

“Considerably different . . . for her sex . . . ”:
Fashioning Martha Jefferson as
Republican Daughter and Plantation Mistress

Billy L. Wayson

“The plan of reading I have left for her,” Jefferson wrote, “is considerably different from what I think would be most proper for her sex in any other country than America.”¹ This single sentence, written in late 1783 to the secretary of the French legation, Marbois, is freighted with a host of still unanswered questions and nettlesome curiosities. In Thomas Jefferson’s mind, what was the “America” for which eleven-year old Patsy was being prepared? How did her “sex” or gender condition what she should read? Where were the boundaries of propriety Father thought could be exceeded in America but not in other nations?

As frequently happens with Jefferson’s writings, the historical record is further confounded by the speculative reasons he offers for such a “plan.”

I am obliged in it to extend my views beyond herself, and consider her as possible at the head of a little family of her own. The chance that in marriage she will draw a blockhead I calculate at about fourteen to one, and of course that the education of her family will probably rest on her

¹ Thomas Jefferson to Marbois, Annapolis, 5 December, 1783, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950-), 6:373-74. Hereafter cited as *Papers*. Martha (1772-1836) was the first child of Thomas and Martha Wayles Skelton Jefferson. Three of her parents’ six children survived infancy; Martha and Mary (1778-1804) lived to adulthood.

I wish to express my appreciation to Endrina Tay, Associate Librarian at the Jefferson Library for her indispensable assistance with transcribing manuscript book lists, identifying full citations, and directing me to sources. Jack Robertson, Foundation Librarian, afforded access to the invaluable on-line source of Jefferson’s many book lists being developed by the Jefferson Library. Research Librarian Anna Berkes graciously guided me through the intricacies of research guides and archival holdings. Lisa Francavilla, Managing Editor, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*, patiently bore my repeated queries on the provenance of the “List of Books for a Lady’s Library” held in the Thomas Jefferson Papers, Series 6, Randolph Family Manuscripts, 1790-1889 (DLC), <http://www.loc.gov> (4 February 2009). Both errors of omission and commission remain, as usual, my responsibility.

own ideas and direction without assistance. With the best poets and prosewriters I shall therefore combine a certain extent of reading in the graver sciences. However, I scarcely expect to enter her on this till she returns to me.²

A “blockhead”? “Head of a little family”? Why the “graver sciences”? What is young Patsy doing alone in Philadelphia, anyway? The reader can easily spin out a host of additional questions generated by these few sentences.

My own questions over the past several years led me to Thomas Reid's *Powers of the Mind*; Adam Smith's *Moral Sentiments* and kindred ethical formulations from the Scottish Enlightenment; to revisit Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, but avoid a near encounter with Bacon's *Novum Organum*. This wending through what Merrill Peterson has called Jefferson's “labyrinthian” character involved collecting some 1000 letters plus sundry other documents bearing on the questions associated with “considerably different” and “other than America.”³ What I discovered was that Martha Jefferson's education did turn out to be “considerably different,” just not in ways her father likely intended. The full story is a book-length piece we are struggling to pare to publishing economics.

The purpose here is more limited: First, I will describe how Jefferson, atypically for the times, came to be responsible for educating his daughter. This is followed by a brief description of the precepts or pedagogical understory that buttressed Patsy's education and, for that matter, the University of Virginia some thirty years later. Third, the paper discusses a letter prepared several decades after young Patsy's schooling in which Father recollected his expectations for her education and included a “catalogue of

² Thomas Jefferson to Marbois, Annapolis, 5 December 1783, *Papers*, 6:373-74. It was Marbois' inquiries that resulted in Jefferson preparing *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

³ Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (Charlottesville, VA: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 1988), 9.

books” that was claimed to be her “plan of reading.” Finally, it will speculate on two arcane items from the Jefferson-Randolph family archive -- “List of Books for a Lady’s Library” and a curriculum for the “Boston Lyceum [for Young Ladies].”⁴ In the context of the family’s history following the 1818 Burwell letter, these documents shed slightly more light on what Jefferson meant by a “plan of reading” that was “considerably different . . . for her sex” and on his enduring legacy and intellectual heritage for women’s education in America.

