



PROJECT MUSE®

Radical Cross-Writing for Working Children: Toward a
Bottom-Up History of Children's Literature

Elizabeth Massa Hoiem

The Lion and the Unicorn, Volume 41, Number 1, January 2017, pp. 1-27
(Article)

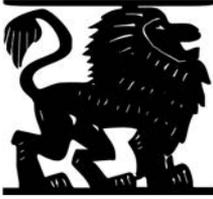
Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/uni.2017.0001>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/662598>



Radical Cross-Writing for Working Children: Toward a Bottom-Up History of Children's Literature

Elizabeth Massa Hoiem

In a letter to the editor of the Radical newspaper *The Poor Man's Guardian*, an anonymous article signed "M.A.B." urges the "mothers and teachers of both sexes, (whose business it is to instruct the rising generation)," to read educational literature with their families. Self-identifying as a wife and mother, M.A.B. provides the following list of suggested works: "the 'poor Man's Guardian,' Mr. Cobbett's 'History of the Reformation,' the 'Poor Man's book of the Church,' 'Church Examiner,' 'The National Holiday,' the 'Political Writings of Mr. Paine, and other such excellent publications.'"¹ Such pamphlets and periodicals touting constitutional reform, deism, general strikes, and redistribution of wealth are the kind of dangerous literature that made British elites ask whether teaching poor children to read "would only tend to make the people study politics, and lay them open to the arts of designing men" (Hansard HC Deb 24 April 1807). These recommended readings look nothing like the early nineteenth-century moral tales, domestic fiction, or imaginative literature widely anthologized in the *Norton Anthology of Children's Literature* or Patricia Demers's *From Instruction to Delight*, and none of the authors single out children as their intended audience. Yet M.A.B.'s recommendations point to a tradition of Radical working-class cross-writing from Britain's First Industrial Revolution that warrants integration into our histories of children's literature.² I establish this tradition by focusing on the 1830s as a watershed decade, when Radicals first identified children as an important audience.

The writings of Thomas Paine or William Benbow may not strike us as children's literature. But the suggestion that their texts were recommended reading for young people begs the question why we accept as children's literature classics some adult works that were appropriated by children,

such as *Robinson Crusoe*, but not Paine's *Rights of Man* or his defense of deism, *Age of Reason*. Neither do we include Radical works that explicitly target a working youth audience, such as William Cobbett's surprisingly seditious *A Grammar of the English Language*.³ Such exclusions are all the more remarkable given that some "church and king" polemical literature, written to counteract Paine's influence among poor adults and children, passes as children's literature, including Hannah More's *Village Politics* and Sarah Trimmer's *The Family Magazine* and *The Servant's Friend* (Jackson 174–90). Those Radical Dissenters and reformers who regularly attract scholarship—William Godwin, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, and Mary Wollstonecraft—are specifically bourgeois Radicals, tied to Unitarianism and rational Enlightenment values—in Godwin's case, vilified but not imprisoned.⁴ The pattern suggests that we may unwittingly eliminate from consideration those texts written for and embraced by Radical working-class readers.⁵

This oversight stems from a scholarly consensus that pioneers of children's literature publishing (e.g., John and Elizabeth Newbery, John Marshall, and John Harris) served middle-class readers with books that reflect their values. Thus, the rise of English children's book publishers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is closely associated with the rise of middle-class families, with parents who could afford to purchase books and whose children had the time and education necessary to read them. Rigorous studies have established and embellished this narrative: Isaac Kramnick charts the eighteenth-century transition from aristocratic to bourgeois values by locating the Dissenting Protestant doctrine—that life is a race fairly won through hard work—in children's literature from *Little Goody-Two Shoes* to *The Little Engine that Could* (99–132). Offering a more nuanced reading, Andrew O'Malley in *The Making of the Modern Child* argues that by the late eighteenth century, "Children's literature became one of the crucial mechanisms for disseminating and consolidating middle-class ideology" (11). Approaching children's books through the history of reading, M. O. Grenby's *The Child Reader, 1700–1840* confirms that no one profession dominated children's book ownership, but "irrespective of authors' or publishers' intentions, children's literature was consumed predominantly by middle- and upper middle-class children" (85). Christopher Parkes in *Children's Literature and Capitalism* investigates middle-class ideology in literature produced a century after Goody Two-Shoes found her fortune, yet he remains in step with Kramnick and O'Malley by interpreting this history in terms of ever-encroaching middle-class dominance.⁶ While these studies provide sophisticated readings of the historically contingent ideological work of children's literature, they collectively give the impression that children's literature catalogs the irresistible advance of middle-class, capitalist ideology; the same history, revised to include more

working-class voices, could as easily indicate persistent resistance against its homogenizing influence.

The accepted historical narrative of childhood could be distilled as follows: Our modern concept of childhood, as a sacred time preserved for play, improvement, and education, began with the middle classes and spread to everyone else. So did children's literature.⁷ I suspect that this narrative is self-reinforcing. Since our histories of children's literature and childhood normalize child readers who do not work, it is difficult for twenty-first-century scholars to recognize as children's literature texts that do not conform to middle-class values, narrative forms, and reading practices. Warning against such fixed definitions, Marah Gubar points out that identifying "essential traits" means essentializing children and adults and "tends to narrow our vision, leading us to ignore, misread, or arbitrarily rule out-of-bounds texts that do not share these qualities" (211–12). Instead, Gubar suggests recovering the agency of actual children by investigating how they interact performativity with texts to claim ownership of them, an approach that proves useful when recovering working-class texts, which are often used collectively in public spaces.

By offering examples of texts used by working children, this essay shifts the boundaries of children's literature to accommodate divergent texts. For practical reasons, I chose a limited archive, the Radical children's texts produced for and among English working-class communities during the Short Hours Movement, leading up to the Factory Act of 1833. The political, informational, and radical content of such texts has relegated them to fields like working-class history, where they have escaped the attention of children's literature scholars. In my conclusion, I roughly sketch how this archive fits into a larger tradition of Radical working-class literature for children in the early nineteenth century.

Including Radical working-class literature in our historical narrative of children's culture is important for recognizing the contributions of working-class families toward ending child labor in favor of universal education, a change that marks the advent of modern childhood and adolescence. Although the affective value of children first supplanted economic value in wealthy families whose children did not work, these same families did not believe that poor children should be spared working to support themselves until after labor movements made such a belief possible (Horn 22).⁸ When middle-class writers and advocates for the poor are represented in the canon to the near exclusion of working-class voices and values, we mistakenly imply a unidirectional transculturation of values from wealthy families to poor families. I am wary of recapitulating the patronizing attitude betrayed by Henry Brougham, the Whig MP who advocated for universal education while nevertheless insisting that "useful knowledge was the discovery and

the property of the ruling class,” and “learning and improvement” undeniably spread “in one way, and that downward” (qtd. Vincent 163). By including an overlooked strain of Radical children’s literature, we can move toward a social history of children’s literature that recognizes diverse experiences of childhood and child reading.

The Short Time Movement and Working-Class Cross-Writing

From 1831 to 1834, labor conflicts in northern England dramatically refocused the national conversation around child work and play. Factory towns in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire coordinated efforts through Short Time Committees to push for a Ten Hours Bill that would limit factory work for children under eighteen. Targeting child labor was a strategic choice. In a laissez-faire climate, workers who ultimately wanted a Ten Hours Bill for all operatives could appeal to the wider public for legislative interference on behalf of children. Since adult factory work required young attendants, the “friends of the Ten Hours Bill” knew that the limited hours of children would effectively extend to adults.

