

Eighteenth-Century Women's Education in Britain

Eighteenth-century women were accused of lacking education, of deficient instruction, with being superficial. Most writers of educational projects blamed women's foibles but did not agree as to on their origins: was [their] inherent ignorance responsible or was it education, a perverted education because it focused on the accomplishments of women belonging to the upper strata? At the same time, libels, essays, satirical literary portrait mocked learned women who were deemed pernicious.

Fénelon lamented the different pedagogical treatments given boys and girls in his treatise *De l'éducation des filles* (1687):

Rien n'est plus négligé que l'éducation des filles. La coutume et le caprice des mères y décident souvent de tout: on suppose qu'on doit donner à ce sexe peu d'instruction. L'éducation des garçons passe pour une des principales affaires par rapport au bien public [...] on se croit en droit d'abandonner les filles à la conduite des mères ignorantes et indiscrettes.¹

This introductory remark can be applied to France as well as to England as it was translated in 1699 by George Hickes under the title *Instructions for the Education of a Daughter*. It profoundly influenced the movement in favour of a degree of education for women²; it should therefore be mentioned concerning the history of British ideas and mentalities.

Women are as much concerned as men with the role of education if not more so since they had the responsibility of their sons from infancy to the age of seven and their daughters' until their marriage. Fénelon stresses that their fundamental function was that of inculcating children habits and moral principles that were to shape their adult lives: "elles [femmes] ont la principale part aux bonnes ou aux mauvaises mœurs de presque tout le monde [...] Mais les enfants, qui feront dans la suite tout le genre humain, que deviendront-ils, si les mères les gâtent dès leurs premières années ?"³.

In order to be a sound educator it is better to be educated. The archbishop of Cambrai was one of the first to draw attention to this obvious truth : " il faut considérer, outre le bien que font les femmes quand elles sont bien élevées, le mal qu'elles causent dans le monde quand elles manquent d'une éducation qui leur inspire la vertu. "⁴ He goes on to refer to the twofold responsibility they are invested with : "Il est constant que la mauvaise éducation des femmes fait plus de mal que celles des hommes, puisque les désordres des hommes viennent souvent et de la mauvaise éducation qu'ils ont reçue de leurs mères, et des passions que d'autres femmes leur ont inspirées dans un âge plus avancé."⁵ A double responsibility and sometimes, in case of a deficient education, a double source of guilt as mothers, as wives, lovers or friends. This idea was taken up by the periodical *The Guardian* in 1713 where Richard Steele admits that women must improve themselves so to give their children the benefit of a better education: "I would recommend the Studies of Knowledge to the Female World [...]."⁶ Some people thought that women's foibles were due to their inferior and deficient nature which no education could change or improve and therefore proposed that to deny women the possibility of being educated and to keep them as they were was the same as to hinder any possible improvement in their nature. The result would be to abandon them to evil.

The question of women's education is part of the controversy on education in general which, after the mid-seventeenth-century led to numerous publications by both men and women about boys' as

well as girls' education,⁷ after a shift in the conception of human nature and the perception of childhood and children. Jacques Pons stresses the passion for some kind of improved pedagogy as a consequence : "Le dix-huitième siècle a été une des périodes les plus brillantes dans l'histoire de la pédagogie européenne [...]."⁸ Such passion was influenced by the seminal work of John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). The individual appears as mainly the result of education. As early as the first section of his treatise, Locke asserts: "of all the Men we meet with, Nine Parts of Ten are what they are, Good or Evil, useful or not, by their Education. 'Tis that which makes the great Difference in Mankind."⁹ Since Aristotle's times, the aim of education has not changed: to learn how to govern oneself in order to learn how to govern others. In the long run, it fashions individuals, that is, the future society. One sees the passage from the private individual to the collective, public, and political. Education is therefore also a political issue.

Several reasons can be given to account for the intense quality of the debate on women's education in England. On the one hand, women's education had deteriorated since Elizabeth I's reign (1558-1603). Historians agree that Protestantism led to an increased literacy, in particular among women, as they read and learnt the Bible, but concerning women's instruction, the effects of Protestantism in England are not clearly perceptible according to Paul Denizot.¹⁰ One cannot assert that the closure of convents in 1536 put an end to a valuable instruction for a minority of women. Instruction was still praised in the late XVIth century perhaps because of Elizabeth I's reign, since educated ladies played a civilizing role at court and were not targets for ridicule. But court life vanished in 1688 with the accession of William of Orange to the throne, and again in 1714 with the Hanover dynasty and George I.

On the other hand, the decline of women's education in the modern period is also linked to a change in mentalities especially as concerns the way celibacy and the contemplative life were considered. Protestantism praises matrimony and the family. Women's mission becomes that of procreation and looking after their children's education, their husbands' well-being and the care of the home. With such a distribution of roles, women's intelligence becomes superfluous, if not dangerous, which eventually led to hostility, if not to a mockery of women's learning.

The debate on women's education is also one of the facets of the controversy, "the war between the sexes." It is related to the philosophical, theological and ethical question of the equal or unequal status (in particular intellectual) of man and woman, but it raises the more immediate issue of women's role in society, their potential diversification, given their newly recognized capacities and expertise. In the late XVIIIth century, one began to wonder how essentially different boys' and girls' education should be.

I. THE NEW CONCEPTION OF HUMAN NATURE AND CHILDOOD

The works of the historian Philippe Ariès show that children in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were considered as miniature.¹¹ A change in mentalities took place as part of a more important modification of societal attitudes. In the late XVIIth century, human nature was envisaged in three ways.

Till the late XVIIth century the Calvinist conception prevailed in England: it saw the child as a creature naturally disposed to evil, which corresponded to the Augustinian conception based on the orthodox belief in man's natural depravation since the Fall. Richard Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man* (1659) mirrors such an attitude.¹² Consequently a child was to be strictly disciplined, literally and figuratively (wrapping up along with and physical punishment).

However seventeenth-century religious sources express an increasing rejection of the Calvinist view of man's depravation since the Fall and of predestination. Latitudinarianism, founded on the perfectibility of human nature, which became wide spread. This opinion was articulated by John Earle who emphasizes the prelapsarian state of the child in *Micro-Cosmography* (1628) where he assimilates the child to Adam before the fall.¹³ His natural purity and benevolence can be preserved by an appropriate environment and education.

Lastly, the child's nature could also be seen as a blank, as a "*tabula rasa*" or as malleable clay; the expression of such an idea in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) inscribed Locke in a long tradition that reappeared with the rediscovery of Plutarch (1411) and of Quintilian's *Institution oratoria* (1416). The idea that virtuous actions were the result of training was spread by Locke's writings that brought a theoretical recognition of the new social attitude towards children that was beginning to prevail at that time.

