or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams, ed. Maurice Hindle (1794; London: Penguin Books, 1988) 361.

[5] Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1993) 8.

[6] Daniel Defoe, The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719; London: Penguin Books, 1965) 157.

[7] Jacqueline Rose, The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction, Revised edition (1984; Houndmills, Basingstoke and London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992) 58.

[8] Edgeworth's analysis of the effects of history reading has much in common with that of William Godwin. In his essay "Of History and Romance", he writes, "It is in the contemplation of illustrious men, such as we find scattered through the long succession of ages, that kindles into a flame the hidden fire within us. . . . While we admire the poet and the hero, and sympathise with his generous ambition or his ardent exertions, we insensibly imbibe the same spirit, and burn with kindred fires" (362).

[9] Sir Thomas Troubridge (1758?-1807) rose to the rank of rear admiral in Britain's navy, and his career was closely linked to that of Nelson. "Troubridge, Sir Thomas," Dictionary of National Biography 1973 ed.

[10] The same sentiments manifest themselves throughout Patronage (1814), for example, as where Lord Oldborough rewards his secretary, Mr. Temple, for a stirring speech that he makes in the House of Commons. Lord Oldborough remarks that "'[a] man of genius . . .

can become a man of business'", and thereby illustrates Edgeworth's greater contention that business *is* compatible with honour and, further, that Britain's professional men ***must*** remember this as they rise in the world. Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, eds. Connor Carville and Marilyn Butler, Vols. 6-7 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999) 7: 91.

[11] Edgeworth, Popular Tales 3: 3-167.

[12] The fact that Sancho Panza's ambitions are those of a would-be colonizer is made abundantly clear throughout Don Quixote, particularly where the squire intimates that he will use whatever means are necessary in order to exact the maximum profit from 'his' colonized lands:

> 'What care I, if my subjects be blacks? what have I to do, but to ship them off, and bring them over to Spain, where I may sell them for ready money; with which money I may buy some title or employment, on which I may live at my ease all the days of my life? . . . Before God, I will make them fly, little and big, or as I can: and let them be never so black, I will transform them into white and yellow: let me alone to lick my own fingers.' (278)

[13] Kelly, Women, Writing, and Revolution 184-85.

[14] Suvendrini Perera, Reaches of Empire: The English Novel from Edgeworth to Dickens (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 7.

[15] This emphasis manifests itself in More's Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, for example, where she ponders the deleterious effects that the supervision of a French governess may have upon the accent of her young charge. What disgrace is there, More wonders, when a young girl's accent betrays that she has "been bred in her own [country]: a country, to which (with all its sins, which are many!) the whole world is looking with envy and admiration, as the seat of true glory and of comparative happiness: a country, in which the exile, driven out of the crimes of his own, finds a home!" (1: 103).

[16] John Barrell, English Literature in History: An Equal, Wide Survey (London: Hutchinson, 1983) 119.

[17] Although Tobias Smollett's The Life and Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves was first published in 1762, Barrell's reading of this novel usefully illuminates this part of his argument. Written "in the manner of Don Quixote", Smollett's text "has as its central character a baronet who, before the opening of the novel, had been the ideal of the benevolent paternalist landowner" (200). Unhinged by the mistaken belief that he has been rejected by Aurelia Darnel, Smollett observes that Launcelot Greaves sets out "'to honour and assert the efforts of virtue; to combat vice in all her forms, redress injuries, chastise oppression, protect the helpless and forlorn, relieve the indigent, exert [his] best endeavours in the cause of innocence and beauty, and dedicate [his] talents, such as they are, to the service of [his] country'". The difficulty for the reader, Barrell contends, is to decide whether or not to dismiss Greaves as a lunatic knight errant "for it is clear that he has a more complete grasp of the condition of England and of the virtues necessary to its government than anyone else in the book" (200). "[P]art of the problem of determining whether Greaves is mad or not", he notes, "is the question of whether anyone who seriously attempted, not simply to exhibit, but to employ the virtues of the gentleman in a society as corrupt as that described in the novel, would not appear to be an anachronism as ludicrous as Sir Launcelot" (201). Tobias Smollett, The Life and Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves, ed. Peter Wagner (1762; London: Penguin Books, 1988) 49-50.

[18] The fact that Edgeworth is acutely conscious of the potential difficulties and post-Revolutionary implications of this project peculiarly manifests itself at one particular moment in Essays on Professional Education. Attaching a proviso to her insistence that future soldiers and sailors should read Thomas Day's Sandford and Merton (1783-89), she observes that the text's "prejudice against *gentlemen*" is the result of the fact that it "was written before the French revolution, and at a time, when there was reason to dread, that the luxurious and effeminate manners, which were then fashionable in France, should spread to the nobility of England, and debase the manly character of Britons" (138).

[19] Richard Steele, The Guardian no. 34, April 20th, 1713, quoted in Barrell, English Literature in History 37.

[20] Edgeworth advances the same argument in relation to the country gentleman who is waiting to inherit his estate. If the nation is at peace, she argues, he should travel at home and abroad; if it is at war, he should go into the army (298).

[21] Essays on Professional Education similarly insists that "[a] boy intended for the army or navy should be as soon as possible initiated in geography" (134).

[22] Trumpener, Bardic Nationalism 25.

[23] I do not intend to focus in this chapter upon how this process of incorporation/appropriation is treated by Edgeworth in her texts relating to Ireland. However, I do wish to call attention here to Seamus Deane's observations in Strange Country regarding what he calls Edgeworth's "dramatizing" of the England/Ireland relationship "as an early form of imperial romance – one in which a 'utilitarian' adventure is undertaken in a romantic territory in order to conquer it, remap it, domesticate it" (30). The arguments of Katie Trumpener and Suvendrini Perera have clear implications for what Deane is asserting here, as do Jacqueline Rose's contentions about the way in which "discovering, or seeing, the world is equivalent to controlling, or subduing, it" (58).

[24] John Brewer, The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century (London: Harper Collins, 1997) 630-31.

[25] Percy G. Adams, Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1983) 57.

[26] Trumpener argues further that the writing of such literature is, for Edgeworth, "too often undertaken by the arrogant or ignorant, with lasting damage to cross-cultural understanding", and she cites the case of Craiglethorpe, the self-styled travel writer in Ennui, by way of illustration (58).

[27] Edgeworth, Popular Tales 3: 217-347.

[28] Richardson, Literature, Education, and Romanticism 155-56.

[29] As we have already seen, just such a figuring of the primitive child features in "The Little Merchants". In this text, it is through the eyes of the English servant boy, Arthur, that the primitive Neapolitan children and culture are both newly discovered and reborn. As my next chapter will demonstrate, the profound political repercussions of all of this are even more marked in a text like "The Grateful Negro", wherein an (ideal) British plantation owner is portrayed as a benevolent father figure who watches over and protects his childlike slaves.

[30] As the Pickering and Chatto edition of The Absentee, Madame de Fleury and Emilie de Coulanges does not include this preface, I am quoting here from Maria Edgeworth, Tales of Fashionable Life, first series, vol. 1 (London: J. Johnson, 1812-13) iv.