With so much resting on the case for protecting children, protests routinely granted a central place to families and child factory workers, so much so that one of their leaders in the West Riding, Richard Oastler, was nicknamed “King of the Children.” A variety of literature produced by Short Time Committees—pamphlets, open letters, periodicals, broadsides, and handbills—address child readers as political actors.⁹ Surviving broadsides specify children and families as the intended audiences, and they refer to adults in terms of their parental relationship to children. “What say ye now, FATHERS, MOTHERS, CHILDREN?” asks one broadside, and another states “The battle is yours, then every Man Woman and Child to your post.—England expects every one to do their duty” (*Child Murder; Ten Hour Bill*).¹⁰ The explicit call to women, mothers, and children urges individuals to speak who were not usually associated with political participation. Anticipating reluctance, one broadside urges, “Children and Mothers, these Men should know your minds. Let them know. They ‘call’ Oastler for saying that Masters make you their Slaves. But if you don’t tell them right out, that you *will* have it [the Ten Hours Bill], they’ll say that ‘*Silence gives Consent*’” (*Factory Commissioners at Leeds*).

As suggested by the address to adults and children, these texts, songs, hymns, protests, handbills, periodicals, and speeches of the Short Time Movement form a coherent body of cross-writing. Invoking this term may seem counterintuitive, since polemical texts that espouse one political view may seem stubbornly univocal, or less artistically composed of a “dialogic mix of older and younger voices” (Knoepfmacher and Myers vii). However, the

rhetorical strategies of Radical texts share intriguing similarities with those of children's literature, since both construct a disarmingly simple voice (child or plebian) that is far from simple. Like imaginative literature for children, Radical journalism and satire use double-voiced play, through "strategies of quoting, parodying, rewriting" that undermine the univocal sincerity of the mainstream press. According to Jon Klancher, "the radical writer always claims the last word, laying bare the rhetorical stance which his middle-class interlocutors find intolerably fixed" (100). Heteroglossia characterizes literature for children and for Radicals, since both construct their distinct audiences as supplementary to the mainstream adult reader. Recent scholarship by Marcus Wood, Helen Rogers, and Ian Haywood includes some children's literature into their studies of Radical literature, where there is considerable overlap among printers and readers (Wood 215–63; Rogers, "Beautiful Books" 57–84; Haywood 56–78).¹¹

Creative comingling between the two was more common in London, where children's forms proved especially ripe for satirical appropriation as a way to reinterpret paternalist infantilization of the poor. Contemporaneous with the Short Time Movement's commencement in northern England, London publisher William Hone was acquitted for blasphemy after publishing parodies critical of government corruption based on the Lord's Prayer and Anglican Catechism, the two texts that children memorized in National schools; meanwhile, his parody, *The Political House That Jack Built* (1819), a "juvenile publication" dedicated (like John Newbery's *Goody Two-Shoes*) to "nursery children six feet high," reached staggering sales, with fifty-four editions that spawned multiple nursery rhyme rebuttals (Wood 20–60).¹² By the 1830s, even provincial regions gained access to children's literature, creating more opportunities for genre cross-fertilizations (Grenby 60–70). The very possibility that texts intended for one audience might be read by another—that poor readers might purchase 6d. cheap editions of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (Vincent 114), or that children might pick up Hone's parodies¹³—was one of the driving forces behind the so-called "taxes on knowledge" (1819–36) created to price political periodicals above what poor readers could afford (Murphy 21–24).¹⁴ In a decade of anxiety over mixed audiences, sharing certain kinds of books between different ages and classes was a provocative act. Far from indicating that workers did not yet write specifically for children, Radical cross-writing evinces a sophisticated awareness of genre conventions for addressing class- and age-stratified audiences, enough to parody mainstream books for children as a protest against the notion that some political information should be reserved for wealthy, mature audiences. This cross-fertilization also makes it imperative for twenty-first-century scholars who study historical children's literature to cast a wide net.

Reading and Literacy among Poor Children

These brief ephemeral texts, circulated among children with limited literacy, may seem far removed from the world of John Harris's Juvenile Libraries. Yet recent work in the history of reading decenters traditional books and private reading by considering a wider landscape of public and outdoor reading (Henkin 15), and by celebrating the materiality of books as objects (Price 305–10). Drawing on these trends, Matthew Grenby asks in *The Child Reader* whether we should privilege reading as the proper use of children's books, given that young children may be illiterate or find other uses for their books. Since "literacy did not necessarily equate book use" (37), Grenby prefers the word "users" to "readers" for accessing the multiple affordances offered by books, an approach I adopt for working-class cross-writing, but for different reasons (9; see also Rogers, "Beautiful Books" 59).¹⁵ Firstly, unless we expand what "literacy" and "books" for children look like, we cannot consider the kind of cheap publications that the poor could afford to regularly purchase without charity or government subsidies that might eliminate controversial content.¹⁶ Secondly, by including reading among a full range of public and performative uses for texts, we can recognize the practices through which poor children claimed ownership of texts (Gubar 209–16).

The form that Radical working-class literature took was inextricably connected to the varied literacy and limited purchasing power of its audience. Readers in northern England were geographically distant from London and Edinburgh, the centers of publishing. Most could only afford to read the same handful of books passed down in the family, supplemented by a few chapbooks and ballads gleaned from provincial peddlers.¹⁷ Reading at home was difficult, with few hours of daylight and no privacy (Altick 83; Murphy 8; Vincent 122–23). Literacy rates hovered around two-thirds of the population during the eighteenth century, then fell in the industrial districts, before rising again to 67 percent by the 1841 census (Humphries 21). Since historians estimate literacy by the percentage of people who sign their names, these statistics reveal little about the "quality of working-class literacy," which may have suffered as work disrupted school attendance (Murphy 8). As children entered the workforce in larger numbers and at younger ages, they attended fewer years of school with frequent interruptions, the 1830s marking the lowest decade for attendance at two to three years (Humphries 207–14).

Poor readers found creative solutions for these limitations by making reading a social activity that included people of all ages and reading abilities. Adults and children joined together at night schools to teach one another; readers purchased used books, borrowed books from employers and friends, or encountered snippets of literature reprinted in cheap periodicals; they pooled

their money to purchase a favorite newspaper, paid a literate worker to read aloud in their workshops, and gathered in coffeehouses or public houses whose owners subscribed to a selection of Radical papers (Murphy 7–25; Thompson 782–92; Webb 83). At public gatherings, the most fluent readers shared literature by reading aloud—indeed, working-class journalists wanted to “be heard as well as read,” and they pitched their styles and designed their typography accordingly, so that the illiterate “were not barred completely from political or literary discourse” (Murphy 11–12; see also Thompson 782).¹⁸ Since Radical working-class texts for children serve a different kind of reader, they may not signal a child audience in the same way as books published by John Marshall or Harvey Darton.¹⁹

The Short Time Movement Writes for Children

Despite these differences, some handbills from the movement feature child characters and borrow from familiar children’s literature genres, while also adapting these genres to represent working-class experiences and values. A handbill titled *Conversation among Factory Children, about the Commission*, is a children’s dialogue, a form made popular decades earlier by the Enlightenment value placed on improving conversation. Dialogs such as Charlotte Smith’s *Rural Walks: In Dialogs* or Anna Laetitia Barbauld’s *Pastoral Lessons, and Parental Conversations* present natural speech between parents and children who converse in a familiar, everyday setting, modeling an approachable teaching strategy that parents and children can imitate through their own daily conversations.²⁰

Conversation among Factory Children retains the dialog’s sense of immediacy by choosing a setting relevant to workers: “Hannah, Sally, Jane, and Betty were strolling the Fields on whit-Monday,” the introduction informs readers, “when the following Conversation was supposed to take place.” Whit-Monday is a work holiday following Whit-Sunday (forty days after Easter), when workers picnic on the town green. In Lancashire and Yorkshire, Whit-Monday likely held a regional association with the assembly of child workers. Every year in Manchester, thousands of Sunday school children paraded in the streets, similar to the charity children march to St. Paul’s Cathedral on Holy Thursday in London, famously described by William Blake. Manchester’s tradition, which started in 1801, periodically attracted political statements, as when child participants commemorated the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 by dressing in “drab coloured hats, and other badges of the disaffected and riotous townspeople” (qtd. in Cunningham 46). Political dress and badges were thereafter forbidden, a rule that suggests such displays were a reoccurring problem well before the 1830s, when children visibly joined protests for

the Ten Hours Movement. Whit-Monday, then, is a politically meaningful setting, an occasion when two different models of childhood clashed, when working families attempted to interrupt the safely depoliticized, paternalist displays of charity and Sunday school children organized by middle-class benefactors. While this broadside conforms to a recognizable mainstream form, its departure in content and cheap format are emblematic of Radical pushback against depoliticizing childhood.