II. THE EMERGENCE OF THE "OPPOSITE SEX"

The change in the conception of human nature was accompanied by an evolution of the definition of the relationship between the sexes. In the XVIIIth siècle there was a shift from a physiological and moral treatment of woman's nature to a socio-cultural treatment of woman's condition with the passage from a one-sex model to a two-sex one. Woman began to be defined no longer as inferior to man but as the "opposite sex."

1. Woman's nature

The question of woman's nature is fundamental influencing all the others: can a woman be man's equal? Is she to be so? The physical (the body), spiritual (the soul) and intellectual (the mind) aspects of woman's specificity are at the core of the debate.

The philosophical argument of the hierarchy of the sexes was developed by Aristotle for whom the male sex was the normal one, and the female, a natural aberration. *De la génération des animaux* reads : "les femelles sont par nature plus faibles et plus froides, et il faut considérer leur nature comme une déféctuosité naturelle."¹⁴ And: "la femme ressemble à un mâle stérile"¹⁵ since woman was believed to be a passive vessel for male semen. As such woman was an unfinished being. Therefore man's superiority was a principle not to be disputed, which Aristotle confirms in his *Politics*, so as to legitimate a woman's subordination in marriage.

Physiological reasons are used to account for woman's deficient nature. In the theory of temperament and the four humours (inherited from Hippocrates and Galen), woman's nature corresponds to a wet and cold temperament and man's to a hot and dry one. That coldness also explains that her genitals – similar to those of man "same sex model" remain within her body.¹⁶ As McKeon puts it: "women are conceived, not as fundamentally different, but as inferior versions of men."¹⁷ Biological and ideological arguments reinforce one another.¹⁸ Such is the common opinion that justifies woman's biological and hence intellectual inferiority given that her brain is different from that of man. Fénelon himself was still prejudiced: "Leur corps, aussi bien que leur esprit, est moins fort et moins robuste que celui des hommes."¹⁹

In the course of the XVIIIth century, the anatomical model changed, turned from isomorphism to dimorphism, to a "two-sex model," as is explained by Laqueur:

Aristotle and Galen were simply mistaken in holding that female organs are a lesser form of the male's and by implication that woman is a lesser man. [...] structures that had been thought common to man and woman – the skeleton and the nervous system – were differentiated so as to correspond to the cultural male and female.²⁰

McKeon sums up this change in the following way: "Women are not an underdeveloped and subordinate version of men; they are biologically and naturally different from them – the 'opposite' sex."²¹

The Church echoes this philosophical tradition and stresses that woman's inferiority first occurred when she was created, giving arguments that are chronological (Eve was created before Adam),

essential (she was created out of one of Adam's ribs, not out of a divine material) and teleological (she was created to be Adam's helpmate, so for man).²²

2. Woman's soul

The question of whether woman had a soul or not was not settled before the Council of Trent (1545-1549). The Church fathers laid stress on woman's moral inferiority: she was the first to have been deceived, to have sinned and pushed man to evil. Eve's punishment was to be submitted to her husband. If women are denied the possibility to develop their own moral autonomy, it is because of the biological frailty of their brains along Aristotelian principles that give man the greatest part of reason as by Halifax, asserted as late as 1688, in *The Lady's New-Year's Gift*. Writing to his daughter, "Your Sex wanteth our reason for your Conduct."²³ Woman's so-called weak intellect makes her moral life dependent on man.

3. Woman's understanding

Having a soul and understanding was denied to woman as a consequence of Aristotle's theory that confounded the order of the body with that of the mind in order to show woman's intellectual weakness. That postulate was invalidated by Descartes's philosophy. In his *Discours de la méthode* (1637), he proves the separation of the body and the soul and, in the sixth of his *Méditations métaphysiques*, he demonstrates the full autonomy of the mind.²⁴ Then the brain is independent from the sexed bod, an idea that is summed up by Poulain de la Barre as "L'Esprit n'a point de Sexe."²⁵ Nevertheless, this philosophical theory, though known and accepted by some, was still quite remote from common opinion.²⁶ Woman's lot in patriarchy was to be under moral and, consequently, legal tutelage.

4. Women's status and functions in patriarchy

Patriarchy, defined by Fletcher as, as "the institutionalised male dominance over women and children in the family and the subordination of women in society in general,"²⁷ rests on two "pillars": "Patriarchy was thus founded upon God's direction and woman's natural physical inferiority."²⁸ Thus the husband's authority is rooted in Aristotle's *Politics* that establishes the necessity of a unique authority in the family as in the city, which is man's because of the strength of his reason. This leads to the analogy between national and domestic governments.

Biblical arguments often go in the same direction as those borrowed from Aristotle.²⁹ The Old Testament supports such a hierarchical principle: woman was created for man, for the propagation of the species in wedlock, and for mutual help after the Fall. In Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (2.3), the spouse's power over the bride is parallel to that of Christ over man. Therefore woman's destiny is to obey her father, her brother, and then her husband.

All educational treatises stress children's duties towards their parents and wives' towards their husbands. In 1740, in *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady*, Wetenhall Wilkes takes up Richard Allestree's arguments in 1659 in *The Whole Duty of Man* and, in 1673, in *The Ladies Calling*. They were also used by William Fleetwood in *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children*

(1705). Richard Allestree stresses that a woman's obedience to her husband and her submission to God are linked in *The Whole Duty of Man*:

They [wives] are to render obedience to their husbands in the Lord [...] In all things that do not cross some command of God's, this precept is of force, and will serve to condemn the peevish stubbornness of many wives, who resist the lawful commands of their husbands, only because they are impatient of this duty of subjection, which God himself requires of them.³⁰

In English law, as is written in William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the English Constitution* (1758), the husband and wife are "one person."³¹ A woman who changes her status when she marries is not longer a *feme sole* (legally *sui iuris*) but a *feme covert*. As a wife has no separate, independent legal existence, she can sign no contract and has no rights over her children.³² So marriage meant the civil erasure of the wife³³ who no longer existed in the eyes of the law.³⁴

For Mary Wollstonecraft, the wife was her husband's property or at least his ward³⁵ both in her essay *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) ("The laws respecting woman, which I mean to discuss in a future part, make an absurd unit of a man and his wife; and then, by the easy transition of only considering him as responsible, she is reduced to a mere cipher")³⁶ and in her novel *The Wrongs of Woman; or, Maria* (1798), as put by its eponymous heroine: "a wife 'has nothing she can call her own'"³⁷ and "[A wife was] as much a man's property as his horse, or his ass."³⁸

Women's so-called natural occupations are reproduction, the care of the children and of the home whereas men's are linked to production, the public sphere and the life of the city. Men's enlightened education included university attendance and travels; women's consisted in Bible reading and rearing children. Women were brought up to become companions, not rivals, to complement men, not to enter into rivalry with them.

