

## On *Moral Tales* and *Practical Education* : Maria Edgeworth's Method of Education and Her Educational Thought\*

Naoko SAKAI\*\* and Takeo IIDA\*\*\*

**[Summary]** Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) is a writer and an educationalist whose educational ideas were ahead of her times in Europe. *Moral Tales* (1801) is a collection of her short stories, and *Practical Education* (1798), which was written in collaboration with her father Richard Lovell Edgeworth, shows her theory of education and was published in the same year as *Lyrical Ballads* by two Romantic poets, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge; and Edgeworth's two books are interrelated. The good educators in *Moral Tales* are considered to be her ideal educators whose roles she discusses in *Practical Education*, while the bad educators in *Moral Tales* are those whom she criticizes in *Practical Education*. Children's tendencies and growths are also described in these two books. In addition, *Moral Tales* is partly influenced by Romanticism; Edgeworth uses the words "please" and "pleasing" several times, and we can see her attention to the importance of people's emotions and feelings. This is the influence of Romanticism which made liberation of people's feelings.

**[Key Words]** Education, reading, language, governess, judgement, accomplishment, reason, romantic feeling.

### Introduction

Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) is a British-Irish novelist, educationalist, playwright and essayist who wrote sketches of Irish life, commentary on contemporary English society, and instruction in children's moral training. She is called "the 'Irish Jane Austen' or the 'female Sir Walter Scott'", as Abby Wolf says ("Maria Edgeworth" par. 1), because she also wrote about the happiness of women, and historical novels. Wolf also points out that "her writing actually

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\*This is a revised version of Naoko Sakai's MA thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Comparative Cultural Studies of Kurume University in January, 2010. Acknowledgements are due to Professor Ian Carruthers of Kurume University, who gave useful suggestions and comments to the thesis.

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### Introduction

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influenced both [Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott]” (“Maria Edgeworth” par. 1). She wrote a wide variety of books, and in them it is very interesting to see her view of education because she is ahead of her times on the idea of education. Among her educational books, I am going to discuss the characteristics of *Moral Tales* (1801) in relation with *Practical Education* (1798), because they are inter-related.

Before studying about Maria Edgeworth’s view of education, it is important to review briefly her life and her background. Maria Edgeworth was the daughter of Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817) and Anna Maria Elers. R. L. Edgeworth was an Anglo-Irish proprietor and engineer, and also an educational writer, who was born in Bath. In his life, he had four wives and twenty-two children, and Anna Maria was his first wife. She was English, and the daughter of a lawyer. Maria Edgeworth was born as their third child in Oxfordshire, England, and she lived in Ireland from her middle teens until her death; that is why she is called the “Irish Jane Austen” for she is sometimes considered as an Irish writer. Her mother died in 1773, but her step-mother, Honora Sneyd, is said to have been a good mother and teacher to her. There is a place called Edgeworthstown in Longford, Ireland; ancestors of the Edgeworths immigrated there in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as landlords. Maria visited Edgeworthstown with her father and Honora when she was six, and they stayed there for only three years; however, from the age of fifteen she resided there permanently. Therefore Edgeworthstown is important as the place where Maria wrote a lot of her works. Maria went to a boarding school from 1775 to 1802. Honora died in 1780, and then R. L. Edgeworth married her sister, Elizabeth Sneyd. They had nine children; however, Elizabeth died after a long illness in 1797, and Maria had her third step-mother Frances Anne Beaufort in 1798. Maria helped her parents to educate her great number of brothers and sisters; and that is why she experienced educating children without being married or having her own children. After her father’s death, “[she] took over the management of Edgeworthstown and acted as [her brother Lovell Edgeworth’s] agent in order to effect a family reconciliation” (*Ways of Wisdom* 245-46).

While studying about her, I was absorbed in her thought, and wanted to know who had influenced her thoughts and ideas on education. Naturally, there are a lot of people who influenced Maria’s ideas on education; especially, through her daily life, her father R. L. Edgeworth and his greatest friend Thomas Day (1748-1789) gave her great influences. R. L. Edgeworth was very enthusiastic about his children’s education. He even endeavoured to educate his eldest son Richard according to the principle of Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *Émile* (1762) with Day; they even visited Rousseau in France, though “the experiment fared badly”, as Elizabeth Harden indicates (*Maria Edgeworth* 4). He also “had a highly inventive

mind and wrote many articles on scientific and mechanical ideas" ("Edgeworth, Richard Lovell" par. 2). He joined the Lunar Society, and met and conversed with intellectual people such as Erasmus Darwin, Joseph Priestley, James Watt, Jonathan Stokes, Samuel Galton, Josiah Wedgewood and Anna Seward. His enthusiasm was soon shared by Maria, and she wrote the book *Practical Education* and *Professional Education* (1809) in collaboration with him.

Thomas Day was a British author and abolitionist, born in London. He was well-known for the children's book *The History of Sandford and Merton* (1783-1789). He built a great friendship with R. L. Edgeworth, and Maria often spent her holidays in his house. He joined the Lunar Society with R. L. Edgeworth. As I mentioned above, he resolved to educate R. L. Edgeworth's eldest son in the principles of *Émile* together. It can therefore be said that "Edgeworth and the [joint education] project converted Day to Rousseauism" ("Thomas Day", *Wikipedia* par. 1). He wrote a poem, "The Dying Negro" (1773), which it is said "struck the keynote of the anti-slavery movement" ("Thomas Day", *Classic Encyclopedia* par. 1). Maria also mentioned the anti-slavery movement in her works, as we shall see later in her short story "The Good Aunt" ; and we can say that it was under his influence.

Maria Edgeworth was greatly influenced by books such as John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), Rousseau's *Émile*, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) and Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia or the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-96). She mentions them in her works, especially in "The Good Aunt". We can say that both R. L. Edgeworth and Thomas Day also read these books.

To see Maria Edgeworth's view of education, it is really interesting to compare her *Moral Tales* with *Practical Education*. *Moral Tales* was written for young people, and Maria Edgeworth shows some educational examples in her tales. There are six short stories, "Forester", "The Prussian Vase", "The Good Aunt", "Madoiselle Panache", "Angelina; or, L'amie Inconnue", "The Good French Governess" and one play "The Knapsack" in *Moral Tales*; in each tale there are some adults who educate children who are from childhood to teenage, and Edgeworth wrote how children grow up step by step. The adults in these tales are various: parents or relatives, governesses, masters, tutors, or school teachers. She embodied her idea on education in the tales; however, the educational methods in the tales are not always good examples. Although Elizabeth Harden criticizes her, saying "As fiction, the tales lack the freshness and vitality of the children's stories since their effectiveness is often vitiated by the pressure of purpose on plot and by the predictability of the characters" (Harden, *Maria Edgeworth* 34), *Moral Tales* shows the readers what is good education and what is bad education, as well as how children will be enabled by each method, so it is really simple and

easy for the readers to understand the stories. The good education in each tale must be a reflection of Edgeworth's ideal educational method.

On the other hand, *Practical Education* was written on the basis of the observation of Maria's brothers and sisters,<sup>(1)</sup> and it is a study of the methods of education based on psychology. It is a collaboration between her and her father R. L. Edgeworth. There are twenty-four specific subjects in *Practical Education* such as "On Sympathy and Sensibility", "Books" and "On Public and Private Education". Harden says that "Twentieth-century scholars view it as the 'most significant contemporary work on pedagogy',<sup>(2)</sup> and one historian of education, in particular, claims that it is the most important work on general pedagogy to appear in Great Britain between the publication of Locke's *Thoughts* in 1693 and Herbert Spencer's *Essay on Education* in 1861" (Harden, *Maria Edgeworth* 24-25).