The four girls discuss the commissioners, whom they consider “some Laymen and Doctors that can get nought to do,” and decide to confront them to demand the Ten Hours Bill. “Well,” asks Hannah, “but how must we do if they won’t let us have it?” Sally responds, “Why we must take it to be sure. We must be all of a mind only to work Ten Hours, and we must tease our Parents and our Sunday-School Teachers till we get it.” “But then shan’t we get less wage?” Jane asks, while Sally and Hannah—little political economists that they are—insist that “Wage Tale” is a lie told to scare them into submission. Jane suggests that they sing their song for the commissioners (which they promptly sing together), while Betty asks if the other children saw a recent protest that they could imitate (they were all there) (*Conversation*). Although the four girls are fictional, the dialog refers to specific events. The girls are planning for the sort of protests that reached their apex in the days and weeks following Whit-Monday (May 6, 1833), when working children organized by Short Time Committees repeatedly gathered in Lancashire and Yorkshire factory towns to demonstrate against the touring Royal Commissioners.

A little context explains why the girls degrade these government investigators who were tasked with investigating factory conditions. The previous year, the Short Time Movement successfully found an advocate in Michael Sadler, but his efforts to pass protective legislation in the summer of 1832 were interrupted when the administration abruptly dissolved in order to reconstitute a new government and pass the Great Reform Bill (1832) that enfranchised the middle classes. The Sadler Report on conditions in factories, published the following January 1833, shocked the public just as Sadler himself was pushed from public office and power shifted in favor of industrialists who opposed factory legislation. When Lord Ashley reintroduced the Ten Hours Bill in February 1833, opponents responded by forming a commission to investigate the authenticity of the Sadler Report. Operatives in northern England widely believed that this follow-up investigation, based on closed, unpublished interviews, conducted where employers might intimidate workers and wine-and-dine the commissioners, was orchestrated to stall legislation and to undermine Sadler’s damning testimonies of long hours and routine physical abuse (Ward 32–113).

The Whit-Monday dialog encourages its child readers to attend protests by depicting exemplary characters who have witnessed other protests that they intend to imitate—implying that the children reading the handbill should also imitate the “play” of these child characters. This inter-referential movement between reading about activities, then acting them out, is widespread in contemporary children’s literature of this period, which uses characters to model the transition from learning through books, as readers, to learning from practical experiments, as actors.²¹

The handbill dialogue assumes a familiar way of reading but has a different understanding of childhood leisure and imaginative play. Whereas middle-class children’s literature constructs an implied child reader who is empowered by conflating work and play, that is, by learning through physical activities that imitate adult work, texts for these working children of the West Riding insist that child workers are empowered when they publically document the unpleasantness of their work and the injustice of their masters. The girls who gather on Whit-Monday naturalize both work and play as a universal across species, but they see these activities as mutually exclusive: “We must work, that we know, and we are willing too, but we won’t be wrought to death. . . . We must have time to learn to read and sew and to do house work—and we surely ought to have a little play. The lambs play and the little foal of the ass has time to play” (*Conversation*). Where excessive work destroys life, play enlivens children and allows them to participate in political life. Only defenders of the factory system, such as Andrew Ure, represent child factory work as playful or enlightening. This departure from a more familiar representation of play and work common to canonical children’s literature should alert scholars to our own assumptions about playful texts, which can exclude texts that fail to conform.

The same protests described by the four characters would have been attended by many of the children who read this broadside. *Fraser’s Magazine* describes a gathering outside of Manchester just two days before Whit-Monday, on May 4, 1833, “on the field called Peterloo,” where in 1819 soldiers had fired upon peaceful protesters. The children came to meet Parliament’s investigators and display their ragged bodies as “document of proof in reality”:

Here they formed in order of procession, having gathered all the flags, ribands, pieces of coloured cloth, printed bills, and printed hat-bands, that a short notice of three days enabled them to collect. The names of their chief advocates, Sadler, Oastler, Bull, Ashley, and Fielden, were upon these hat-bands. There were flags and devices alluding to the subject of factory labour and its suffering in different ways, such as A Muzzle for the Steam Giant,” “Manufactures without Child-slaying,” &c. . . . The children moved on with drums and banners, and occasional bursts of noise or hilarity, suitable enough for younglings who had escaped from work on a fine summer’s afternoon. (*Commission for Perpetuating* 9–10)

Here we can see this one handbill as part of a whole constellation of experiences unique to these working children from Lancashire and the West Riding. Although such ephemeral texts may not seem like children's literature, the banners, hatbands, flags, and handbills carried by these protesters composes the landscape of reading for these children. These texts are the working-class equivalent of handwriting samplers, jigsaw puzzles, and games—manipulable texts and toys owned by middle-class children, which scholars such as Megan Norcia and Jill Shefrin examine in order to enrich the study of children's literature (Heath; Norcia; Shefrin). Political banners and broadsides reveal experiences that may have motivated poor children to desire literacy; together, these neglected texts compose their horizon of expectations, which inform how working children encounter other texts that we more readily admit are children's literature, such as Sunday school hymnals, periodicals, and chapbooks.

Children's hymns, for instance, were adapted for use during their protests, which is obliquely referenced when Whit-Monday girls sing "their song." Ten days later, on May 16, 1833, over three thousand factory children and fifteen thousand additional supporters greeted the commissioners at their hotel in Leeds with a letter of protest, where they sang their "Factory Song" (*Great Meeting in Leeds* 7):

We will have the Ten Hour Bill,
That we will, that we will,
Else the Land shall ne'er be still,
Ne'er be still, ne'er be still.
Parliament say what they will,
We will have the Ten Hour Bill;
Then we will be joyful,
When we get the Ten Hour Bill.

(*Factory Commissioners at Leeds*)²²

Frequently mentioned in reports of meetings and protests, the "Ten Hours Song" adapts a children's hymn by Thomas Bilby, "Here we suffer grief and pain," sung to the tune of "Joyful" (1832) (Clapp-Itnyre 227–29). The Ten Hours Song's demand for immediate reform ironically reverses Bilby's original lyrics, which contrast unhappiness on earth ("Here we suffer grief and pain; / Here we meet to part again") with joyful reunion in heaven ("In heaven we part no more. / Oh, that will be joyful! / Joyful, joyful, joyful!"). The child protesters, on the other hand, gather together in the present, and they will be "joyful" when they get what they want here on earth.²³

The song's origins in children's hymnody is no surprise considering the organizing leadership that Lancashire and Yorkshire children received from Sunday school teachers and clergy. The most prominent of these, Reverend

George Stringer Bull, the Vicar of Byerly and an Evangelical Anglican Minister and Sunday school teacher at Bradford, learned effective methods of organizing popular support for causes as an abolitionist, then applied these skills to organizing Yorkshire children. Formerly a missionary in Sierra Leone, Rev. Bull was drawn to the ten hours cause because he noticed that most parish children worked too late on weeknights to attend his school, and they were so exhausted on Sundays that they fell asleep during their lessons. Willing to set aside religious and political differences, Rev. Bull forged instrumental alliances between local Radical Dissenter leaders from the working classes and prominent Anglican Tories, even convincing Lord Ashley to take Sadler's place in the 1833 session as sponsor for the Ten Hours Bill (Gill 77–132). Another broadside addressed to children reports his speech delivered to one thousand children on June 11, 1833 at the Primitive Methodist Chapel, thus replicating another familiar form of children's literature: the religious sermon (Bull, *On . . . June 11th, 1833*).