III. SOME FACTS ABOUT THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke considers that the difference between boys' and girls' education is a slight one: "I have said *He* here, because the principal Aim of my Discourse is, how a young Gentleman should be brought up from his Infancy, which in all things will not so perfectly suit the Education of *Daughters*; though where the Difference of Sex requires different Treatment, 'twill be no hard Matter to distinguish."³⁹

The variants seem to be details since they are left to parents' common sense. Yet in a former letter addressed to Mrs Clarke in 1685, Locke names them : to protect young girls' skin from the sunshine, to have lukewarm and not cold foot baths according to the seasons, and to teach girls dancing early enough to fight their natural shyness: such differences are physical but not intellectual.⁴⁰ Among other things, he tries to develop women's capacity to bring up their children before the age of ten with proposals such as: "[to] read English perfectly, to understand ordinary Latin and arithmetic, with some general knowledge of chronology and history."⁴¹

He adds: "except "making a little allowance for beauty and some few other considerations of the s[ex], the manner of breeding of boys and girls, especially in the younger years, I imagine, should be the same,"⁴² after writing: "Since, therefore I acknowledge no difference of sex in your mind relating [...] to truth, virtue, and obedience, I think well to have no thing altered in it from what is [writ for the son]."⁴³ He does not refer to the absence of differences on the intellectual level.

1. Literacy

Comparative historical and sociological studies on the degree of literacy in all social strata make it possible to establish the difference between boys' and girls' education. Learning how to read and how to write were distinguished at the time.⁴⁴ To know how to read was necessary to be able to read and teach the Bible; in the lower strata to know how to write was deemed superfluous even by the supporters of charity scholls, such as Isaac Watts in 1728 in his *Essay towards the Encouragement of Charity Schools*.⁴⁵ If the number of witnesses capable of writing their names in trials in East Anglia and London between 1580 and 1640 is taken into account, we find one woman for eight men between 1580 and 1640, and one woman for two or three men in the late XVIIIth century. In 1754, the marriage registers of 274 parishes scattered throughout the whole of England show that about 60% of men and 35% of women were able to sign their names. In 1800, the figures were 60% for men and 45% for women.⁴⁶

Complementary observations about England and Wales in a treatise by Jonathan Swift, *Of the Education of Ladies* (1765), make a satire of women's ignorance in the upper and upper middle strata: "considering the modern way of training up both sexes in ignorance, idleness, and vice [...]"⁴⁷ He discards many men in order to give the number of educated men in the aristocracy and the gentry, concluding: " out of only fifteen thousand families of lords and estated gentlemen [...] I suppose one in thirty to be tolerably educated [...] upon cooler thoughts [...] I shall reduce them to one thousand; which, at least, will be a number sufficient to fill both Houses of Parliament."⁴⁸ The equivalent figure for women is fifty. Using a different, more scientific method, Neuburg gives quite similar figures.⁴⁹

2. Criticisms

In *A Letter to a Young Lady, on Her Marriage* (1723) Swift stresses: "It is a little hard that not one Gentleman's Daughter in a Thousand, should be brought to read, or understand her own Natural Tongue, or be Judge of the easiest Books that are written in it [...]." ⁵⁰ However, numerous girls knew how to read and write but they were taught hardly more with the exception of accomplishments such as drawing, singing, dancing, and sometimes a little French and Italian. The aim of their education was to prepare them to find a husband, that is what Mary Wollstonecraft was to call "the great art of pleasing" ⁵¹ in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). If they had brothers who had a tutor, they could manage to pick up some scraps of knowledge. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu secretly learnt Latin.

Women's spelling was described as very deficient. In *A Letter to a Young Lady, on Her Marriage*, Swift accuses the flaws of education: "they are not so much as taught to spell in their Childhood, nor can even attain to it in their whole Lives." ⁵² The same criticism is expressed in 1740 by *The Champion*, a periodical founded by Henry Fielding. ⁵³ Such a foible does not lead to shame; it can even be fashionable as is attested in *The Ladies' Library* (1714) by Richard Steele: "Their Deficiencies in Spelling are become so fashionable that to spell well is, among the fair Sex, reckon'd a Sort of Pedantry [...]." ⁵⁴

Steele points to the fact their handwriting is clumsy: "that care [Writing a good Hand] goes no farther than the making their Letters; the connecting them, and an orderly placing their Words in streight Lines is what they are for the most Part utterly Strangers to [...]." ⁵⁵ This criticism is later to be found in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* when the traveller mentions the writing of the Lilliputians. ⁵⁶ In 1740 Wetenhall Wilkes believes it necessary to emphasize that calligraphy is important in girls' education: "To write a fine hand, is a great ornament to a young lady, and is either envied, or praised, by every one. This is therefore a necessary improvement." ⁵⁷ The near absence of a basic education has negative consequences on the capacity to think, to argue, so on the development of one's personality.

3. Three ways of educating girls from the upper strata

Swift enumerates the three ways of educating girls from the upper strata in *Of the Education of Ladies*: "the care of their education is either left entirely to their mothers, or they are sent to boarding-schools, or put into the hands of English or French governesses [...]." ⁵⁸

a) education at home

In the upper strata, daughters under the age of seven were educated by their mothers whether they were later to attend a boarding school or not. In the middle ranks, mothers taught their daughters the rudiments of childcare and housework. In life as in fiction, girls were often motherless ⁵⁹ because of the high deathrate at childbirth (one woman out of ten). ⁶⁰ Children were then often trusted to a relative, often an aunt experienced in the manners of the world.