[31] Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, eds. Heidi Van de Veire and Kim Walker with Marilyn Butler, vol. 5 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999) 226.

[32] Edgeworth, Popular Tales 1: 267-330.

[33] The point that Edgeworth is making is underlined by the imagery that she invokes in order to describe the Ludgate household on the morning following Leonard's arrest. The scene is one of complete domestic disarray, with the unfed Ludgate children sitting on the floor. "[T]he boy", the text significantly observes, was "drinking the dregs of a decanter of white wine", while "the girl [was] playing with a pack of cards" (1: 327).

[34] Edgeworth highlights this point by contrasting the Ludgates with Lucy and her future husband, Allen, throughout the text. Ultimately, this prudent couple come to the aid of the Ludgates' children, whom they "not only clothed and fed, but educated . . . with their own children, in habits of economy and industry" (1: 330). When they grow up, these retrieve "the credit of their family, by living according to their grandfather's . . . maxim", thereby simultaneously demonstrating, of course, they have properly appreciated the implications

of Lucy and Allen's way of life (1: 330). This emphasis in the text illustrates Teresa Michals's argument that, for Edgeworth, "the family has a corporate personality, one underwritten by the market value of its members' good characters rather than by its inheritance of land, the traditional basis of such a corporate personality". Teresa Michals, "Commerce and Character in Maria Edgeworth" 1-2.

[35] As the hero of "an educational romance", it is entirely appropriate that Jervas shares his name with a translator of Cervantes's Don Quixote. Charles Jervas, or Jarvis, was probably born in Dublin in 1675, and was a portrait painter of some repute. His translation of Don Quixote was not published until three years after his death in 1739, but the Dictionary of National Biography notes it "was frequently reprinted, and maintained its popularity, even against Smollett's translation (1755)". "Jervas, Charles," Dictionary of National Biography 1973 ed.

[36] "'Lame Jervas'", he writes, "is a story of self-help which looks back to Dick Whittington and forward to Samuel Smiles" (225). Once Jervas arrives in London and is taught to read and write, "[t]he narrative . . . becomes an educational romance, as [he] pursues 'useful information' through self-directed reading" and thereafter experiences a number of extraordinary adventures (225).

[37] As we have already seen, this is also in evidence in "To Morrow" where the father of one of his college friends secures Basil's place at the embassy in China for him. See Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized, tr. Howard Greenfield from Portrait du Colonisé précédé du Portrait du Colonisateur (1957) (1965; London: Earthscan Publications, 1990) 112.

[38] Jean-Paul Sartre, introduction, The Colonizer and the Colonized 21.

[39] Maria Edgeworth, Continuation of Early Lessons, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (1814; London: R. Hunter, 1816).

[40] Said, Culture and Imperialism 89.

[41] Kelly notes that following Charles's death in 1792, Elizabeth, although devastated, "wished to continue her brother's work as a cultural revolutionary", and did so as "a fictionalized version of him, his career, and his work as an Orientalist":

> [The] material, viewpoint, and political purpose [of her Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah; Written Previous to, and During the Period of His Residence in England; To Which is Prefixed a Preliminary Dissertation on the History, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos (1796)] show the influence of her brother, as reflected in his published Orientalist work, An Historical Relation of the Origin, Progress, and Final Dissolution of the Government of the Rohilla Afghans in the Northern Provinces of Hindostan; Compiled from a Persian Manuscript and Other Original Papers (1787), and a translation and edition of The Hedaya, or Guide: A Commentary on the Mussulman Laws (1791). The aim of these works is to justify British intervention in India and reform of colonial administration, led by the Orientalists, as an attack on court government both in the empire and at home. (129)

For a brief overview of the life and works of Elizabeth Hamilton, see Dictionary of British Women Writers 311-13.

[42] "Jones, Sir William," The Dictionary of National Biography 1973 ed.

[43] Edward Said also addresses this notion of a real versus an imaginary power in Culture and Imperialism, where he considers E.M. Forster's A Passage to India (1924). "Part of the extraordinary novelty of Aziz's trial [in the novel] is that Forster admits that 'the flimsy framework of the court' cannot be sustained because it is a 'fantasy' that compromises British power (real) with impartial justice for Indians (unreal)" (89).

[44] Bryan Edwards (1743-1800) was a West India merchant, who published several influential works tracing the history and implications of colonial life. One of these, The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies (1793), features particularly in Edgeworth's "The Grateful Negro", and I will be returning to it in detail in my next chapter. For an overview of Edwards's biographical details, see "Edwards, Bryan," The Dictionary of National Biography 1973 ed.

[45] Frye, The Secular Scripture 29, 177.

Endnotes to Chapter 4.

[1] Edgeworth, "The Grateful Negro", Popular Tales 3: 179.

[2] Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized 69.

[3] Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Essays on Professional Education 411.

[4] Beer, The Critical Idiom: The Romance 79, 41.

[5] Beer, The Critical Idiom: The Romance 41.

[6] McKeon, Origins of the English Novel 280.

[7] McKeon observes, "The first thing we know about Don Quixote, after all, is that he is a country gentleman with a small farming estate, a modest household, and a penchant for hunting; and the first thing we learn of Sancho is that he is a neighbor of Don Quixote's and a country laborer" (283).

[8] Elam, Romancing the Postmodern 20.

[9] "During this period", Richardson and Hofkosh observe, "British rule over India was consolidated, Canada was aggressively developed, colonialism began in earnest in Australia, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Ceylon, and Java, and the Caribbean possessions (or 'sugar islands') were augmented with the seizure of Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, and British Guyana". Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh, introduction, Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834, ed. Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996) 3. See also Trumpener, Bardic Nationalism 164-65.

[10] Apart from the socio-political difficulties generated by the effects of both the French Revolution and the subsequent years of war with France, Richardson and Hofkosh point out that Britain had to weather the crisis that was caused by the loss of its American colonies, along with the difficulties that arose both out of its early mismanagement of Bengal and the slave rebellions in the West Indies (3).

[11] My reading here is indebted to various critics, including, of course, Katie Trumpener. In

her analysis of the British novel from the 1790s to the 1820s, she states that it

> remains preoccupied with the integrity and interpenetration of cultural spaces: successive novelistic genres establish a dialectical relationship between nationalist ways of thinking about place and the consciousness of empire, a dialectic crucial not only to romantic nationalist, regionalist, and local-color writing, but also to early colonial literature. During this period, the British novel is both caught up in a wide-reaching experiment with new and old narrative coordinates and engaged in an unprecedented reflection of extranovelistic intellectual and political trends, especially the expansion and consolidation of a worldwide British empire. (164)

[12] Suvendrini Perera makes this observation in her reading of Belinda. See her Reaches of Empire 23.

[13] Trumpener, Bardic Nationalism 163.

[14] Austen's heroine recalls this moment when Edmund Bertram, her cousin and Sir Thomas's son, urges her to talk more freely with her uncle. Fanny points out that she does "'talk to him more than [she] used'", and she asks Edmund did he not hear her ask him "'about the slave trade last night?'" (213). Edmund says, yes, he did, but he had hoped her question "'would be followed up by others'" (213). Fanny replies:

> 'I longed to do it – but there was such a dead silence! And while my cousins were sitting by without speaking a word, or seeming at all interested in the subject, I did not like – I thought it would appear as if I wanted to set myself off at their expense, by shewing a curiosity and pleasure in his information which he must wish his own daughters to feel.' (213)

[15] For Said's reading of Mansfield Park, see his Culture and Imperialism 95-116.

