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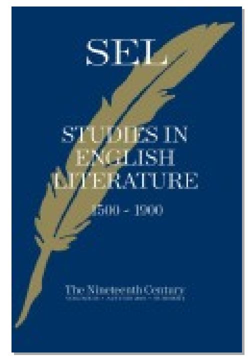

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FRANCES FERGUSON

In the history of colonialism, in the history of mass education, the notion of method has had a particularly prominent place. Method, in the guise of bureaucratic procedures, has seemed to approach the status of universal solvent almost as fully as money itself. It enables exchange. In the context of educational debates, methodological questions reach into the understanding of the staging of education, particularly from the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. They dictate what can be taught to students at what ages, what kinds of architecture or decoration might facilitate their learning. Questions of method have particular urgency in discussions of exchanges between societies largely because questions about their aptness at translation are particularly intense there. The methods that manifest themselves in the systematization of laws and the development of techniques for education can look alternately oppressive and absurd: what might have looked in one society merely as a way of organizing particular forms of recurrent social action can look like a hegemonic attempt to pave over another society's ways of doing things.

Claude Levi-Strauss and Louis Althusser famously apply a critique of colonialist education to modern European practices, so that the institution of compulsory education in Western societies itself emerges less as an opportunity for the schooled than a liability.[1] As Levi-Strauss puts it, universal literacy enforces acknowledgment of the methodical operation of the law, so that ignorance of the law would cease to be—if it ever had been—an excuse.[2] Jacques Derrida may mock Levi-Strauss's insistence that

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preliterate societies had as great a quantity of knowledge as literate ones, on the grounds that it is absurd to speak of quantities of knowledge.[3] Yet he would have had less to object to if Levi-Strauss had talked about education and educational method rather than knowledge *tout court*. For education, however much we may talk about the need to foster creativity and originality, always has the aim of transmitting extant knowledge and extant techniques of knowledge production from one generation to another. It thus inevitably gives special prominence to transcription and copying.[4] It brings attention to the way in which learning—and materials to be learned—accumulate.

Efforts to extend education throughout particular societies perforce have a normalizing effect, even when they focus on the transmission of subjects such as mathematics that seem remote from ideological influence. For even discoveries are of the nature of copies, copies of what seems retrospectively like a previously unapprehended order that is confirmed after the fact by the grading or verification system. Early nineteenth-century experiments in mass education did not, however, directly subscribe to the view of copying that I have just laid out. In the discussion that follows I examine the cases of Andrew Bell's and Joseph Lancaster's experiments in mass education. Although these two have been seen as so similar as to be almost interchangeable, I aim to bring out the nature of their increasingly bitter opposition to one another and to suggest that this antagonism revolved around their different understandings of the notion of copying. Copying, in Bell's view, was to be avoided; copying, in Lancaster's, to be embraced, as a social as well as an intellectual and mechanical operation.

In *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, Gauri Viswanathan observes the importance of debates that were internal to Britain in shaping British educational policy in India.[5] She lucidly identifies the difficulties that individuals had in escaping the domestic debates in which they had been embroiled as they attempted to develop schemes for dealing with a colonial population. Viswanathan particularly stresses the tensions that arose when English literature, "a seemingly innocuous and not yet fully formed discipline," was asked "to perform the functions of those social institutions (such as the church) that, in England, served as the chief disseminators of value, tradition, and authority."[6] Arguing against "reading the history of the education of Indians exclusively in terms of the education of the English lower classes," she also suggests the importance of the British domestic debate between Anglican educators and Dissenting or secular educators, as India was sometimes seen as a "'fair and open field for testing the non-religion theory of education.'"[7]

Viswanathan takes up the story of the British debates about Indian education and "the beginnings of English literary studies," largely with "the Charter Act of 1813, an act born of the tensions between Parliament and the East India Company and between Company officials and missionaries and whose wording was so ambiguous as to encourage an unexpected prominence to English studies."[8] The particular episode which I take up here, however, involves a somewhat earlier moment in the history of British educational debates, a moment that extends from the 1790s through to 1808 and after. Although one can discern the outlines of the later promotion of English literary studies that was to follow, the debate largely circled around how students should be brought to learn rather more elementary skills: basic reading, math, and spelling. Over the course of little more than a decade an acrimonious exchange began—what Barbara Rooke labels the Bell-Lancaster controversy in the chronology she includes in her edition of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Friend*.[9] Understood in its most basic elements, the controversy pitted Andrew Bell, who first arrived in India as a chaplain to British military regiments in 1787 and later headed the Male Military Asylum and Orphanage (founded in 1789), against Joseph Lancaster, a young Quaker who opened a school on Borough Road in London on New Year's Day in 1798 with the aim of educating the children of the working poor.

