



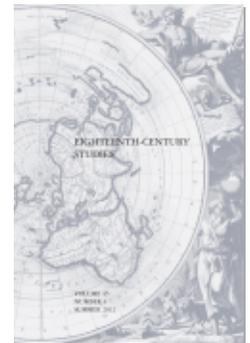
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*Children's Fiction 1765-1808: John Carey; Margaret King
Moore, Lady Mount Cashel; Henry Brooke (review)*

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(Review)

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of captive Africans' experience via the Middle Passage. To be sure, Africans were not unscathed by the slave trade; for all those who fought valiantly against their captors, there were many others who simply succumbed to their trauma, unable to break through their estrangement, abuse, and dejection.

Notwithstanding, Diptee's narration of the pure trauma of the Atlantic passage frames very well the argument of her final chapter; here she moves away from the traditional resistance paradigm and makes the simple yet assertive claim that Africans negotiated the dilemmas of enslavement in accordance with their past experiences. Diptee shifts the focal question from that of how slaves responded to slavery, instead asking, How did Africans (as Africans and as human beings) negotiate the predicament of their enslavement? This simple linguistic twist forces us to see that slavery was not the ultimate condition of Africans, and therefore that slave status was neither the sole nor the primary force behind enslaved people's behaviors. As people with personal histories, fears and desires, virtues and vices, their interpretation, assessment, and negotiation of their lives in Jamaican slave society were conditioned by more than just slavery's punishing regime. For example, African slavery provided a benchmark by which Africans assessed Jamaican slavery. Diptee's appraisal of the Muslim Abu Bakr al Saddiq, enslaved in Jamaica, was that his views of his enslavement were "informed by his religious beliefs" (100). She believes that Abu Bakr lacked "moral opposition to slavery" because he interpreted his "enslavement as divinely ordained" (102). Diptee's conclusion at the end of this chapter, that Africans' "peculiar histories" shaped their interpretation of and responses to their enslavement, refocuses our attention on those overlooked in adult and collectivized histories of slavery. Her work opens up nuanced and interesting ways of thinking about this subject.

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Anne Markey, ed., *Children's Fiction 1765–1808: John Carey; Margaret King Moore, Lady Mount Cashel; Henry Brooke*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011. Pp. 189. B/w ill. \$60.00.

The study of eighteenth-century children's literature poses peculiar difficulties, as Peter Opie has noted, and one of these is access. Texts of children's books are not always readily available outside of the archive, what with the genre under-represented on ECCO and the microform series of the Bodleian's Opie Collection owned by only a handful of libraries. Facsimiles traditionally have helped to fill the gap, but they, too, can be difficult to get, as many were produced as keepsakes for library friends' groups or in series published in Japan. Even better than facsimiles for the contextualization of seemingly simple texts are full-dress editions, but few have been published since the short-lived Oxford University Press series under Brian Alderson's editorship back in the late 1960s.

Things have been looking up, though, with the appearance of the Broadview editions of Sarah Fielding's *The Governess* and Thomas Day's *History of Sandford and Merton*, and now this anthology of fiction for children in Open Court's series "Early Irish Fiction c.1680–1820." It features three works in English by Carey,

King, and Brooke that were in circulation for decades, but which have rarely figured in critical discussion of the period's children's books; they also foreground issues that continue to figure in criticism of modern Irish children's literature. As regional or children's fiction, none of the three is going to knock the great Maria off her pedestal, but editor Anne Markey makes a good case for their relevance to historians of children's books or scholars in Irish studies.

Learning Better than House and Land (1802) by John Carey, the son of a wealthy Dublin Roman Catholic baker, who was schooled in France in defiance of the Irish Penal Laws, fits the series' rubric best, and receives the most attention. Markey argues that although the story is set in England and America (Carey lived in both places), *Learning* reflects late eighteenth-century Irish concerns and anxieties about educational opportunities. Carey reconceived the Hogarthian progress of a good and a bad boy from the same social class as an emigration tale about the intertwined fortunes of two Yorkshire lads—Harry the squire's son and Dick the cow herder's son—hailing from the same village. Orphaned en route to America, they must make their way in a society that unlike Ireland rewards merit without regard to religion or social class. Dick, who studies his book with what Charlotte Yonge would have called "Irish eagerness," rises thanks to his skills and work ethic, while Harry slides down the social ladder and ends up a barber, having never acquired basic competencies. Given the story's political subtext, highlighted by its illustrations, it may be no coincidence that *Learning* was first published by Benjamin Tabart, an associate of Sir Richard Phillips the radical bookseller.

