

things that have been said before. And indeed, Frye's thought has influenced the national awareness of many more Canadians than have actually read his works. Those who have had that pleasure will recognize ten of these essays on Canadian culture as re-publications, a fact which has been emphasized by the casualness with which they have been edited into this collection. But no matter: Frye's thought remains fresh in the midst of our national proclivity for tortured self-examination. His musings lighten and enlighten the shadows in our national awareness.

If the Canadian experience has a contribution to make to the Western culture of which we are a part, it is to be found in our hammering out of the relationship between civilization and nature. Traditional Christian thought places those two concepts in opposition: it sees man's role as bringing nature into harmony with a human concept of order, on the premise that man can improve himself only through human and social institutions. But in most of Canada, conditions are such that the challenge lies not in dominating nature, but rather in coming to terms with it: the capitalist-socialist controversy that is such an obsession in other parts of the Western World must here take second place to working out a "détente with outraged nature."

It has taken Canadians something like four centuries to become clearly aware of this central necessity to their national existence. The artistic age in which Canada was founded, the Baroque, "was an age of intense belief in the supremacy of human consciousness over nature." One of the expressions of this was the imposition of geometric forms in the human environment, "a symbol of aggressiveness, of human domination." It was also expressed in the Christian attitude to other religions, which were seen as demonic parodies of Christianity. Nature spirits had to be devils, as the numinous was not to be found in nature. The concept of false gods which must be destroyed was but a short step from the belief that the only good heathen was a dead heathen. "What is particularly horrifying about the extermination of, say, the Beothuks in Newfoundland is the casualness with which it was done, the ability to murder people of a different ethnical group without losing five minutes' sleep over it." True enough, but the Newfoundland situation cannot in fairness be considered as typical of Canada. The island's administration was not stabilized within the British colonial framework until 1824; the last known Beothuk died in 1827. Those attitudes which had such tragic consequences for the Beothuk were counterbalanced in other parts of the country by the belief that with some effort, even heathens could be incorporated into a fully human society by means of conversion. The struggle to achieve this has led us, slowly and sometimes reluctantly, to the awareness that precolumbian cultures have enough of value for us to consider them a part of our heritage. In destroying them we impoverish ourselves.

But the lesson is a difficult one, and so as Canadians we continue to wrestle with our perpetual crisis in national identity. It is perhaps ironic that as we concentrate on our technological, political and social problems, our enduring legacies to the future will be cultural. Canadians may be justified in priding themselves on being leaders in certain types of high technology, but technologies have a way of being superseded. Political and social institutions serve their purpose and then transform or die. Cultural achievements are the best survivors, and at their artistic best are never superseded. It is ironic that in Canada, our most distinctive (and among the best) achievements in the visual arts have arisen from the nature-based, (i.e., "savage") traditions of the Inuit and Amerindians.

As is perhaps to be expected, this influence is much less evident in our literature; but even here, nature does a fair amount of brooding, and a streak of atavism is not hard to find. Still, as Frye is keenly aware, our cultural traditions are many, even though we revolve permanently in the U.S. orbit. Our national vision of life must be made up of words, just as the myths of bygone ages created worlds out of words. The one sure way of degrading man is to degrade his language, or perhaps to drown him in a sea of meaningless words — George Orwell's "newspeak". It is because Frye is so intelligently optimistic as to our ability to deal with such dangers that he is so salutary to read. Whether we agree with his analysis in whole or in part, he sounds a positive note that I, for one, take heart in.

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Pickering, Samuel F., Jr., *John Locke and Children's Books in Eighteenth-Century England*. Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1981, pp. 236. \$21.00 (U.S.).

Interest in the history and development of children's literature has been steadily increasing in recent years. This interest is most readily observable in the number of books and articles that have appeared. The field is still

dominated by historical surveys — studies in the mode of F. J. Harvey Darton's *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*, but more specialized studies are appearing. Such a work is *John Locke and Children's Books in Eighteenth-Century England* by Samuel F. Pickering, Jr.