[16] Perera, Reaches of Empire 21.

[17] Handed down in the case of James Somerset, a black slave who had been brought to England, versus his master, a Mr. Stewart of Virginia, this held that England was "'a soil whose air is deemed too pure for slaves to breathe in'". Widely interpreted to mean that slavery had effectively been abolished in England, in real terms, the judgement did not result in the immediate emancipation of all of the slaves already upon English soil, and it "ended neither the slave trade nor the institution of slavery in the colonies". Rather, it functioned as a romantic benchmark against which Britain could continue to assert her

moral and cultural pre-eminence, while simultaneously continuing to ignore the true implications of her relationship to slavery. My reading here is indebted to Anne K. Mellor's consideration of the Mansfield Judgement. See Anne K. Mellor, "'Am I Not a Woman, and a Sister?': Slavery, Romanticism, and Gender," in Richardson and Hofkosh, Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture 311.

[18] Comic Dramas, in Three Acts represents one of only two sets of plays that Edgeworth ever published. The other is Little Plays for Children, which was published in 1827. Apart from "The Two Guardians", Comic Dramas includes two Irish plays, "Love and Law" and "The Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock", and these rehearse the themes of her more substantial Irish work. Maria Edgeworth, Comic Dramas in Three Acts (London: R Hunter, 1817).

[19] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Hymns in Prose for Children, new ed. (1781; London: The De La Mare Press, no date).

[20] The first verse of Cowper's poem begins:

> I am monarch of all I survey,
> My right there is none to dispute,
> From the center all round to the sea,
> I am lord of the fowl and the brute. (1-4)

See Baird, John. D. and Charles Ryskamp eds., The Poems of William Cowper (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 403.

[21] Adams, Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel 126.

[22] Robinson Crusoe insists on being called "governour" by the English sailors on the ship that eventually convey him back to civilisation (264).

[23] Significantly, as we saw in chapter two, it is Cowper's poem, not Defoe's novel, that initially inspires Frank's inappropriate emulation of Robinson Crusoe in Frank: A Sequel to Frank in Early Lessons.

[24] Dr. John Aikin and Mrs. Barbauld, Evenings at Home; or, The Juvenile Budget Opened, new ed. (1782-6; London: Ward, Lock, and Company, no date). Moira Ferguson points

out that Edgeworth was familiar with this text. See Moira Ferguson, Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834 (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) 233.

[25] In a letter written to her Aunt Ruxton in 1794, Edgeworth observes, "We are reading a new Book for Children, Evenings at Home . . . We admire Mrs. Barbauld's [tales] extremely – Has Sophy seen them?". Edgeworth's admiration for Barbauld's work is evidenced not only by the frequent references that she makes to Barbauld in both her own writing and letters, but also by the Longford: St. Mel's College: Catalogue of the Library of the Edgeworth Family, which reveals that the family had copies of most of Barbauld's work. See Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Ruxton, May 8th, 1794, letter 111.

[26] Aikin and Barbauld, Evenings at Home 348-52.

[27] Aikin and Barbauld, Evenings at Home 117-20.

[28] Aikin and Barbauld, Evenings at Home 414-17.

[29] Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings, ed. Vincent Carretta (1789; London: Penguin Books, 1995).

[30] Ferguson, Subject to Others 4.

[31] Aphra Behn, Oroonoko, The Rover and Other Works, ed. Janet Todd (1688; London: Penguin Books, 1992) 126.

[32] This type of idealization of the native other, which informs both Barbauld and Aikin's "Master and Slave" and Equiano's autobiography, recurs repeatedly in texts of this period. As I will be demonstrating in detail below, it is clearly encoded in Bryan Edwards's The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies, but it also evidences itself in an instance of peculiar significance in a later text of his in which he details the history of the slaves' rebellion in San Domingo. In this text, which was also in the Edgeworth family library, Edwards records "one instance . . . of such fidelity and attachment in a negro, as is equally unexpected and affecting". Mons. and Madame

Baillon, and their daughter and son-in-law, "were apprized of the revolt by one of their own slaves, who was himself in the conspiracy, but promised, if possible, to save the lives of his master and his family". Detailed in Edwards's text are the slave's three attempts to secure the safety of his erstwhile masters. It emphasizes that when the family believed all hope was lost, "the faithful negro again appeared like their guardian angel". Having finally conducted them to safety, "he took his leave for ever, and went to join the rebels".

In "The Grateful Negro", as we shall see, Edgeworth clearly rehearses such an example of "fidelity and attachment . . . [in] a negro [slave]", and it is entirely possible that ideas from *both* of Edwards's texts are finally incorporated by her into her tale. See, for example, my endnote number 52 below for the comparisons that can be drawn between Edwards's and Edgeworth's figuring of the rebellious native other. See Bryan Edwards, An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo: Comprehending a Short Account of its Ancient Government, Political State, Population, Productions, and Exports; A Narrative of the Calamities which have desolated the Country ever since the year 1789, with some Reflections on their Causes and Probable Consequences; and a Detail of the Military Transactions of the British Army in that Island to the End of 1794 (London: John Stockdale, 1797) 75-76.

[33] Behn's treatment of slavery in Oroonoko is obviously beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I would argue that two crucial differences distinguish it from that of Edgeworth's in her tale. Firstly, and as I have already suggested, Behn figures Oroonoko as exceptional, while Edgeworth's argument in "The Grateful Negro", and throughout her writing, is that, with kindness, it is possible to make a 'Caesar' out of any slave. Further, although Behn's 'narrator' insists that she admires Oroonoko and enjoys a special relationship with him, the fact that she is implicitly fearful of him challenges this assertion in her text. Thus, she observes, "when the news was brought . . . that Caesar had betaken himself to the woods, and carried with him all the Negroes, we were possessed with

extreme fear, which no persuasions could dissipate, that he would secure himself till night, and then, that he would come down and cut all our throats" (132). As we shall see below, Edgeworth on the other hand insists that Mr. Edwards's professed affection for Caesar is genuine and consistent, and that he is literally willing to trust Caesar with his life.

[34] The fact that Caesar has to struggle against his affection for Clara, his betrothed, is also emphasized in Edgeworth's text. Terrified by the threats that Esther, the obeah woman, makes against Caesar's life, Clara begs him to join the conspirators. Instead of his life, Caesar tells her to think of his "'honour'" (3: 195).

[35] Richardson, Literature, Education, and Romanticism 226.

[36] It notes: "Mr. Jefferies might perhaps have forbidden such violence to be used, if he had not been at the time carousing with a party of jovial West Indians " (3: 199). The insinuation here is that Jefferies's failure to exercise the type of moral integrity necessarily expected of a Briton may, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact that he has associated with, and been tainted by, representatives of an inferior culture.

[37] Details of the conspiracy are known to all of the slaves on the island *except* those on the Edwards's estate (3: 183). Also, once informed by Caesar of the rebellion, Edwards arms the slaves as well as the whites on his plantation as "they were all equally attached to him" (3: 207).