*Moral Tales* was published three years later than *Practical Education*. R. L. Edgeworth comments on the preface of *Moral Tales*, "[t]hese tales have been written to illustrate the opinions delivered in 'Practical Education'" ("Preface" 6). Therefore, first of all, I want to consider how the educational method of *Practical Education* is applied to *Moral Tales*.

## Chapter I: *Moral Tales* and *Practical Education*: Edgeworth's Method of Good Education

### 1.1 "The Good Aunt"

"The Good Aunt" is the story of a little boy called Charles Howard and his "good aunt" Mrs. Francis Howard, and it also points out the advantages of public education. They are living together, and as the story says, "[Mrs. Howard] loved her nephew, and she wished to educate him so that her affection might increase, instead of diminishing, as he grew up" ("The Good Aunt" 5); Mrs. Howard is keen on giving Charles a good education. Not only does she work for Charles, but she has a high desire to improve herself. She has an idea which might be ahead of her times; her grandfather owned an estate and slaves in the West Indies and, at his death, he handed them over to her. However, "[s]he did not particularly wish to be the proprietor of slaves" ("The Good Aunt" 12), and "she had been desirous to sell her West India property" ("The Good Aunt" 13). We can see Edgeworth's anti-slavery ideas in this part, and it also shows the influence of Thomas Day.

Mrs. Howard has her own thoughts and methods on education; particularly, her education places a great emphasis on books. When Charles was very young, she used "to read aloud to him any thing entertaining that she met with" ("The Good Aunt" 6), and "[w]hen he was able to read fluently to himself, she selected for him passages from books which she thought would excite his curiosity to know

more" ("The Good Aunt" 6; italics Edgeworth's). Although Mrs. Howard puts a great emphasis on books, she never forces Charles to read books which he does not understand; and when she notices that his attention is not fixed, she always stops his reading. On this reading education, Edgeworth mentions in the chapter on "Books" in *Practical Education*: "The custom of reading aloud for a great while together is extremely fatiguing to children, and hurtful to their understandings; they learn to read on without the slightest attention or thought" (197). The understanding is always considered important for children's reading, as she says, "children should be taught to read by the understanding" (*Practical Education* 197); therefore, Mrs. Howard "was not in a hurry to cram him with knowledge" ("The Good Aunt" 6). In addition, Mrs. Howard always encourages Charles to converse with her about what he reads, and it must be a good chance to arrange the knowledge which he gets from the books. Edgeworth says in *Practical Education*, "the [preceptors'] greatest difficulty has been to find a sufficient number of books fit for children to read" (197). Mrs. Howard has "the courage to apply herself seriously to the cultivation of her understanding: she educated herself, that she might be able to fulfil the important duty of educating a child" ("The Good Aunt" 5). Therefore we can say that Mrs. Howard is an ideal preceptor who is faithful to *Practical Education*.

As well as on books, Edgeworth puts a great emphasis on 'conversation'. "A child may learn as much from conversation as from books — not so many historic facts, but as much instruction" ("The Good Aunt" 6). Since "sensible, well-informed people" ("The Good Aunt" 6) often visit Mrs. Howard's house, their conversation also contributes to the formation of Charles's taste.

The languages of their conversations are also important for child's education. When Charles enters Westminster school, he meets a little boy called Oliver. He is a Creole, and lively and intelligent; however, he is in trouble because of his neglected literary education which was given before he entered the same school; he is ignorant of the common rudiments of spelling, reading, grammar and arithmetic. In the chapter "On Public and Private Education" of *Practical Education*, Edgeworth says that "[t]he boy, who at home lived with his father's servants, and was never taught to have any species of literature, will not acquire a taste for it at school, merely by being compelled to learn his lessons" (286). Not only was his literary education neglected, he also acquired many bad words as he remembers when struggling with his writing: "I make use of a great number of odd words, and vulgar expressions, and bad English, which I learned from being with the servants, I believe, at home" ("The Good Aunt" 42). On the other hand, Charles never heard the conversation of the servants under Mrs. Howard's great care, and he always listened to the conversations of "the sensible, well-informed people" ("The Good Aunt" 6); and his writing skill is therefore great. When

Oliver said to Charles, "I thought writing was quite a different thing from speaking, because in writing there must be sentences, and long sentences, and fine sentences, such as there are in books" ("The Good Aunt" 41-42), Charles answered "In *some* books, ... but not in all" ("The Good Aunt" 42; italics Edgeworth's). Unlike Oliver, the well-educated Charles can tell good books from bad ones. The difference between Charles and Oliver reminds us of the following description in *Practical Education* :

Children who have never lived with servants, who have never associated with ill educated companions of their own age, and who in their own family have heard nothing but good conversation, and seen none but good examples; will in their language, their manners, and their whole disposition, be not only free from many of the faults common amongst children, but they will absolutely have no idea that there are such faults. The language of children, who have heard no language but what is good, must be correct. (186)

We can see that Charles is one such ideal child who has acquired the language which Edgeworth advises children should have. On the quality of children's language, Edgeworth also warns:

children who hear a mixture of low and high vulgarity before their own habits are fixed, must, whenever they speak, continually blunder; they have no rule to guide their judgment in their selection from the variety of dialects which they hear; probably they may often be reproved for their mistakes, but these reproofs will be of no avail, whilst the pupils continue to be puzzled between the example of the nursery, and of the drawing room. It will cost much time and pains to correct these defects, which might have been with little difficulty prevented. (*Practical Education* 186)

This is the exact situation which Oliver has experienced. To make a good environment for a child requires a great effort on the part of the parents or a preceptor; it is this kind of effort Mrs. Howard makes for Charles' situation.

One more thing that Mrs. Howard puts a great emphasis on is liberal education. She always thinks that "a man of sense might be a good scholar" ("The Good Aunt" 6), and she starts to teach him classics such as Latin, and she hires Mr. Russell as a tutor for Charles before he enters school. He is not fond of Latin at first, and he even dislikes Mr. Russell, saying "I am sure at any rate, I like the learned pig fifty times better than Mr. Russell!" ("The Good Aunt" 7). However, one evening, a celebrated traveller came to Mrs. Howard's house, and he "drew out Mr. Russell's knowledge and abilities" ("The Good Aunt" 8) through

their conversation; Charles listened to them, and, from then on, “looked up to his tutor with respect” (“The Good Aunt” 8). Therefore by the time he enters Westminster school, Charles studies hard, even becoming good at Latin, and teaches it to little Oliver. As a result of his education by Mrs. Howard and Mr. Russell, Charles grows up as “a man of sense”. He knows what is wrong and what is right; he is able to make a right choice when he meets a troublesome situation. Besides, he has an ability to lead his friends to the right way.

Even though he receives a liberal education like Charles Howard, Augustus Holloway is depicted as a negative example in “The Good Aunt”. Holloway is one of the best Latin scholars at Westminster school. He has already mastered Latin before he enters school, and he believes that most of his education has been finished. However, he is mentally immature; he is very selfish and always thinking about his own benefits. In the background of his characteristics, we can see the education given by his father Alderman Holloway, his tutor Mr. Supine, and his mother Mrs. Holloway, who is apathetic regarding education. The Alderman's ideas of education are to make a contrast between school and home: they should spend a lot of time and money for luxurious holidays, and relieve his son from his school studies. It is worthwhile to notice Edgeworth's remarks on “[m]istaken parental fondness” in the chapter “On Public and Private Education” of *Practical Education*: she says that “[m]istaken parental fondness delights to make the period of time which children spend at home as striking a contrast as possible with that which they pass at school” (288). She further indicates that parents should not make a contrast between school and home, and she also questions:

How is it possible, that any master can long retain the wish or the hope of succeeding in any plan of education, if he perceives that his pupils are but partially under his government, if his influence over their minds be counteracted from time to time by the superior influence of their parents? (*Practical Education* 289)

According to her idea of education to help children succeed in their education, parents should follow and cooperate with the plan of education which their school master holds up. Therefore she depicts the Alderman as a negative example of a parent. Because of the Alderman's bad education, Augustus cannot wait for holidays; he comes to think that studying is a tough thing even if he could do very well, and it might not be worthwhile for him. He cannot understand the real pleasure of studying; if he could take pleasure in it, it might replace the mere material rewards which he can get by doing well in his work.