Bell took to print first, in 1797. Lancaster published a first edition of his *Improvements in Education* in 1803. The two became widely known as proponents of the monitorial method in education, which eliminates the use of a number of teachers and instead enlists more advanced students to act as instructors for the less accomplished. Many accounts of the two men and their work stress the similarities between their projects and observe that they initially developed their schemes simultaneously but in substantial independence of one another.[10] Vernon L. Allen, in *Children as Teachers: Theory and Research on Tutoring*, refers to the Bell-Lancaster system as if it were one thing.[11] And it has become conventional to suggest that the chief difference between the two men amounts to one about the place of religion in education: Bell aimed to train up "good scholars, good men, and good Christians," while Lancaster minimized anything he took to be related to "creeds of faith, words, and names," that is, to anything that involved the promulgation of specific religious doctrines rather than an ecumenical Christianity.[12]

Lancaster's position would, thus, have been congenial to utilitarians, the ones whom Viswanathan rightly identifies as having been reluctant to introduce British religion into India. Yet the irony of the particular situation that I am describing is that Bell was in a position to head a school—the Male Military Asylum and Orphanage at Egmore, near Madras—in the period before British missionaries were allowed to proselytize in India. Bell never had to worry about a ban on missionary activity, never had to defend himself against charges that he was encouraging young Indian men to adopt an alien set of religious beliefs. Rather, he escaped such accusations by focusing his efforts on a distinctive group of students: the sons of European military men and Indian women, though, as Robert Southey points out in his biography of Bell, Bell's preferred students were the sons of European military men and European women.[13]

Referring to the British-Indian children as "half-caste," Bell describes his project largely in terms of a contest that he hopes would eventuate in the dominance of the students' British traits over their Indian ones.[14] As he puts it, "I think I see, in the very first maxims which the mothers of these [half-caste] children instil [*sic*] into their infant minds, the source of every corrupt practice, and an infallible mode of forming a degenerate race."[15] And he writes to one correspondent that he aims at "giving to society an annual crop of good and useful subjects, many of them rescued from the lowest state of depravity and wretchedness."[16] Moreover, he represents himself as having hit on the idea of using more advanced students to teach when he found Indian ushers (adult teachers who reported to him) to be intractable. Bell not only achieved considerable savings in employing unpaid students rather than salaried ushers, but also eliminated debates about the educational protocols of the Male Military Asylum when he dismissed ushers who had their own ideas about how instruction should be conducted. The school thus assembled a group of people most unlike those in the environment into which the students had been born.

India and the notion that education might be a platform for any kind of interchange between Indians and Britons soon ceased to figure in Bell's presentation of his educational scheme. Although he took over the Male Military Asylum in 1789, the *Experiment in Education* that he published in 1797 was already part of a farewell to India. The text that he signed on 28 June 1796 describes various practices that he adopted for the school, but that straightforward account is followed with a number of testimonials from students and grateful philanthropists who, with their veritable seals of approval, made the experimental phase of the project seem to have reached a conclusion.[17] When Bell, an ordained Anglican minister, returned to Britain, his thinking about education no longer involved the exchange of ideas between Britain and India. As Sarah Trimmer says, "it does not appear that he has ever attempted to repeat [his experiments] in *Europe*."[18] And it was in England that the controversy became a controversy, as the British discovered how little they were prepared to exchange ideas about education among themselves.

In the discussion that follows, I begin by saying something about the reception history of Bell's and Lancaster's projects in order to identify how the two schemes were increasingly starkly opposed to one another by others and then by the principals themselves. I then try to explain a paradoxical feature of this reception, namely that even as the two schemes were seen as wildly different from one another, partisans of each man charged the other with plagiarism, with Bell's advocates being particularly vocal. Finally, I examine some of the basic procedures of each educational model to try to understand the relation that the reception bore to the substance of the systems themselves.

As Mary Moorman rightly observes, the controversy "epitomized the conflict between Church and Dissent" and "effectually delayed any promotion of education by the State for two generations" (until the passage of the Elementary Education Act in 1870).[19] Supporters of Bell insisted that "the Church [should] have control" over education, as in the "Madras System," while supporters of Lancaster urged that the State should adopt "free education on 'general Christian principles.'"[20] Bell initially praised the orderliness and effectiveness of the proceedings at Lancaster's Borough Road school and seemed inclined to cooperate with Lancaster in ventures that he took to be parallel. Lancaster, for his part, thanks Bell in the 1803 first edition of *Improvements in Education* for having explained to him that the sand that Bell recommended for early writing lessons (in imitation of the practice of Malabar children) should be dry rather than wet and for having provided the model for his own emphasis on sounding out syllables distinctly (thus analyzing words into their constituent syllables rather than treating them as synthetic wholes as students were learning to read and to write).[21]

Their cordial relationship deteriorated, however, when Trimmer, who styled herself the Guardian of Education, contacted Bell. She was, she wrote to him, soon to publish an essay titled "A

Comparative View of the New Plan of Education Promulgated by Mr. Joseph Lancaster, in His Tracts concerning the Instruction of the Children of the Labouring Part of the Community." Bell would have discovered when he read the essay that any praise Trimmer accorded Lancaster was a mere rhetorical gesture; she was praising in order to blame that much more effectively. Trimmer gave him advance notice, quite explicitly laying out her strategy, before going on to encourage Bell to think that Lancaster was taking credit for work that he, Bell, had done.

Trimmer's essay set the terms of discussion for Bell's partisans from that point on. She foregrounds three issues that R. A. Foakes has identified as key: intellectual priority, the place of religion in the educational scheme, and the use of rewards and, especially, punishments.[22] She flatly stated that "this mode [Lancaster's method of instruction] had its origin in a school under the particular management of a *clergyman* of the *Church of England*, Dr. Bell, who, in the second edition of his '*Experiment in Education*,' lately published, has favoured the public with 'A Scheme of a School on the Model of the *Male Asylum* at Madras,' of which he was one of the directors and superintendant [*sic*]."[23] She affirms her own assertion in a summary—"From what has been exhibited concerning Dr. Bell's scheme of education, the reader will easily perceive that his system and Mr. Lancaster's, are similar in respect to the classification of the school, and making the boys teach one another"—before ominously suggesting that she refrains from mentioning other points of similarity, and that "farther traits of resemblance may be observed in proceeding with the work, but it is not my object to trace this resemblance minutely."[24] Anything valuable in Lancaster's system was, she insists, already available in Bell's. Moreover, she turns the tables on Lancaster's appeals for highly generalized and ecumenical religious instruction by suggesting that "[i]t is certainly asking too much to require the members of the [Established] Church to withhold from children in their school education their Creed and their Catechism, their Bible in fact, and their Common Prayer Book, and '*to keep in the back ground*' all the *peculiar doctrines* which the Church holds sacred."[25] Bell's system—as Trimmer describes it as the model for Lancaster's—provides all the advantages that Lancaster's does. Moreover, it does not, as she says Lancaster's does, exclude all those in conformity with the "[Established] Church, which is one *of the pillars of the* Constitution, as well as the Glory Of The Nation."[26]