Typical of Radical literature of 1832–33, Rev. Bull's sermon argues that factory work and play are incompatible. In child-friendly language, the sermon encourages children to remain firm in their support for a Ten Hours Bill so that they can have more free time to play, attend school, and bond with their parents. The sermon attacks opponents who want to compromise by proposing eleven hour limits on the child's work day: "TEN ARE PLENTY. . . . If any body think that Ten are too few, let them try it themselves. It is enough for your fathers and grown up brothers, and quite enough for you. Besides an *Eleven Hour Bill* will leave you very little or no time to read, to sew, to learn house work, or to play." After clarifying what ten hours means (the work day was actually much longer, once accounting for meals and breaks), Bull objects that long hours keep children from play and school: "I have established Evening Schools on the week day for Factory Children, and the Children at one of them sent us word that they could not come in summer, they wanted to play. So I told them I should not prevent them going to play, for they *want*, and *love* PLAY, and *will play* even when they are very tired. So I shall take them into School again when they *cannot* play, when the cold and wet weather comes. But when we get our Bill, we shall be able to do better." As an adult who keeps children working at school, Rev. Bull explains why he will not prevent children from playing, and why factory owners should follow his example. Carving out separate times for play, school, and work takes the opposite approach to education from the "practical education" pedagogies favored by middle-class parents, where playing (or imitating) "work" is the most fun way to learn. Rev. Bull's willingness to encourage play and public assembly is all the more remarkable when contrasted with the purpose of many Sunday schools, charity schools, and Schools of Industry, which gained

support in order to prevent poor children from playing (“idleness”) in public streets and parks when not at work.²⁴

Rev. Bull focused on child audiences in many public speeches and publications, in which he teaches children to pray for political change and practical needs. In *Examples of Prayer for Sunday School Children*, written for his Bradford students, Rev. Bull includes a veiled request to God for the Ten Hours Bill in the suggested Morning Prayer: “May I be diligent at my work, and faithful to my duty. May I attend to my learning with care, as far as I have *time*; and increase, O Lord, this privilege to the young, especially to Factory Children” (5). Careful calculations of a worker’s time are typical in the “Short Timer” literature produced to support the Ten Hours Bill, which often italicize or capitalize the word “time.”²⁵ Like Thomas Bilby’s hymn, Rev. Bull’s prayer exemplifies how a book more easily recognizable as children’s literature can be more meaningful within the context of polemical handbills and protest songs.

Audience and Agency

One obvious problem with calling these texts “children’s literature” is the question of audience. Are they primarily intended for children? Perhaps adult political agitators use child dialogues or sermons, like they use child protesters, to advance their own agenda by representing worker grievances through an affective genre best calculated to garner public support. Are the children in the Whit-Monday dialog or Rev. Bull’s sermon no different from Wordsworth’s cottage maid, merely characters in what is essentially an adult drama, intended for adult readers?

Fortunately, some evidence survives showing the distribution of these handbills to child workers. An unsigned printed cover letter for Rev. Bull’s sermon reads:

Sir,

I intend to supply every Factory Child in this Neighbourhood with a Copy of this Address. I send respectfully to ask, if you can undertake to supply the hands under your care. If you can, please to send me the Number without delay. If it is not convenient, please let me know directly.

Your reply will much oblige,

Yours respectfully,

Bradford, June 13th, 1833.²⁶

Since this is a printed coversheet, rather than a handwritten letter, many copies likely accompanied packets disseminated to different sympathetic mills. While there is no smoking gun for most of these documents, another record survives for a rhyme titled “The Yorkshire Factory Children’s Letter to Mr. Wilson Patten, M.P.,” reprinted in Rev. G. S. Bull’s periodical, *The British*

Labourer's Protector and Factory Child's Friend (BLP&FCF), with the note about its distribution in March 1833: "A large number of this Tract circulates weekly among Factory Children" (203).²⁷ Records of how handbills circulated among the children are few, but the survival of these records suggests that the Short Time Committees had an established method for disseminating texts to children by spring 1833, when eliciting their participation in rallies became paramount.

Even if these texts were distributed to children, the question remains whether propagandist literature can promote child agency. Such heavy-handed ideological messages may seem to close down exploration and instrumentalize children for an adult cause. If we see the children of the Ten Hours movement as puppets, then we accept the version of history told by laissez-faire opponents of factory legislation, who discredited the Short Time advocates for supposedly manipulating children in order to limit the adult workday. When the commissioners published their observations in an August 1833 report, they claimed that adult workers hoodwinked the public with parades of suffering children. The commissioners dismissed child protesters and their petitions as "studied compositions," in "all cases the machinery employed to divert public attention from the true state of the question." After shifting the blame for child abuse from factory overseers to the workers themselves, their report concludes "the interest of the children is really not at the root of the agitation of this question, excepting amongst benevolent individuals in a higher sphere" (45, 46). In other words, only wealthy allies of workers actually care about children; workers use them.

For their part, adult operatives represented children as vulnerable victims who need protective legislation, but they gave children more credit as political agents because they wanted the public to take child protests seriously, as authentic evidence of what children endured and how they felt about proposed legislation (Gleadle 215–30). In their communities, including women and children in rallies was a tradition that declared a public meeting's "peaceable intent," and was, therefore, an accepted cultural practice, not a newly invented political ploy (Thompson 159).

Faced with divergent interpretations of child participation, I evaluate child agency based upon definitions embraced by working families, which is challenging because "agency" was constructed by the very events in question. Whether children were "free agents" is not simply a matter of literary interpretation, but a legal question, debated in Parliament and in the courts. Reformers passed the first labor laws at a time when any protection was construed as unlawful interference in a worker's freedom to contract his or her labor. They did so by demonstrating that some labor is "unfree" and should be regulated—first cotton mill apprentices (1802) but eventually all

child labor (1819).²⁸ As a result, “children” were defined as that category of workers who are not free agents; therefore, “agency” and “childhood” are codetermined concepts that evolved together, with conflicting definitions forwarded by different parties.²⁹ The commissioners, for instance, began their report by defining childhood in economic terms. Children become adults when they first “retain a part of their wages, . . . make their own contracts, and are, in the proper sense of the words, free agents.” In response, the Short Timers ridiculed the idea that “at 13 years of age, little girls and boys are ‘free agents,’ able to judge and act for themselves—‘adults,’ in fact” (*Proceedings* 8). Although Short Timers had the immediate practical goal of protection for all children under age twenty-one, they also reflected that no one is a free agent—that all working people are exploited and eligible for protective legislation.³⁰

When we judge whether a text empowers children, these contingent definitions of agency matter. One way to increase child agency is to offer a wide selection of ideas, accessed through uncensored, open-ended creative literature. But these liberal values have little meaning in a community where children cannot afford to express their choices by selecting multiple texts for loan or purchase in a broad marketplace of ideas. Furthermore, access to political nonfiction was liberating because these texts were more likely to face censorship than imaginative fiction. The government and private charities funded educational institutions and publications that avoided politics or promoted conservative messages, such as National Schools, mechanics institutes, and the S.P.C.K. and S.D.U.K., in order to keep working-class adults out of politics. In the bitter wake of the 1832 Reform Bill, the Radical Tory journalist William Cobbett expressed skepticism toward government schools that aimed, by eschewing politics from the curriculum, “to bend the minds of children towards passive obedience and slavery” (*Political Register*). In other words, keeping politics away from children was a form of indoctrination—a perspective the very reverse of the belief that polemical texts are coercive. For Radical working-class parents, giving children access to political information empowered them with the knowledge to one day fight their disenfranchisement (Rose 20–40).