The most interesting thing in “The Good Aunt” is that through their



relationship with Charles, both Oliver and Augustus have changed gradually and remarkably. Oliver, since he established a close friendship with Charles, becomes capable of following his class, never being a laughing-stock, and he has got more courage. In addition he gradually gains self-confidence. When he met Charles, he had been Augustus's "fag", which is a traditional role in some English schools: little boys "are forced to wait upon and obey their master-companions" ("The Good Aunt" 21), and he could not refuse Augustus even if he had been treated in a tyrannical way. Charles, who cannot stand seeing Augustus's behaviour toward Oliver, releases him from Augustus by fighting, becomes friends with the Creole boy, and encourages his school life.<sup>(3)</sup> As a result, Oliver even manages to read "the account of the execution of two rebel Koromantyn negroes, related in Edward's History of the West Indies" ("The Good Aunt" 72), which is the kind of books he had avoided before because of his impression of its difficulty. In addition, he acts to help a mulatto woman, who has got injured from falling off the coach, and tries to negotiate with Augustus who is responsible for her injury. Moreover, at the end of the story, he finds and denounces Mr. Aaron Carat's crime. Mr. Carat, a Jew, is a jeweller, who tempts Augustus to sell illegal lottery tickets to students. Oliver first attempts to buy one from Augustus; however, he is dissuaded by Howard. As a result, thanks to Oliver, the schoolmaster Dr. B finds out something illegal is going on in his school, and stops it before it gets more serious. Dr. B buys a good toothpick-case from Mr. Carat for Oliver, saying "It is better to trust to prudence than fortune" ("The Good Aunt" 79). Then, in addition, Oliver notices that the toothpick-case is very similar to the mulatto woman's thimble which Mrs. Howard had given to her. In fact, Mr. Carat has stolen and is selling Mrs. Howard's grandmother's jewels, which had been lost on board ship from Jamaica. Oliver discovers these facts by his observation and his excellent intelligence.

Meanwhile the change in Augustus is also amazing. Almost throughout the story, he appears as a boy who is selfish, overconfident, and tyrannical, and we see his lack of self-examination: "[h]e was told that his education was *nearly* at an end; he believed it was *quite* finished, and he was glad of it, and glad it was so well over" ("The Good Aunt" 30; italics Edgeworth's). He behaves arrogantly towards his "fag" Oliver, while he pretends to be good towards his masters and his parents. He tempts a coachman to let him drive a coach, and causes an accident, which made the mulatto woman injured, and what is worse, he tries to get out of taking any responsibilities. However, he is struck by the friendship between Oliver and Charles. In the end, he confesses his wrongdoings to his father, and then he thanks Oliver and Charles.

"The Good Aunt" shows Charles not only as a well-educated child, but also as a good educator for Oliver and Augustus. They made a real friendship at school,

and it is a great advantage of public education that children grow up together in good friendship. Edgeworth had a firm belief that educators and environments strongly influence the process of children's growth.

## 1.2 "The Good French Governess"

"The Good French Governess" is a story about a French governess, Mad. de Rosier, who is "a lady of good family, excellent understanding, and most amiable character" (71). France was under the bloody reign of Robespierre, and her husband and son were put into the prison of the Conciergerie, and their names were listed up in the traitors' list to be guillotined. Then, she took refuge in England, and was employed by an English widow, Mrs. Harcourt, as the governess of her four children. Edgeworth describes Mrs. Harcourt in the following way:

[She] had been a very fine woman, and continued to be a very fine lady; she had good abilities, but, as she lived in a constant round of dissipation, she had not time to cultivate her understanding, nor to attend to the education of her family; and she had satisfied her conscience by procuring for her daughters a fashionable governess and expensive masters. ("The Good French Governess" 71-72)

She has three daughters and a son: Isabella, Matilda, Favoretta and Herbert, and Mad. de Rosier became their governess. Edgeworth describes these four children's characters in detail. Isabella, the oldest, is fourteen years old. Her countenance is intelligent; however, she has too much confidence. This is because "she had, from her infancy, been taught to believe that she was a genius" ("The Good French Governess" 72). Edgeworth further describes her:

Her memory had been too much cultivated; she had learned languages with facility, and had been taught to set a very high value upon her knowledge of history and chronology. Her temper had been hurt by flattery, yet she was capable of feeling all the generous passions. ("The Good French Governess" 72)

She takes great pleasure in ostentatious display of her knowledge and memory, but she cannot apply her abilities in more practical ways. Isabella's emphasis on knowledge and memory cannot be justified, because Edgeworth says:

A number of facts are often stored in the mind, which lie there useless, because they cannot be found at the moment when they are wanted. It is not sufficient therefore in education to store up knowledge, it is essential to

arrange facts so that they shall be ready for use, as materials for the imagination, or the judgment, to select and combine. (*Practical Education* 199)

The second daughter Matilda is thirteen. She is a handsome girl; however, she is timid and falls into “hopeless indolence” (“The Good French Governess” 72). This is because:

she did not learn the French and Italian irregular verbs by rote as expeditiously as her sister, and her [former] impatient preceptress pronounced, with an irrevocable nod, that Miss Matilda was *no* genius. The phrase was quickly caught by her masters, so that Matilda, undervalued even by her sister, lost all confidence in herself, and, with the hope of success, lost the wish for exertion. (“The Good French Governess” 72; italics Edgeworth’s)

This is why she pays great attention to dress and personal accomplishments; her countenance might be the only thing that she is able to have confidence in. Edgeworth points out that “[i]f Matilda were *no* genius, it must have been the fault of her education” (“The Good French Governess” 72; italics Edgeworth’s), and goes on adding:

On sensibility all that is called genius, perhaps, originally depends: those who are capable of feeling a strong degree of pain and pleasure may surely be excited to great and persevering exertion, by calling the proper motives into action. (“The Good French Governess” 72-73)

Poor Matilda is a victim of her former preceptress and of the adults around her.

Favoretta, the youngest daughter and the youngest child, is six. Edgeworth says that “[a]t this age, the habits that constitute character are not formed, and it is therefore absurd to speak of the character of a child of six years old” (“The Good French Governess” 73). Then she describes her:

Favoretta had been from her birth the plaything of her mother and of her mother’s waiting-maid. She was always produced when Mrs. Harcourt had company, to be admired and caressed by the fashionable circle; her ringlets and her lively nonsense were the never-failing means of attracting attention from visitors. (“The Good French Governess” 73)

However, once she leaves the company, she turns out to be grouchy and capricious.

Herbert is eight years old, and, although he is the only boy in their household, while Favoretta is too-much caressed by everyone, he is not. The waiting-maid Mrs. Grace scolds him too much, and, whenever she scolds, "a sullen gloom overspread Herbert's countenance" ("The Good French Governess" 73). Because of the lack of admiration he receives,

he partly fulfilled his tormentor's prophecies, for he became a little surly rebel, who took pleasure in doing exactly the contrary to every thing that he was desired to do, and who took pride in opposing his powers of endurance to the force of punishment. ("The Good French Governess" 74)

He does not get along with his preceptress and the waiting-maid; however, he becomes attached to one of the family servants Stephen. Mrs. Harcourt is not "so strict" in his intercourse with him, arguing that:

"children will get to the servants when one's from home, and it is best that they should be with such of them as one can trust — now Stephen is quite a person one can entirely depend upon, and he has been so long in the family, the children are quite used to him, and safe with him." ("The Good French Governess" 74)

Nevertheless, Edgeworth criticizes this kind of idea, saying that "[h]ow many mothers have a Stephen, on whom they can entirely depend!" ("The Good French Governess" 74). Mad. de Rosier comes into such a family, and carefully studies the habits of the family members, and then educates these four children in an admirable way.

