

4  
The College of Wooster ILL



6807

ILLiad TN:

**Borrower:** SWW

**Lending String:** \*WOO,EAU,EUQ,VMW,GH0

**Patron:** Koster, Jo

**Journal Title:** New literary history.

**Volume:** 37 **Issue:** 3

**Month/Year:** 20060601 **Pages:** 631-642

**Article Author:**

**Article Title:** Lerer, "Thy Life to Mend, This Book Attend"; Reading and Healing in the Arc of Children's Literature'

**Imprint:** [Baltimore, etc. Johns Hopkins Universit

**ILL Number:** 43063631



**Call #:** HC4 .W66

**Location:** WOO Periodicals

**ARIEL**

**Charge**

**Maxcost:** \$25.00IFM

**Shipping Address:**

Winthrop University

ILL

Dacus Library

824 Oakland Ave

Rock Hill, SC 29733

**Fax:** 803-323-3285

**Ariel:**

## “Thy Life to Mend, This Book Attend”: Reading and Healing in the Arc of Children’s Literature

Seth Lerer

WHEN HE WAS SMALL, my son would go to bed early. He would curl up, his head under the covers, and my wife and I would read to him. We began, as most parents today would begin, with the board-books and simple stories: *Goodnight Moon*, *Pat the Bunny*, and the illustrated stories about the dog, Carl, whose words we would provide. As he grew older, we would move to books of greater narrative complexity: *Make Way for Ducklings*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *James and the Giant Peach*. We passed through the phases of a young boy’s fascinations: stories about trucks and cranes; histories of dinosaurs; science-fiction fantasies; tales of elements and chemical reactions. And through it all there would be *Redwall*, *Harry Potter*, *Artemis Fowl*, *Eragon*. In ten years we covered a literary canon.

That canon deals with many things—coming to terms with friends and family; interpreting the world; learning the ABCs of ethics and imagination—but what it deals with most, at least to my mind, is the way in which the act of reading makes the reader whole. To heal is to make whole—the etymology of “heal” goes back to the Germanic *hal*, “whole” or “hale.” In learning stories, memorizing alphabets, shaping the hand to form the letters, the child brings the disparate parts of life into a whole. Often, the stories told in children’s books illustrate how learning these arts leads to the arts of social understanding. In the move from ignorance to knowledge, from illiteracy to literacy, often we trace an arc from illness or confusion into health and knowledge.

Reading, like healing, takes place best in bed. The child takes to the covers to provide a space of safe imagination—or, by contrast, of private transgression. Reading in bed has been a social practice in the West since at least the twelfth century, when the French abbot Guibert of Nogent recorded his memories of childhood. How often, he recalls, parents and teachers “thought I was asleep and resting my little body under the coverlet when my mind was really concentrated on composition, or I was reading under a blanket, fearful of the rebuke of others.”<sup>1</sup> Guibert’s youthful attentions to the text, for all of their apparent good will, have

the tinge of transgression about them, and his autobiography, *De vita sua*, is full of stories of transgressive sexuality and secret sins. The body ails with lust—Guibert recalls his “itching heart,” and his dreams, both awful and arresting, that the devil sends him in his sleep. Boiling over with such madness, as he puts it, he is “carried along to words which were somewhat obscene” (87). He “hammered out verses in secret” (88), until finally given the occasion to compose a scriptural commentary. He “pursed [his] task in secret,” and took pleasure in the fact that, in the end, it saved him from idleness (91).