“a sacred charge”

Patsy, as the family affectionately called her, did not spend her formative years at a mother’s side learning the ways of plantation life. Physical environment, social practices, living arrangements, ethnicities, and more would be “considerably different” than her Virginia contemporaries. She was left at a Philadelphia boarding house amid strangers in late 1783. She was transported to Paris and placed in a convent school, where she dined at the Abbesses’ table with spinsters and widows wise to the world of the *ancien regime*. A few weeks after returning to Virginia in 1789, the seventeen-year old former convent student was married, thrust into the role of plantation mistress at Monticello without preparation and afforded little guidance other than Father’s regular letters. Why was she away from even a surrogate mother and being taught by a father?

When he penned the 1783 letter to Marbois, Jefferson was still suffering the pangs of grief. Wife Martha’s death from childbirth complications after just ten years of marriage had left him in a swoon, senseless, and living “a miserable kind of existence.”

⁴ These documents are located together in the Randolph Family Manuscripts of the Thomas Jefferson Papers (Series 6) held by the Library of Congress. Filed adjacent is a first-person description of the curriculum for the innovative Boston Lyceum for Young Ladies founded by Dr. John Park in 1813. Next is a list of books in an, as yet, unidentified hand.

It also in his heart left him with the “sacred charge” to care for and educate his three living children: Martha, aged ten at her mother’s death; Mary, six; and infant Lucy. Solace and temporary respite from “wretchedness” sprung from two founts: “care and instruction of [their] children” and the “soothing reflection that . . . one angel . . . views these attentions with pleasure and wishes continuance of them.”⁵ Further emotional relief was found in a return to public service.

In the fall of 1782, Jefferson accepted an appointment as a Peace Commissioner in Paris and departed Monticello with Patsy on December 19, leaving sisters Mary and baby Lucy with their Aunt Eppes.⁶ A month’s boarding with strangers at Mary House’s, while Father received his instructions from Congress;⁷ then, a departure on January 26th for Baltimore to await transportation to France. When American negotiators in Paris reached an agreement with Great Britain, they returned to Philadelphia and Mrs. House on February 26, 1783. Home for a Virginia spring and summer.

Patsy and Congressman Jefferson were on the move again in late October 1783, jogging in a two-horse phaeton along a westerly route across the Blue Ridge Mountains, north down the Shenandoah Valley, and on to Mrs. House’s Philadelphia home from 29 October to 18 November. Congress chose Annapolis over facing mass protests by unpaid Revolutionary War veterans. Meanwhile, Patsy moved to Mrs. Thomas Hopkinson’s and began her plan of reading and tutored instruction in the ornaments

⁵ Thomas Jefferson to Elizabeth Wayles Eppes, [3? October 1782], *Papers*, 6:198-99. The widowed Martha Wayles Skelton married Jefferson on January 1, 1772 at the home of her half-sister, Elizabeth (Mrs. Francis) Eppes.

⁶ Mary Jefferson was called “Polly” by her family and, after her return from France, also by “Maria” which had been ascribed by her schoolmates at Panthemont.

⁷ James A. Bear and Lucia C. Stanton, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 1:524-27 (hereafter, *JMB*) and *Papers* 6: 226.

(French, music, drawing, dance) under the watchful, if distant, eye of a demanding father.⁸

“a plan of reading”

Patsy’s “time in Philadelphia,” Jefferson wrote Marbois, would be “chiefly occupied in acquiring a little taste and execution in such of the fine arts as she could not prosecute to equal advantage in a more retired situation.” But, reading was definitely on the agenda for Patsy’s education during the five and one-half months they were separated. Daily “from 3. to 4. read French,” he admonished from Annapolis. “[F]rom 5. till bedtime read English, write &c.”⁹ Over six weeks later, he sulked: “Your long silence had induced me almost to suspect you had forgotten me I am anxious to know what books you read” Two months elapsed; Father still coaxed Patsy: “Let me know what books you have read since I left you, and what tunes you can play.” Springtime brought no lessening of demands: “I wish to know what books you have read since I left you” Unfortunately, there is no record of the “books [Marbois] was so kind as to recommend;” but, Patsy was left in Philadelphia with “Gil Blas and Don Quichotte which [Father considered] among the best books of their class.” Ironically in light of their subsequent journeys, both titles were popular Spanish novels telling the stories of wandering the world: one in search of adventure; another, pursuing ideals and

⁸ Bear & Stanton, *JMB*, 1:537. Jefferson took his seat at Princeton on 4 November 1783 but Congress adjourned the same day to reconvene at Annapolis three weeks hence (Dumas Malone, *Jefferson the Virginian* [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978], 403-04).