Chartist Children and the Short Time Movement’s Legacy

The 1830s was a watershed decade when the working-class press shifted from talking about children to addressing children as an important audience, in part because children proved themselves key allies. Rev. Bull’s periodical, the *BLP&FCF*, which ran from September 1832 through April 1833, provides a microcosm of this transition. Like most Radical working-class newspapers,

Bull's periodical makes political information cheap (1d. per issue) through an eclectic reprint of anything relevant to the local Short Time efforts, from meeting minutes, to accounts of injured children, to sentimental poems with child speakers (20), to the progress of the Ten Hours Bill in Parliament. The journal more deliberately addresses children in early spring 1833, when the Short Timers first mobilize this constituency for public action. The December 7, 1832 issue includes "A Dialogue between Esther, a Piecer, and Fanny, a Reeler," a conversation between two children at work, in the same form as the Whit-Monday dialogue (93). But he doesn't interpolate children as readers of the journal until February 22, 1833, when Rev. Bull opens a letter from London to his "young friends" (178–79, 190), followed in April 1833 by an address to children from Richard Oastler, who offers a sophisticated yet child-friendly history of the Ten Hours Bill's progress in Parliament with instructions to "sing one and all" the Ten Hours Song (233–37).

By the final issue, children are the journal's exclusive audience. Rev. Bull concludes by suggesting several prayers (with puns on time) for "temporal blessings as well as spiritual" that "our young readers" can "read, mark, and learn." The prayers ask God to "Bless the efforts of our Friends who wish to shorten our toil; and increase our comforts. Turn the hearts of our rulers towards the poor" (255–56). Within a few years of Bull's journal, some working-class periodicals began addressing children in a more structured way, such as the *Gazette of the Working Men's Association*, which had a children's column. Although historians have argued that working youth experience childhood and adolescence as discrete life stages after legislation removes them from the workforce, the concerted efforts of Short Timers to effectively engage child audiences shows a moment decades earlier when working families and their allies experimented with modern constructions of childhood that later gain prominence.

One indicator that children made Radical texts their own is the enduring regional influence of the Short Time Movement. A few years later, Lancashire and the West Riding became a provincial center for the Chartist movement, which depended upon leaders trained in political organizing as young people.³¹ This next generation not only viewed children as allies who stood to benefit from political reforms, but made child education a paramount concern. According to Malcom Chase's study of children raised in Chartist households (1838–48), parents encouraged their children to sign the People's Charter (i.e., petitions for working-class enfranchisement, presented to Parliament), named their children after Chartist leaders, formed juvenile Chartist branches of the National Charter Association (NCA), and opened Chartist Sunday schools (Chase 126–40). Education, "moral and political" became a rallying cry of the Chartist movement. In the founding principles of the London Working

Men's Association, William Lovett, who became a leading voice of Moral Force Chartism, urged fathers to "politically and morally instruct your wives and children." After relocating to Leeds, Lovett integrated fiction, including Frederick Maryatt's sea adventures, into his Chartist journal, the *Northern Star*, uniting imaginative and practical literature. He urged workers to "take the education of their children into their own hands," as "the children of today will, in a few years, be called upon to exercise the rights and duties of men, it becomes our paramount duty to qualify them for their future station, . . . to devise, maintain, and execute a wise and just system of education" (Lovett 398, 247–48). At the time, classroom reading lessons used selections that taught the poor to obey and respect property rights, but Radicals like George Jacob Holyoake developed their own grammars and readers, in the process, integrating the Radical tradition more fully into mainstream children's literature by the end of the nineteenth century (Marsh 243).

In closing, I would like to briefly sketch the longer trajectory of Radical working-class cross-writing that coexisted with the early nineteenth century rise of children's publishing. The broader tradition to which Short Time texts belong might begin with works about children, such as Thomas Spence's *The Rights of Infants* (1796), and include those texts that worker autobiographers report defining their coming-of-age reading experiences—first *Pilgrim's Progress* (Thompson 34–38; Murphy 16–17) and folktale chapbooks (Vincent 113–23), then Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* in adolescence—as well as texts that thematize youth access to political literature, such as Rev. Robert Taylor's *Swing*.³² This tradition claims its own pedagogical commentators who envision new systems of education, such as Robert Owen, William Lovett, and Eliza Sharples. Early nineteenth-century ephemera and oral texts would include children's hymns published or sung at public protests, periodicals that address children or include a "children's corner," self-education books (e.g., William Cobbett's *Grammar*), and children's books by Radical authors from Wollstonecraft to Holyoake.

Elizabeth Massa Hoiem is an assistant professor at the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she teaches children's literature, fantasy, and literacy studies. Her current book project, The Education of Things: Mechanical Literacy in British Culture, 1762–1860, examines how writers represent education as an embodied experience, where children learn directly from the physical world through object learning or the education of things. Her research encompasses a wide range of children's literature and material culture—autobiographies, science textbooks, automata displays, Radical journalism, and education treatises—and reveals the hidden class politics of learning with things.

Notes

¹ *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* (1824–26) by William Cobbett (the preeminent Tory Radical journalist, elected M.P. in 1832) compares the 1820s unfavorably with an idyllic pre-reformation past, arguing that the Tudors orchestrated the reformation at the expense of Catholic charity and rights for the poor (Thompson 836); *The Book of the Poor Man's Church* by John Cleave (a co-operatist and Radical publisher) criticizes the Anglican church as a corrupt, self-serving monopoly; *The Church Examiner & Ecclesiastical Record* (1832) is a Radical periodical co-edited by John Cleave and William Carpenter; *Grand National Holiday, and Congress of the Productive Classes, &c.* (1831) by William Benbow (London coffee-house proprietor and Radical publisher) argues that 1 in 500 men oppress, plunder, and disenfranchise the other 499 and introduces the “national holiday” or general strike as an instrument of reform.

² Throughout this essay, I capitalize “Radical” when referencing the nineteenth-century British political movement that supported constitutional reform, criminal justice reform, redistribution of wealth and tax reform, access to education, working-class management of public institutions, protective labor laws, a free press, and universal manhood suffrage. I define a working-class text as one “that is self-consciously directed toward the working class and that clearly reflects working-class interests,” which I derived from Paul Thomas Murphy’s definition of a working-class periodical (31).

³ Written for his son, James, the full title specifies adult self-education and children’s schools: *A grammar of the English language: in a series of letters. Intended for the use of schools and of young persons in general; but, more especially for the use of soldiers, sailors, apprentices and plough-boys.* Called “the public instructor” by his detractors, Cobbett fled England in 1817 to avoid prosecution for his publications and lived for two years on Long Island, where he wrote this grammar book. It invites readers to correct the king’s speeches and uses provocative examples, such as conjugating “to work” and “to defy tyrants” (Cobbett 78). Rev. William Lisle Bowles, chaplain to the Prince Regent, complained “its object is to pervert and corrupt the youthful mind in its first and earliest avidity of knowledge” (12–13).

⁴ Celebrated children’s book authors and educators are well represented among those who combatted Paine’s popularity by churning out affordable and entertaining alternatives: Hannah More “scribbled a little pamphlet called *Village Politics*” for “the most vulgar class of readers” (qtd. Jackson 174), while Sarah Trimmer warned parents of Jacobin content in books for children. On the heels of *The Parent's Assistant* (1796), Maria Edgeworth tried her hand at writing *Popular Tales* (1804) for those seventy thousand readers from “beyond circles which are sometimes exclusively considered as polite” (1.iv–v). The Sunday school literature and SDUK publications of the early Victorian period served a similar purpose, fighting cyclical resurgences of the Radical press.

⁵Donelle Ruwe argues for a similar bias regarding satire. She notes that children's literature scholars exclude political sequels to John Harris's *The Butterfly's Ball, and the Grasshopper's Feast* (1807) from their studies. She concludes that scholars generally avoid acknowledging children as the intended readers of political satire.