As Foakes points out, Anglican clergymen seized upon the religious issue and essentially argued that Lancaster the Quaker was, in Trimmer's description, "a Goliath of Schismatics" who was attempting to represent religious secession as toleration.[27] The lines of distinction between the two men and their systems were, however, drawn especially sharply by Coleridge, who went so far as to offer a supernumerary lecture on education following his announced series of lectures on poetry for the Royal Institution in 1808. If there was a text for that lecture, it went missing—perhaps after the directors of the Royal Institution censured Coleridge for having vehemently criticized Lancaster and his scheme even as the rules of the Institution expressly enjoined lecturers not to attack living individuals.[28] Henry Crabb Robinson's extensive notes have, however, been preserved. They represent Coleridge as having passionately praised Bell for developing an educational system that had done as great service to mankind as Thomas Clarkson had in his efforts on behalf of abolition.[29] They also depict Coleridge as having equally passionately denounced Lancaster, focusing in large measure on Lancaster's techniques for punishing students who violated the rules of conduct of the school.

Bell and Lancaster were both, almost inevitably, opposed to beating children. Educational writers from at least the time of John Locke's *Some Thoughts concerning Education* (1693) had regularly spoken against the use of corporal punishment.[30] Though Bell and Lancaster both echoed the by-now-standard repudiation of corporal punishment, Coleridge, who recommended the sparing use of corporal punishment, joined Trimmer in finding the punishments that Lancaster meted out intolerably cruel, resting as they did on shame.[31] Lancaster, while observing that "[t]he chief offenses committed by youth at school, arise from the liveliness of their active dispositions" rather than from innately evil tendencies, also thought that repeated misdemeanors should be recognized and corrected.[32] A monitor observing and admonishing a routinely idle boy, Lancaster writes, "has liberty to put a wooden log round his neck, which serves him as a pillory" that forces him to hold his head in the proper position for attention to his work.[33] Finally, Lancaster describes a "punishment [that he deems] one of the worst that can be inflicted on boys of sense and abilities": putting them "in a sack, or in a basket, suspended to the roof of the school, in the sight of all the pupils, who frequently smile at *the birds in the cage*."[34]

Lancaster's insistence that punishments are seldom resorted to in his school and that they are "preferable to others more severe, and in common practice," and his recommendation that they be blended with "more generous" practices, seems not to have figured in Coleridge's detailing of punishments in which students are themselves "made the instrument[s]" of their own correction.[35] In Coleridge's insistence that a child should be educated by love, he also seems to have passed over the threat with which Bell coupled his instruction, that each boy should rule his own notebook (which no one else should be allowed to write in) and should write in letters of a size that the master would dictate to him. Bell may not have specified the punishment that would attend the malfeasance of larger or smaller handwriting, but he did require a loyalty oath to penmanship: "This hand I am to keep to in writing throughout this book [the boy's personal notebook]; and should I deviate from this rule willfully and through carelessness, I am to be brought to punishment according to the regulations of the school."[36] The emphasis fell on the importance of self-copying.

Others echoed Trimmer's three points of attack when they insisted on the importance of schooling as a marking off of the self and a withdrawal from negative influence. In 1812 Robert Southey published *The Origin, Nature, and Object of the New System of Education*, in which he again urges Bell's claim to have originated the system of "self-tuition" but largely confines his remarks to complaints against Lancaster.[37] The value of Bell's scheme, he writes, could be "fully understood by those only who are well acquainted with India; such being the deplorable state in which these children were frequently left, that their miserable mothers have sometimes sold them to the native powers, to be circumcised and trained up in the army, or mutilated for the service of the palace!"[38] Southey then reports a sermon of Dr. Herbert Marsh's in which Marsh makes the point that "[e]ven [religious] neutrality, however strictly observed, is in *this* case a kind of *hostility*. It is *hostility* to the Establishment, to deprive our children of that *early* attachment to it" that can never be made up for later.[39] Southey ridicules Lancaster's claim that schools using his methods give students more practice in spelling and math than they could have in a situation in which the correction of each child's work interrupts the ongoing announcement of new problems: "Mr. Lancaster's estimate, it must be owned, is very much like that of the three Irishmen, who said they had walked a hundred and fifty miles in the day,—because they had walked fifty miles a-piece: if knowledge depended upon the number of words spelt, not by an individual boy, but by imputing to one the amount of what is done by all, the sum total in millions might then, indeed, be a matter of exultation and importance."[40] Further, Southey spiced the observation: "Mr. Lancaster seems to have borrowed this notion from the Roman Catholics, whose religious fraternities are founded upon a supposition that every member is entitled to the full benefit of all the prayers which are said by the whole."[41]

I will return later to the question of rewards and punishments and their connection with Lancaster's claim that his methods gave students unusually abundant practice. At this point, however, I want to outline the two systems and explain something of their transmission history. Foakes, in reviewing the terms of the controversy, says that "there is little doubt that Bell introduced the basic principle of self-tuition, and [that] Southey, who also attended [Coleridge's] lecture [on the Bell-Lancaster systems] and was fired by it, was right … to emphasize that there was essentially only one system based on the same principle, if differing in detail."[42] It is this observation—advanced by Trimmer, Coleridge, and Southey alike, and affirmed by Foakes—with which I want to disagree. But I also want to provide something of a justification for their views—or, if not a justification, at least an explanation of the route by which they came to them.