⁹ Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson, Annapolis, 28 November 1783; 15 January 1784; 19 March 1784; and 17 April 1784, *Papers*, 6:380-81, 465-66, and 7:110, respectively. Jefferson left Philadelphia for Annapolis on 22 November 1783 and returned on 14 May 1784. The daily schedule Father outlined for his young daughter stemmed from his belief in a diurnal pattern of mental vigor – strongest from 8:00-12:00 AM – and he routinely apportioned subject matter on this basis. There was a similar developmental variation in the capacity of the mental faculties of memory and reason, generally. From ages eight to fifteen was a time for exercising memory, when the “mind was not yet firm; reason, from fifteen to some indeterminate stage called “old age,” when faculties were in decline. See various citations below.

jousting with imagined enemies.¹⁰ There was little reading over the next three months. On May 11th, the Virginia couple left Philadelphia for Boston via New York and sailed for France on 5 July, where Jefferson assumed his post as Minister Plenipotentiary for the next five years.

This brief letter to Marbois contained only fragments of a “plan.” Though private tutoring and directed reading were traditional forms of learning, Patsy’s was slightly unusual by including in 1783 the “graver sciences” and considerations of spousal inadequacies.¹¹ Her travels away from a rural, isolated mountain top to an urban townhouse and foreign metropolis provided an abundance of learning experiences. However, the “plan of reading” would only be revealed long after she had returned to Monticello and was caring for her twelfth child. Father’s implicit “system” guiding Patsy’s development would emerge over several years as he drew from a reservoir of Enlightenment thinkers to devise an education for his “dear daughter.”

“all is in the wind”

For fifty years, Thomas Jefferson penned legislative proposals, government reports, and innumerable letters describing the inherent value of education for males, its

¹⁰ Jefferson owned several editions of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* in Spanish and a French translation (Sowerby #4347). *Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* by Alain-René Le Sage (Londres, 1749 or 61; Sowerby #4346) recounts a youth who is placed by his parents in the house of an uncle for his education and sets out from thence to learn about life, its temptations, and prospects from brigands, prostitutes, and persons of high degree. He successfully navigates these experiences in a corrupt society to become a landed nobleman. It concludes with a felicitous marriage whose sexual consummation on the wedding night is thwarted by groomsmen enticing the husband into a drunken stupor. Jefferson regularly recommended the novel for both boys and girls, but it is unclear, given his views on gender, why he considered the picaresque genre appropriate for an eleven-year old girl.

¹¹ Between 1800 and 1840, the “graver sciences” – natural philosophy, astronomy, chemistry, botany, mineralogy, natural history, etc. – were more prevalent in girls’ academies than in boys. For example, seventy-four percent of girls’ schools in Virginia and North Carolina advertised “natural philosophy” compared to forty-seven for boys; astronomy, 47% and 22%, chemistry, 54% and 21%, etc. (Kim Tolley, “Science for Ladies, Classics for Gentlemen: A Comparative Analysis of Scientific Subjects in The curricula of Boys’ and Girls’ Schools in the United States, 1794-1850,” *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1996), 129-153, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/369502>,

place in his political philosophy, and finally created a physical manifestation.¹² Amid the monuments to Jefferson's educational thought and institutional purveyors of his canon, it is not surprising that his most lasting and radical contributions to pedagogy are obscured. The elective, science-oriented curriculum pioneered at the University of Virginia, for example, caused such a stir in the academic world that Harvard professors resoundingly rejected it and Yale's President Day felt compelled to publish a faculty report defending a classical course of study.¹³ Or, Jefferson's belief that human relationships were the foundation of youthful learning is not always apparent as a visitor marvels at an "Academical Village" of residences for students and their mentors.¹⁴ Nor, is it obvious that Father drew from the very luminaries of Enlightenment thought in fashioning Patsy for a future in the plantation south as mistress of a republican household. He guided her learning with an unwritten "plan of reading;" it was directed through letters whose "precepts", he wrote, were "dictated by experience, by a perfect