A few days after Mad. de Rosier met the children, she takes them to "a large toy-shop, or rather warehouse for toys, which had been lately opened under the direction of an ingenious gentleman, who had employed proper workmen to execute rational toys for the rising generation" ("The Good French Governess" 80). She purchases some toys for them, but not too many, for her object is "to create a taste for industry [in four children's minds] without the dangerous excitation of continual variety" ("The Good French Governess" 83). Edgeworth adds that:

It is easy to make children happy, for one evening, with new toys and new employments; but the difficulty is to continue the pleasure of occupation after it has lost its novelty: the power of habit may well supply the place of the charm of novelty. ("The Good French Governess" 87)

Therefore what Mad. de Rosier purchases for them are very rational things; for Herbert, she buys radish-seeds, a little spade, a hoe and a watering-pot, because he is fascinated with them at the shop. In *Practical Education*, there is a chapter on “Toys”, which is the first chapter of the book. Edgeworth writes that there is a suitable age at which children are introduced to gardening, and if it is too early, for example at the age of six or seven, it is useless because they have not enough strength to do such hard work. However, she also writes that “[a] garden is an excellent resource for children” (*Practical Education* 22). Herbert first tears and opens a little packet of the radish-seeds and tries to eat them in a mischievous attitude, and when the shopman stops him, he replies in an angry tone; however, then Mad. de Rosier says to him, “They are the seeds of radishes, my dear, . . . if they be sown in the ground they will become radishes; then they will be fit to eat, but not till then. Taste them now, and try” (“The Good French Governess” 82-83); he obeys willingly. What Mad. de Rosier means to do is to convince him in a persuasive tone without scolding at him, and it is a very different way from the way of Mrs. Grace who used to scold him all the time. Because Mad. de Rosier teaches him seriously and warmly, he gradually opens his heart. Buying the rational toys for the children, Mad. de Rosier induces in their minds a love for industry; and she wishes them to avoid suffering from ennui, because “[t]he state of *ennui*, when contrasted with that of pleasurable mental or bodily activity, becomes odious and insupportable to children” (“The Good French Governess” 87; italics Edgeworth’s).

Through this experience, Herbert gradually changes. One day, he asks Mad. de Rosier to teach him reading which he was never tempted to do before. He says to her, “perhaps you could teach me, though Grace says ’tis very difficult; I’ll do my best” (“The Good French Governess” 89); and she replies to him, “Then I’ll do *my* best too” (“The Good French Governess” 89; italics Edgeworth’s). This scene shows that they have built a good relationship of trust. This is shown by his comment to Mrs. Grace, “[Mad. de Rosier is] my friend” (“The Good French Governess” 90).

Mad. de Rosier builds a good relationship with the other children as well, and all of the four children change in good ways gradually. Isabella, who used to take pleasure only in showing off her knowledge and memory, gradually cultivates her reasoning and imagination. Matilda cultivates her talents for arithmetic. Moreover, Isabella comes to encourage Matilda, and they build friendship and learn sympathy with each other. Favoretta and Herbert build a good relationship too. In the chapter on “Sympathy and Sensibility” in *Practical Education*, Edgeworth writes:

With the precautions which have been mentioned we may hope to see children

grow up in real friendship together. The whole sum of their pleasure is much increased by mutual sympathy. This happy moral truth, upon which so many of our virtues depend, should be impressed upon the mind; it should be clearly demonstrated to the reason; it should not be repeated as an a priori, sentimental assertion. (161)

Because Mad. de Rosier is able to build a good relationship with the children, their mother Mrs. Harcourt gradually becomes interested in her children's education. In chapter on "On Female Accomplishments, Masters, and Governesses" of *Practical Education*, Edgeworth argues that "[i]f [a governess] does not agree with the child's parents in opinion, she must either know how to convince them by argument, or she must with strict integrity conform her practice to their theories" (308-09). Mad. de Rosier has been successful in indirectly convincing Mrs. Harcourt of the value of her methods.

In "The Good French Governess", Edgeworth makes some critical remarks on female boarding school. Mrs. Harcourt has a friend called Mrs. Fanshaw; they play cards together. She is a kind of woman who "had been educated at a time when it was not thought necessary for women to have any knowledge, or any taste for literature" ("The Good French Governess" 126). However, female education improved in her daughter's time, and she sent her daughter to a boarding-school, Suxberry House in London, whose "chief recommendation" was "the expense" ("The Good French Governess" 126). Miss Jane Fanshaw is about sixteen. At Suxberry House, she learned "to speak French passably, to read a *little* Italian, to draw *a little*, to play tolerably well upon the piano-forte, and to dance as well as many other young ladies" ("The Good French Governess" 126; italics Edgeworth's). Since she seems well-cultivated, Mrs. Fanshaw is proud of her very much. However, she is depicted as an example of woman who received a disadvantage of female boarding school. Edgeworth describes her:

She had been sedulously taught a sovereign contempt of whatever was called *vulgar* at the school where she was educated; but as she was profoundly ignorant of every thing but the routine of that school, she had no precise idea of propriety; she only knew what was thought vulgar or genteel at Suxberry House; and the authority of Mrs. Suxberry (for that was the name of her schoolmistress) she quoted as incontrovertible upon all occasions. ("The Good French Governess" 126-27; italics Edgeworth's)

Miss Fanshaw now comes back to her home, because her mother thought that "it was time to take her from school, and to introduce her into the world" ("The Good French Governess" 126). Then Mrs. Fanshaw invites Mrs. Harcourt and her

daughters, Isabella and Matilda, to her house, and in return Mrs. Harcourt invites them to her house a few days after. Miss Fanshaw is first surprised at the behaviour of Isabella and Matilda, because it is quite different from what she has learned at Suxberry House. Then she tries to persuade them to go to Suxberry House. She says that she wrote themes every week at Suxberry House, and “it made [her] hate writing” (“The Good French Governess” 130), however, “there’s an end of it” (“The Good French Governess” 130). According to her, the advantage of going to school is that “all those plaguing things” (“The Good French Governess” 130) finish when you leave school. She unsuccessfully attempts to persuade Isabella and Matilda of the rightness of her own opinion that “you that have a governess and masters at home, you go on for ever and ever, and you have no holydays either; and you have no out of school hours; you are kept *hard at it* from morning till night” (“The Good French Governess” 130; italics Edgeworth’s). However, Isabella and Matilda do not agree with her opinion, because to their eyes, “it did not appear the most delightful of all things to be idle, nor the most desirable thing in the world to have their education finished, and then to lay aside all thoughts of further improvement” (“The Good French Governess” 130). They develop very well as almost ideal scholars of Edgeworth. On the other hand, Miss Fanshaw lacks her self-examination as Augustus in “The Good Aunt”.

At the end of the story, Mad. de Rosier finds her son who was thought to be dead. He made a miraculous escape from the prison of the Conciergerie, and now works in England. They have a touching reunion, and on being encouraged by everyone, they decide to go back to France together. Mrs. Harcourt and her children are disappointed to part from Mad. de Rosier, who is a good preceptress and a good friend for them. In addition, Mrs. Harcourt regrets that “[t]he plan of education which had been traced out remained yet unfinished” (“The Good French Governess” 152), and fears that “Isabella and Matilda might feel the want of their accomplished preceptress” (“The Good French Governess” 152). However, Edgeworth writes that:

these fears were the best omens for her future success: a sensible mother, in whom the desire to educate her family has once been excited, and who turns the energy of her mind to this interesting subject, seizes upon every useful idea, every practical principle, with avidity, and she may trust securely to her own persevering cares. Whatever a mother learns for the sake of her children, she never forgets. (“The Good French Governess” 152)

Then after Mad. de Rosier leaves, Mrs. Harcourt applies herself to literature and cultivates her understanding.