⁶Christopher Parkes describes how a middle-class vision of child-as-capitalist "displaced" competing working-class depictions of children as victims of capitalism. His integration of childhood with economic history provides a helpful challenge to scholars who accept Romanticism's concept of "childhood as separate and apart from capitalist society," by suggesting instead that children, viewed as ideal innovators and self-improvers, became constitutive of and "synonymous with capitalism" (6–7).

⁷Histories of childhood and adolescence imply the same transculturation of values as histories of children's literature—from wealthier families, who first form new concepts of childhood, to poor families with working children. John Gillis remarks in *Youth and History*, "The discovery of adolescence belonged essentially to the middle classes" (98). Aaron Esman in *Adolescence and Culture* associates modern adolescence with the need to remove older children from the workforce: "The bulk of evidence supports the view that adolescence" is "a product of industrialization, of the need to extend the period of education and training for adults roles in the face of expanding technology, and of the need . . . to keep young people out of the labor force in order to assure job opportunities for adults in times of scarcity" (16). John Springhall in *Coming of Age* concurs that adolescence "was first discovered in the late nineteenth century as urban-industrial society came to subject children and the young to ever longer periods of formal schooling and the transition from childhood to adulthood became ever more drawn out and complex." Springhall credits "the abolition of child labour, the introduction of compulsory education, the progressive raising of the school-leaving age and the advent of a teenage market for leisure" (8). These studies generally emphasize that wealthier children first experienced adolescence, while underemployed urban poor children were viewed as a "problem" to be solved by educational and disciplinary institutions. Some scholars may emphasize that poor children first experience the disciplinary practices that first constructed adolescence as a social problem, but, again, as a symptom of efforts to normalize an account of youth that originated in affluent families. For an account of why and how leisured childhood became universal, see Cunningham, *Children of the Poor*.

⁸Pamela Horn emphasizes that reformers expressed moral objections to mistreatment, dangerous conditions, and long hours for children, but "they rarely argued that [child labor] should be ended. They merely wished it to be regulated in order to eliminate the worst abuses" (22). Even during the later half of the nineteenth century, reformers continued to believe that the half-time system (children work half the day and attend school the other half) was beneficial (Horn 42). See also Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, for a creative, in-depth account of working families and their attitudes towards child labor.

⁹ I use “handbills” or “broadsides” depending on whether it was posted (broadside) or distributed (handbill). Many of these documents may have been used both ways. Handbills are modeled on Ballads; they are single sheets on cheap paper, printed on one side, often with a picture or bold text for visual enhancement. While chapbooks and ballads are more recognizable as sources of children’s literature, these circulated with cheap periodicals and political pamphlets through the same printing shops and peddlers, indicating intersections between a greater variety of cheap literature and early children’s literature (Haywood 60).

¹⁰ Working-class historians have thoroughly documented these events, as well as many of the texts I reference, but the significance of this history is not always widely known to children’s literature scholars.

¹¹ Katharine Kittredge finds similar cross-writing in comparatively conservative texts and argues that some advice books written for working-class readers are actually proto-young adult literature (106).

¹² As Marcus Wood explains, mock toys and mock alphabets were popular, such as *The Political ‘A, Apple-Pie’ or, the ‘Extraordinary Red Book’ versified; for the instruction and amusement of the rising generation* (1820), sometimes misattributed to Hone (Wood 215–63), or the “Bad Alphabet for the Use of the Children of Female Reformers” (Thompson 718).

¹³ At William Hone’s trial, the judge accused Hone of corrupting servants and children, who lacked the sophistication necessary to read parody without harming their morals: “Could he seal hermetically the eyes and ears of his children, that the poison should not enter their minds . . . ?” (Hone, *Three Trials*, 45).

¹⁴ The low price of Radical literature excited government censorship more than content because high prices limit readership to the wealthy. William Cobbett inaugurated the reign of cheap political periodicals when, in 1816, he dropped the price of his *Political Register* from 1s. 6d. to 2d. As “two-penny trash” proliferated, the government fought back with a tax (1819–36) that added a 4d. stamp to political periodicals, more than what many poor readers could afford. “Prices above a penny or two obviously limited the circulation of working-class periodicals,” although readers clubbed together to purchase the more expensive 6d. papers (Murphy 23). By comparison, the average respectable children’s book of the 1830s cost about 2s. 6d. (Grenby 73)—a reminder that poor children could more readily afford a political newspaper or one penny sensational than a fresh copy of Newbery’s *Goody Two-Shoes* at 6d. (Vincent 113).

¹⁵ Helen Rogers demonstrates that illiterate children in prison cherished the material qualities of illustrated children’s books (59), while E. P. Thompson relates that one worker ascribed “talismanic virtue to owning” William Cobbett’s writings, even though he could not read them (782).

¹⁶ Wealthy and poor children of the early nineteenth century read different texts because cheap industrial books for all were not yet available. In a study of children's Bibles, Ruth B. Bottigheimer finds a "two tier tradition" before 1850, with different contents for poor and wealthy children. After 1850, the traditions slowly converged as mechanized printing and binding encouraged the production of many inexpensive, identical texts, used by children of all classes (124, 129).

¹⁷ Before the Victorian age of cheap literature, poor children read whatever they chanced to find in "educative and religious institutions and their libraries, teachers and pupils, economic and social superiors, fellow working men, . . . public houses, and coffee shops" (Vincent 118). Since they typically turned over their wages to their mothers, they purchased few texts until they were old enough to earn better wages (Humphries 243). Working-class autobiographies uniformly describe an intellectual awakening, or "secularized conversion" (Vincent 136), when these young adults gained access, for the first time, to "a highly-motivated and wide-ranging program of reading" that "depended upon choice and not upon accident" (Murphy 17, 18).

¹⁸ *The Factory System; or, Frank Hawthorn's Visit to His Cousin* (1831), a pamphlet dedicated to the Short Time cause, models what this reading community may have looked like. The fictional family debates child labor, then consult a literate neighbor whom they find reading the newspaper and sharing news from Parliament. For those who couldn't read, books still held value as special objects.

¹⁹ Many of the texts I use are well documented in Ward, *Factory Movement*. For those who want to locate more working-class texts, I recommend using social histories of popular reading and working-class life to find public spaces and political events attended by families with children, then searching regional periodicals and printers for child-related content. Occasionally, WorldCat searches by printer and town reveal additional materials produced by the same local printers, such as *Hymns for Factory Children* (1831) printed by Thomas and Elizabeth Inchbold, who produced many of the West Riding Short Time materials.

²⁰ Dialog forms of children's literature are numerous. Joachim Heinrich de Campe, for instance, made *Robinson Crusoe* into a children's story (1789) by transforming the novel into a dialog between a father and his children. The dialog form imitates how many children, especially girls, learned in their homes through conversation. See Cohen, "Familiar Conversation."

²¹ For performativity and children's Robinsonades, see O'Malley, "Acting out Crusoe."

²² For a full description of this protest, with the letter delivered by the children to the commissioners, see *Great Meeting in Leeds*. This account describes the children as eager participants who arrived early "for slips to bind round their hats" that say "The Ten Hours Bill" and required little "expense" or "efforts to collect" together

(1). These events follow the plan for protesting the arrival of the commissioners in each town, see *Instructions to the Short Time Committees*. Their song is recorded on a handbill, *The Factory Commissioners at Leeds*, which reports a protest in May 1833 at a Leeds Flax Mill. For additional descriptions of these protests, see *Manchester. The Factory Commission Arrived*, and *Verdict of the London Press*.

²³ I am in debt to children's hymn expert Alisa Clapp-Itnyre for identifying the original hymn and lyrics. An alternative title for this hymn is "The Happy Meeting."

²⁴ See also "Factory Children, At a Public Meeting," for a similar address to families, dated February 19, 1833. Each member of the family requires time, while a shorter workday allows evening schools, with Sunday reserved for rest (6).