¹² For a minor sampling of the many words he penned on education and various book lists over a period of almost fifty years, see: Thomas Jefferson to Robert Skipwith, with a List of Books for a Private Library, Monticello, 3 August 1771, *Papers*, 1:76-81; Thomas Jefferson to Peter Carr, with Enclosure, Paris, 10 August 1787, *ibid.*, 12:14-19; to John Minor, Monticello, 14 August 1814 with letter to Bernard Moore attached, *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Paul Leicester Ford, ed. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1904-05 Federal Edition), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/> (15 September 2005); "Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia," [4 August 1818], *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, edited and with an introduction by Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 332-346 (hereafter cited as "Report of the Commissioners" or "Rockfish Gap Report"); and to Nathaniel Burwell, Monticello, 14 March 1818, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, eds. Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D. C.: 1904 Library Edition), 165-168. Hereafter, cited as *Writings*. Printed versions of the Burwell letter are available from many sources, but this will be the version of the document used in this paper unless otherwise noted.

¹³ Jack C. Lane, "The Yale Report of 1828 and Liberal Education: A Neorepublican Manifesto," *History of Education Quarterly*, 27, No. 3 (Autumn, 1987), 325-338. What became known as "The Yale Report" was actually three documents issued as *Report of the Course of Instruction in Yale College by a Committee of the Corporation and the Academical Faculty* (New Haven: Yale College, 1828) and later published in *The American Journal of Science and Arts* (25 [January 1829], 151-67) as "Original Papers in Relation to a Course of Liberal Education".

¹⁴ Jefferson wrote in "Report of the Commissioners" on the importance of relationships to learning: "The affectionate deportment between father and son, offers in truth the best example for that of tutor and pupil; and the experience and practice of other countries, in this respect, may be worthy of enquiry and consideration with us."

knowledge of the situation in which you will be placed, and by the fondest of love” It was affection that impelled the enterprise, but what were the “precepts” that guided this journey? There was no grand education schema or even more than passing comment on women’s education, but there were common principles guiding his instruction of both sexes.

Jefferson accepted the central notion of Locke’s sensationist epistemology and pedagogy. In a parody of Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum*, he once wrote John Adams: “I feel, therefore I exist. . . . When once we quit the basis of sensation, all is in the wind.”¹⁵ Sensations were the basis, but they could not be the sole origin of knowledge or morality; they were simply too contingent, too uncertain, too disorderly, as Sterne had so humorously described in one of Jefferson’s favorite works, *Tristram Shandy*. Random, unstructured sensations pushed knowledge and morality dangerously close to the tempestuous gales of Platonic idealism, Cartesian rationalism, and Humean egoistic ethics -- all of which were unacceptable to Jefferson. So, his pedagogy blended features of Francis Bacon’s scientific method, John Locke’s sensationist epistemology,

¹⁵Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, 15 August 1820, *AJL*, 567-68. These comments were response to a letter from John Adams that explicitly raised the questions of what can be known and how referencing the three contending philosophical positions. (John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, 12 May 1820, *Ibid.* 563-65.) His intense feelings concerning the deleterious effects of Platonic idealism on education are expressed in Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 5 July 1814, Cappon, *AJL*, 430-34. For Jefferson’s rejection of Cartesian rationalism, see *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVII, and Sowerby #1247, both of which espouse the “experimental” method of Francis Bacon. See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, Book 3, Part 1, Section 1 (London: John Noon, 1739), <http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/> (January 6, 2006) in which he writes: “. . . virtue is distinguished by the pleasure, and vice by the pain, that any action, sentiment or character gives us.” Rene Descartes’ cognitivist epistemology was stated as follows: Physical “bodies are not properly known by the senses [that] is as they are seen or touched but only . . . as they are understood by thinking . . .” (32-33). See *Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated with an introduction by Laurence J. LaFleur (Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., The Library of Liberal Arts, 1960), 22-24, 32-33, and 51. Jefferson’s library included Descartes’ *Principia philosophiae et Metaphysica* (Sowerby #3719).

Thomas Reid's common sense ontology, and moral sense ethics of the Scottish Enlightenment.¹⁶

Learning was a recursive four-step process that was repeatedly invoked in Jefferson's instructions to Patsy, nephew Peter Carr, his grandchildren, and others. First, form "habits" through the regular "exercise" of the moral sense, mental faculties (memory, reason, and imagination), and the physical body."¹⁷ Next, be aware of and attentive to the sensations these activities excite; third, evaluate the "truth" of these experiences using innate common and moral senses; and, finally, assemble this filtered set into "classes, orders, genera, species" as principles of "nature," rules of conduct, and aids to memory.¹⁸ As we might expect from an avid book collector, reading was one of those "exercises" critical to Jefferson's pedagogical methods.