Young ladies were educated by different masters, the main one being the dancing master who gave them lessons in deportment as the one caricatured by Fielding in "Voyages of Mr. Job Vinegar"; the editor does not forget that the aim of a girl's education is husband hunting, as marriage was often a

question of economic survival,⁶¹ as well as in another of his periodicals, *The Covent-Garden Journal* n°56 (1752): seven masters were necessary to educate a "Town-Lady."⁶² In the countryside, squires' daughters were poorly educated according to the same periodical: "I apprehend, that except in the Article of the Dancing-Master, and perhaps in that of being barely able to read and write, there is very little Difference between the Education of many a Squire's Daughter, and that of his Dairy-Maid, who is most likely her principal Companion [...]."⁶³

b) boarding-schools

The origin of British boarding-schools is to be found in a suggestion by Thomas Becon in *Catechism* (1564); he wanted to open schools for girls, comparable to but not identical to *grammar schools* for boys: "it is expedient that by public authority schools for women-children be erected and set up in every Christian commonweal [...]."⁶⁴ So as to defend the idea of the necessity of educating girls, he resorts to the same arguments as Juan Luis Vivès (*De institutione fœminae christianae* [1524]), Thomas More and Erasmus (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* [1526]): society and families would draw advantages from a Christian education given to girls as well as boys.

After the Anglican schism, the dissolution of convents, which until 1536 had several functions, also played an important part in the creation of boarding-schools. Indeed, convents were institutions with multiple functions:⁶⁵ at first refuges for girls refusing an arranged marriage or for noble widows, they became gradually refuges for women from the gentry and from commercial backgrounds. Convents also welcomed women unable to lead a normal life (handicapped ones) or unable to get married, as John Aubrey writes in 1665: "This was a fine way of breeding up young women, who are led more by example than precept; and a good retirement for widows and grave single women, to a civil, virtuous, and holy life."⁶⁶ A new institution was necessary since English Catholics sent their daughters to convents on the continent, in France in particular (St Omer, Douai).⁶⁷

In the mid-XVIIIth century, because of the rise of the middle strata and resulting competition on the marriage market, this new category of schools developed. Many tradesmen and upstarts sent their daughters between twelve and fourteen years of age to boarding-schools for training in good manners and, perhaps, in the hopes of entering the fashionable society, as is stressed by the Edgeworth.⁶⁸

Such schools were opened in London and in its suburbs as well as in Manchester, Oxford, Exeter and Leicester⁶⁹; John Evelyn mentions them in his *Diary* in 1649 and Samuel Pepys in his in 1667.⁷⁰ These schools could be distinguished by signs such as "A Boarding School for Young Ladies" or "Young Ladies Boarded and Educated."⁷¹ Periodicals such as *The Spectator* published advertisements.⁷² Boarding-schools were often run by ruined women of the gentry, by former governesses, sometimes even by former servants as one can read in Clara Reeve's *Plans of Education*: "Adventurers of all kinds have found resources in this profession: needy foreigners, without friends or characters; broken traders; ladies of doubtful virtue; ladies' waiting maids; nay, even low and menial servants, have succeeded in raising a boarding school."⁷³ The dancing master could be a circulating actor and the French master a former soldier. Young girls were taught reading, writing, the accomplishments, a smattering of French...

There was considerable criticism at the beginning of the XVIIIth when Mandeville condemned the absence of intellectual nurture in *The Virgin Unmask'd* (1709),– "there they may be taught to Sing and Dance, to Work and Dress, and, if you will, receive Good Instructions for a Genteel Carriage, and how to be Mannerly; but these Things chiefly concern the Body, the Mind remains uninstructed"⁷⁴ – as well as at the end when Clara Reeve vituperated: "even among those of the better kinds, the attention is chiefly paid to external accomplishments, while the moral duties, and the social virtues are neglected, or slightly attended to."⁷⁵ Idleness, the inadequacy of the girls' future social occupations, are blamed in *The Annual Register* (1759): "it would be of much more consequence they should be well instructed how to wash the floor than how to dance upon it [...] The needlework taught at these schools is of a kind much more likely to strengthen the natural propensity in all young minds to show and dress, than to answer any housewifely purpose."⁷⁶

Boarding-schools are even sometimes accused of subverting the social order when girls contemn their parents and refuse to help them as is denounced in *The Annual Register* (1759):

How disappointed will the honest shop-keeper be, if, at any age when he thinks proper to take his daughter from school, he should expect any assistance from her! Can he suppose a young lady will weigh his soap for him? [...] Though ignorant of everything else, she will be so perfect in the lessons of pride and vanity, that she will despise him and his nasty shop, and quit both, to go off with the first man who promises her a silk gown and a blonde cap.⁷⁷

Young girls no longer willing to marry within their social stratum and, if they accept to do so, they definitely refuse to help their husbands in their jobs. Besides, in those schools, they become frivolous, which can lead their families to ruin.

In her *Plans of Education* (1792), Clara Reeve regrets that boarding-schools have become schools of immorality where girls become coquettes and self-important: "How often do we see the young girls come from those schools, full of pride, vanity, and self-consequence! – ignorant of the duties and virtues of a domestic life, insolent to their inferiors, proud and saucy to their equals, impertinent to their parents [...]"⁷⁸ Four years later, Hannah More tells the story of farmer Bragwell and his daughters; the boarding-school has not made them more intelligent but made them idle and full of vanity: "They came home at the usual age of leaving school, with a large portion of vanity grafted on their native ignorance [...] They spent the morning in bed, the noon in dressing, the evening at the spinnet, and the night in reading novels."⁷⁹ Girls read bad literature and spend their parents' money to buy trinkets. Such an image is very remote from the model boarding-school that is described in *The Governess; or, The Little Female Academy* (1748) by Sarah Fielding, a novel influenced by Fénelon and Locke, where nine girls are educated by Mrs Teachum.⁸⁰

4. Women's education in the lower and poor ranks

In the XVIIIth century, interest was shown in the education of the poor, among whom women who had to be made capable of earning their living so as not to fall into prostitution; the aim was to maintain social order, not to preserve individuals' well-being.

a) charity schools for boys and girls

At the end of the Stuarts' reign, numerous schools were opened for poor children in towns as well as in the countryside. After the moral laxity of Charles II's reign, *Societies for the Reformation of Morals* were founded in 1691, thanks to clergymen; they aimed to fight impiety and debauchery. The *Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK)* was created in 1699 in the same perspective, in order to coordinate existing efforts to organize some kind of education for the poor. Village schools already existed. Charity schools aimed to enable members of the lower strata to read the Bible, earn an honest living, and be useful to society, The moral reform of the nation by religiously educating young people was also a target. They should be grateful towards their betters and be aware of being indebted to them. Manual training prevailed in these schools. In London as in the countryside there were far more boys than girls.

b) the opposition to those schools

There were different categories of objections. Some saw these schools as Tory instruments of propaganda. In his *Essay on Charity and Charity Schools*, added to the third edition of *The Fable of the Bees*, Mandeville saw the will to reinforce the supremacy of the Established Church over dissenters. Others considered them as a potential threat to the established order since education and social promotion were thought to be closely connected. Positive arguments were the same as those defended by the *SPCK*. Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810) was the alter ego of Robert Raikes in Gloucester, in 1781, who tried to revive the *Church Sunday Schools*, originally modelled on *charity schools* and financed by public funds. She made it possible to open *Sunday schools* in 1786 in Brentford, attended by more than three hundred children in 1788.