Bell's and Lancaster's systems were similar but only on the broadest level, that of "the basic principle of self-tuition," in which students taught students. This was, however, hardly a new principle. As Francesco Cordasco observes in his introduction to the third edition of Lancaster's *Improvements in Education*, "the techniques were very old (extending back to the efforts of John Brinsley [ca. 1570–ca. 1630], with evidence of the use of monitors in Elizabethan grammar schools)."[43] Once the controversy got going, Lancaster suggested that Bell himself had drawn his own plans from descriptions of Chevalier Paulet's plans that the *Literary Repository* had published in 1788.[44] Yet neither Bell nor Lancaster invented the principle of self-tuition because it did not need inventing. It was common practice, one that Bell observed when he saw older children in Malabar teaching younger ones to write their letters in the sand, and one that has been perennially practiced in every situation in which there have been more people eager or willing to learn than adult teachers available to teach them. This basic concern about staffing educational institutions led Lancaster to use the methods he did and to announce that the slender resources of the "labouring" members of society meant that they had to adopt different principles for educating their children from those employed by the rich. This was the case because, as Lancaster writes, "The rich possess ample means to realize any theory they may chuse to adopt in the education of their children, regardless of the cost."[45] His system, he thought, necessarily differed from the schemes that Locke, Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant had urged when they recommended that a family hire a highly qualified tutor (and remunerate him as generously as they thought they should have been during their own periods of service as tutors in wealthy households).

Bell's and Lancaster's plans for "self-tuition" were, then, identical on the broadest terms in that they involved only one adult teacher and therefore minimized the outlay on salaries. Bell's boys taught one another under the supervision of only one adult teacher—Bell. Lancaster's more advanced students became monitors who oversaw small groups of students learning subjects that the monitors had already mastered (or could deliver through the use of a key that Lancaster recommended, so that anyone who could read could teach). Apart from the elimination of virtually all the adult staff, however, the two plans differed substantially. Bell assigned students to two overlapping groups of two, so that each student was a tutor to another and a pupil to yet another, and he proposed that the adult teacher should close off the circle by teaming up with the least proficient student in the group. Over time he suggested that students could be divided into classes, but the basic unit for his system was the overlapping pair. Such an arrangement disposed his model particularly well for the use of families and very small country schools of the kind that William, Mary, and Dorothy Wordsworth participated in at Grasmere.[46]

Meanwhile, Lancaster's students operated on an almost altogether different plan and a vastly different scale, including as many as a thousand students. Lancaster insisted that all the pupils in a spelling or reading or writing group would complete all the work assigned as if it had been assigned to each individually. He even discouraged silent reading and urged that individual copies of books be magnified so as to be read by everyone in a class simultaneously, on the theory that "solitary reading … has no emulation with it," thus making books a kind of collective and public property.[47] This was a point that Southey failed to grasp when he suggested that the Catholic Irishmen whom he mocked thought that each individual accomplishment (walking fifty miles, spelling fifty words) might be claimed by each and every individual (as if each had walked a hundred and fifty miles or spelled a hundred and fifty words). Lancaster was not advancing a theory of intercession in which one person's action or prayer might be credited to another's account. Rather, he advocated a scheme in which there was maximal public repetition of exercises such as spelling, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division—that is, in which each pupil was seeing and doing every exercise or problem that every other student simultaneously saw and did. Even if a student was not called on for an answer to every question, he—and later, she as well—had each question very much in view. And the students were ranked by the same recursive process that a spelling bee follows, so that both the correctness of correct answers and the mistakenness of wrong answers were themselves part of the public display. By contrast, Bell's scheme was a more individualistic affair. It demanded that each boy line his own exercise book himself and zealously affirm his right to be sole proprietor of it: no one else should write in a boy's personal book.

Even when religious doctrine was not as prominently on display as in Trimmer's discussion, then, the various understandings of the organization of individual and collective action roughly followed the contours of the different ways of depicting action (or caricatures of them) in different religious persuasions. Even when Coleridge and Southey emphasized specific religious texts and teachings less than Trimmer had in her list of the central books of religious education, they saw the issues in terms of a model that corresponds to a Protestant version of self-examination—of exactly the kind that John Howard represents in his discussions of the penitentiary and its occasions for contemplation of one's own past actions.[48] The pupil below each individual and the tutor above became the occasion for conveying information and for harnessing the admiration that children may have for older children, but the scope of the entire operation was limited by the centrality of the supervision of the teacher. As Trimmer puts it, "In smaller establishments [than Lancaster's], as Dr. B. has shown, the master may do all that properly belongs to him, and *him alone* without exciting the passions of the youthful mind beyond bounds."[49] Bell advocates using "the *black book*, as the boys call it, or *register* of continued idleness, negligence, ill-behaviour, and every offense which requires serious investigation and animadversion."[50] Once Lancaster began to return Bell's fire, he charged that Bell had a black book but no white one. In his view, the limitation of Bell's scheme lay in its penitential, self-examining character and its way of multiplying occasions for blame without offering an equal number of opportunities for positive acknowledgement. What Lancaster observed was an incomplete system, one that identified punishments rather than rewards and punishments.