¹⁶ John Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding," *The Empiricists*, abridged by Richard Taylor (New York: Anchor Books, nd). See also, "Can Reason attain to the Knowledge of Natural Law through Sense-Experience? Yes," *Locke Political Essays*, ed., Mark Goldie, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Following Francis Bacon, Jefferson categorized his library (and thus human knowledge) on the basis of three mental faculties. Memory, reason, and imagination, respectively, included history, philosophy, and fine arts (Charles A. Miller, *Jefferson and Nature: An Interpretation* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988], 35-37.) The common sense ontology is described in Thomas Reid, "An Inquiry into the Human Mind," *The Works of Thomas Reid* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan and Stewart, 1822), 7th edition, with Preface, Notes, etc., by Sir William Hamilton, 1:108. See also Reid's "Powers of the Mind," *Ibid.*, 2:708-09 in which he asserts allegiance with the "vulgar" (or common person) that what we perceive are not ideas but real things.

¹⁷ The mental and moral faculties were situated, respectively, in the "head" and "heart." The well-known "head and heart" letter to Maria Cosway (12 October 1786, *Papers*, 10:443-53), among its other interpretations, also informs Jefferson's distinctions and interactions between the moral, mental, and physical learning domains and the mental faculties of memory, reason, and imagination. Thus, references to an "honest heart" means "virtuous," and a "knowing head" to "reason." See Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, 8 January 1825, *AJL*, 605-06, in which he approvingly notes the "discovery" by the French Ideologues that thinking is an operation of the cerebrum and sensory experiences are processed by the cerebellum, leaving morals to the "heart." The "Ideologues" were a self-ascribed group of French intellectuals who used experimental methods to develop a physiological basis to connect Locke's physical sensations with mental ideas, thus avoiding the idealists' reification. See Thomas Jefferson to Georges Cabanis, 12 July 1803, L&B, *Writings*, 10:404.

¹⁸ See Thomas Jefferson to Dr. John Manners, 22 February 1814, L&B, *Writings*, 14:97-98: "Memory is incapable of retaining separately all the facts of nature that we sense . . ." If we concentrate "too minutely" on the flood of sensations, Jefferson wrote to Edward Everett: "we often reduce our subject to atoms, of which the mind loses hold" (Thomas Jefferson to Edward Everett, 24 February 1823, L&B, *Writings*, 15:414).

A “Liberal System” of Education

There is scant evidence of Patsy’s reading while a student in the Panthemont convent school from August 1784 to April 1789. She complained of struggling with Livy: “I go on very slowly with my tite live,” the fourteen-year old complained, “ its being in such ancient Italian that I can not read with out my master” Nonetheless, her father considered this “an exercise in the habit of overcoming difficulties” that he deemed an essential “part of the American character.” “I shall take up my Livy, as you desire it.” She relented. “I shall begin it again, as I have lost the thread of the history.”¹⁹

A few other titles in her “plan of reading” are suggested by books received in Paris that bear her signature. These include the following: De Florian’s *Galatée*, *Pastorale Imitée de Cervantes*; *Theatre A Lusage Des Jeunes Personnes* by Stèphanie de Genlis; an historical novel of Spain by the seventeenth century salonnière, Madame de La Fayette; another copy of *Gil Blas* that Patsy dated 1785; and perhaps most troubling for Father, M. de La Forest’s *Méthode d’Instruction pour ramerner les Prétendum Réformés a l’Èglise Romaine* (A Lyon: chez Amié de la Roche, 1784).²⁰

Long after their return from Paris in 1789, Monticello’s Sage received a request from Nathaniel Burwell to,

¹⁹ Martha Jefferson to Thomas Jefferson, Panthemont, 8 March 1787; Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson, Aix en Provence, 28 March 1787; Martha Jefferson to Thomas Jefferson, Panthemont, 9 April 1787, *Papers*, 11:203-04, 250-52, and 281-82, respectively. Patsy likely was reading Jacopo Nardi’s translation of Livy (Sowerby #52, <http://tjlibraries.dataformat.com/> [15 March 2009]). She entered the Abbaye Royale de Panthemont, a combination school, convent, and hostel for divorcées, widows, and spinsters on 24 August 1784.