IV. EDUCATIONAL TREATISES AND SOME PROPOSALS

1. Locke and his successors

Locke's treatise based on letters, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) was the pioneering work about education. It originally addressed noble men and boys from the gentry, although its universal character made it adaptable to other children – which is noted by Pierre Coste in his Preface to his French translation⁸¹ – and therefore to the education of girls.

After Locke, other thinkers took up the question. Among others, John Essex wrote *The Young Ladies' Conduct; or, Rules for Education* in 1722. Numerous essays were devoted to the issue in periodicals (*The Tatler*, *The Spectator* and *The Guardian*).⁸² John Gregory published *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1762) and Hester Chapone dedicated *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind Addressed to a Young Lady* (1773) to Elizabeth Montagu.

2. Some proposals

Bathsua Reginald Pell Makin (1641-1673) was the governor of Princess Elizabeth (Charles I's daughter) between 1642 and 1650, who taught her Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French and Italian. In 1673 she used a masculine *persona* to publish anonymously *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts, & Tongues*, a treatise including a project for a school that she was to open near London, at Tottenham High Cross. In the Dedicatory letter to Lady Mary, the Duke of York's daughter, in which she wants to prove the benefits of a girls' education: "I verily think, Women were formerly Educated in the knowledge of Arts and Tongues, and by their Education, many did rise to a great height in Learning" and she refers to the past to better demonstrate the validity of her thesis: "Were Women thus Educated now, I am confident the advantage would be very great: The Women would have the Honour and Pleasure, their Relations Profit, and the whole Nation Advantage [...] I do not (as some have wittily done) plead for female Preeminence. To ask too much is the way to be denied all."⁸³ Girls must be educated in order to better the world. She denounces the fear of educated women. She stresses, more by conviction than by rhetorical strategy, that her claim lies in the framework of the patriarchal society⁸⁴; she asks for private instruction but does not claim public office for women.

Mary Astell (1666-1731), a Tory and an Anglican, learnt Latin, philosophy, mathematics and logic. Between eight and thirteen, she began studying the philosophy of the Cambridge Platonists and was influenced by Descartes's ideas through her uncle. She is one of those who think that ignorance leads to folly, weakness and vice: "The Cause therefore of the defects we labour under, is, if not wholly, yet at least in the first place, the mistakes of our Education; which like an Error in the first Concoction, spreads its ill Influence through all our Lives."⁸⁵ She adds: "if our Nature is spoil'd, instead of being improv'd at first; if from our Infancy we are nurs'd up in Ignorance and Vanity; are taught to be Proud and Petulent, Delicate and Fantastick, Humorous and Inconstant, 'tis not strange that the ill effects of this Conduct appear in all the future Actions of our Lives."⁸⁶

"Mary Astell's belief [...] in reason and in an unsexed understanding, her belief in the autonomy of one's mind make of her a 'prophetess of the Enlightenment.'⁸⁷ As she was aware that she could not

change the material conditions of women's lives, she wanted to encourage women's intellectual, moral and spiritual emancipation. Erudition is less important than the reasoning capacity to learn how to think correctly. Her aim was to liberate her women readers from false values, to lead them to become aware of their capacities: 'Let us [...] not entertain such a degrading thought of our own *worth* [...] We value *them* [men] too much, and our *selves* too little [...] and do not think our selves capable of Nobler Things than the pitiful Conquest of some worthless heart.'^{88 89}

The first part of *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest. By a Lover of Her Sex* (1694) is rather traditional (even if it is more detailed than previous projects). Mary Astell suggests the establishment of a "religious retreat"⁹⁰ for women from the middle and upper strata, where they would stay for a temporary stay or for their whole lives;⁹¹ they could acquire some knowledge in order to become governesses or, at least, good examples for other women. A woman's true value lies in her intelligence: "This [mind] is the richest Ornament, and renders a Woman glorious in the lowest Fortune: So shining is real worth, that like a Diamond it loses not its lustre, tho' cast on a Dunghill."⁹² Her female readers could not but be sensitive to the metaphor of jewels, then to the comparison with a diamond. Her *Proposal* ends, three years later, with a philosophical defence of the intellectual equality of men and women. As her proposal was judged to be redolent of Catholicism, it did not materialize though the necessary funds had been raised.⁹³

Her project became a reference for *A Protestant Monastery* (1698) by George Wheeler, in Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759), in *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-54) by Samuel Richardson and in *A Description of Millenium Hall* (1762) by Sarah Scott, a utopian novel where several women founded a female community. Defoe praises Mary Astell's ideas in his *Essay upon Projects* (1697)⁹⁴ where he proposes an "Academy for Women":

What Care do we take to Breed up a good Horse, and to Break him well! [...] and why not a Woman? [...] the great distinguishing difference which is seen in the world between Men and Women, is in their Education [...] Not that I am for exalting the Female Government in the least: But, in short, *I wou'd have Men take Women for Companions, and Educate them to be fit for it.*⁹⁵

The most famous name concerning women's education is that of **Mary Wollstonecraft** (1759-1797). Mary, her sisters and a female friend opened a school in 1783 at Islington then in 1784 at Newington Green (in the suburbs of London). In 1787, she published *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: With Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life*, a rather short book consisting of short juxtaposed sections such as "Moral Discipline;" "Artificial Manners," "Boarding Schools," "The Observance of Sunday" or "On the Treatment of Servants"... which were very much influenced by Locke (for instance as concerns the early acquisition of good habits, the plainness of clothes). Even if she was dissatisfied with women's status, she still considered that their roles as wives and mothers were fundamental; that they must learn self-restraint and submission.

She wrote two books for children. *Original Stories from Real Life; with Conversations, Calculated to Regulate the Affections, and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness* (1788) tells the story of two girls, aged twelve and fourteen. Left to the care of servants until their mother's death, they were

trusted to Mrs Mason, "a woman of tenderness and discernment, a near relation."⁹⁶ Thanks to exemplary situations, she teaches girls how to avoid anger, love benevolence, patience and truth.