Guibert’s language has reminded many medievalists of St. Augustine, whose *Confessions* clearly is a model for *De vita sua* and whose sense of childhood literacy comes accoutered with a similar anxiety about the health of bodily desire. Who can forget those passages from the *Confessions* where he tells of how he had been made to “memorize the wanderings of a hero named Aeneas, while in the meantime I failed to remember my own erratic ways. I learned to lament the death of Dido, who killed herself for love, while all the time, in the midst of these things, I was dying, separated from you, my God and my Life, and I shed no tears for my own plight.”<sup>2</sup> Augustine phrases these early encounters with the literary classics as matters of moral health. God, he prays, should not let him *deficiat*, “become weak,” under the discipline of his obedience. “Let me not tire of thanking you for your mercy in rescuing me from all my wicked ways,” Augustine prays. And yet, the stories of his childhood led him to unhealthy *errores*. Central to all the tales he tells in the first books of the *Confessions* is a kind of unhealthy, obsessive theatricality. Schoolroom practice was performance: memorizing speeches from Terence’s *Eunuchs*, or Virgil’s *Aeneid*. The stage, as readers of Augustine have long known, captivated him. “Many and many a time I lied to my tutor, my masters, and my parents, and deceived them because I wanted to play games or watch some futile show or was impatient to imitate what I saw on the stage” (1.19). And, of course, when he comes to Carthage, burning in the frying-pan of desire, it is the theater that grabs him. But the theater, paradoxically, offers pain. “Why is it that men enjoy feeling sad at the sight of tragedy and suffering on the stage, although they would be most unhappy if they had to endure the same fate themselves?” (3.2). The story of the *Confessions* is a story told of turnings from theatrical performance to inner reflection; from sorrow to joy; from the sickness of obsession to the health of pastoral care.

So, too, are many stories for the child. Indeed, if medievalists recall Guibert, then any modern parent must recall Pinocchio. In its late-nineteenth-century codification by Carlo Collodi, and its mid-twentieth-century transformation by Walt Disney, the tale focuses on how the child must turn from the theater to the schoolroom. Pinocchio begins life, in

essence, as a stage prop—a bit of wood dressed up, a puppet animated by desire. In Collodi, Pinocchio sells his spelling book to buy admission to a puppet show and, in a moment worthy of Augustine's *Confessions*, he leaves literacy aside for spectacle.<sup>3</sup> He is brought into theater, made a part of the performance. In the Disney movie, these episodes transform themselves into a brilliant, if terrifying, critique of theatricality itself, complete with figures such as the Fox and Stromboli redolent of anti-Semitic and antihomosexual stereotypes. In Collodi's version of the story, by contrast, such scenes become the venues not for burlesque but for healing. When Pinocchio runs into the assassins, or when the little girl takes him home, or when the doctors find him ill, it is a Fairy who enters to administer a medicine (chap. 17).

I could go on. The story of Pinocchio seesaws from home to wilderness, from welcoming and healing figures to abductors. Even Pinocchio's later transformation into a jackass is a kind of illness—and an illness, once again, associated with the excesses of the theater. Recall Augustine, not simply captivated but ravished or abducted by the theater (in the Latin, *rapiebant me spectacula theatra*). Pinocchio, too, has been abducted, enraptured, and enraptured through the machinations of his manager. And when he finally appears on stage, transformed into a donkey, his attire and his bearing captivate the audience. "Era insomma un ciuchino da innamorare!" (394) ("In short, he was a donkey to steal your heart away" [395]).

If the theater is the site of unbridled desire, then it is the book that is the place of healthy study. Much children's literature moves across the axes of the stage and the book, excess and moderation, illness and health. Little wonder that the Puritans—some of the most prolific writers for children ever—shunned the stage and sought a way of life so self-consciously untheatrical that they should imagine childhood as a space not of performance but probity. The arc of Puritan writing moves from the alphabet to the elegy—from inventories of experience to meditations on the transitoriness of life. The Puritans were fascinated by their children, and they transformed the old traditions of the ABC, the hornbook, the saint's life, and the confession into guides for social and for moral life.<sup>4</sup>

But more than simply offering up books for children, they imagined children as books in themselves. Self-writing and self-reading permeate the English and early American imagination. The churchman John Earle, in his 1628 *Microcosmographie*, put it this way:

A Childe is a Man in small Letter, yet the best Copie of Adam before he tasted of Eve, or the Apple; and hee is happy whose small practice in the World can only write this Character. Hee is natures fresh picture newly drawn in Oyle, which

time and much handling dimmes and defaces. His Soule is yet a white paper unscribbled with observations of the world, wherewith at length it becomes a blurr'd Note-booke. . . . His father hath writ him as his owne little story, wherein he reades those dayes of his life that he cannot remember; and sighes to see what innocence he has out liv'd. (B1 r—B2 v)<sup>5</sup>