Pickering's book is advertized as one that "will be of interest to social, literary, and cultural historians as well as to students of children's literature, the history of education, and publishing history". Indeed it should be so, for Pickering touches all these subject areas. But perhaps this is the book's failing. It tries to cover too much ground too quickly in too short a space. The result is a book that is frustrating and, at time, tedious.

In the first of six chapters, the author provides some historical background to the development of children's literature and the publishing industry, outlines the basic elements of John Locke's philosophy of education, and discusses one important genre popular in the eighteenth century, animal stories and fables. This is followed by chapters dealing with other types of literature — fairy tales, biographies of animals and inanimate objects, chapbooks and religious tracts, and "Godly" poetry. The final chapter returns to a discussion of the eighteenth century publishing industry by way of an examination of the activities of some of the major publishers of the period and the books they published. The book contains twenty-two illustrations from original texts and numerous excerpts.

Like Darton, whom he quotes on this point, Pickering writes that "children's books did not stand out 'as a clear but subordinate branch of English literature until the middle of the eighteenth century'" (p. 3). Pickering states that children's literature began to develop rapidly after the middle of the century, owing much to the "publishing success" of John Newbery. In Pickering's words, "Blending batches of good fun, sprinklings of instruction and a dollop of Locke's educational ideas into his books, Newbery became the first publisher of children's books on a large scale in Britain" (p. 13). Not all historians, however, accord Newbery this place of importance. Some years ago, Percy Muir in his *English Children's Books 1600-1900* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1954, 1969) argued that there has been a disproportionate regard for Newbery's importance among historians of children's literature and he attributed this to Newbery's nineteenth century biographer. Muir argued that Newbery was not the pioneer in the publishing of children's books he has been held to be. Pickering, in all his praise for Newbery, makes no reference to this contrary point of view, even though he includes Muir's book in his bibliography, and presumably, is familiar with it. This omission is important because Pickering devotes so much attention to the life and work of Newbery throughout his book.

Space severely limits Pickering's discussion of the factors other than Newbery's "publishing success" which contributed to the expansion of the trade in children's books. He provides only the briefest outline:

'Commercial prosperity' . . . had increased the size of the middle class and contributed to social mobility within Britain itself. As large numbers of people climbed above penury and achieved modest financial security, they were better able to afford books for their children. Because the future seemed to promise more than laborious poverty, they wanted books which their children could use as educational stepping-stones to climb higher in society. Later, with the rapid growth of Sunday schools in the 1780's and 1790's, popular education began, and a new reading public of some five hundred thousand Sunday scholars was created (p. 4).

This outline places an uncomfortable emphasis on education as an aid to social mobility.

Linking John Locke to the burgeoning book trade and commercial prosperity, Pickering writes:

If commercial prosperity made the expansion of the book trade possible, the writings of John Locke provided publishers and educators with a wealth of general and particular educational matter. No other Englishman had written so broadly and so reasonably on education. Previous seventeenth-century writers had limited the applicability of their works by appealing to select social classes or particular religious groups . . . Locke did not limit his readership . . . (pp. 4-5).

One must take issue with Pickering at this point. Locke did indeed, like writers before him, limit his readership. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* was, as John Locke himself stated, "designed for a gentleman's son" (Teacher's College Press edition, edited by Peter Gay, 1971, p. 176). Pickering brushes over this statement by arguing:

Much of its content appeared applicable not merely to the "Gentleman's Son" for whom it was ostensibly written but to the children of parents in all walks of life. Locke was a popularizer. He took educational suggestions dangling loosely from many works and wove them into what the eighteenth century saw as a magic carpet. Not only would it carry children upward, but it was available to everyone, not simply princes lounging amid frankincense and myrrh but shopkeepers' sons rummaging through sugar and salt (p. 6).

Pickering's statement seems to pass glibly over Locke's own opinion on the subject: "I think a prince, a nobleman, and an ordinary gentleman's son should have different ways of breeding" (*Some Thoughts* p. 176).