Yet if Coleridge and Southey mischaracterized Lancaster's system, they were helped to their misrepresentations by both Trimmer's long essay and Bell's activities. Foakes notes that "as Bell revised and expanded his book, he incorporated into it, without acknowledgment, some of the practical instructions elaborated in Lancaster's more detailed writings, and laid himself open to the charge, made by Joseph Fox, that he had stolen Lancaster's ideas."[51] In fact, the text that Bell sent in page proofs to Coleridge just before Coleridge gave his supernumerary lecture on education was the first Bell had published that adopted the term "monitor," Lancaster's term of art from the beginning. This line of transmission led Coleridge, to judge from Robinson's report, and Southey, to judge from Southey's discussion of 1812, to suppose greater long-standing similarity between the two schemes than was there. They imagined that Bell, having published something earlier, must have published something that looked very much like his text of 1808. Thus it was that the phrase "monitorial system" came to be applied to Bell's and Lancaster's programs alike.

The point of tracking the process by which Bell took more and more of Lancaster's material and was credited with priority is not, however, to insist that we give due acknowledgment to Lancaster. As I mentioned earlier, neither man deserves entire credit; they were following practices that had been perennially discovered. Rather, the discussions of priority help us to focus on the way that the Bell-Lancaster controversy offers two different models for thinking about the relationship of individuals to the groups of which they are a part. Both Bell and Lancaster relied on subscribers to fund their schools—the period's version of Kickstarter—and their work was laced with acknowledgments of the generous support they had received, which served not only to offer thanks but also to generate favorable publicity.

Southey, apparently particularly nettled by George IV's support for Lancaster, remarked on Lancaster's self-promotion, yet recognized Bell as adept at appealing directly to prominent literary men such as Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth and enlisting their public endorsements.[52] Thus, Bell delivered the copy of the 1808 version of his plan into Coleridge's hands just as Coleridge was offering his series of increasingly well-received lectures. In the process he pursued Trimmer's recommendation that he do more to take credit for his educational plan. Bell also enlisted Wordsworth and Southey to prepare a complete edition of his works and write his biography—a project that Southey stuck with even after Wordsworth lost interest in it and that his son Charles Cuthbert Southey completed after his father's death.

By the time Southey was writing what would be volume 1 of *The Life of the Rev. Andrew Bell, Comprising the History of the Rise and Progress of the System of Mutual Tuition*, published in 1844, he seems to have retained less enthusiasm for Bell than he had had in 1812 in his first assessment in *The Origin, Nature, and Object of the New System of Education*. Southey, identifying William Wilkie as Bell's chief mentor, details how Wilkie took to literature and "came to the extraordinary conclusion, that the likeliest way of promoting it ['his own advancement in the world'] was to write an epic poem" so that he would attract the attention of a patron.[53] After deliberating his choice "among the various branches of fine literature," he rules out tragedy on the grounds that "it would have been deemed scandalous for a minister of the kirk even to see one represented," then considers and drops the idea of writing a novel because "this was not the kind of work which could be produced as a claim for preferment."[54] What Wilkie sought was patronage, personal sponsorship by another person, and what Southey brings out in including this information about Bell's mentor is the extent to which Bell is an individual who sought out relationships with other individuals in advancing in his career. Bell was, that is, an independent agent who saw himself dealing with a collection of independent agents. He therefore, as Southey also indicates, piled up a series of different appointments to chaplaincies in India—eight of them by Southey's count—and was disappointed when he was denied the same opportunity to be paid for multiple simultaneous appointments once he returned to Britain.[55]

These facts about Bell's career constitute, I think, something more than interesting biographical data. Southey's rehearsal of them not only betokens his diminished enthusiasm for Bell and his plans, but also identifies something crucial about Bell's lines of thought in ways that I will say more about momentarily. Bell's approach to his life and his plan for his work follow the same model: they cast up their accounts in the way that the firm does. The relationship between persons thus always looks like a sociable one (rather than one based on sociality). It was particularly that model that Trimmer recognized in Bell's work and that led her to suggest that his person and his brand were being infringed upon. It was that model that influenced Coleridge and Southey to repeat much of what Trimmer had to say, and to revise and qualify their own assessments of Bell's work (privately, in Coleridge's case; sardonically, in Southey's). In the world of sociability in which they, like Bell, are operating, the question of exactly how much a particular person values another person's work and the question of exactly who originates certain ideas looms very large. Thus, Trimmer and Coleridge and Southey accused Lancaster of cribbing his thoughts from Bell, while Coleridge also complained privately that Southey simply rehearsed the account of Bell that he had given in his supernumerary lecture.

The basic picture that emerges from the complicated case of Bell and Lancaster and their reception is of a contrast between what I just called sociability and sociality, but we might also describe it as a contrast between a plan (Bell's, with its timetable and rules) and a system (Lancaster's, with its emphasis on the system itself and its capacity for self-adjustment). The Lancasterian system, like all others, encourages pupils to read accurately, to sound out their letters, and to produce an intelligible word in the presence of others. Moreover, it fosters normative voicing that one might think of as the equivalent of broadcast English. The Bell approach, as advanced by Coleridge, aims to single out individual voices (as if to do the police, à la Charles Dickens's Sloppy in *Our Mutual Friend* [1864–65]). Thus, at one point in the *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge objects to Lancaster's recommendation that children should read texts written by others in as natural a voice as possible and should not read in a sing-song manner. Lancaster recommends discouraging "a singing tone in reading" "by *force* of ridicule," and maintains that those who read in a singing tone should be decked out with "matches, ballads," and should be sent "round the school, with some boys before him, crying matches, &c. exactly imitating the dismal tones with which such things are hawked about the streets in London."[56] Thus, he proposes that children should be made fun of for reading in this way and mocked for sounding like street vendors.