Mad. de Rosier has a great power of observation, and has an art to educate each child in the method which fits for the child. Her four pupils were victims of neglected education, however, all of them have improved. In addition, Mad. de Rosier has educated not only her pupils but also their mother. She leads the family into happiness.

## Chapter II : *Moral Tales* and *Practical Education* : Edgeworth's Examples of Bad Education

### 2.1 "Mademoiselle Panache"

"Mademoiselle Panache" is a story of a French governess, Mademoiselle Panache. Edgeworth portrays Mlle. Panache as a bad governess in the story, which shows an example of bad education. There are two opposing typical characters in the story, Helen Temple and Lady Augusta, and the story follows the growing process of each girl when they are twelve years old in Part I, and sixteen years old in Part II. In *Practical Education*, Edgeworth writes instructions for governesses in the chapter "On Female Accomplishments, Masters, and Governesses", so, in this section, I am going to discuss "Mademoiselle Panache" in relation with that chapter.

Helen Temple is a very sentimental girl, and as she always judges in a vague way, she cannot make a reasonable judgment. However, she gradually and remarkably changes through her encounter with Lady Augusta. Her mother, Mrs. Temple, puts a great emphasis on education. She is considered as a good educator just like Mrs. Howard in "The Good Aunt"; the story tells us that her daughters "were very fond of their mother, and particularly happy whenever she had leisure to converse with them" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 91). She has established a trustworthy relationship with her daughters. When Mrs. Temple and her daughters are invited to the S— Hall where Lady Augusta lives, trouble occurs. Helen is involved in Lady Augusta's roguery. Lady Augusta shows her a book with pretty vignette which her mother forbids her to take. What is worse, when she is showing it to her, her mother comes, and to hide it, Lady Augusta forces Helen to put it in her pocket. Helen does not have a chance to put it back to her; therefore, she has to take it to her home. She is also forced to keep the secret by her Ladyship. Mrs. Temple becomes aware that something strange is going on; however, she never asks or scolds her daughter. This in itself causes Helen's guilty conscience to suffer. "[W]hat she felt the most painful was, her mother's kind, open, unsuspecting manner" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 114). From this sentence, we can see the success of Mrs. Temple's education at this stage: Helen regrets her faults, and can judge, by herself, what is right and what is wrong



even when her mother does not scold at her. She can sense her mother's concern. What is more, Mrs. Temple's education policy is "to correct, or rather to teach them to correct, any little faults in their disposition, and to rectify those errors of judgment to which young people, from want of experience, are so liable" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 91). Mrs. Temple says to Helen, "[y]ou are old enough", "you are perfectly at liberty . . . I do not want to force any secret from you: do what you think right and honourable" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 115). Helen is distressed and struggles with the advice, and in the end, she makes her own decision which is the most honourable for her.

On the other hand, Lady Augusta is depicted as an egoistic and self-conscious character; and Mlle. Panache is the governess of Lady Augusta. Lady Augusta never regrets what she has done, and she never feels sorry to Helen. In addition, her attitude to her governess is harsh; even Helen and her sister Emma cannot look her in the face. Two persons who educate Lady Augusta are responsible for her attitude; her governess Mlle. Panache, and her mother Lady S— who has chosen the governess for her daughter. Lady S— talks about her daughter's French education to Mrs. Temple when they dine at Lady S—'s. She says, "I think myself most exceedingly fortunate. I am absolutely certain that Mademoiselle Panache comes from Paris, and was born and educated there; so I feel quite at ease" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 100). She also says, "I may depend on Mademoiselle Panache, for she is the best creature in the world. I've the highest opinion of her. Not that I would trust my own judgment, but she was most exceedingly well recommended to me" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 101). The reasons why Lady S— employed her are that she was recommended, and that she can speak French; however, as Mrs. Temple and her daughters notice, she has only a little knowledge of French literature, and in fact, she used to be "a milliner" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 104). Therefore, she is not a professional educator; however, Lady S— does not understand about it. In *Practical Education*, Edgeworth points out the importance of the choice of a governess:

In the choice of a governess we should not, then, consider her fashionable accomplishments as her best recommendations; these will be only secondary objects. We shall examine with more anxiety, whether she possess a sound, discriminating, and enlarged understanding. Whether her mind will be free from prejudice; whether she has steadiness of temper to pursue her own plans; and, above all, whether she has that species integrity which will justify a parent in trusting a child to her care. (308)

Her idea is that a governess should not only specialize in French, she should also have understanding and good temper. As a result, at the end of the story, Lady

S— exclaims, “A bad education!”, and complains to Mrs. Temple that Mademoiselle Panache “was well recommended to me, and how could I foresee all this?” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 172). In contrast to Lady S—, Mrs. Temple does not hire a governess for her daughters, and is contented with them to cultivate only standard French. She says to Lady S—:

“Helen and Emma” “read and understand French as well as I could wish, and if they ever go to France, I hope they will be able to catch the accent as I have never suffered them to acquire any fixed bad habits of speaking it.” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 100)

Mrs. Temple's idea of studying French seems to be an echo of Edgeworth's contemporary educator Hannah More's similar idea in *Strictures on Female Education* (1799):

I would rate a correct pronunciation and an elegant phraseology [of the French language] at their just price, and I would not rate them low; but I would not offer up principle as a victim to sounds and accents. (103)

Mrs. Temple also puts emphasis on a correct pronunciation and elegant phraseology. On the other hand, though Mlle. Panache is French, she has a dialect, not possessing “a correct pronunciation and an elegant phraseology” ; in addition, “her taste for language” is not “elegant” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 104).

In Part II, Helen and Lady Augusta have reached sixteen, and they begin to think about men. They mature, but in opposite ways. Lady Augusta is still under the auspices of Mlle. Panache; and Lady S— is “content with her daughter's progress in external accomplishments, paid no attention to the cultivation of her temper or her understanding” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 118-119). Lady Augusta has grown up to have a striking figure, and always dresses elegantly, and she cultivates accomplishments. She has very good external accomplishments such as archery and music, and everybody observes her with great admiration. Her mind, however, is poorly cultivated; she has no understanding and good temper. On the day of the archery meeting, she sees that Helen is walking with a man called Mr. Montague, who has a “very good family, — [a] fine fortune” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 125). Then an evil thought crosses her mind:

her habitual disposition to coquetry, joined to a dislike of poor Helen, which originated while they were children, made her form a strong desire to rival Helen in the admiration of this young gentleman of — “very good family and fine fortune.” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 125-26)

She concentrates upon attracting Mr. Montague's attention to her at the archery meeting; then she "came forward, a striking figure, elegantly dressed, who, after a prelude of very becoming diffidence, drew her bow, and took aim in the most graceful attitude imaginable" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 126). However, what she lacks is true affection. She wins Mr. Montague's heart at once, only aiming to win against her rival Helen; therefore, once she notices that she has lost his heart, her target changes to another man. Mr. Montague, as he spends time with her at S— Hall, realizes Mlle. Panache's ill education of Lady Augusta. In the meanwhile, Helen is not necessarily good at playing instruments, but she has an ability to amuse her friends by playing them. Edgeworth mentions many values of accomplishments in *Practical Education*; she says accomplishments are important not only to women, but to society in general, and "they must be just objects of attention in early education" (295). Lady Augusta studies only for a selfish purpose. She cultivates great accomplishments. However, she suffers from ennui. Although she has outstanding accomplishments, she cannot develop her own tastes. After all, she has no motivation to develop her mind, and she cannot enrich her life anymore. On the other hand, Helen has her own taste, and Mr. Montague sees his future life with Helen being enriched. Edgeworth writes: "[l]et young women cultivate their tastes or their understandings in any manner that can afford them agreeable occupation, or, in one word, that can make them happy" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 112). In *Practical Education*, Edgeworth writes instructions for governesses on pupil's "understanding":

it is in all cases advisable to cultivate the general power of the pupil's understanding, instead of confining her to technical practices and precepts, under the eye of any master, who does not possess that which is the *soul* of every art. (306; italics Edgeworth's)