A is indeed for Adam here—and for Apple—and the character of the child is, explicitly, to be compared to the characters on the page. Children are to adults as small letters are to capitals. The soul is a blank sheet—the old image of the *tabula rasa* now transformed into a schoolboy's smudged notebook. The father here does not merely sire the child; he has "writ him as his owne little story, wherein hee reades those days of his life hee can not remember"—an image of such poignancy and brilliance that the modern reader cannot but recall Charles Dickens's transformation of this sentiment at the beginning of his *David Copperfield*: "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, . . . these pages must show." Or, as Benjamin Franklin put it, in one of his "Silence Dogood" letters written when he was sixteen: "You must spread all upon paper."<sup>6</sup>

Children become the books of our imagination here. And if the child is kin to letter or to page, then the sustained study of the letters and the pages of the world becomes the key to understanding childhood. This process is precisely what the Puritans would gather from an argument like Earle's—and though Earle himself was no dissenter from the Church of England or its King, his book had such wide popularity throughout the period of Puritan activity in England (even during the Interregnum, there were three separate editions published) that we may see it as part of the trajectory of character inquiry that shaped the Puritan alphabetization of childhood.<sup>7</sup> Reading and writing, recognizing the letter and correctly forming its character, were the poles of its pedagogy.

And the epitome of this tradition was the famous *New England Primer*, a book that probably originated in the 1680s and '90s but that took on its familiar shape in the edition of 1727 (the earliest surviving edition as well).<sup>8</sup> The *Primer* was, throughout its long life, many things. It embraced alphabets and emblems, proverbs and prayers, poetry and moral tales. Though its main contents remained stable, its tone shifted markedly in the middle of the eighteenth century, becoming more evangelical and richer in hymns and prayers (all probably in response to the religious climate change spurred by the so-called Great Awakening). But in its earliest form, the *Primer* reflects the controlling idioms of Puritan children's literature and, in the process, acts as something of a gloss on the inventories and the elegies that filled its books.

The *Primer* begins with lists. Its hornbook-like opening presents the alphabet in both roman and italic print and then, on the next page,

both the "great" and "small" English letters in black-letter and in Roman type. From the start, then, the *Primer* is not only an instruction manual for spiritual literacy; it is an inventory of typography. The bookishness of prayer is central to its argument: in the famous picture alphabet, the letter B stands for "Thy Life to Mend / this Book Attend," and even H reveals "My Book and Heart / Shall never part." And so, when the child moves past these letters to the section titled, "The Dutiful Child's Promises," it is to "learn these and such like Sentences by Heart"—to put the book precisely in the heart. The Alphabet of Lessons, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments—they all are, as the Commandments end, "words which I command thee this Day shall be in thy Heart." The heart is now a kind of book, a page or tablet on which lessons should be written. Such is the lesson of the poem attributed to the martyr John Rogers which comes towards the end of the *Primer*.

Give ear my Children to my words,  
                                   whom God hath dearly bought,  
 Lay up his Laws within your heart,  
                                   and print them in your thought.  
 I leave you here a little Book,  
                                   for you to look upon;  
 That you may see your Fathers face,  
                                   when he is dead and gone.

The poem offers an anatomy of literacy. Ear, heart, and eye become the operative organs of the child's understanding. And unlike the earlier, pre-Reformation habit of meditating on the wounds of Christ or the tortured crucifixion of his body, this poem exhorts the child to look upon the face of God. That act of seeing is an act of reading. The act of knowing is an act of printing. "Lay up his Laws within your heart"—the phrase "lay up" meant, in the print-shop, the activity of washing the form, or composed page.<sup>9</sup> God's laws are always in the form of an inscription, whether it be in the tablets of the Ten Commandments or the printed page of text.