²⁵ Not only is the movement organized by "Short Time Committees," but "Short Timers" calculate work time carefully. In one pamphlet from 1832, Rev. Bull demonstrates that long work days degrade parent-child bonding by meticulously tabulating the minutes that working children spend with their parents, estimated 255 per week (*A Respectful and Faithful Appeal* 10).

²⁶ This cover letter is digitized and included with Bull's sermon.

²⁷ Wilson Patten is the M.P. who suggested forming the commission, and this "factory child's" letter asks whether he would like his children to work in factories. Adopting a child's voice to argue for factory reforms was a frequent rhetorical device and does not necessarily mean this letter was written by a Yorkshire factory child. Nevertheless, George Jacob Holyoake, the editor of *Radical*, co-operatist and atheist periodicals (and a children's book author!) gives credit to girl piecers for authoring this poem and another poem, reportedly handed to Joseph Pease. He reprints both poems in *The History of Co-operation in England* (1.425–27).

²⁸ Parliamentary debates record how societal beliefs about who has agency and under what circumstances shifted with new labor laws. During the debate over The Factory Act of 1819, which established, for the first time, that all children are not free laborers, Charles Williams-Wynn argued, "it was generally expedient not to interfere with free labour. Now this was wholly inapplicable to children of a tender age, . . . who were necessarily at the mercy of their masters" (Hansard HC Deb 10 April 1818). Answering the Earl Grosvenor's concern that it is "dangerous to legislate on the subject of free labour," the Earl of Liverpool responded, "this was no question of free labour. It was preposterous to talk of these poor children as free agents" (Hansard HL Deb 25 February 1819). The Short Timers inherited these legal precedents, which made it impossible to legislate adult labor except by proxy, through children. Eventually, the Factory Act of 1844 extended protection to women under the same logic. Lord Ashley argued, "in theory these females were considered free agents, yet that in practice they were no such thing." (Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1844).

²⁹Legal historians argue that we began to think of children as developmentally and legally less-than-adults during the nineteenth-century rise of contract law, in order to support the fiction that adult workers, by contrast, are free agents who sign contracts as equals with their employers—this at a time when the law permitted employers to engage in coercive practices now categorized as human trafficking, such as forced labor to pay off a debt. See Brewer, *By Birth or Consent*; Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor*.

³⁰As evidence, they cite structural inequalities that make contracts between a rich person of property and a poor person inherently unequal, since the poor contract their labor under duress, fearing starvation for themselves and their families. For example, a pamphlet titled *The Factory Bill*, compares Lord Ashley’s Ten-Hour Bill and the commissioners’ proposals by questioning at what age workers become free agents, if ever, for “even the male adult has but little of the character of the free agent remaining” (3).

³¹Chartist strongholds in 1836–48 overlap with the regional network of Short Time Committees across Lancashire and Yorkshire, as shown on *Political Meetings Mapper* (Navickas).

³²Taylor’s play, *Swing*, performed regularly at Richard Carlile’s Rotunda (a London assembly hall for Radical performances, lectures), asks audiences to identify with the “youth” John Swing, who “has frequently been caught in the act of reading books, tracts, and papers, which he huddles into his pocket, the moment he perceives any one approaching him.” The local clergyman, Ebenezer Sanctity, threatens that if these “inflammatory, blasphemous, or seditious publications” are found in his parish, he will hold the Swing family responsible and evict them. John’s father reflects, “O curse their reading. How can I prevent— / How hinder them from reading what they will?” (Act II, Scene I). The theme of *Swing* is whether parents can regulate what their older children read, but this family dynamic symbolizes the larger question of control over what the poor read.

Works Cited

- Address to the Friends of Justice and Humanity in the West Riding of York, from the Meeting of Delegates of the Short Time Committee, Established to Promote the Legislative Adoption of the Ten Hour Factory Bill, Assembled . . . October 28th, 1833.* Bradford, 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Altick, Richard Daniel. *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800–1900*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1957. Print.
- Barbauld, Anna Laetitia. *Pastoral Lessons, and Parental Conversations*. London: Darton and Harvey, 1797. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Benbow, William. *Grand National Holiday and Congress of the Productive Classes, &c.* London, [1832?]. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.

- Bottigheimer, Ruth B. "God and the Bourgeoisie: Class, the Two-Tier Tradition, Work, and Proletarianization in Children's Bibles." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 17.2 (1993): 124–34. *Project Muse*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Bowles, Rev. William Lisle. *Thoughts on the Increase of Crimes, the Education of the Poor, and the National Schools; in a Letter to Sir James Mackintosh*. 2nd ed. Salisbury: Brodie and Dowding, 1819. Print.
- Brewer, Holly. *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2005. Print.
- Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress as Originally Published by John Bunyan; Being a Facsimile Reproduction of the First Edition*. London: Elliot Stock, 1875. *Hathi Trust*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Bull, Rev. George Stringer. *British Labourer's Protector and Factory Child's Friend. Radical Periodicals of Great Britain* 1–31 (1832–1833). New York: Greenwood. Reprint, 1969. *Hathi Trust*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- . *Examples of Prayer for Sunday School Children, Intended for the Use of His Sunday-Scholars*. Bradford, 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- . *Factory Children: At a Public Meeting of the Borough of Bradford held on . . . February 19th, 1833, to Consider of the Propriety of Petitioning Parliament Respecting the Factories Regulation Bill . . . the Rev. G.S. Bull . . . Said*. 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- . *On . . . June 11th, 1833, in Consequence of Many Misrepresentations . . . Respecting Advice Given to the Factory Children about the Ten Hour Bill*. 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- . *A Respectful and Faithful Appeal to the Inhabitants of the Parish of Bradford on the Behalf of the Factory Children*. Bradford: T. Inkersley, 1832. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Chase, Malcolm. "'Resolved in Defiance of Fool and Knave'?: Chartism, Children and Conflict." *Conflict and Difference in Nineteenth-Century Literature*. Ed. Ninah Birch and Mark Llewellyn. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 126–40. Print.
- Child Murder No Crime!*. Huddersfield, J. Hobson, 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Clapp-Itnyre, Alisa. *British Hymn Books for Children, 1800–1900: Re-Tuning the History of Childhood*. Surrey: Ashgate, 2015. Print.
- Cleave, John. *The Book of the Poor Man's Church*. London, [1841?]. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Cobbett, William. "Education and 'Heddekashun'" *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* 7 Dec. 1833: n. pag. *19th Century British Library Newspapers*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- . *Grammar of the English Language, in a Series of Letters. Intended for the Use of Schools and of Young Persons in General; But, More Especially for the Use of Soldiers, Sailors, Apprentices and Plough-boys*. New York: Printed for the Author by Clayton and Kingsland, No. 15 Cedar-Street, 1818. Print.

- . *A History of the Protestant "Reformation," in England and Ireland: Showing How That Event Has Impoverished and Degraded the Main Body of the People in Those Countries. In a Series of Letters, Addressed to All Sensible and Just Englishmen.* Parts I–XVI. London: Charles Clement, 1824–1826. Print.
- Cohen, Michèle. "'Familiar Conversation': The Role of the 'Familiar Format' in Education in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century England." *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain*. Ed. Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009. 99–116. Print.
- The Commission for Perpetuating Factory Infanticide.* 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Conversation among Factory Children, about the Commission.* 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Cunningham, Hugh. *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood Since the Seventeenth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992. Print.
- Demers, Patricia, ed. *From Instruction To Delight: An Anthology of Children's Literature to 1850*. Don Mills: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- Edgeworth, Maria. *The Parent's Assistant; or, Stories for Children*. 2nd ed. London: J. Johnson, 1796. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Edgeworth, Richard. Preface. *Popular Tales*. By Maria Edgeworth. Vol. 1. London: R. Hunter; Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1823. Print.
- Esman, Aaron H., M.D. *Adolescence and Culture*. New York: Columbia UP, 1990. Print.
- Factories Inquiry Commission. *First Report of the Central Board of His Majesty's Commissioners . . . with Minutes of Evidence, and Reports by the District Commissioners.* 1833 (450) XX. *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (HCPP)*. ProQuest. Web. 5 July 2016.
- The Factory Bill: Lord Ashley's Ten-Hour Bill and the Scheme of the Factory Commissioners Compared.* London, 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- The Factory Commissioners at Leeds.* Bradford, 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Gill, John Clifford. *The Ten Hours Parson: Christian Social Action in the Eighteen-Thirties*. London: S.P.C.K., 1959. Print.
- Gillis, John R. *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770–Present*. Expanded Student ed. New York: Academic, 1981. Print.
- Gleadle, Kathryn. "'We Will Have It': Children and Protest in the Ten Hours Movement." *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency, 1750–1914*. Ed. Nigel Goose and Katrina Honeyman. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2011. 215–30. Print.
- Goldsmith, Oliver, Giles Jones, John Newbery, and Charles Welsh. *Goody Two-Shoes: A Facsimile Reproduction of the Edition of 1766*. London: Griffith & Farran, 1882. Hathi Trust. Web. 5 July 2016.