The knowledge of literature is also related with internal progress. Helen and her future lover Mr. Montague read a lot of books, and have a wide knowledge of literature. Then Mr. Montague is surprised and furious at the fact that Lady Augusta has "the very worst book in the French language; a book which never could have been found in the possession of any woman of delicacy — of decency" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 157). Presumably, the book was recommended by Mlle. Panache. Because she herself has not read a lot of books and has only a narrow knowledge of literature, she has no sense to choose books for her pupil. This is a quite opposite character to Mrs. Howard in "The Good Aunt", who puts a great emphasis on books about the child's education. In *Practical Education*, Edgeworth advises governesses on literature: "[a] general knowledge of literature is indispensable; and yet farther, she must have sufficient taste and judgment to

direct the literary talents of her pupils" (*Practical Education* 310). Thus, she emphasises the importance of the knowledge of literature for governesses.

A governess has a great effect on a child's education. As a result of Mlle. Panache's lack of knowledge and responsibility, Lady Augusta becomes a self-conscious person, intent only on conquering men. Her happiness lies only in people's admiration of her and her enslavement of men. In *Practical Education*, Edgeworth indicates: "there would be no necessity for her being a *mistress of arts*, a performer in music, a paintress, a linguist, or a poetess" (*Practical Education* 310; italics Edgeworth's). The governess, instead, must be a professional educator who cultivates a child's spirit and understanding more than her technical accomplishments.

## 2.2 "Angelina; or, L'amie Inconnue"

"Angelina; or, L'amie Inconnue" is a story about a romantic and eccentric girl, Miss Anne Warwick, who puts herself in correspondence by the name of "Angelina". Edgeworth describes her as follows:

her want of what the world calls common sense arose from certain mistakes in her education. She had passed over her childhood with a father and mother who cultivated her literary taste, but who neglected to cultivate her judgment: her reading was confined to works of imagination; and the conversation which she heard was not calculated to give her any knowledge of realities. ("Angelina; or, L'amie Inconnue" 10-11) (Hereafter "Angelina")

When she was about fourteen, her parents died, and then she lived with Lady Diana Chillingworth (Lady Di). Lady Di is described as "a lady who placed her whole happiness in living in a certain circle of high company in London" ("Angelina" 11). She gives dogmatic advice to Miss Warwick; and Miss Warwick is fed up with it. Miss Warwick has no friends and acquaintances around her who have topics of common interest, and suffers from ennui. Therefore when she happens to read a novel called "The Woman of Genius" at a circulating library, she was exceedingly attracted by the heroine Araminta, who is the author herself. She "longed to become acquainted with her" ("Angelina" 11), and wrote a letter to the publishers; and then got an answer which is "in a highly flattering, and consequently very agreeable style" ("Angelina" 11). After that, her correspondence with her "*unknown friend*" Araminta ("Angelina" 11; italics Edgeworth's) continues for nearly two years. She is immersed in the unreal world of the book, and dreams of it; she averts her eyes from reality. She receives an invitation to Araminta's "charming romantic cottage" ("Angelina" 11) in south Wales, and decides to go there by herself. Lady Di notices her journey, and is disappointed

with it.

What Edgeworth wants to say in this story is that Miss Warwick's reading is confined to imagination, and this is not good for a well-balanced female education. In the chapter on "Books" in *Practical Education*, Edgeworth argues that:

With respect to sentimental stories, and books of mere entertainment, we must remark, that they should be sparingly used, especially in the education of girls. This species of reading cultivates what is called the heart prematurely, lowers the tone of the mind, and induces indifference for those common pleasures and occupations which, however trivial in themselves, constitute by far the greatest portion of our daily happiness. (191-92)

Edgeworth thus indicates that reading "sentimental stories" and "books of mere entertainment" will cause "the danger of creating a romantic taste" (*Practical Education* 192), and she further argues:

there is reason to believe, that the species of reading to which we object has an effect directly opposite to what it is intended to produce. It diminishes, instead of increasing, the sensibility of the heart; a combination of romantic imagery is requisite to act upon the associations of sentimental people, and they are virtuous only when virtue is in perfectly good taste. (192)

Miss Warwick is surely a bad example of the case. She is fed up with her daily life, and dreams a charming "unknown friend" Araminta, and her romantic life. She goes to Araminta's cottage by herself; however, when she finally meets her, she is very shocked. Because Araminta is so much different from what she imagined. This kind of dreamy woman is referred to in *Practical Education*:

Women, who have been much addicted to common novel-reading, are always acting in imitation of some Jemima, or Almeria, who never existed, and they perpetually mistake plain William and Thomas for 'My Beverly!' (173)

In the case of Miss Warwick, the heroine Araminta exists; however, what she dreamed of did not exist. This is because she cultivated only her literary taste. There are other abilities which need to be cultivated besides the literary taste as Edgeworth advises in *Practical Education*:

Women who cultivate their reasoning powers, and who acquire tastes for science and literature, find sufficient variety in life, and do not require the *stimulus* of dissipation, or of romance. Their sympathy and sensibility are

engrossed by proper objects, and connected with habits of useful exertion: they usually feel the affection which others profess, and actually enjoy the happiness which others describe. (173; italics Edgeworth's)

Miss Warwick needs to cultivate these abilities, and such cultivation, Edgeworth believes, will lead up to women's happiness of life.

### Chapter III: *Moral Tales* and the Age

*Moral Tales* and *Practical Education* were both published in the Romantic period in Europe, which extends roughly from the 1780s to the 1830s. In England, people were greatly influenced by the European Enlightenment thought, and the poetry of William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) became very popular after 1798 in which their joint work *Lyrical Ballads* was published just at the same time as *Practical Education*. In addition, as Alan Richardson says in his book *Literature, Education and Romanticism*, "Education was one of the most hotly contested and frequently discussed topics of what is often called the Romantic age" (2-3). This is because, in the 1780s, there were a lot of changes of education in England, and the period witnessed the beginning of mass education. In England, people's interests in education were gradually raised in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Sunday schools were increased rapidly. This is because of the industrial revolution: a lot of people came to cities from rural areas, and children were also made to work hard to help their parents' lives. However, many of the children tended to do misdemeanours; therefore, Robert Raikes opened a Sunday school in 1781 to prevent children from committing crime. It was the first school for lower-class children. Moreover, as Richardson points out:

[These years saw] the rise of a children's literature geared for instructional use at home and in the schools, the first experiments in didactic "popular" fiction, the practical working out of Locke's educational methods for use in the middle-class home, the popularization in England of Rousseau's educational theories, the publication of the first major feminist critiques of education, the adumbration of a Romantic response to a number of these developments in poems by Blake and Wordsworth. (*Literature, Education and Romanticism* 3)

In this exciting period, Edgeworth did practical experiments on her brothers and sisters, with R. L. Edgeworth, and recorded their observations on children's learning patterns, and then wrote *Practical Education* based on the records.