This is an example of Pickering's method, and it is one of the most frustrating aspects of his book. While he does not exactly omit or deliberately falsify, his statements are too glib, too facile. What the philosopher wrote and what the historian claims he wrote are not quite the same thing. A wealth of unstated qualifications lies under Pickering's statements and the chances of misunderstanding and/or misinterpretation are therefore considerable.

In the first place, social climbing was not particularly approved of, let alone as common an occurrence as Pickering's statement would imply, nor was education available to everyone in eighteenth century England. With respect to social climbing, one need only recall the case of Richardson's *Pamela*, to which Pickering actually refers more than once. The heroine of the novel protested that she had no aspiration to rise above her social class — she knew her place. It was only after she was properly convinced that her master's love for her was as genuine as her own love for him that she consented to marry him and advance her station accordingly. Affection came before social aspiration. In the case of education, it is agreed that John Locke certainly was broadminded and reasonable for his time, and from a twentieth century vantage point, his thoughts on education do appear to take into consideration the children of parents in all walks of life. But we are living in an age and in a part of the world where all children, regardless of class origin may receive an education. It was not so in eighteenth century England. One feels that Pickering should have emphasized this fact. Pickering, however, links the expansion of publishing with literacy and the Sunday School Movement — a movement that was directed toward the lower classes — and the ideas of John Locke. It is all too easy to assume from Pickering's statements that John Locke was concerned with the education of both poor and privileged children — "the children of parents in all walks of life" — when in fact, Locke had nothing at all to say about the poor in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. What he thought about the poor, however, is evident in a document he wrote in 1697 in which he suggested drastic remedies for their treatment — "remedies which", writes Peter Gay in his introduction to *Some Thoughts*, "seem oddly out of place with his general humanitarianism and which demonstrate that to seventeenth century thinkers, even to radicals, the poor were barely human" (p. 13). So much for Locke and the "magic carpet".

Pickering generally attempts to include too much in his chapters, with the result that they tend to lack focus. For example, in his first chapter, he discusses a variety of topics — early children's books, John Newbery and the beginnings of the children's book publishing industry, John Locke and the basic elements of his philosophy, and one of the most popular subjects for children's books at the time, "the animal creation". Although he does try to link his subjects together, one feels that his discussion would have been more effective if he had dealt with the material in two short chapters rather than in one long one.

A final major criticism of the author concerns the way in which he assumes, or leads the reader to assume, that the writers and publishers he discusses carefully read and studied the works of John Locke. This is not a safe or even reasonable assumption, since one can be familiar with a philosopher's ideas without actually having read his works, particularly if the philosopher is as important and influential as Locke certainly was. Pickering's phrase, "Locke taught" is particularly disconcerting. For example, he writes that "Locke had taught" Isaac Watts "the practical necessity of cozening children into knowledge" (p. 143). The celebrated author of *Divine Songs* was indeed influenced by Locke, but he was also influenced by a great many others, such as the educator James Talbot, the writers Bunyan and Janeway, the poets Milton, Herbert, and Herrick, and a number of hymnologists (J. H. P. Pafford's introduction to The Oxford University Press edition of *Divine Songs*, 1971, p. 33). Moreover, Pickering seems to ignore the old debate concerning what is really revolutionary in a philosopher's work and what is actually an eloquent expression of prevailing thought. As Peter Gay writes in his introduction to The Teacher's College Press edition of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, "Like many another revolutionary, John Locke was also a conservative, at once transmitting and transforming traditional ideas" (p. 1).

Although one of Pickering's stated purposes is to show the influence of John Locke's ideas on the works of writers and publishers such as Isaac Watts, Mrs. Trimmer, Mrs. Barbauld, William Wordsworth, John Newbery, and John Marshall, the association seems rather forced in places. He offers little proof of Locke's influence on a particular writer or publisher other than an emphasis on the similarities in expression or thought. The inclusion of a direct reference to Locke by name in the works of his selected authors would have strengthened his argument. He does not really consider the possible influence of other philosophers and educationists on writers and publishers of children's books. To have done so would not have diminished the sense of Locke's importance, and his book would have appeared less like a paean to Locke and more like a well balanced study of eighteenth century English children's books.