The Female Reader; Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse; Selected from the Best Writers and Disposed under Proper Heads; For the Improvement of young Women (1789) is an anthology belonging to the tradition of educational writings combining theory and practice: the child must be brought up as an autonomous rational individual. The excerpts are mainly drawn from the Bible and Shakespeare's plays but also from eighteenth-century writers (Voltaire, Hume, Steele, Charlotte Smith, Sarah Trimmer, Herster Mulso Chapone and Madame de Genlis).

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects (1792) addresses middle-class women and links her concern for women's education with more general political ideas. Apart from Rousseau, she criticizes the educational treatises of John Gregory (*A Father's Legacy to His Daughters, etc.: A Book for Young Women* [1762]) and of James Fordyce (*The Character and Conduct of the Female Sex, and the Advantage to Be Derived by Young Men from the Society of Virtuous Women* [1776]). Conversely, she approves of that written by Hester Chapone (*Letters on the Improvement of the Mind Addressed to a Young Lady* [1773]). Just as Mary Astell, whose works she does not seem to have read,⁹⁷ her aim is to teach women to think by themselves: "That women at present are by ignorance rendered foolish or vicious, is, I think, not to be disputed; and, that the most salutary effects tending to improve mankind might be expected from a REVOLUTION in female manners, appears, at least, with a face of probability, to rise out of the observation."⁹⁸ Her treatise includes specific proposals: coeducational schools (education at school rather than at home) for some subjects, teachings in connection with girls' future roles in society aiming to enable them to earn their living and their children's in case of widowhood.

Hannah More, the famous blue-stocking, expresses her ideas in *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), written in reaction to Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* so as to awaken people's religious feelings. Likewise Priscilla Bell Wakefield wants to maintain social discrimination in the education of children; in *Reflections on the Present Education of the Female Sex* (1798), she suggests that girls' schools should be divided into four categories, each corresponding to a social rank. Neither Hannah More nor Priscilla Wakefield judge necessary or appropriate that girls should have a sound culture.

In the 1790s, the issue also inspired the radical historian Catherine Macaulay Graham who wrote *Letters on Education, with Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects* (1790), admired by Mary Wollstonecraft, as well as by the other radicals such as Mary Hays and Anne Frances Randall [probably Mary Robinson] and the moderate novelist Clara Reeve in *Plans of Education* (1792). *Practical Education* (1798), written by Maria Edgeworth and her father Richard Lovell Edgeworth, owes much to Rousseau. Both women are anxious to improve the moral level of society. However none of these educated women had any real influence on the history of women's education.

The opposite opinion is also to be found: in 1793 Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins wrote: "Our Maker never designed us for anything but what he created us, a *subordinate* class of beings; a sort of noun

adjective of the human species, tending greatly to the perfection of that to which it is joined, but incapable of sole-subsistence."⁹⁹

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) admired the *Proposal* of Mary Astell, who prefaced her *Embassy Letters* (1724/25). Though they were separated by age, social rank, faith, and political loyalty, both women denounced the "unjust custom", perpetuated by male prejudices. One of Montagu's letters in 1753 to her daughter, the countess of Bute, reads: "the unjust custom prevails of debarring our Sex from the advantages of Learning, the Men fancying the improvement of our understandings would only furnish us with more art to deceive them, which is directly contrary to the Truth."¹⁰⁰ In another letter, she encourages her daughter to favour her own daughters' taste for reading but she adds the following warning: "but teach them not to expect or desire any Applause from it. Let their Brothers shine, and let them content themselves with making their Lives easier by it [...]"¹⁰¹ She is guided here not by her conviction of women's incapacity but by a prudence characteristic of the period.

¹ François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, *De l'éducation des filles*, 1687, *Œuvres*, ed. Jacques Le Brun, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, "Bibliothèque de La Pléiade," 1983) 1: 91.

² *Instructions for the Education of a Daughter, by the Author of Telemachus. To Which Is Added, A Small Tract of Instructions for the Conduct of Young Ladies of the Highest Rank. With Suitable Devotions Annexed. Done into English and Revised by Dr. George Hickes*, 1699 [London, 1707] A4-A5.

³ Fénelon 92.

⁴ Fénelon 93.

⁵ Fénelon 93.

⁶ Richard Steele, *The Guardian* n°155 (8 September 1713), ed. John Calhoun Stephens (Lexington : U of Kentucky P, 1982) 506.

⁷ See John W. Adamson, *Pioneers of Modern Education 1600-1700, Contributions to the History of Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1905) 237-57 and William Boyd, *The History of Western Education* (London: Black, 1972) 1-17.

⁸ Jacques Pons, *L'Éducation en Angleterre entre 1750 et 1800* (Paris: Leroux, 1919) 3.

⁹ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 1693, ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (1989; Oxford: Clarendon, 2003) 1.83.

¹⁰ Paul Denizot, "Du catholicisme au protestantisme: Grandeur et décadence de l'instruction féminine?," *L'Éducation des femmes en Europe et en Amérique du Nord, de la Renaissance à 1848: Réalités et représentations*, ed. Guyonne Leduc (Paris: L'Harmattan, "Des idées et des femmes", 1997) 88: "les effets bénéfique du protestantisme en matière d'alphabétisation n'ont, semble-t-il, guère profité aux femmes pour qui la lecture de la Bible et la prière, vivement recommandées par les traités d'éducation ou d'édification, n'ont constitué qu'une incitation supplémentaire à l'obéissance, à la docilité, à la soumission et à la vertu, voire à la résignation [...]."

¹¹ Voir Philippe Ariès, "Chapitre II. La Découverte de l'enfance," *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (1960; Paris: Seuil, 1973) 23-41 [*Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (1962)] and J. H. Plumb, "The New World of Children in Eighteenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 67 (1975): 64-95.

¹² Richard Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man, Laid Down in a Plain and Familiar Way for the Use of All, but Especially the Meanest Reader [...] with Private Devotions for Several Occasions* (London, 1659) 20: "The new born babe is full of the stains and pollutions of sin which it inherits from our first parents through our loins."

¹³ See John Earle, *Micro-Cosmography; or, A Piece of the World Discovered, in Essays and Characters Address'd to Men of Honour, Men of Pleasure, and Men of Sense. With a Seasonable Admonition to the Young Ladies of Great Britain*, 1628 (London, 1897) 1-2: "[A child is] the best copy of Adam before he tasted of Eve or the apple [...] His soul is yet a white paper unscrawled with observations of the world [...] He is purely happy, because he knows no evil [...]."

¹⁴ Aristotle, *De la génération des animaux*, ed. and trans. Pierre Louis (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1961) 4.6.775a.

³³ Aristotle 1.20.728a.