Phillips's competitor William Godwin hoped to incline his young readers to virtue through the cultivation of the imagination, a central idea in this volume's second work, *Stories of Old Daniel* (1808), which deserves a higher profile in discussions of Romantic children's fiction. Its author, Margaret King, was an Irish-woman who had been a pupil of Mary Wollstonecraft and the model for one of Mrs. Mason's charges in *Original Tales for Children*. In *Old Daniel*, which seems meant primarily for boys, King tried to gratify the love of adventure and marvels in acceptable, even positive ways through her hale nonagenarian narrator. Part Münchhausen and part Scheherazade, Daniel the veteran of foreign wars holds a flock of village boys spellbound every Sunday with ghost stories, Schilleresque tales of encounters with robbers, and accounts of crossing the Pyrenees in winter without glorifying derring-do at the expense of the life lesson. In fact, he implies that virtue, rather than bravery, kept him alive. While Daniel was based on an old Irish storyteller King remembered from her childhood, he is no Thady Quirk, as "great improvements" were made in "his mode of expression." He does, on the other hand, tell stories described as based on actual incidents in Ireland, such as "The Bog-Trotter," "The Little Pedlar," and "The Boy who was Forgot at School," as well as "Little Dog Trusty's Ancestor," a tribute to King's countrywoman, Maria Edgeworth.

The inclusion of Henry Brooke's fable of the three trout is something of a stretch, except as a fine example of lively writing by an Irishman. The pert speeches to God of the two naughty trout that seal their doom are quite funny, thanks to Brooke's ability to make them sound like spoiled little fishes—which, as Goldsmith observed to Johnson, was not as easy as it looked. Brooke's fable originally appeared in the second chapter of *The Fool of Quality* and was tailor made for recycling in children's books, a widespread phenomenon during this period usually assumed to be without literary interest. Markey reprints two different retellings: one in which the story is cleverly recast as a fairy tale (perhaps to downplay the Methodist overtones); and the other as the centerpiece of an early nineteenth-century pamphlet

for children about Sunday observance. The transformation of the frame story in the second example would be clearer had Markey cut some of the general remarks on fable and devoted more space to the frame story in *The Fool*; the account of Henry Moreland's first five years is surely one of the most unusual depictions of childhood in the English novel, but is still not particularly well known.

By making available interesting new works by Anglo-Irish writers, Markey has made a very welcome contribution to the field of historical children's literature, in which the rarity of original editions, combined with the high incidence of anonymous works, has encouraged the tendency to riff on a handful of famous books instead of striking out into less familiar territory.

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Thomas E. Brennan, gen. ed., *Public Drinking in the Early Modern World: Voices from the Tavern, 1500–1800*, 4 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011). £350.00 / \$625.00.

Thomas Brennan, general editor of this four-volume collection, opens his introductory essay with a question: Why did the historian go into the bar? But this is not intended as a joke. Taverns, and the drinking that took place inside them, were serious enterprises that offer historians an entrée into the most important sites of sociability in the early modern world. As the multiple editors explain, after the Reformation, when profane activities were banned from the church, public houses emerged as the main locus of social life. Thus taverns provide a view into a broad range of cultural and economic practices; they offer insight into how society gathered, did business, sorted itself out by status and gender, and consumed. And because public drinking took place inside the tavern, sociologists and anthropologists use it as a laboratory in which to study the role of alcohol. The ranting of religious and political leaders about the dangers of drink presents yet another vantage point: What values did the public house threaten? Whom did they fear abused drink? What were the social consequences of too much alcohol? Finally, the editors suggest that the efforts to regulate and tax drinking constituted some of the initial steps toward state building, thus enabling us to glean insights into rulers' views and agendas for their populations.

The documents in these volumes focus on taverns and drinking in early modern France (volume one), the Holy Roman Empire of the German nations (volumes two and three), and the North American colonies (volume four). (For unexplained reasons, a proposed volume on England was dropped.) Each volume reflects editorial decisions about what to include. The collection is intended for multiple audiences; for scholars who are working on taverns or topics related to the public house and drinking, it provides convenient access to texts from a variety of locations. These volumes are also a valuable addition to an undergraduate library, as they allow students to work with primary sources and tackle research projects, especially from a comparative perspective.

Broadly, this collection is intended to illuminate the character, function, and significance of drinking establishments. Because of the size and complexity of