Despite the foregoing criticism, *John Locke and Children's Books in Eighteenth-Century England* contains much valuable information. The author knows his subject, and because the book includes so much that is useful,

it seems almost unfair to be too critical. Perhaps the book is simply too ambitious. Had the author limited his subject to John Locke's influence on one or two writers or genres, he might have achieved more success.

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Bettelheim, B. and Zelan, K., *On Learning To Read. The Child's Fascination With Meaning*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982, 306 pp. \$17.95.

How a child learns to read has been and still is a mystery — most children learn to read, most children want to read, and most children show how pleased they are to be able to read by holding newspapers and magazines and reading the 'way their parents do.' But some children have an easier time of going through that mysterious process "learning to read" than others, and Bettelheim and Zelan give us several clues as to why some have an easier time. The authors point out that "if academic studies are not pushed too soon or too hard," "if his past experiences in home and school" equip him, and "if he finds reading rewarding" then the child will learn to read. Reading is perhaps the single most important acquisition the child will make — for if the child cannot read well, then, as the authors point out, the child's fate is sealed.

Children have to acquire decoding, phonetic and blending skills, and word recognition if they are going to read; most children quickly realize the necessity of learning these skills. Perhaps the willingness to acquire these skills is also dependent upon their identification with their parents and their teacher. Interpersonal skills brought to the classroom by the teacher are of great importance. The teacher creates the atmosphere in which the child wants to read — but then what to read? Literacy appears dependent not only upon skill acquisition and upon repetitive play with words and rhymes, but as importantly upon "reading a story worth his attention". Just to drill in decoding or phonics does not produce literacy, and "if by third grade a child is well started on becoming literate, in all likelihood he will continue in the same direction."

Children need books and materials to read that are truly interesting to them, that are well written, informative, presenting points of view, where characters in stories "live" and have substance to their lives expressing opinions and emotions that are in keeping with situation events. Bettelheim and Zelan find that children in grades one and two think they are reading "junk" and find the stories so unreal as to be boring.

But it seems that neither children nor teachers chose the books that children are to read. Bettelheim and Zelan point out that it is a practical belief that books which offend or might offend the fewest number of people are the ones which will be purchased by boards of education. Fairy stories, true to life adventures, strong emotional events have little place in children's reading. As Bettelheim and Zelan point out, it is no wonder then, even when children have the intelligence (to learn) to become literate, they fail.

Bettelheim and Zelan make a plea for organize reading: reading based upon the child's own stories and enlightened and enriched by "real literature of the mother tongue, presented in literary wholes" (Huey, 1980). However, what we seem to have done is reduced the number of words used in children's readers, increased the number of pictures, and made the plot of the story, if there is one, weaker, blander, and less relevant to children's experiences. We have not kept up with children's vocabulary levels, we have not kept up with the material they see on television and hear their parents talking about — we have emphasized a dullness and an exceptional emptiness of content. Nothing to let children get their teeth into!

Bettelheim and Zelan, in their zeal to push meaningfulness and interest in text content, de-emphasize playing in kindergarten. However, many of us have found that children's play leads to writing and reading, and "teacher's praise as reward for being a good . . . block-builder" is as important as skill acquisition. In fact it is skill acquisition (Weininger, 1979). Children's natural curiosity to learn to read is fostered by effective play atmosphere, not just by "making reading an activity of intrinsic interest." It is important to recognize that while interesting text content is vital for continual literacy development, play permits the exploration of fantasy, attitudes, and strong emotions of love and hate which provide the foundation for the interest in learning to read to develop. Perhaps children at the Orthogenic School learned to read only after they were able to play out their troubles and problems.

While we continue to search for central nervous system impairment to explain reading failures, we often fail to take into account the need not only to play, but the psychological reasons why children do not read. Bettelheim and Zelan note boredom as a factor, but even when children learn to decode, they still do not necessarily read