- Great Meeting in Leeds on . . . the 16th of May, 1833, of the Factory Children to Present Their Protest to the Commissioners Appointed through Mr. Wilson Patten's Motion for Further Enquiry, &c. &c.* Leeds: R. Inchbold, 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Grenby, M. O. *The Child Reader, 1700–1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. Print.
- Gubar, Marah. "On Not Defining Children's Literature." *PMLA* 126.1 (2011): 209–16. *Modern Language Association*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Hansard. HC Deb 24 April 1807, vol. 9, col 548.
- . HC Deb 10 April 1818, vol. 37, col 1262.
- . HL Deb 25 February 1819, vol. 39, col 655.
- . HC Deb 22 March 1844, vol. 73, col 1378.
- Haywood, Ian. *Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics, and the People, 1790–1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Heath, Shirley Brice. "Child's Play or Finding the Ephemera of Home." *Opening the Nursery Door: Reading, Writing and Childhood 1600–1900*. Ed. Mary Hilton, Morag Styles, and Victor Watson. London: Routledge, 1997. 91–103. Print.
- Henkin, David M. *City Reading: The Written Word and the Urban Public in Antebellum New York*. New York: Columbia UP, 1998. Print.
- Holyoake, George Jacob. *The History of Co-operation*. Vol. 1. London: T. F. Unwin, 1906. *Hathi Trust*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Hone, William. *The Political House That Jack Built*. 54th ed. London: William Hone, 1819. Print.
- . *The Three Trials of William Hone, For Publishing Three Parodies; Viz. The Late John Wilkes's Catechism, The Political Litany, and the Sinecurist's Creed*. London: William Hone, 1818. *Hathi Trust*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Horn, Pamela. *Children's Work and Welfare, 1780–1890*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. Print.
- Humphries, Jane. *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.
- Hymns for Factory Children*. Leeds: T. Inchbold, 1831. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Instructions to the Short Time Committees of England and Scotland with reference to the Commission*. 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Jackson, Mary V. *Engines of Instruction, Mischief, and Magic: Children's Literature in England from Its Beginnings to 1839*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1989. Print.
- Kittredge, Katharine. "'For the Benefit of Young Women Going into Service': Late Eighteenth-Century Proto-Young Adult Novels for Labouring-Class Girls." *Women's Writing* 23.1 (2016): 106–26. Print.

- Klancher, Jon P. *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987. Print.
- Knoepfmacher, U. C., and Mitzi Myers. “‘Cross-Writing’ and the Reconceptualizing of Children’s Literary Studies.” *Children’s Literature* 25 (1997): vii–xvii. *Project Muse*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Kramnick, Isaac. *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-Century England and America*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990. Print.
- Lovett, William. *Life and Struggles of William Lovett: In His Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom*. London: Trübner, 1876. Print.
- M.A.B. “To the Women of England.” *Poor Man’s Guardian* 26 May 1832: n. pag. *19th Century British Library Newspapers*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Manchester: *The Factory Commission Arrived: Memorial of the Factory Children Presented*. Manchester [sic], 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Marsh, Joss. *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998. Print.
- Murphy, Paul Thomas. *Toward a Working-Class Canon: Literary Criticism in British Working-Class Periodicals, 1816–1858*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1994. Print.
- Navickas, Katina. *Political Meetings Mapper*. British Library Labs, n.d. Web. <<http://www.politicalmeetingsmapper.co.uk/>>. 5 July 2016.
- Norcia, Megan A. *X Marks the Spot: Women Writers Map the Empire for British Children, 1790–1895*. Athens: Ohio UP, 2010. Print.
- O’Malley, Andrew. “Acting out Crusoe: Pedagogy and Performance in Eighteenth-Century Children’s Literature.” *The Lion and the Unicorn* 33.2 (2009): 131–45. Print.
- . *The Making of the Modern Child: Children’s Literature and Childhood in the Late Eighteenth Century*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Paine, Thomas. *Collected Writings: Common Sense, The Crisis, and Other Pamphlets, Articles, and Letters; Rights of Man; The Age of Reason*. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1995.
- Parkes, Christopher. *Children’s Literature and Capitalism: Fictions of Social Mobility in Britain, 1850–1914*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.
- Price, Leah. “Reading: The State of the Discipline.” *Book History* 7 (2004): 303–20. *JSTOR Arts and Sciences*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- The Proceedings of a Public Meeting of the People of Bradford, Yorkshire . . . on . . . July 25, 1833, to Deliberate upon the Position of the Ten-Hour bill: With the Address of the Rev. G.S. Bull. Bradford, 1833*. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Public Protest Against the Factory Commission*. Leeds, 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.

- Richardson, Cavie. *The Factory System; or, Frank Hawthorn's Visit to His Cousin, Jemmy Cropper of Leeds*. Leeds: T. Inchbold, 1831. *Making of The Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Rogers, Helen. "Oh, What Beautiful Books! Captivated Reading in an Early Victorian Prison." *Victorian Studies* 55.1 (2012): 57–84. *EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Rose, Jonathan. *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale UP, 2010. Print.
- Ruwe, Donelle. "Satirical Birds and Natural Bugs." *The Satiric Eye: Forms of Satire in the Romantic Period*. Ed. Steven E. Jones. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 115–37. Print.
- Shefrin, Jill. *The Dartons: Publishers of Educational Aids, Pastimes & Juvenile Ephemera, 1787–1876*. Princeton: Cotsen Occasional, 2010. Print.
- Smith, Charlotte. *Rural Walks: In dialogs, Intended for the Use of Young Persons*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1795. Print.
- Spence, Thomas. *The Rights of Infants*. London: Printed for the Author, 1797. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Springhall, John. *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860–1960*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986. Print.
- Steinfeld, Robert J. *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. Print.
- Taylor, Robert. *Swing: or, Who Are the Incendiaries?: A Tragedy Founded on Late Circumstances and as Performed at the Rotunda*. London: Richard Carlile, 1831. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- The Ten Hour Bill: An Address to the Inhabitants of Huddersfield and Its Vicinity*. Huddersfield, 1832. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Thompson, E. P. *The Origins of the English Working Class*. London: Penguin, 1980. Print.
- Verdict of the London Press: Factory Commissioners' Report*. London: Mills, Jowett, and Mills, 1833. *Making of the Modern World*. Web. 5 July 2016.
- Vincent, David. *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography*. London: Europa Publications, 1981. Print.
- Ward, J. T. *The Factory Movement, 1830–1855*. London: Macmillan, 1962. Print.
- Webb, R. K. *The British Working Class Reader, 1790–1848: Literacy and Social Tension*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955. Print.
- Wood, Marcus. *Radical Satire and Print Culture, 1790–1822*. Oxford: Clarendon, Oxford U, 1994. Print.
- Zipes, Jack, et. al. eds. *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature: The Traditions in English*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2005. Print.