But if the *Primer* is a guide to life, it is, as well, a book of death. The dead are everywhere, from the biblical verses that precede the hornbook opening, to the poems at its core, to the story of the martyred John Rogers at its end. "For surely there is an end, and thy expectation shall not be cut off." This bit of Proverbs opens up the book, and the end is everywhere. The cat illustrating letter C plays, but afterwards slays. Rachel, in letter R, mourns for her firstborn. Time cuts down all, and as for youth, "Death soonest nips." The verses that follow the Ten Commandments (perhaps written by Cotton Mather himself) note:

I in the Burying Place may see  
 Graves shorter there than I;  
 From Death's Arrest no Age is free,  
 Young Children too may die;

It is only a short step from this little poem to the tales of the young dead collected in James Janeway's *A Token for Children*—a book, first published in 1671, that after John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was the most popular of any in its time and that remained a mainstay of the American, as well as the British, library well into the eighteenth century. The endpoint of the *Primer*, like that of Janeway's *Token*, is the world to come.

That world to come is, in the end, a place of healing, and Janeway's volume collects exemplary stories of children who died young. Such children, often sick, found spiritual health through reading, through performing the catechism, and through reflecting on moral stories. One of the most poignant of his stories concerns John Harvy, born in 1654 and dead at age eleven.<sup>10</sup> A prodigy in language, he could speak at two as well as children did at five, and though restricted by his parents from attending school at such a young age, he himself found a school of his own. "Without the knowledge of his parents," little John attended school "and made a very strange progress in his learning, and was able to read distinctly, before most children are able to know their letters" (66). His is a story of the life virtually sacrificed to books. Obsessed by reading, "inquisitive . . . and very careful to observe and remember what he heard," John Harvy emerges as the model child behind what would become the pedagogy of *The New England Primer* (68). It is as if he lives out all of the injunctions of the *Primer*. His book and heart shall never part. To mend his life, he attends to the book. He models the Puritan ideal of carefully controlled speech, while at the same time illustrating the doctrine of what John Bunyan would call "grace abounding." In Janeway's words, he acted often "without any instruction from his Parents, but from an inward Principle of Grace" (69). He learns his catechism perfectly, in keeping with the instructions to be idealized in *The New England Primer*. But that is not enough for John: "he was not content to learn it himself, but he would be putting others upon learning their Catechism" (71). No one, not even his mother's maids, escapes his attention.

When he was six years old, John Harvy was afflicted with "sore eyes" (73). Instructed by the doctors to rest his eyes and not to read, John could not obey. He would "stand by the window and read the Bible and good Books; yea, he was so greedy of reading the Scripture, and took so much delight in it, that he would scarce allow himself time to dress himself; . . . judging it God's Command that he should give himself up to reading, he could not be beat off from it, till he was so bad, that he

had like never to have recovered his sight more" (73–74). John practically reads himself blind, and this physical self-abnegation appears to show throughout Janeway's story how the boy puts words always above things. Learning was "his recreation. He was never taught to write, but took it of his own ingenuity" (77). He ate sparsely, dressed soberly, and prayed earnestly.

If John almost read himself blind, he almost read himself to death—or, to put it more precisely, he read to prepare himself for death. Death was the telos of his reading. "He was next to the bible most taken with reading of Reverend Mr. Baxter's works, especially his *Saints Everlasting Rest*; and truly, the thoughts of that Rest, and Eternity, seemed to swallow up all other thoughts; and he lived in a constant preparation for it, and looked more like one that was ripe for Glory, than an inhabitant of this lower World" (82–83). By the time he was eleven, his family had moved to London, and the plague had hit. With his family members dying around him, John keeps to his *Saints Rest*, "which he read with exceeding curiosity," even writing "several Divine meditations" of his own (83–84). Sickened by the plague himself, John asks his mother—in what must be one of the most curdingly pathetic moments of pre-Victorian children's literature—"I pray let me have Mr. Baxters Book, what I may read a little more of Eternity, before I go into it" (84). Speech soon fails John, and he dies.