[38] Bryan Edwards, The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies, 2 vols. (Dublin: Luke White, 1793) 2: 88-91.

[39] This manifests itself even in the very names of several of the characters in "The Grateful Negro". In the first place, the fact that Edgeworth names *her* benevolent plantation owner "Mr. Edwards" is a point so obvious that it might easily be overlooked. Caesar's betrothed, Clara, is evidently named for one of Bryan Edwards's slaves who was "a most faithful well-disposed woman . . . brought from the Gold Coast to Jamaica the latter end of 1784" (2: 62-63). The implications of Edgeworth naming her benevolent overseer

"Abraham Bayley" are discussed in greater detail below.

[40] In Edgeworth's text, when Jefferies is confronted by Edwards for having allowed Caesar to be seized for his debts, the negligent planter remarks: "'What signifies talking about the matter, as if it were something that never happened before! Is it not a case that occurs every day in Jamaica?'" (3: 178).

[41] Edwards dedicated his text to "The King's Most Excellent Majesty", observing that, "under his mild and auspicious government", Britain's West Indian dominions "are become the principal source of the national opulence and maritime power" (n.p.).

[42] Noting the evidence of "a very intelligent person . . . who had visited many parts of the coast, and [who] appeared to be a man of veracity and candour", for example, Edwards recalls how this honest gentleman assured him: "'In all parts of the coast, and I apprehend it to be the same inland, the body of the people are in a state of absolute and unlimited slavery'" (2: 94). In questioning twenty-five of his own slaves, newly arrived from Africa, Edwards further observes, "fifteen frankly declared that they were born to slavery, and were either sold to pay the debts, or bartered away to supply the wants of their owners" (2: 97). Of the ten remaining, five had been "kidnapped . . . and sold to black merchants, while the other five had fallen victims to some of those petty wars" periodically instigated throughout Africa (2: 97). As Anne K. Mellor points out, merchants, traders and planters sought to defend slavery and the slave trade on the grounds that both "were necessary to Britain's economic survival", supporting their arguments with the further observation that both practices were also "morally justified" as many Africans "had been slaves in their own countries and . . . were savages or heathen[s] incapable of rational thought or moral feeling and hence unfit for freedom". See Mellor, "'Am I Not a Woman, and a Sister?'" (312).

[43] Moira Ferguson argues that the Church of England's approach to slavery was conservative as it "used its acquisition of [this] extensive property in the East Caribbean

. . . as an opportunity to convert slaves to Christianity" (100).

[44] This emphasis upon the fact that many of the planters acquired their plantations by accident or inheritance constitutes but one part of the process through which Edwards tries to distance the West Indian plantocracy from the charges of the abolitionists. He also argues that the planters are

> entirely innocent and ignorant of the manner in which the Slave Trade is conducted (having no other concern therein than becoming purchasers of what British acts of parliament have made objects of sale) so it is equally consonant to their interest and their wishes, that effectual means should be pursued for preserving the health of the Negroes, by securing to them proper and reasonable accommodation on the passage. (2: 113).

Edgeworth's treatment of the mine-owner's lack of responsibility for the conditions under which Jervas laboured as a child clearly echoes Edwards's assertion that the high mortality rate on some of the ships is directly attributable to "the criminal rapaciousness of many of the ship-masters" (2: 110).

[45] Edwards suggests that the work of slaves should be "certain and determinate" (2: 138). They should be paid "wages for extra labour. . . . At the same time, it will be necessary to secure to the Negroes by law, the little property or *peculium* which their own industry may thus acquire" (2: 139).

[46] Terry Eagleton, Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies In Irish Culture. (London and New York: Verso, 1995) 28.

[47] Zachary Bayly, of Jamaica, was one of Edwards's mother's two rich brothers in the West Indies. When she found herself a widow in 1756, Bayly took her and her six children under his protection. See "Bryan Edwards," Dictionary of National Biography 1973 ed.

[48] It is, of course, entirely significant that the benevolent overseer in "The Grateful Negro" is named in part for Zachary Bayly, Edwards's uncle, and for that gentleman's overseer, Abraham Fletcher. Thus, Abraham Bayley, Edgeworth's overseer, is, the text notes, "a man of a mild but steady temper" (3: 173).

[49] Edwards's account of the terrible fortitude with which the ringleader met his horrendous death has clear parallels with Behn's description of the death of Oroonoko. According to the text, he calmly smoked a pipe while an executioner hacked him to pieces. Only when his second arm was cut off, it notes, did his head sink, "his pipe dropped, and he gave up the ghost, without a groan, or a reproach" (140). Again, this figuring of the African as being somehow impervious to pain plays a vital part in the process through which colonists could continue to deny the humanity of the native other.

[50] Edgeworth's treatment of Hector encodes a similar proposition in "The Grateful Negro". The text notes, "Even in his dreams, Hector breathed vengeance. 'Spare none! Sons of Africa, spare none!' were the words he uttered in his sleep" (3: 185).

[51] Arguing that Belinda is "a novel of significant political interest [that is too] easily dismissed as a conventional tale of courtship and fashionable life in the metropolis", Suvendrini Perera traces the significance of the character of Harriet Freke being explicitly equated with that of an obeah woman in the novel:

> Obeah, representing as it did the survival of African religion and culture on the plantations, was immediately recognized by slave owners as a vehicle of resistance and defiance, and brutal measures were taken to crush its (often female) practitioners. To the West Indian plantocracy so heavily represented in Belinda – Percival, Vincent, and the father of Belinda's rival, Virginia, are all owners of Caribbean properties, and Virginia's lover, Captain Sunderland, has helped to suppress a slave revolt there - the obeah woman is a frightening portent indeed. (15-16, 20)

As in "The Grateful Negro", a footnote in Belinda directs the reader's attention to Edward's treatment of obeah in his history of the West Indies. See Edgeworth, Belinda 209.

[52] In his account of the San Domingo rebellion in his An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo, Edwards similarly (re)interprets a fight for freedom so that it represents nothing so much as the manifestation of demonic desire in what was, formerly, a vision of paradise:

> We have to contemplate the human mind in its utmost deformity: to behold savage man, let loose from restraint, exercising cruelties, of which the bare recital makes the heart recoil, and committing crimes which are hitherto unheard of in history; teeming
>
> > - all monstrous, all prodigious things,
> > Abominable, unutterable, and worse
> > Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd!
> >
> > MILTON (xviii-xix)

What he is describing, he asserts, has never before been witnessed by man:

> Such a picture of human misery; - such a scene of woe, presents itself, as no other country, no former age has exhibited. Upwards of one hundred thousand savage people, habituated to the barbarities of Africa, avail themselves of the silence and obscurity of the night, and fall on the peaceful and unsuspicious planters, like so many famished tygers thirsting for human blood. Revolt, conflagration and massacre, every where mark their progress; and death, in all its horrors, or cruelties and outrages, compared to which immediate death is mercy, await alike the old and the young, the matron, the virgin, and the helpless infant . . . . The rage of fire consumes what the sword is unable to destroy, and, in a few dismal hours, the most fertile and beautiful plains in the world are converted into one vast field of carnage; - a wilderness of desolation! (63-64)

[53] This theme also informs Amelia Opie's Adeline Mowbray. In this text, the heroine comes to the aid of Savanna, a mulatto woman, whose husband is being dragged away to prison for failing to pay his debts. Adeline hands over three guineas to the man's creditor and secures the undying gratitude of Savanna, who later insists on working for the heroine "'for noting [sic] but [her] meat and drink'". Savanna's loyalty to her mistress remains unshakeable in the face of ever worsening misfortunes, and it is upon her faithful servant's bosom that Adeline eventually expires. Amelia Opie, Adeline Mowbray, or the Mother and Daughter, ed. Shelley King and John B. Pierce (1805; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 144.