¹⁶ See Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990) 4: "For thousands of years it had been a commonplace that women had the same genitals as men except that 'theirs are inside the body and not outside it.' In the second century A.D. Galen "developed the more powerful and resilient model of the structural, though not spatial, identity of the male and female reproductive organs, demonstrated at length that women were essentially men in whom a lack of vital heat – of perfection – had resulted in the retention, inside, of structures that in the male are visible without."

¹⁷ Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (2005; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins P, 2007) 526.

¹⁸ Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 19-20.

¹⁹ Fénelon 1: 92.

²⁰ Laqueur 149-50.

- ²¹ McKeon 272.
- ²² See Paul's Epistle to Corinthians: "L'homme n'a pas été créé pour la femme, mais la femme pour l'homme" (2.9).
- ²³ George Savile, 1st Marquis of Halifax, *The Lady's New-Year's Gift; or, Advice to a Daughter*, 1688, *The Complete Works of George Savile, First Marquis of Halifax*, ed. Walter Raleigh (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912) "Husband," 8.
- ²⁴ René Descartes, *Le Discours de la méthode*, 1637, ed. François Misrachi (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1951) 62 (4th Part), 243-66 (6th Meditation).
- ²⁵ François Poulain de la Barre, *De l'égalité des deux sexes*, 1673, ed. Marie-Frédérique Pellegrin (Paris: Vrin, 2010) 99.
- ²⁶ See Roland Marx, "De l'éducation des femmes aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles," *La Femme en Angleterre et dans les colonies américaines aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, ed. Michèle Plaisant (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Publications de l'U de Lille III, 1976) 22.
- ²⁷ Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995) XV.
- ²⁸ Fletcher XVII. See too Lawrence Stone, "Chapter 5: The Reinforcement of Patriarchy," *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld, 1977) 150-218 and Robert Filmer: *Patriarcha; or, The Natural Power of Kings* (written in 1640 and published in 1680).
- ²⁹ See Gen. 3.16: "Ton élan sera vers ton mari et lui te dominera" whereas before the Fall power was granted to man and woman (Gen. 1.26).
- ³⁰ Richard Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man*, 1659 (London: Beecroft, 1771) 303.
- ³¹ See Susan Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990) 1-5, 178-95.
- ³² McKeon 135-36.
- ³³ "the status of the married woman as a *feme covert* who is legally dead" (McKeon 208) and "the *feme covert* was a legal nonentity" (McKeon 202).
- ³⁴ Mary Lyndon Shanley, "Marriage Contract and Social Contract in Seventeenth-Century English Political Thought," *The Western Political Quarterly* 32 (1979): 91 (n. 51).
- ³⁵ Marilyn Butler, ed., "General Introduction," *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Janet Todd and Butler, 7 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1989) 1: 25.
- ³⁶ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792, *Political Writings*, ed. Todd (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) 9.226; see too 2.90.
- ³⁷ Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman, or, Maria. A Fragment in Two Volumes*, 1798, *Mary and The Wrongs of Woman*, ed. Gary Kelly (1976; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980) 2.11.158.
- ³⁸ Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman* 2.11.158.
- ³⁹ Locke 6.86.
- ⁴⁰ See Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke and Edward Clarke*, ed. Benjamin Rand (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1927) 103.
- ⁴¹ Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* 354-55.
- ⁴² Locke, *Correspondence* 121.
- ⁴³ Locke, *Correspondence* 102-03.
- ⁴⁴ See Victor E. Neuburg, *Popular Education in 18th-Century England* (London: Austin, 1971) 93.
- ⁴⁵ Isaac Watts, *An Essay Towards the Encouragement of Charity Schools*, 1728, *The Works of Isaac Watts*, ed. George Burder, 6 vols. (London, 1810) 2: 729 ("I will by no means contend for writing as a matter of equal necessity or advantage with that of reading [...] I would not therefore by any means have it made a necessary part of a Charity-School, that the children should be taught to write").
- ⁴⁶ For 1580-1700, see David Cressy, "Literacy in Pre-Industrial England," *Societas* 4.3 (1974): 233-35; for 1754-1910, see Roger Schofield, "Illiteracy in Pre-Industrial England," *Umea University Educational Reports* 2 (1973): 17-18. See too Stone, "The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640," *Past and Present* 28 (1964): 41-80 and "Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900," *Past and Present* 42 (1969): 69-139.
- ⁴⁷ Swift, *Of the Education of Ladies*, 1765, *A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue, Polite Conversation, Etc.*, *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis, 14 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964) 4: 227.
- ⁴⁸ Swift, *Of the Education of Ladies* 4: 228.
- ⁴⁹ See Neuburg 93.
- ⁵⁰ Swift, *A Letter to a Young Lady, on Her Marriage* 9: 91.
- ⁵¹ Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 2.94.
- ⁵² Swift, *A Letter to a Young Lady, on Her Marriage* 9: 92.
- ⁵³ Henry Fielding, *The Voyages of Mr. Job Vinegar, from The Champion*, 1740, ed. Samuel J. Sackett, Augustan Reprint Society, n°67 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library and the U of California, 1958) n°127, 30-31. Job Vinegar relates his journey to the country of the Inconstants, a mirror of England, in "Voyages of Mr. Job Vinegar":
The Women write letters from one another, which they call SCROLLS, or, according to others, SCROLS, SCROLES, SCRAWLS, SCRAWLS, SKRAWLS, SKRARLS, SCRALES, SQRALS, SKRALS (for they are all the same Word differently spelt) these are very easily understood by the Natives, tho' it is something difficult for a Foreigner, tolerably versed in their Language, to make any Sense of them.
- ⁵⁴ Richard Steele, *The Ladies' Library. Written by a Lady Published by Mr. Steele*, 3 vols. (London, 1714) 1: 17.
- ⁵⁵ Steele, *The Ladies' Library* 1: 17.
- ⁵⁶ Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 1726, *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*, éd. Herbert Davis, 14 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1959) 11: 1.6.57 ("their [the Lilliputians'] Manner of Writing is very peculiar; being neither from the Left to the Right, like the Europeans; nor from the Right to the Left, like the Arabians; nor from up to down, like the Chinese; nor from down to up, like the Cascagians; but aslant from one Corner of the Paper to the other, like Ladies in England").
- ⁵⁷ Wetenhall Wilkes, *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady*, 1740 (London, 1766) 209.
- ⁵⁸ Swift, *Of the Education of Ladies* 4: 228.
- ⁵⁹ See Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage* 78-79, 81.