This is a story about language and interpretation, literacy and elegy, the world and the word. John Harvy's is a life of texts, a life lived for the book and sermon. He would, Janeway notes, sermonize his schoolmates, often taking as his text the biblical sentence, "The Axe is laid on the Root of the Tree, and every Tree that bringeth no forth good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into the Fire" (76). Imagine reading this page in one of the many American reprints of *A Token for Children* of the first third of the eighteenth century, and then imagine turning to the final alphabet page of *The New England Primer*. There, for the letter T, a skeleton with scythe and hourglass stands beside the couplet: "Time cuts down all / Both great and small." And at the bottom, a picture of a tree and the three lines: "Zacheus he / Did climb the Tree / His Lord to see." It is as if John Harvy had an almost intuitive grasp of Puritan typology, a sense of what was both narratively and iconographically central to religious pedagogy.

If any later American writer had an intuitive grasp of Puritan typology it was Nathaniel Hawthorne.<sup>11</sup> A set of little "Biographical Stories" he composed as children's tales in 1841 reveals a narrative imagination strikingly in tune with the inheritance of *The New England Primer* and Janeway's *Token for Children*. For, Hawthorne here begins with the ailing child.



When Edward Temple was about eight or nine years old he was afflicted with a disorder of the eyes. It was so severe, and his sight was naturally so delicate, that the surgeon felt some apprehensions lest the boy should become totally blind. He therefore gave strict directions to keep him in a darkened chamber, with a bandage over his eyes. Not a ray of the blessed light of heaven could be suffered to visit the poor lad. . . . And then his studies,—they were to be entirely given up. This was another grievous trial; for Edward's memory hardly went back to the period when he had not known how to read. Many and many a holiday had he spent at his book, poring over its pages until the deepening twilight confused the print and made all the letters run into long words.<sup>12</sup>

Like so many children of Puritan example, little Edward Temple is defined by reading. His memory is a memory of books; his sense of self is spread all on paper. And so, to calm the boy and pass the time, his father tells him stories about famous men and women. Benjamin West, Isaac Newton, Samuel Johnson, Oliver Cromwell, Benjamin Franklin, Queen Christina of Sweden—biographies calibrated for the young. Benjamin West learns to draw; Isaac Newton spares the life of his pet dog who had ruined an experiment; young Sam Johnson declines to help his father sell books at the market; and so on. But these tales also center on the act of reading: on relationships of books to power and to moral health. Reading through them now, how can one not recall Pinocchio selling his spelling book when coming across young Johnson?

But when the old man's figure, as he went stooping along the street, was no more to be seen, the boy's heart began to smite him. He had a vivid imagination, and it tormented him with the image of his father standing in the market-place of Uttoxeter and offering his books to the noisy crowd around him. Sam seemed to behold him arranging his literary merchandise upon the stall in such a way as was best calculated to attract notice. Here was Addison's *Spectator*, a long row of little volumes; here was Pope's translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; here were Dryden's poems, or those of Prior. Here, likewise, were *Gulliver's Travels*, and a variety of little gilt-covered children's books, such as *Tom Thumb*, *Jack the Giant Queller*, *Mother Goose's Melodies*, and others which our great-grandparents used to read in their childhood. And here were sermons for the pious, and pamphlets for the politicians, and ballads, some merry and some dismal ones, for the country people to sing.

Sam, in imagination, saw his father offer these books, pamphlets, and ballads, now to the rude yeomen who perhaps could not read a word; now to the country squires, who cared for nothing but to hunt hares and foxes; now to the children, who chose to spend their coppers for sugar-plums or gingerbread rather than for picture-books. And if Mr. Johnson should sell a book to man, woman, or child, it would cost him an hour's talk to get a profit of only sixpence.

"My poor father!" thought Sam to himself. "How his head will ache! and how heavy his heart will be! I am almost sorry that I did not do as he bade me."

Such is, of course, the lesson for the child: do as your father bids. But embedded in this story is another lesson: read as your father reads. We see here not simply a tale about the young man who would grow up to become a great lexicographer; we see an argument for books as healing rifts between the father and the son.