[54] Edgeworth's figuring of the native other here as childlike and dependent clearly recalls the arguments of my second chapter.

[55] When the eyes of St. Albans and his mother are finally opened to the perfidy of the Courtingtons, this action of Quaco's is treated in the text in terms that explicitly contest the notion of the "savage heathen's" inability to experience sensibility. Through a series of

misunderstandings, onlookers, including St. Albans, at first conclude that it is Juliana who has made an anonymous gift of a purse full of money to Mrs. Beauchamp in order to alleviate her distress. Far from correcting this impression, Juliana positively encourages it, insisting, "oh, don't mention such a trifle – say no more, - another time" (251). The truth is eventually discovered when St. Albans sees the purse, and recognizes it as the one that he had earlier given Quaco. When St. Albans reveals the truth to Mrs. Beauchamp, Juliana is publicly humiliated, as this lady points out that "there she stands in contrast with this negro boy!" (252).

[56] Mellor, "'Am I Not a Woman, and a Sister?'" 322.

[57] Edgeworth Moral Tales 1: 225-350.

[58] In this tale, Edgeworth contrasts the exemplary Charles Howard with Augustus Holloway, emphasising that the latter's neglected education causes him to fall into bad company at their Westminster school and to run up considerable debts. An essential point of the tale, however, is that, unlike Charles, Augustus is unable to perceive the sensibility of Oliver, a Creole boy and fellow pupil. When Oliver is mercilessly bullied, he appeals to Augustus to help him. Instead, Augustus is dismissive of the boy, and tells the horrified Charles that he "'will make a slave of him, if I choose it – a negro slave, if I please!'" (1: 253). This prompts Charles to fight Augustus in order to defend Oliver, and it is only after six days that he finally succeeds in subduing his rival. Thereafter, Charles takes the Creole boy under his protection, and helps him to repair the defects of his early education.

[59] I am drawing here upon Tom Dunne's argument that Edgeworth texts "show remarkable patterns of continuity and interaction. In particular, the theme of colonist insecurity in the face of the native threat recurs". See Tom Dunne, "'A Gentleman's estate should be a moral school': Edgeworthstown in Fact and Fiction, 1760-1840," Longford: Essays in County History, ed. Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1991) 96.

[60] As her letters demonstrate, Edgeworth grew increasingly aware of the possible consequences of growing native discontent during the last decade of the eighteenth century. In a letter to her Aunt Ruxton in 1794, for example, she observes,

> There have been lately several flying reports of Defenders, near us, but we never thought the danger *near* till today - last night, a party of men, amounting to a sober 40? . . . attacked a house of one Hoxey, about half a mile from us and took as usual their arms - They have been also at Ringowney, where there was only one servant left to take care of the house. . . . You will probably my dear Aunt be surprised at our making such a mighty matter of a first visit from Gentlemen Defenders - you who have had soldiers sitting up in your kitchen for weeks - but you will consider that it is our *first visit*.

References to Defender activity steadily increases in Edgeworth's letters, until, by April 20th, 1795, she is writing that there is "a whirlwind in our county" with "no Angel to direct it". In the event, this "whirlwind" did not manifest itself properly until May 1798, when the United Irishmen finally embarked upon their long-planned for insurrection. The "dreadful disturbances" of which the Edgeworths read in newspapers did not reach Edgeworthstown until early September, but Edgeworth anxiously traced its approach in her letters. See Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Ruxton, August 11th, 1794, letter 114, and, April 20th, 1795, letter 126. Also, Maria Edgeworth to Sophy Ruxton, June 20th, 1798, letter 187. For an overview of the Revolutionary era in Ireland, see J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923, new ed. (1966; London: Faber and Faber, 1981) 246-67.

[61] Edgeworth's account of the family's lucky escape is contained in a letter to her Aunt Ruxton. Two officers and six dragoons who were escorting an ammunition cart to Longford offered the Edgeworths their protection. Detained by Richard Lovell Edgeworth, the family thirty minutes later heard what they thought was "a clap of thunder". In truth, the ammunition cart had exploded, and, if the Edgeworth's had accompanied this cart, they "must" have been killed. See Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Ruxton, September 5th, 1798, letter 194.

[62] This occurred after a Protestant sergeant of militia convinced Longford's terrified

inhabitants that Edgeworth's father had been signalling to the French from the town's goal. For Edgeworth's account of the family's experiences in 1798, see her volume of Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth 2: 205-38.

[63] Maria Edgeworth to Sophy Ruxton, September 9th, 1798, letter 195.

[64] She writes that he drew the conclusion "that he ought to mix more with society, and make himself more generally known in Ireland" (2: 237).

[65] Edgeworth, of course, did not wait until 1798 to begin writing about Ireland; Castle Rackrent, as Marilyn Butler points out, for example, was probably begun as early as 1794. See Butler, introduction to Castle Rackrent and Ennui 5.

[66] Michael Hurst makes the same point, albeit in a different context. "Though [Richard Lovell Edgeworth's] role had in some ways been that of a Don Quixote", he writes,

> it is strongly evident . . . that [Edgeworth] was no mere Sancho Panza. Frequent and deferential in tone as her references to her father always were, the contribution she made to the maintenance and improvement of conditions at Edgeworthstown and the thoughts she threw out on public affairs generally marked her out as a person of considerable intellect, outstandingly fine feeling and no mean practical skill as a manager of human beings.

Michael Hurst, Maria Edgeworth and the Public Scene: Intellect, Fine Feeling and Landlordism in the Age of Reform (London: Macmillan & Co., 1969) 179.

Endnotes to Chapter 5.

[1] Richard Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth 2: 14.

[2] Trumpener, Bardic Nationalism 165.

[3] This illuminates Tom Dunne's contention that "[a] sense of being under siege from the native Irish world underlies all [Edgeworth's] Irish novels". See Dunne, "'A Gentleman's estate should be a moral school'" 98.

[4] Eagleton, Heathcliff and the Great Hunger 152.

[5] Mary Jean Corbett, "Public Affections and Familial Politics: Burke, Edgeworth, and the

'Common Naturalization' of Great Britain," ELH Winter (1994) : 877.

[6] The Reflections, Corbett contends, "promotes the gendered ideals underpinning social and imperial order threatened, in his thinking as in Edgeworth's, by feminine sociosexual impropriety". One of Edgeworth's ambitions in The Absentee is to suggest how these "gendered ideals" may be reformed and maintained, so the cloud that hangs over Grace Nugent's legitimacy throughout the text serves to illustrate the peculiar dangers that unlicensed female sexuality poses to socio-political stability. See Corbett, "Public Affections and Familial Politics" 878.