²⁰ James A. Bear, Jr., “Jefferson’s Advice to His Children and Grandchildren on Their Reading: An Address delivered during the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Tracy w. McGregor Library, 1939-1964” (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia, 1967), 16, 18, and 20. Jean Pierre Claris de Florian (1755-1794) was a poet, writer, and dramatist in the Romantic tradition (Sowerby #4597, <http://tjlibraries.dataformat.com/> [28 April 2009]). Marie-Madeleine Pioche de La Vergne, comtesse de La Fayette (1634-1693) studied classical and modern languages and participated in the salon of Madame de Rambouillet among others. De Genlis is discussed below.

. . . recommend a system of female education, but adopted to the present state of our society. Such a plan as is compatable [sic] with the pecuniary circumstances of females that will enable them to acquire a liberal and accomplished education. . . . I must trouble you farther to accompany it with a catalogue of such books, as you deem proper to compose a female library.²¹

The words “system” and “liberal” to the contemporary eye had specific meanings that Jefferson would have been aware of. He was at the very moment of Burwell’s request in 1818 considering a “system” that would be as much a break from educational tradition as his *Declaration* was from its monarchical handmaiden.²² The “Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia” being drafted by Jefferson assumed, first, that the legislature would eventually approve a three-tiered system -- local elementary schools for all white girls and boys, regional academies, and a university. Second, the proposed university was itself a radical departure from traditional approaches with an elective curriculum heavy in the sciences and including military exercises; little attention to ancient languages; no awarding of degrees; “use of tools too in manual arts;” a campus centered on a lecture hall/library, rather than a chapel; and a student-run

²¹ Nathaniel Burwell to Thomas Jefferson, Saratoga, 17 February 1818, *PapersRS*, unverified transcript provided by the Jefferson Library (MHi: Coolidge Collection).

²² In 1806, the *Edinburgh Review* published a scathing attack on “public schools of England” that were described as an “endowed place of education . . . to which the sons of gentlemen resort in considerable numbers . . . from eight or nine, to eighteen years of age.” The practice of upper classmen dominance made the boys “alternately tyrant and slave” and the older ones were given “an absurd and pernicious opinion of their own importance.” And, the final *coup de grace*: “[T]he most eminent men in every art and science have not been educated in public schools.” See *The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal*, 16:32 (1810, August), <http://pao.chadwyck.co.uk/PDF/1239984075927.pdf> (8 April 2009) 326-342. Jefferson subscribed to the *Review* from 1802 to 1814 and considered it “the ablest of that kind which has ever been published” (TJ to Lafayette, Monticello, 17 May 1816, Sowerby #2811 and #4733; and *Thomas Jefferson Libraries*, <http://tjlibraries.dataformat.com/TJLPDetails.aspx?MRID=JLP30110821>, accessed 7 April 2009). The counterattack on Scotland was led by Edward Copleston, *Reply to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review Against Oxford, Containing an Account of Studies Pursued in that University*, (Oxford: printed for the author and sold by Cooke, Parker, and Mackinlay, 1810).

disciplinary regime. Jefferson was envisioning a truly “liberal” education devoted to open inquiry and pursuit of individual interests.²³

As in politics, the “liberal” moniker was a malleable one in the early nineteenth century education discourse. Historian Jurgen Herbst described the contending pedagogies as “oratorical” and “philosophical.” Traditionally, a “liberal” education was designed “to train an orator-statesman . . . to develop character . . . to identify a liberally educated elite and to imbue it with a respect for gentlemanly polite behavior.” “Mental discipline” was almost the single objective of the oratorical approach to education and was developed through memorization and recitation, whether the subject was ancient languages, mathematics, or history. Students read and memorized; young tutors quizzed; and professors lectured.