All of our fathers hawk the books they think we'd like to read. We stand, with our children, in the marketplace—a place few children care to be. Just witness little Edward Temple bristling at his father's exemplary tale of Benjamin Franklin. In response to Edward's question about what made Franklin so famous, his father responds: "It appears to me that Poor Richard's Almanac did more than anything else towards making him familiarly known to the public. As the writer of those proverbs which Poor Richard was supposed to utter, Franklin became the counselor and household friend of almost every family in America. Thus it was the humblest of all his labors that has done the most for his fame." To which little Edward replies: "I have read some of those proverbs, but I do not like them. They are all about getting money or saving it." If money does not heal, what does? "But now there is a light within which shows me the little Quaker artist, Ben West, and Isaac Newton with his windmill, and stubborn Sam Johnson, and stout Noll Cromwell, and shrewd Ben Franklin, and little Queen Christina, with the Swedes kneeling at her feet. It seems as if I really saw these personages face to face. So I can bear the darkness outside of me pretty well." Literature helps us bear the darkness outside. And, for the darkness within, we must be left only to name the objects that we know will be there in the morning.

Among my son's first books, I can think of no better text than *Goodnight Moon* to illustrate the afterlife of the traditions I have outlined here.<sup>13</sup> In its transformation of an inventory into an elegy, it resonates with the exemplars of the Puritan Imagination. Indeed, for children of the last half century, it may be thought of as a kind of bedroom *New England Primer*. And for our children, too, it is a kind of Augustinian confession, or perhaps a catechism: a way of figuring a beneficent, omniscient other to whom we direct our prayers. Leonard Marcus, in his biography of *Goodnight Moon's* author, Margaret Wise Brown, offers this sensitive assessment in terms that chime with the concerns I have voiced here:

A little elegy and a small child's evening prayer, *Goodnight Moon* is a supremely comforting evocation of the companionable objects of the daylight world. It is also a ritual preparation for a journey beyond that world, a leave-taking of the known for the unknown world of darkness and dreams. It is spoken in part in the voice of the provider, the good parent or guardian who can summon forth a secure, whole existence simply by naming its particulars. . . . And it is partly spoken in the voice of the child, who takes possession of that world by naming its particulars all over again, addressing them directly, one by one, as though each

were alive and bidding them goodnight. . . . The sense of an ending descends gradually, like sleep.<sup>14</sup>

We read together and we heal—not simply making well but making whole. The site of the imagination is the bedroom, the “Great Green Room.” And in that room, we learn to read. The naming of particulars becomes, for *Goodnight Moon*, or St. Augustine, or Pinocchio a way of taking possession, a way of owning one’s world. “I noticed that people would name some object and then turn towards whatever it was that they had named” (*Confessions* 1.8). So the young Augustine learned his language. The naming of particulars for him, or for Pinocchio, or for the child-participant in *Goodnight Moon*’s liturgy, becomes a way of taking possession, of owning one’s small world.

And it becomes a way of owning, too, the world of the imagination. Turn, now, to what must be the best-selling works of modern children’s literature, the *Harry Potter* series, to see how the child’s imagination is a bookish one. For books are everywhere in these stories. The wizard children live in libraries; they prepare their potions out of written recipes; and whenever children are in danger, fall ill, or are set a task of bravery, it is the book that saves them. *Harry Potter* remains full of books, in part, because it is a story about reading, an argument for literacy as the key to the imagination. But the series remains full of books, too, because it constitutes a response to the traditions of children’s literature. Characters evolve out of allusions: Snape, Dumbledore, the whole of Hogwarts for that matter, could come straight from Dickens’s schoolroom novels; the train travels to and fro recall the railway journeys of Enid Blynton; there are Crusoe-like adventures, secret gardens, sentient animals—a whole panoply of figures, tropes, and traditions cut out of the children’s canon. Much has been made, in the popular reception of these books, of how they seem to get children reading again. But the goal of the books is not so much to get our children reading *them* as to encourage them to read their sources. The idealized, implied reader, if you will, of *Harry Potter* is Harry himself, who, at the opening of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, risks punishment for studying at home: “It was nearly midnight and he was lying on his front in bed, the blankets drawn right over his head like a tent, a torch in one hand and a large leather-bound book propped up against the pillow.”<sup>15</sup> How similar this passage seems (at least to my medievalist mind) to Guibert’s surreptitious textual activity under *his* bedclothes. But not all books are safe. Recall *The Monster Book of Monsters*, a strange living volume that needs to be stroked affectionately, lest it open up its jaws and take a piece out of its reader. Harry’s bed—whether it be in his muggle home, or in his Gryffindor dorm room, or in the Hogwarts infirmary (where he seems to land with disturbing

frequency)—is always a place of reading. And for a boy with a scar, what better way to heal the wounds of infancy than with a volume of historical or chemical tales. Thy life to mend, this book attend.