[7] Corbett develops her analysis of the familial plot in Edgeworth's fiction in her Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing, 1790-1870, and one of her observations in this text particularly illustrates the way in which she reads romance. "Throughout post-Union fiction", she writes, "the marriage plot operates as a rhetorical instrument for promoting colonial hegemony in making the private relations of romance and reproduction central to the public and imperial good. . . . [T]his narrative structure . . . figures relations of domination and subordination in a colonial context as coextensive with those of gender and class". Mary Jean Corbett, Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing, 1790-1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 53.

[8] I am drawing here upon Thomas Flanagan's study of the Irish novel, wherein he argues that it is typically "saturated with history. . . . However tedious this preoccupation with history became to others, however much it limited his own work, the Irish writer was yoked to it forever. His search for identity drove him relentlessly into the past". Thomas Flanagan, The Irish Novelists 1800-1850 (1959; Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976) 16.

[9] The sterling work of scholars such as W.J. McCormack, Tom Dunne, and W.A. Maguire, among others, has done much to illuminate the extent to which Edgeworth draws upon not only her own family's history, but also that of her environs in her writing. As Marilyn

Butler puts it in her general introduction to The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth:

> It is now apparent that all four of Edgeworth's Irish tales, and to a lesser extent the Essay on Irish Bulls, are sophisticated textual constructions of a small county in the heart of Ireland, through a network of cross-references to literature, history, biography, story, song and legend, either made literary or familiar by the obvious resemblance to a miscellaneous travel-book, or to the more specialised statistical and economic variant, Arthur Young's Tour in Ireland (1780).

We might assume that contemporary readers of Edgeworth would have recognized more quickly than ourselves the complicated cross-references in her fiction. Marilyn Butler, general introduction, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth 1: xxviii.

[10] Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, eds. Jane Desmarais, Tim McLoughlin, and Marilyn Butler, vol. 1 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999) 54.

[11] Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth 2: 2.

[12] Frye, The Secular Scripture 175.

[13] In my introduction, for example, I observed that Edgeworth's volume of her father's Memoirs insists that early-nineteenth-century readers can scarcely "conceive the variety of domestic grievances, which . . . assailed [Richard Lovell Edgeworth], immediately upon his [1782] arrival at his Irish home" (2: 2). As Thomas Flanagan points out, though, "[Richard Lovell] Edgeworth's long residence in England must have been responsible for some part of the conditions which greeted [the family upon their return to Ireland], though Maria would never have admitted that, but the root of the trouble was buried in the centuries (62).

[14] Richard Lovell Edgeworth, A Letter to the Right Hon. the Earl of Charlemont, on the Tellograph and on the Defence of Ireland (Dublin: printed by P. Byrne, 1797).

[15] Although originally printed under Richard Lovell Edgeworth's name alone, it is clear

from Edgeworth family correspondence that Edgeworth wrote most, if not all, of the text. See Edgeworth's letter to her Aunt Ruxton in April 1795, for example, wherein she writes, "My father says he will allow me to manufacture an Essay on the Logograph [that is, the telegraph] - He furnishing the solid materials & I spinning them". Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Ruxton, April 11th, 1795, letter 125.

[16] Frye, The Secular Scripture 54.

[17] Recalling the production of the Essay in her volume of her father's Memoirs, Edgeworth observes, "sometimes, what was spoken by him, was afterwards written by me; or when I wrote my first thoughts, they were corrected and improved by him; so that no book was ever written more completely in partnership" (2: 336).

[18] The first edition of Essays on Irish Bulls was carelessly printed and, in 1803, the Edgeworths brought out a new edition, which corrected many of the mistakes of the original and added some new material. In 1808, they published a third edition, but, as the textual note to the Essay in The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth observes, this "involve[d] the wholesale rearrangement of some of the chapters, and a completely new beginning" (1: iii). Although the editors of The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth have decided to use the 1808 edition of the Essay for their purposes, I feel that this version effaces many of the arguments of the original text. In particular, it removes many of those passages in which the Edgeworths most keenly reveal their perception that Britain's ability to 'change' the identity of other nations peculiarly facilitates those appetites that impel colonial and imperial life. For this reason, I have chosen not to use the Pickering and Chatto edition of the Essay, and so all of my references are to the 1803 edition of the text. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, Essay on Irish Bulls, 2nd ed. (1802; London: J. Johnson, 1803) 7-8.

[19] Declan Kiberd's reading of the several aspirations that underpin England's stereotyping of the Irish from the time of the first settlers is extremely useful here. He suggests, for

example, "Burke contested English stereotypes of the Irish, because he saw in them projections onto a neighbouring people of those elements which the English denied or despised in themselves". Declan Kiberd, Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation (1995; London: Vintage, 1996) 20.

[20] Catherine Gallagher's reading of the importance of the changeling device in Edgeworth's work similarly calls attention to this moment in Essay on Irish Bulls. For her, the significance of the Edgeworths' treatment of Sancho Panza's bull lies in the fact that it illuminates a wider contention of their essay, namely that "when language calls personal identity into question, property of all kinds, but literary property in particular, is soon at issue". Gallagher's analysis of Edgeworth's use of the changeling device finally differs in several important respects from mine; for instance, she does not recognize that one of the fundamental implications of the Essay on Irish Bulls is that the colonizing process changes the *colonizing* as well as the colonized race. Nevertheless, her argument that "Edgeworth implied, especially in her turn-of-the-century works, that Anglo-Irish instabilities, as well as possibilities for self-creation, could be traced to an intrinsic *Irish* changeableness" is useful, and it has helped to inform my reading. Catherine Gallagher, Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 292-93, 289.

[21] Kelly, Women, Writing, and Revolution 184-85.

[22] Deane, Strange Country 3.

[23] Joep Leerssen argues that this mode of narrating Ireland "interposes itself between reader and subject matter, hides Ireland from view, indeed pushes it beyond the horizon . . . . Ireland is *made exotic* by the selfsame descriptions which purport to represent or explain Ireland". See Leerssen, Remembrance and Imagination 37.

[24] Brian Hollingworth, Maria Edgeworth's Irish Writing: Language, History, Politics (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997) 114-15.

[25] Edgeworth, The Parent's Assistant 3: 25-41.

[26] A footnote emphasizes, "This is a fact" (2: 34).

[27] Beer, The Critical Idiom: The Romance 41.

[28] During the rebellion of 1641, as The Black Book of Edgeworthstown points out, for example, "a vast concourse of rabble, headed by some Popish gentry and several Popish priests" came to the then Edgeworth seat at Crannelagh Castle. Seizing the son of Captain John Edgeworth, who was absent from home, they professed that their intention was

> to cut the 'heretic bastard's throat'. But one Edmond MacBrian Ferrall, a menial servant of John Edgeworth and a Papist, snatched the child from the man who had laid hold on him, and swore by his soul nobody but himself should have the joy of killing him, for that he had got many a frown, many a harsh word and many a blow from the heretic dog the father of him . . .