Richardson says:

Maria Edgeworth, who with her father produced *Practical Education*, the most influential manual of the rationalist approach, helped invent modern children's fiction, and develops throughout her novels and tales a "mother-daughter educational narrative" that displaces the romance plot formerly dominant in fiction by, for, and about women. (*Literature, Education and Romanticism* 7)

As he says, Edgeworth contributed to the invention of children's fiction. Books for children were sadly lacking at the time in Ireland, where she lived. Marilyn Butler writes:

In the 1780s books for children suddenly became what they have been ever since, a substantial part of the booksellers' trade. It was not only Edgeworth who had noticed in the decade before the almost complete dearth of good reading-matter for children of the literate classes, and others had also been ready to follow the lead offered by Mrs. Barbauld's *Lessons*. (*Maria Edgeworth* 156)

In addition, Mark D. Hawthorne says that "there [was] little written expressly for children except Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton* and a handful of tales by Mrs. Barbauld" (*Doubt and Dogma in Maria Edgeworth* 23) (Hereafter *Doubt and Dogma*). Although she writes that Mrs. Barbauld's tales "are by far the best books of the kind that ever appeared" in her chapter "On Books" of *Practical Education* (183), Edgeworth points out some sentences from Mrs. Barbauld's tales which need some "pencil line across" them (*Practical Education* 184). She also mentions that there are some stories "well adopted to one class of children, but entirely unfit for another" (*Practical Education* 187-88). Because she has a lot of younger brothers and sisters, she wanted good books for them. Then she tried to write for them by herself. Hawthorne indicates:

She usually wrote the first draft of a story on a slate, then read it to her brothers and sisters. If they approved, she copied it; if they didn't, she rewrote it and tried again. Her apprenticeship was truly a family affair. (*Doubt and Dogma* 23)

The only flaw which Hawthorne finds in Edgeworth's tales is that her tales are too moralizing. However, I think that it is what she intended to write, so it is not a flaw except by today's standards, in the West at least. *Moral Tales* is a book

she wrote for teenagers.

As I mentioned before, *Practical Education* was written as a collaboration between Maria Edgeworth and her father R. L. Edgeworth, and was published in two volumes in 1798. However, it was not the first one: before publishing the collaboration with Maria, R. L. Edgeworth had written another *Practical Education* with his second wife Honora Edgeworth. It was intended to be in three volumes; and the second volume was a story about two children, Harry and Lucy. However, the first and third volumes were not written because Honora died in 1780, and only the second volume was privately printed in February, 1780, but not published. In the story, Butler points out, “the children ask a great many questions and their parents supply the answers, in well-judged phrases calculated to make brick-making, or many another process, intelligible to the very young” (*Maria Edgeworth* 63). Butler considers the original *Practical Education* to be “frankly educational” and to suffer from “slightness and apparent naïvety, [though R. L.] Edgeworth had a high opinion of its importance” (*Maria Edgeworth* 63). The original version was later published as the first of the *Harry and Lucy* series in 1802, with some revisions, under the names of Maria Edgeworth and R. L. Edgeworth. For the third volume of the original version, which was never written, Honora and R. L. Edgeworth had intended to record some data, especially on their “children’s reactions to new knowledge and experience” (Butler, *Maria Edgeworth* 64); because “they felt that the need was to establish facts, through trying out on real children, lesson by lesson, what could be learnt and what could not” (Butler, *Maria Edgeworth* 64).

As Butler points out, their principle was “that the art of education should be considered as an experimental science” (*Practical Education* 409); in addition, they even pointed out “that many authors of great abilities had mistaken their road by following theory instead of practice” (*Practical Education* 409). The principle was taken over by R. L. Edgeworth’s daughter Maria Edgeworth, in the new version of *Practical Education*. Therefore we can say that her mother Honora, as well as R. L. Edgeworth, was one of the people who greatly influenced Maria’s thoughts on education.

Not only for *Practical Education* but also Maria’s other works including *Moral Tales*, which are not a collaboration with him, R. L. Edgeworth gave her advice; and although she understands her father’s thought well and is very submissive to him, there are some differences between her and his thoughts. He always said that a child should be a rational being, and should cultivate reason; however, she could not wholly accept this. Though *Practical Education* is an excellent collaboration, its defects are that it ignores children’s feelings and emotions and denies romantic feeling which Maria noticed.

Hawthorne points out, “[R. L. Edgeworth’s] children were treated like rational



beings who must eliminate all passion and emotion in order to live virtuously and prudently” (*Doubt and Dogma* 7). In addition, “[R. L. Edgeworth] ignored children’s temperaments and taught by precept and example that reason is the sole guide to human conduct” (*Doubt and Dogma* 7). Maria felt uncomfortable with his strict rational precept as Hawthorne argues:

Miss Edgeworth apparently felt uneasy about his oversimplification of human behavior. More sensitive to the nuances of personality than her father, she neither ignored her own imagination nor forgot her own emotions. (*Doubt and Dogma* 14)

One of the reasons why her father’s rationalism was not wholly accepted by Maria is that she was not deeply educated by her father when she was little. R. L. Edgeworth was not attentive to her at the time because he was too enthusiastic about his son Richard’s education, and Maria spent her childhood with her real mother Anna Maria. Because she also went away to boarding school afterwards, the education she received was not mainly by R. L. Edgeworth’s old-fashioned rational education. Another reason is, of course, the difference of sex between Maria and her father. As a female, she is much more sensitive to feeling, and emotion, or romantic feeling than her father, and also puts emphasis on them. The third reason is the time when she lived. Maria wrote *Moral Tales* in 1801, three years after *Lyrical Ballads* was published. She was 31 at the time, which means that she was so young that she must have been influenced by Romanticism. Her father is already 54 at the time and not very flexible for the new age in contrast to Maria. We can see the feelings in her *Moral Tales*. She often uses the words “please” and “pleasing” in her work; and I think that these words reflect characters’ feeling and emotion. Therefore, first, I am next going to look at her attention to feeling and emotion in *Moral Tales* through the words “please” and “pleasing”.

Edgeworth puts high value on pleasing people. In “Mademoiselle Panache”, there is a conversation between Mr. Montague, Mrs. Temple, and Helen; Mrs. Temple says to Mr. Montague, “[i]f young women were not deceived into a belief that affectation *pleases*, they would scarcely trouble themselves to practise it so much” (130; italics mine). She says that women believe that affectation *pleases* men; therefore we can see from this part that Edgeworth puts emphasis on pleasing people, which is a very important thing. To Mrs. Temple’s words, Mr. Montague questions, “as to *pleasing* — what do we mean? *pleasing* for a moment, for a day, or for life?” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 130; italics mine). Then Helen answers to it smiling, “*Pleasing* for a moment” “is of some consequence; for if we take care of the moments, the years will take care of themselves”

("Mademoiselle Panache" 130; italics mine). Therefore Helen also sets a high value on pleasing people. There is another sentence in "Mademoiselle Panache", "Helen was no proficient in music; but she played agreeably enough to *please* her friends" (153; italics mine). Edgeworth goes on referring to Helen's "accomplishments" ("Mademoiselle Panache" 153), as I mentioned in chapter II; accomplishments must not be used as only for individual purpose as Lady Augusta does; they must be used for the social purpose. Edgeworth depicts Helen as well-educated woman, and pleasing people is an important ability to the society.

There are a lot of sentences in *Moral Tales* which show an educator's feeling and a child's feeling by the words "please" and "pleasing". Therefore I am going to look at each of them. The former feeling can be seen in "The Good Aunt" : first, Mrs. Howard's friend, "a gentleman . . . was much *pleased* with Charles' ready recollection of the little knowledge he possessed, with his eagerness to make that knowledge of use to his aunt, and more with his perfect simplicity and integrity" (17; italics mine). Second, when Charles had fought with Augustus and Mrs. Howard knows of it, "she was *pleased* to hear that he had fought in so good a cause" ("The Good Aunt" 26; italics mine). Third, when Charles got a prize for his essay, Oliver was pleased with it very much, and then "Dr. B., *pleased* with this grateful little boy's honest joy, put the medal into his hands [to give it to Charles by his hands]" ("The Good Aunt" 52; italics mine).