Lancaster's punishments regularly took just such a form. They identified a nonstandard practice and aimed to modify it by exaggerating it or inverting it—that is, by making it publicly, socially visible. Trimmer, Coleridge, and Southey denounced these punishments as inhumane, but such punishments might more plausibly be seen as part of an advancing revival of the kind of shame culture that E. R. Dodds and Bernard Williams identified in Greek literature.[57] Trimmer objected to the idea that the boys should be encouraged to mock anyone, but Lancaster was clearly following lines of thought that Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham had developed from the time of Beccaria's *Dei Delitti e delle Pene* (1764), in which the chief aim of a punishment is less to exact a penalty for past conduct than to have the force of a deterrent—for anyone and everyone—in the future and to make it seem as if the genuinely bad behavior would be to emphasize the difference between the match-seller and the boys. The punishment was a punishment for the sake of a system operating through public regard. We might even say that the difference of the Lancasterian system from Bell's arrangement becomes apparent here in the insistence on treating the school and its modes of punishment under the aspect of a sociological concern for the incentives that students' behavior might represent for one another. As Michel Foucault observes in his work on panoptic imprisonment, "a secret punishment is a punishment half-wasted."[58] To this thinking, we might add, a punishment seen is a punishment that aims to maintain the value of the social regard that here figures as collective regard, rather than the desire for the respect of those we respect that Williams ties to a morality linked to shame.

What Trimmer, Coleridge, and Southey took as a violation of persons and their right to social regard under the rules of sociability was, then, a different thing altogether for Lancaster. He did not hold the account of individuals and the centrality of individual agency that Bell, Coleridge, and Southey did. This latter view led them to stress the individuality of pupils to such an extent that they installed a taboo on copying that resolved itself into an inability to accept others' example as if it were actually an example. Thus, beginning in 1797, Bell recommends that students be taught the alphabet by writing in sand, insisting that writing in sand is "a far more effectual way than that usually practised, as it prevents all learning by rote," presumably because it affords children no chance to trace an image from a written page set underneath their own.[59] Coleridge, some two decades later in the *Biographia Literaria*, mentions Lancaster's disapproval of sing-song reading only to disagree with it. Children, Coleridge argues, should mark the difference between their own thoughts and those of others, and should not attempt the style of reading that fused different voices in a fashion that seemed natural to Lancaster: "for an instinctive sense tells the child's feelings, that to utter its own momentary thoughts, and to recite the written thoughts of another, as of another, and a far wiser than himself, are two widely different things; and as the two acts are accompanied with widely different feelings, so must they justify different modes of enunciation."[60] What Bell and Coleridge both stress in the remarks I have quoted is the commitment to marking out the pupil as an individual, and an individual as someone who writes and reads without copying, and who marks his letters and his thoughts in his self-lined notebook as different from those of others.

Thus, although Foakes characterizes “the monitor system” as “using older children to teach others in a pattern largely of learning by rote,” Bell would, I think, have recoiled in horror at such a description, since he aimed to make even things such as the project of learning to write letters look as though it might be conceived as a distinct alternative to “learning by rote.”[61] Coleridge adopts a similar position in drawing the lines of distinction between a young reader and the words of the author whom he read aloud—a view that perfectly opposed and complemented his mutterings about how Southey had simply taken over the thoughts he had expressed in his 1808 lecture.

Indeed, the antipathy that Bell and Coleridge—and Trimmer and Southey—expressed toward copying went a long way toward protecting them against the recognition that they were themselves duplicating the words and thoughts of others. Thus, Bell could fold into his ongoing iterations of his text Lancasterian terms like “monitor” and “emulation” and Coleridge could accuse Southey of taking from him descriptions even when Coleridge was himself largely echoing points that Trimmer had introduced. They produce classic instances of *mauvaise foi* as Jean-Paul Sartre describes it and Fredric Jameson glosses it: a commitment to oneself renders impossible the sense that the acts that one would condemn in others are things for which one would chastise oneself.[62]

The copying that Bell, Coleridge, and Southey cannot have done, by definition, because they have repudiated copying, thus ends in a peculiar result. They produce a highly developed sense of the self as the sum of all the entries in one’s individual journal without reference to any other. And the jury trial that Bell prescribes as the appropriate way of dealing with bad behavior produces the modern moral subject as someone who can earnestly say that punishment for his behavior is beside the point. Above copying and resistant to the influence of the persons who are copresent to him, he cannot plagiarize, however much he may seem to be repeating the words of someone else. For him the warrant for the assertion that he has not plagiarized, that he has not copied, is his conviction of his personal autonomy. His sense of having meant what he said earns him, he thinks, a full right to unacknowledged use.