⁶⁰ See Mary Ann Schofield, "Did the Mothers Really Die? Three Centuries of Maternal Mortality in 'The World We Have Lost,'" *The World We Have Gained*, ed. Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M. Smith and Keith Wrightson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) 231-60.

⁶¹ Fielding, *The Champion* n°127 (31): "a DNCNG MSTR, who teaches her to hold up her Head, turn out her Toes, to make her Honours, carry herself with a graceful deppartment, to boree, to coupee, to sinkee, to bend easily backwards, to spring gently forwards, and use a thousand other antick Motions, with which these People imagine their Daughters shew themselves to the best Advantage, in the Eyes of their male Beholders".

⁶² Fielding, *The Covent Garden Journal* n°56, *The Covent-Garden Journal* [1752] and *A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, 1752, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar, vol. 7 of *The Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding*, 14 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) 305.

⁶³ Fielding, *The Covent Garden Journal* n°56, 305.

⁶⁴ Thomas Becon, "Of the Office and Duty of Old and Ancient Women," *The Catechism*, 1564, ed. John Ayre, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1844) 1: 377.

⁶⁵ Eileen E. Power, *Medieval Women*, ed. Michael M. Postan (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975) 25.

⁶⁶ John Aubrey, *Miscellanies upon Various Subjects by John Aubrey. To Which Is Added, Hydriotaphia*, by Sir Thomas Browne, 1696 (London, 1890) 219.

⁶⁷ On boarding schools, see Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School: A Study of Women's Education through Twelve Centuries* (London: Oxford UP, 1929) 194-226 and Josephine Kamm, "Seventeenth-Century Boarding-Schools and Projects," *Hope Deferred: Girls' Education in English History* (London: Methuen, 1965) 68-81.

⁶⁸ Maria Edgeworth, and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 1798, 3 vols. in 1 (Poole: Woodstock Books, 1996) 522-23.

⁶⁹ See Kamm 74.

⁷⁰ See John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. Esmond S. de Beer, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955) 2: 555 (17 May 1649) and Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (London: Bell and Sons, 1974) 8: 174 (21 April 1667).

⁷¹ See Clara Reeve, *Plans of Education with Remarks on the Systems of Other Writers in a Series of Letters between Mrs. Darnford and Her Friends*, 1792, rptd *Feminist Controversy in England 1788-1810*, ed. Gina Luria (New York: Garland, 1974) 111, 135, 182 and Rosamond Bayne-Powell, *The English Child in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Murray, 1939) 271-81.

⁷² See *The Spectator* n°28 (2 April 1711) 1: 115-18; see too n°314 (29 February 1712) 3: 140 et n°332 (21 March 1712) 3: 226.

⁷³ Reeve 135.

⁷⁴ Bernard de Mandeville, *The Virgin Unmask'd*, 1709, ed. Stephen H. Good (New York: Delmar, Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprint, 1975) 48.

⁷⁵ Reeve 127.

⁷⁶ *The Annual Register* (1759): 425.

⁷⁷ *The Annual Register* (1759): 425.

⁷⁸ Reeve 136.

⁷⁹ Hannah More, *The Two Wealthy Farmers; or, The History of Mr. Bragwell. In Seven Parts, Cheap Repository Tracts*, 1796 (London, 1835) 5-6.

⁸⁰ See Linda Bree, "Conquering Giants: *The Governess; or, The Little Female Academy*," *Sarah Fielding* (New York: Twayne, 1996) 58-72.

⁸¹ Pierre Coste, trans., *Pensées sur l'éducation* (Paris, 1695).

⁸² See *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) n°230 (28 September 1710) 3: 190-96, n°234 (7 October 1710) 3: 207-12; *The Spectator*, ed. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) n°168 (12 September 1711) 2: 160-64, n°337 (27 March 1712), n°445 (31 July 1712) 4: 62-65; *The Guardian* n°24 (8 April 1713) 110-13 et n°111 (18 July 1713) 380-83.

⁸³ Bathsua Reginald Pell Makin, *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts, & Tongues, with an Answer to the Objections against This Way of Education*, 1673, ed. Paula L. Barbour, Augustan Reprint Society, n°202 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library and the U of California, 1980) 3, 3-4.

⁸⁴ On these two women, see Michèle Lardy, *L'Éducation des filles de la noblesse et de la gentry en Angleterre au XVII^e siècle* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1994) 35-36.

⁸⁵ Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Great Interest. By a Lover of Her Sex*, 1694, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies. Parts I and II*, 1694, 1697, ed. Patricia Springborg (London: Pickering, 1997) 10.

⁸⁶ Astell 11.

⁸⁷ Joan K. Kinnaird, "Mary Astell and the Conservative Contribution to English Feminism," *Journal of British Studies* 19 (1979): 64 ("[a] prophetess of the Enlightenment"). See too Ruth Perry, "Radical Doubt and the Liberation of Women," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18.4 (1985): 472-91 and Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986) 70.

⁸⁸ Astell 8.

⁸⁹ Leduc, "Femmes et images de lumière(s): Émancipation intellectuelle et sens de la vie chez Mary Astell," *Vie, formes et lumière(s). Hommage à Paul Denizot*, ed. Leduc (Villeneuve d'Ascq: PUS, 1999) 22.

⁹⁰ *Proposition* 1.18: "a Religious Retirement" and "a Retreat from the World."

⁹¹ Astell 21.

⁹² Astell 1.46

⁹³ Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell* 134.

⁹⁴ Daniel Defoe, "An Academy of Women," *An Essay upon Projects*, 1697 (Menston: Scolar P, 1969) 285: "Ingenious Lady".

⁹⁵ Defoe 296, 302, 302-03. See Leduc, " Mary Astell et Daniel Defoe, auteurs de projets féministes pour l'éducation ? ", *L'Éducation des femmes en Europe et en Amérique du Nord*, éd. Leduc, 144-59.

⁹⁶ Wollstonecraft, *Original Stories from Real Life; with Conversations, Calculated to Regulate the Affections, and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness*, 1788, *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft* 4: 361.

⁹⁷ Voir Leduc, "Mary Astell (1666-1731) as a Critic of Power Relations in Domestic and Political Patriarchy," *Gender/Genre*, ed. Kornelia Slavova et Isabelle Boof-Verresse (Sofia: St Kliment Ohridski, 2010) 288-98.

⁹⁸ Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 13.281, §2.

⁹⁹ Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind, Its Powers and Pursuits*, 2 vols. (London, 1793) 2: 197.

¹⁰⁰ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu 1708-1762*, ed. Robert Halsband, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965-1967) (6 March 1753) 3: 26.

¹⁰¹ Montagu (January 1750) 2: 450.