The real wizardry of *Harry Potter* lies in literacy, and my son—long a devotee of these books—claims now to have outgrown them. At thirteen, he wants to be a welder. Evenings once spent over volumes are now passed hunched in the garage over an electric arc. Shielded by his helmet, he takes scraps of metal and joins them into new shapes. This is his wizardry, his wand, his will. His most recent project is to weld a set of rods into an open cube. And so, one recent evening, I tried to explain to him how I felt about all of this. I told him how I marveled at his skill, and how I thought that welding really was a way of bringing things together. The red-hot metal heals over the seams and cracks; small fragments mend into new wholes. He's actually making things, building out of the shards of life holders for his imagination (for what else could an open-sided cube contain?). I finished my speech and he looked up, smiled briefly, and then caught himself, remembering that he was, in fact, a teenager, and said: "Dad, you read too much."

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

NOTES

1 Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*. Translated by John Benton as *Self and Society in Medieval France* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), 78 (hereafter cited in text).

2 Augustine, *Confessiones*, ed. J. J. O'Donnell, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Translated by R. S. Pine-Coffin as *Confessions* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1961), 1.13 (hereafter cited in text by book and chapter number).

3 Carlo Collodi, *Le Avventure di Pinocchio / The Adventures of Pinocchio*, bilingual edition, ed. and trans. Nicholas J. Perella (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), chap. 9 (hereafter cited in text by chapter or page number).

4 See C. John Sommerville, *The Discovery of Childhood in Puritan England* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992); Patricia Demers, *Heaven Upon Earth: The Form of Moral and Religious Children's Literature, to 1850* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993); Patricia Crain, *The Story of A: The Alphabetization of America from "The New England Primer" to "The Scarlet Letter"* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). The Puritan impact on children's literature generally has been surveyed, as well, in Mary V. Jackson, *Engines of Instruction, Mischief, and Magic: Children's Literature in England from Its Beginnings to 1839* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

5 John Earle, *Micro-cosmographie: or, A Piece of the World Discovered, in Essays and Characters* (London: Edward Blount, 1628). See Bruce McIver, "John Earle: The Unwillingly Willing Author of *Microcosmography*," *English Studies* 72 (1991): 219–29, and the brief discussion in David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 48–49.

6 Benjamin Franklin, Silence Dogood, no. 7, in *Benjamin Franklin: Writings*, ed. J. Leo Lemay (New York: Library of America, 1987), 23.

7 See McIver, "John Earle."

8 See David H. Watters, "‘I spake as a child’: Authority, Metaphor, and *The New England Primer*," *Early American Literature* 20 (1985–86): 193–213; Crain, *Story of A*, 38–54; and the material in the facsimile edition of Paul Leicester Ford, *The New-England Primer* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1899), which reproduces the earliest complete, surviving edition (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1727). Most of the *Primer* is now reproduced in facsimile, too, in Jack Zipes et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature* (New York: Norton, 2006).

9 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v., "lay," v. def. 60; "lay up," def. k.

10 James Janeway, *A Token for Children: Being an Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives and Joyful Deaths of Several Young Children* (London, 1673), Part II, Example XIII, 65–87 (hereafter cited in text). This is the earliest complete text of the book available to me. All quotations will be from this edition.

11 See the discussion throughout Crain, *Story of A*, and for the larger trajectory of American Puritan literary history, the foundational critical work still remains Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975).

12 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Biographical Stories," in *True Stories from History and Biography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1972), <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext05/haw8110.txt> (accessed July 12, 2006).

13 Margaret Wise Brown, *Goodnight Moon*, illustrated by Clement Hurd (New York: Harper, 1947).

14 Leonard S. Marcus, *Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened by the Moon* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 187.

15 J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 7.