When the Elementary Education Act established universal childhood education in Britain in 1870, the Bell-Lancaster debate lost its urgency. It ceased to prompt partisans of one side or the other to rehearse their arguments in print. Yet the terms in which the debate was conducted may help us to understand its influence on subsequent aesthetic thought, and particularly on Coleridge's. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, in their 1983 edition of *Biographia Literaria*, usefully suggest the interimplication of Coleridge's thinking about the educational controversy and his thinking about poetry and poetic language, noting how Coleridge digressed in 1811 from his announced topic of *Romeo and Juliet* to speak about Lancaster and how he returned to the theme in a lecture of 1813.[63] In 1817 he again took up the theme in *Biographia Literaria*, this time in relation to the question of poetic diction and the propriety of Wordsworth's understanding of it. Indeed, the education controversy and the account of copying that Coleridge developed in relation to it go a long way toward explaining why Coleridge contrived his own peculiar account of Kant and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling in importing them into England.[64] Famously arguing against what he saw as Wordsworth's fallacious declaration of the proximity of his own poetic diction to low and rustic life, Coleridge spoke of the desirability of poetry's providing "an *imitation* as distinguished from a mere *copy*."[65]

That distinction between imitation and copy had, of course, even greater prominence in Coleridge's account of the primary imagination, the secondary imagination, and the fancy.[66] And the Bell-Lancaster controversy enables us to understand how tendentious he was in describing fancy as receiving "all its materials ready made from the law of association."[67] In defining the primary imagination in terms that Lancaster and other Dissenters would have accepted, he depicts it as perception of a kind perfectly consonant with materialist associationism. Yet the distinction between fancy and secondary imagination converted fancy into an inadequate reworking of those perceptual materials and secondary imagination into a fulfillment that they might not have known they were lacking. Imitation and copy, yet again.

The parting of the ways that makes aesthetic experience a remedy for the deficits of perception has many sequelae, perhaps none more prominent than the two different understandings of the performative that have arisen in the discussions of J. L. Austin's description of it in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962).[68] For Austin, the explicit performative situates a speech act so thoroughly in an interpersonal context that there need not be any negotiation of exactly what someone means. The copresence of the persons engaged in a particular linguistically enacted ritual makes them latter-day participants in Lancaster's notion of simultaneous reading. They do not go to a wedding, hear the bride and groom utter their vows before witnesses and an officiant, and proceed to wonder about whether a marriage has taken place. (Indeed, this is the point of Austin's declaration that poetry is parasitic when it does further work on such performative statements.) For Coleridge, however, all the moments in which persons are, so to speak, on the same page are instances of copying rather than imaginative imitation. And it is this line of the performative as an imaginative reenactment that Geoff Quilley has so effectively tracked in his account of the depictions of Captain Cook in this issue.

NOTES

[1] Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Penguin, 1992), pp. 298–300; and Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1984), pp. 5–7.

[2] Levi-Strauss, pp. 298–300.

[3] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 101–40, esp. 128–32.

[4] The notion of copying I develop here involves seeing intelligibility itself as a version of copying. The disagreement between Levi-Strauss and Derrida over whether the Nambikwara chieftain whom Levi-Strauss observed was writing or only pretending to write thus looks to me like a debate over how far copying can or should be individualized.

[5] See Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (1989; rprt. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), pp. 11–2. See especially Viswanathan's discussion of the tensions between the East India Company and the English Parliament and between Parliament and British missionaries.

[6] Viswanathan, p. 7.

[7] Ibid.; and Alexander Duff, *India, and India Missions: Including Sketches of the Gigantic System of Hinduism, Both in Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1839), p. 429, qtd. in Viswanathan, p. 8.

[8] Viswanathan, p. 21.

[9] "Chronological Table, 1772–1834," in *The Friend*, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Barbara E. Rooke, vol. 4.1 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, 23 vols. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969–83), pp. xxv–xxxiv, xxix.

[10] R. A. Foakes, "'Thriving Prisoners': Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Child at School," *SIR* 28, 2 (Summer 1989): 187–206; and *Biographia Literaria, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol. 7 of *The Collected Works*, p. 60n3.

[11] Vernon L. Allen, *Children as Teachers: Theory and Research on Tutoring* (New York: Academic Press, 2013), p. 13.

[12] Andrew Bell, *An Experiment in Education, Made at the Male Asylum of Madras. Suggesting a System by Which a School or Family May Teach Itself under the Superintendance of the Master or Parent* (London, 1797), p.

[v]; ECCO ESTC T099021. Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education as It Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community*, 4th edn. (London: J. Lancaster, 1806), p. xii.

[13] Robert Southey and Charles Cuthbert Southey, *The Life of the Rev. Andrew Bell, Comprising the History of the Rise and Progress of the System of Mutual Tuition*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1844). Robert Southey explains how "orphans of officers, if left destitute," had preference; "the orphans of non-commissioned officers and soldiers had the next claims"; followed by the sons of the noncommissioned officer or soldier unable to provide for his children's education (1:156). "But," Robert Southey clarifies, "none were eligible unless their fathers were of European descent" (1:157).

[14] Bell, *An Experiment in Education* (1797), p. 7.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Southey and Southey, *Life of the Rev. Andrew Bell*, 1:179.

[17] Bell, *An Experiment in Education* (1797), p. 38.

[18] [Sarah] Trimmer, *A Comparative View of the New Plan of Education Promulgated by Mr. Joseph Lancaster, in His Tracts concerning the Instruction of the Children of the Labouring Part of the Community* (London: T. Bensely, 1805), p. 139.

[19] Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 2:178.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Lancaster, *Improvements in Education as It Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community*, facsimile of 3d edn. (1805; rprt. Clifton NJ: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1973), pp. 46–60, esp. 46–7, 60.

[22] Foakes, pp. 192–4.