Having made a great show of "shaking, threatening and sometimes hurting the child to make him scream and roar (the better to impose on the rabble)", MacBrian Ferrall ran off with the boy and, instead of killing him, hid him "in some bog-hole or under some ditch" until he could retrieve him later. As a result of "the fidelity of this poor Irishman", both the child and his mother were saved from the mob and eventually conveyed to safety. Harriet Jessie Butler and Harold Edgeworth Butlers, eds., The Black Book of Edgeworthstown and Other Edgeworth Memories 1585-1817 (London: Faber and Gwyer Ltd., 1927) 12-13.

[29] Tom Dunne, Maria Edgeworth and the Colonial Mind (Cork: University College Press, 1984) 17.

[30] Marilyn Butler, endnotes, Castle Rackrent and Ennui, by Maria Edgeworth (London: Penguin Books, 1992) 347.

[31] W.J. McCormack, Ascendancy and Tradition in Anglo-Irish Literary History from 1789 to 1939 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) 99.

[32] Butler and Butler, The Black Book of Edgeworthstown 13.

[33] Butler, general introduction, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth 1: xl.

[34] Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, eds. Jane Desmarais, Tim McLoughlin, and Marilyn Butler, vol. 1 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999) 175.

[35] Maria Edgeworth, The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, ed. Claire Connolly, vol. 8 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999) 39.

[36] The theme of apostasy is also raised more indirectly, however, by the fact that Colambre "'*will* have a prodigiously fine estate when some Mr. Quin dies'" (5: 5). As W.J. McCormack and Kim Walker point out in their notes to the World's Classics edition of The Absentee, "the name [Quin] is not uncommon in Ireland, but thus spelled (with one 'n') is usually Protestant". Although it is not directly stated in the text, it is therefore obvious that the Clonbronys have also recanted their faith; as a Catholic, Colambre could not inherit Quin's estate. W.J. McCormack and Kim Walker, endnotes, The Absentee, by Maria Edgeworth (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 286.

[37] Dunne, Maria Edgeworth and the Colonial Mind 8. As my reading of "The White Pigeon" has already demonstrated, Edgeworth does not confine this theme of "an improving paternalistic English landlordism" to her "later novels".

[38] McCormack, Ascendancy and Tradition 10.

[39] I am quoting here from Claire Connolly's reading of the significance of hospitality in Castle Rackrent. See Claire Connolly, "Uncanny Castle Rackrent", That Other World: The Supernatural and the Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts, ed. Bruce Stewart, vol. 1 (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1998) 214.

[40] McCormack makes the point that, although the Rackrent estate changes hands five times in the course of the novel, only one inheritance is by primogeniture. Thus, Sir Patrick O'Shaughlin's wife, who is never even named, is the only mother in the text. See McCormack, Ascendancy and Tradition 109.

[41] Julian Moynahan, Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture

(Princeton, New Jersey, and Chichester, West Sussex: Princeton University Press, 1995) 21.

[42] Robert Tracy, "Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan: Legality versus Legitimacy," Nineteenth Century Literature June (1985) : 6.

[43] My arguments here are informed by my reading of Katie Trumpener's analysis of the function of the nurse in Romantic literature. Romantic novelists, she writes,

> argue contra Rousseau [that] the nurse's disappearance from the early-nineteenth-century household fundamentally alters children's relationship to language and the day-to-day texture of class traditions. Once under official prohibition, indeed, the nurse (like the bard or the bog before her) begins to represent a repressed collective unconsciousness; her persistent return in fiction and in dreams . . . represents a collective resistance against the order of banishment. Once a most ordinary and familiar presence, the nurse is transfigured into a mythic personage, bathed in nostalgia and longing. . . . If the nurse is remembered ontogenetically, by individual adults, as the object of their earliest, most fragmentary memories, she is also remembered phylogenetically, as the embodiment of an earlier, now-lost cultural epoch, which can be reconstructed only fragmentarily. (197-98)

[44] Lord Y is "an Irish nobleman, with whom [Glenthorn] was not personally acquainted, but for whose amiable character and literary reputation [he] had always, even during [his] days of dissipation, peculiar respect" (1: 285).

[45] Ellinor makes this startling admission in the mistaken belief that her other son, Owen, is among a band of rebels seized by Glenthorn and M'Leod upon the Glenthorn estate. Stung by his insistence that he should "'lose [his] honour . . . lose [his] character'" if he releases Owen, Ellinor reveals to Glenthorn that he is Owen's brother: "'[I]t's fit I should tell you again, and again, and again, that he who is now slaving at the forge, to give me the earnings of his labour . . . is the true and real Lord Glenthorn'" (1: 266-67). Revealing to Glenthorn that she switched him for the true heir to the Glenthorn estates in the belief that this "'very sick'" child would not live, Ellinor further insists that she was a good mother to her 'changeling' son and "'never wronged him in any way, except in the one article of changing him at nurse'" (1: 269-70).

[46] Glenthorn's first marriage was a disaster. In the first place, his choice of wife was

dictated by the state of his finances; as he puts it, he "chose her by the numeration table: Units, tens, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands" in choosing his bride (1: 167). Once married, he considered Lady Glenthorn "as an incumbrance, that [he] was obliged to take along with [his] fortune", and thus made no real effort to make her part of his life (1: 168). Eventually, Glenthorn is inspired to seek a reconciliation with his wife when he discovers that she is planning to elope with Captain Crawley, his agent. Despite his best efforts, however, the marriage ends in divorce.

[47] Butler, introduction, Castle Rackrent and Ennui 43.

[48] Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth 1: 360.

[49] As W.J. McCormack puts it in his Ascendancy and Tradition, Colambre's sojourn at Mrs. Raffarty's villa is important because it brings him to "a halt; it forces him to consider his surroundings and his domestic background, to *relate* his Irish and English experience" (129).

[50] The fact that the Dashforts are essentially putting on a production for Colambre is made peculiarly apparent by one of Lady Dashfort's observations to her daughter. "'To do you justice,'" she remarks, "'you play Lydia Languish vastly well . . . but Lydia, by herself, would soon tire; somebody must keep up the spirit and bustle, and carry on the plot of the piece; and I am that somebody . . . Is not that our hero's voice which I hear on the stairs?'" (5: 80). Although he does not yet realize it, Colambre is clearly being drawn by the Dashforts into their theatrics.

[51] W.J. McCormack and Kim Walker point out:

> the sustained attack on the good name of Grace's ancestry is concentrated here. St Omer is a town in Northern France where, in 1592, Robert Parsons (1546-1610) set up a Jesuit college for the English Catholic laity who were no longer able to conduct their own education under Elizabeth. After 1762, the buildings were used as a preparatory school attached to the English seminary at Douai. By the late eighteenth century, the name had become synonymous with a profession of Catholicism, in Ireland as well as in England. (303-04)

[52] Flanagan, The Irish Novelists 89-90.

[53] When Colambre reveals his true identity, Nick Garraghty realizes that the young lord will reveal the extent of his perfidy to Lord Clonbrony. He thus makes haste to London, hoping to secure his employer's signature on some leases through which, as Colambre notes, Lord Clonbrony "'will lose three times [the] sum by the bargain'" (5: 139).