The latter feeling can be seen in "The Good French Governess" and "The Good Aunt". First, in "The Good French Governess", Mad. de Rosier says to Matilda, "My love . . . ask me as many as you *please*" (79; italics mine). Second, since Matilda has no confidence in her intelligence, and has no motivation to study, "Mad. de Rosier patiently waited till she discovered something which seemed to *please* Matilda more than usual" ("The Good French Governess" 94; italics mine). From these sentences, we can see that Mad. de Rosier's educational approach handles children's emotion carefully. Third, when Mrs. Harcourt says that, thanks to Mad. de Rosier, her children improved very much, "Matilda looked *pleased* by this speech of her mother" ("The Good French Governess" 93; italics mine). In "The Good Aunt", too, there is an important sentence about Mr. Russell's education of Charles: Charles says to Mrs. Howard, "Mr. Russell told me the other day, that if I applied myself, I might be whatever I *pleased*" (15; italics mine). Charles is very young at the time, and he responds by saying that he will be "a physician, or a lawyer, or something" ("The Good Aunt" 15). Therefore Mr. Russell's words served to motivate Charles.

As for romantic feeling, there are some remarkable expressions in "Mademoiselle Panache". When Lady Augusta laughs at Helen, Mr. Montague "[speaks to Mrs. Temple] with indignation of coquetry, and lamented that so

many beautiful girls should be spoiled by affectation” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 130). However, he falls in love with or is charmed by Lady Augusta that evening:

Whether all Mr. Montague’s sober contempt of coquetry was at this moment the prevalent feeling in his mind, we cannot presume to determine; we must only remark, that the remainder of the evening was devoted to Lady Augusta; he sat beside her at supper and paid her a thousand compliments, which Helen in vain endeavoured to persuade herself meant nothing more than — “I am, madam, your obedient humble servant.” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 131)

Therefore, Helen, who has already fallen in love with him, has to approach to his passion. Mrs. Temple, who feels pain for her daughter’s distress, says to her, “you thought you had won Mr. Montague’s heart? But what did you *think about your own?*” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 133; italics mine). I think that the words “your own” here mean Helen’s own emotional attachment to Mr. Montague, and that Mrs. Temple pays attention to Helen’s heart, not to her reason. In addition she also encourages her, saying that Mr. Montague has “the power of *pleasing* [Helen]” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 133; italics mine). We can also see her emphasis on “pleasing” in the following part as well. As he knows Lady Augusta, he notices her “picturesque attitude” (“Mademoiselle Panache” 154), and reminds Helen’s attractiveness. As Edgeworth explains:

He felt a secret idea that he was beloved, and a sober certainty that Helen had a heart capable of sincere and permanent affectation, joined to a cultivated understanding and reasonable principles, which would wear through life, and ensure happiness, with power superior to the magic of passion. (“Mademoiselle Panache” 156)

Although Mr. Montague wavers in his judgment initially, Helen wins his heart in the end.

Because Maria Edgeworth depicts people’s feeling and emotion in her *Moral Tales*, we can say that she was not a strict rationalist like her father, and seems to have been influenced by the-then-growing Romanticism to some extent.

## Conclusion

Maria Edgeworth’s *Moral Tales* and *Practical Education* are interrelated in a lot of points. She wrote *Moral Tales*, based on what she and R. L. Edgeworth had expounded in *Practical Education*, and she tried to make it easier for the

young reader to read.

In Chapter I, I discussed Edgeworth's method of good education through her two moral tales, "The Good Aunt" and "The Good French Governess". In both of the stories, there are good educators, and their children develop very well. In "The Good Aunt", Mrs. Howard educates her nephew Charles. In her education of the nephew, she puts emphasis on pleasurable reading, so as not to cram him with knowledge, but to cultivate his understanding. Mrs. Howard also shows an ability to choose books which are fit for children, on which Edgeworth puts stress in *Practical Education*. In this story, she depicts public education as well, and Charles meets a boy, Oliver, whose education is neglected at home though he struggles to study at school. Oliver spent his time at home with his servants, which, as Edgeworth mentions in *Practical Education*, is not good for children. In "The Good French Governess", a French governess, Mad. de Rosier, educates her four pupils, Isabella, Matilda, Favoretta and Herbert. These four children are victims of neglected education by their former preceptor; however, the new governess, Mad. de Rosier, educates them remarkably well. Their mother is not interested in the education of her children at first; however, Mad. de Rosier gradually draws her into becoming interested. She has an ability to convince her of her thoughts on children's education, and is described as an ideal governess. In educating their pupils, both Mrs. Howard and Mad. de Rosier do their best to cultivate their own selves too, and they show a deep knowledge of literature; in addition they take educating a child as their most important duty. They are the kind of ideal preceptors whom Edgeworth presents abstractly in *Practical Education*.

In Chapter II, I described Edgeworth's examples of bad education through her two other moral tales, "Mademoiselle Panache" and "Angelina; or, L'amie Inconnue". In "Mademoiselle Panache", there is a bad educator, Mlle. Panache. Mlle. Panache is employed by Lady S—, because she was well recommended. As Edgeworth indicated in *Practical Education*, this, by itself, is an inadequate test of a teacher's worth, and, as a result, Lady S— eventually comes to regret having hired her. Mlle. Panache has no taste for literature, which Edgeworth argues is necessary for a governess, and she fails in her pupil's education. Her pupil, Lady Augusta looks well cultivated and has great accomplishments; however, she has not cultivated her temper and understanding. In "Angelina", the heroine is a romantic and eccentric young girl, Miss Warwick. Through all of her moral tales, Edgeworth puts emphasis on reading education; however, in *Practical Education*, she argues that we need to be cautious of romantic stories when considering a girl's education. Miss Warwick is an example of a girl who cultivated literary taste without cultivating judgment. Consequently she becomes addicted to romantic correspondence with an "unknown friend" to the neglect of her studies

and her self development.

In Chapter III, I wrote about the relation between *Moral Tales* and the age when Edgeworth wrote it. When she wrote it, England was in the Romantic period, and she was influenced by Romanticism to some extent. In contrast to her father R. L. Edgeworth, who was a strict rationalist, Maria Edgeworth paid attention to people's feeling and emotion, which was demonstrated by the fact that she used the words "please" and "pleasing" a lot of times in her *Moral Tales*; and I think that these words reflected her characters' feelings.

Maria Edgeworth is a woman who dedicated her life to education. From her youth, she took care of and educated her young brothers and sisters. Her experience taught her to observe on her brothers and sisters during the education of them, for research purpose. She incorporated her observations and research results in *Moral Tales* and *Practical Education*. She also wrote children's fiction for their good education. *Moral Tales* is one such fictional work, and because in it she makes use of a lot of points discussed in *Practical Education*, we can see her strong conviction and belief in her educational method.

#### Notes

- 1 The original basis of *Practical Education* is partially provided by "The Papers of Maria Edgeworth 1768-1849" in microfilm (Part 1: Reel 1).
- 2 Brian Simon, *Studies in the History of Education* (London, 1960), 25, cited in Elizabeth Harden, *Maria Edgeworth*, 24.
- 3 Charles' freedom from racial prejudice is considered to be a reflection of Maria's, which is expressed in her 1804 letter to her third step-mother, Frances Anne Edgeworth: "I am glad, my dear mother, to find that we are not so singular as we feared we were in our horrible toleration of Black men—I have never yet touched upon the subject to my aunt for an excellent reason, because I think she would not be of my opinion" ("The Papers of Maria Edgeworth 1768-1849" in microfilm (Part 2: Reel 3)).

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