[23] Trimmer, p. 129.

[24] Trimmer, p. 139.

[25] Trimmer, pp. 150–1.

[26] Trimmer, p. 150.

[27] Southey and Southey, *Life of the Rev. Andrew Bell*, 2:132. Trimmer dated her letter 24 September 1805.

[28] See Foakes, pp. 191–2.

[29] Coleridge, *Lectures 1808–1819: On Literature*, ed. Foakes, vol. 5 of *The Collected Works*, pp. 95–109. Henry Crabb Robinson's notes mention that Coleridge names Bell and Thomas Clarkson as "the two men who had done most for humanity in his time" (*Lectures 1808–1819*, p. 102).

[30] It became common for educational writers to emphasize the importance of governing children with reason or affectionate ties, rather than corporal punishment. John Locke, for instance, observed that "the usual lazy and short way by Chastisement, and the Rod, which is the only Instrument of Government that Tutors generally know, or ever think of, is the most unfit of any to be used in Education" (Locke, *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James L. Axtell [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968], pp. 146–51, esp. 148).

[31] Lancaster attempted to make public regard function as both reward and punishment. He thus encouraged competitions between classes of students so that demonstrating superior knowledge would function as a reward in recognition, and relied on various forms of public shaming as punish-

ment (Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* [1805], pp. 100–5). Coleridge, by contrast, recommended corporal punishment as an appropriate part of the program of affectionate attention he endorsed. See Robinson's notes on Coleridge's 3 May 1808 supernumerary lecture on education before the Royal Institution in *Lectures 1808–1819*, p. 102.

[32] Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* (1805), p. 100.

[33] Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* (1805), p. 101.

[34] Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* (1805), p. 102.

[35] Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* (1805), pp. 104–5.

[36] Bell, *An Experiment in Education* (1797), p. 16.

[37] Robert Southey, *The Origin, Nature, and Object of the New System of Education* (London: John Murray, 1812), p. 26.

[38] Robert Southey, *Origin, Nature, and Object*, p. 3.

[39] Robert Southey, *Origin, Nature, and Object*, p. 108.

[40] Robert Southey, *Origin, Nature, and Object*, p. 33.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Foakes, p. 192. Foakes refers to Robert Southey's *Origin, Nature, and Object*.

[43] Francesco Cordasco, introduction to *Improvements in Education* (1805), pp. 5–12, 9.

[44] See Lancaster, *An Account of a Remarkable Establishment of Education at Paris* (London: J. Lancaster, 1809), cited in Foakes, p. 192.

[45] Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* (1805), p. vii.

[46] See Moorman, 2:178–9.

[47] Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* (1805), p. 51n.

[48] John Howard's *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales, with Preliminary Observations, and an Account of Some Foreign Prisons* (Warrington: William Eyres, 1777) was the most influential eighteenth-century British work urging prison reform. Howard particularly recommended that prisons be hygienic, that prison-keepers themselves be supervised, that prison guards employ discipline more gentle than severe, and that prisoners be temporarily put in solitary confinement to consider their faults (p. 72).

[49] Trimmer, p. 140.

[50] Bell, *An Experiment in Education, Made at the Male Asylum at Egmore, Near Madras* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1805), p. 15.

[51] Foakes, p. 192. See Joseph Fox, *A Comparative View of the Plans of Education as Detailed in the Publications of Dr. Bell and Mr. Lancaster* (London: A. Grant, 1808), pp. 13–8.

[52] Robert Southey, *Origin, Nature, and Object*, p. 127.

[53] Southey and Southey, *Life of the Rev. Andrew Bell*, 1:13.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Southey and Southey, *Life of the Rev. Andrew Bell*, 1:107, 1:126, and 3:142–3.

[56] Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* (1805), p. 105.

[57] Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1993), pp. 75–102, 219–24. Williams's argument, briefly stated, is that the Greeks did participate in a "shame culture," but that that culture involved a more robust notion of moral agency than scholars such as Bruno Snell would admit when he insisted that the Greeks saw all human action

under the sign of fatality. Williams draws on a distinction between "shame culture" and "guilt culture" made by E. R. Dodds in *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1951).

[58] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 111.

[59] Bell, *An Experiment in Education* (1797), p. 26. I am indebted to my colleague James Chandler for helping me to this understanding of Bell's formulation.

[60] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 7.2:60n.

[61] Foakes, p. 189; and Bell, *An Experiment in Education* (1797), p. 26.

[62] Fredric Jameson, *Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2013), p. 228. Jameson tellingly applies Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of *mauvaise foi* to George Eliot's Casaubon and Bulstrode. Sartre's concept of *mauvaise foi*, or bad faith, aligned it with social conformity and an excessive concern for the view of others. See Sartre, *Mauvaise Foi* (Paris: Hatier, 2001).

[63] See Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 7.2:60–1n3. The editors, Engell and Bate, in this same note also call attention to Thomas De Quincey's witty observation that people were asking, "'Have you heard Coleridge lecture on Bel and the Dragon?'" (De Quincey, *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols. [Edinburgh, 1889–90], 5:196).

[64] See Barbara L. Packer, *The Transcendentalists* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2007), pp. 29–31. Packer offers a lucid discussion of Frederic Henry Hedge's "celebrated review of Coleridge's works for the *Christian Examiner* in 1833," which displays a full appreciation of how strenuously Coleridge bent Kantian terms (p. 29).

[65] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 7.2:43.

[66] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 7.1:304.

[67] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 7.1:305.

[68] See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà, 2d edn. (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975).