[54] Corbett, Allegories of Union in Anglo-Irish Writing 74.

[55] In A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth, for example, Mrs. Edgeworth recalls Edgeworth had tears in her eyes while writing that were "like the cutting of a knife": "sitting up at night and struggling with her grief as she wrote Ormond; she was [after her father's death] unable to use [her eyes] without pain" (2: 1). Katie Trumpener makes a similar point in her reading of the novel, observing: "Edgeworth's letters make clear [that] the writing of Ormond, and especially the death of King Corny, is bound up, on many levels, with the final illness of her own father. . . . Ormond . . . is in several senses a testimonial to a dying patriarch" (64).

[56] The national implications of Sir Ulick's inconstancy are highlighted for Ormond when a young lady recites some comic lines about his guardian at a party:

> To serve in parliament the nation,
> Sir Ulick read his recantation:
> At first he joined the patriot throng,
> But soon perceiving he was wrong,
> He ratted to the courtier tribe,
> Bought by a title and a bribe; . . .
> Pay by the job, - you have his vote. (8: 146)

[57] This occurs as a result of a night of drinking at King Corny's. Returning to Castle Hermitage with Sir Ulick's son, Marcus, the two youths come upon Moriarty Carroll and some others upon the road. Tempers flare and, in a heated struggle, Ormond's pistol accidentally fires and the ball lodges in Moriarty's breast (8: 16).

[58] Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, revised

ed., 2 vols. (1776; London: Penguin Books, 1997) 1: 115.

[59] Dr. Cambray is the Church of Ireland clergyman who is given the living at Castle Hermitage contrary to Sir Ulick O'Shane's wishes. "'[A] very agreeable, respectable, amiable man'", he is a particular friend of the Annalys, and supports their efforts to help Ormond reform his life (8: 109).

[60] "[T]he daughter of an officer of the Irish Brigade and of a French lady of good family", Mademoiselle O'Faley is both "excessively fond" of Dora, and entirely dismissive of King Corny's way of life: "It was a million of pities", she thought, "that such a woman as herself, and such a girl as Dora, and such a young man as Mr. Ormond might be made, should be buried all their days in the Black Islands" (8: 60, 63).

[61] "At the time when [his] head was full of Tom Jones", the text observes, "Dora had always been his idea of Sophy Western"; once Fielding's novel "had been driven out of his head by sir Charles Grandison . . . Dora, with equal facility, turned into his new idea of a heroine" (8: 59).

[62] As Marilyn Butler points out in her biography of the author, Edgeworth made the acquaintance of this distinguished man of letters during her family's visit to Paris in 1802 (189).

[63] A celebrated French writer, Jean François Marmontel's radicalism invited controversy:

> His political novel, Bélisaire (1767), in which he defended individual liberty, was the cause of a pamphlet war between the religious establishment who condemned its impiety and philosophes like Voltaire who jumped to its defence. He emerged triumphantly from the quarrel to be named royal historiographer of France . . .[and] [i]n 1783 he became secretary of the Académie Française.

See "Marmontel, Jean François," A Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century History, eds. Jeremy Black and Roy Porter (1994; London: Penguin Books, 2001) 446-47.

[64] Under sentence of transportation for a crime of which he is innocent, Moriarty reveals that he "'got on board of an American ship, by the help of a friend – and this ship being knocked against the rocks . . . came safe ashore in [France] on one of the *sticks* of the

vessel'" (8: 215).

[65] Hollingworth, Maria Edgeworth's Irish Writing 196.

[66] Richard Lovell Edgeworth conducted experiments in bog reclamation throughout his life. In 1810, as Marilyn Butler points out, for example, "[h]e accepted the role of adviser to the new government survey of the Irish bogs". Butler, Maria Edgeworth 211.

[67] The enjoyment that Edgeworth took in Richard Lovell Edgeworth's reading of her work is eloquently illustrated at one particular moment in 'her' volume of his Memoirs. Recalling how he would encourage her to "'*Sketch*'" promising material, she emphasises that, if her father thought her efforts were going well, "the pleasure in his eyes, the approving sound of his voice, even without the praise he so warmly bestowed, were sufficient and delightful excitements to 'go on and finish'" (2: 344-45).

[68] In the first instance, Edgeworth devoted the years immediately following Richard Lovell Edgeworth's demise to the completion of his Memoirs, and it can and has been argued that the adverse reception that this work received upon publication hugely informed her decision to henceforward concentrate primarily upon the production of children's texts. In a "situation where a[ny] reference to her was likely to be accompanied by abuse of [her father]", Edgeworth argued that the great glory of writing children's books was that they were thought scarcely "'worth mentioning'" by critics. Secondly, in the years after 1817, there can be no doubt that Edgeworth entered a new and exciting phase in her life. Between 1820 and 1823, for instance, she made several trips to England and the continent, moving confidently in society without her father. Similarly, after 1825, she took on the responsibility for running the Edgeworthstown estates and, contrary to her father's dire predictions upon his deathbed, she displayed a remarkable strength of character in this regard, proving that it was *she*, and not her brother, Lovell, who was "'wise and economic'". See Butler, Maria Edgeworth 412-13, and, Butler and Butler, The Black Book of Edgeworthstown 210.

[69] Michael Pakenham Edgeworth (1812-81) had a distinguished career in the Honourable East India Company and, when Edgeworth wrote to this letter to him on February 19th, 1834, he was serving in the Bengal Civil Service. In the letter, Edgeworth expresses her gratitude to her brother for his observations on the state of his part of India, noting: "'Many of the observations on India apply to Ireland . . . Some of the disputes that you have to settle at Cucherry, and some of the viewings that you record of boundaries, &c., about which there are quarrels, so put me in mind of what I am called upon to do here continually in a little way'". Maria Edgeworth to Michael Pakenham Edgeworth, February 19th, 1834, quoted in Frances Edgeworth, A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth 3: 87-88. See also "Edgeworth, Michael Pakenham," Who Was Who in British India, John F. Riddick (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1998) 113.

[70] Hurst, Maria Edgeworth and the Public Scene 33.

Endnotes to Epilogue.

[1] Sir Francis Tuker, The Yellow Scarf: The Story of the life of Thuggee Sleeman or Major-General Sir William Henry Sleeman, K.C.B. 1788-1856 of The Bengal Army and the Indian Political Service (London, Sydney, and Toronto: White Lion Publishers Ltd., 1961).

[2] For the details of Sleeman's career in India, see either "Sleeman, Sir William Henry" in the Dictionary of National Biography 1973 ed., or, "Sleeman, Sir William Henry," in Who Was Who in British India 333. Patrick Brantlinger's introduction to Philip Meadows Taylor's Confessions of A Thug (1839) provides a useful insight into the Thuggee. See Patrick Brantlinger, introduction, Confessions of A Thug (1839; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998) vii-xvii.

[3] Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized 69.

[4] Myers, "Socializing Rosamond" 53.

[5] In her Their Fathers' Daughters, Kowaleski-Wallace argues that "the discrepancy"

between the lives of Hannah More and Edgeworth, for example, "and the female program they prescribed is one direct result of the pressures they experienced as 'daddies' girls' under patriarchy" (7).

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