An emerging counter-force, fueled by the Enlightenment’s commitment to inquiry, deemed “liberal” as freedom from *a priori* restraints on knowledge creation and diffusion.²⁴ This perspective was much more oriented toward the “graver sciences” of

²³ “Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia,” *The Portable Jefferson*, edited and with an introduction by Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 332-346. This also is referred to as the Rock Fist Gap Report after the location of the Commissioners’ meeting. Jefferson and his allies were vying to locate the future university at Charlottesville against interests in Staunton and Lexington. He was not sanguine about the prospects for a system of education in Virginia. “. . . [I]t has to encounter ignorance, malice, egoism, fanaticism, religious, political and local perversities” (TJ to Albert Gallatin, Monticello, 15 February 1818, L&B, *Writings*, 258). It bears noting that the Report’s descriptions and language in Jefferson’s mind were part of a political strategy to garner votes in the legislature to support the curriculum. “. . . [T]here is a floating body of doubtful and wavering men I have therefore thrown in some leading ideas on the benefits of education” (Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Monticello, 28 June 1818, *The Republic of Letters*, ed. James Morton Smith [New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995], 3:1804-05.

²⁴ Jurgen Herbst, “The Yale Report of 1828,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall, 2004), 215). Some (Herbst among them) argue this was a “modernization” of the college education, because it reframed traditional curriculum and methods in terms of the new “faculty psychology.” Also, see Jack C. Lane, “The Yale Report of 1828 and Liberal Education: A Neorepublican Manifesto,” *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Autumn, 1987), 325-338. These and other authors typically do not cite what for the times would have been the radical plans for higher education being hatched in Virginia by Jefferson, who from a careful reading was clearly siding with Edinburgh against Oxford in the European debate.

natural philosophy, chemistry, botany, geography, mineralogy, etc., and was summarized by Jefferson's belief in the "illimitable capacity of the human mind." So, Burwell's use of "liberal" in a letter to Jefferson would have had a particular meaning. "a solid education"

Just four days after giving birth to her twelfth and last child, Martha was drafted by Papa to assist in answering Burwell by preparing a "catalogue of the books for such a course of reading" that they had practiced (Figure 1). It is doubtful that new-borne George Wythe Randolph was "one of her élèves" Grand Papa claimed was helping them; the writing is clearly Grand Papa's.

Jefferson acknowledged that female education had "never been a subject of systematic contemplation," but "thought it essential to give [his daughters] a solid education."²⁵ This would "enable them, when become mothers to educate their own daughters, and even to direct the course for sons, should their fathers be lost, or incapable, or inattentive." Perhaps benefiting from direct experience with his son-in-law, spousal inadequacies were elaborated and "household oeconomy" added as a critical learning objective: "The order and economy of a house are as honorable to the mistress as those of the farm to the master, and if either be neglected, ruin follows, and children destitute of the means of living."

²⁵ Thomas Jefferson to Nathaniel Burwell, Monticello, 14 March 1818, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, eds. Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D. C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904 Library Edition), 15:165-68. This version of the letter does not include the "catalogue" of books, whose source is indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

“a catalogue of books for such a course of reading as we have practiced”	
<p>Les Voyages d'Anacharsis Gillies's history of Greece. 4. v. 8^{vo} Gillies's history of the world. 3. v. 8^{vo} Livy. Eng. Sallust. Eng. by Gordon. 12^{mo} Gibbon's Decline of Rome 12. v. 8^{vo} Tacitus. Eng. by Murphy. Suetonicus. Eng. by Thompson. 8^{vo} Plutarch's lives. Lempriere's universal biography. 2. v. 8^{vo} Histoire ancienne de Milot. 4. v. 12^{mo} Histoire de France de Milot. [end page 1]</p>	<p>Russel's Modern Europe. 5. v. 8^{vo} Robertson's Charles V. Memoires de Sully. 8. v. 12^{mo} Vie de Henri IV. par Perefixe 12^{mo} Louis XIV. et XV. de Voltaire Histoire generale de Voltaire. Baxter's hist. of England Robertson's history of Scotland. 2. v. 8^{vo} Robertson's history of America. [end page 1]</p>
<p>[page 2] Botta's hist. of American Independance Burke's & Girardin's hist. of Virginia 4. v. 8^{vo} Joyce's Scientific dialogues. 3. v. 16^s Histoire naturel de Buffon. Tully's offices. Eng. Senequa par La Grange. 6. v. 8^{vo} Morale et bonheur. 2. v. miniature. Stanhope's Charron on wisdom. 8^{vo} Oeconomy of human life. 12^{mo} Sterne's, Sherlock's & Allison's sermons. Sermons de Massillon et Bourdaloux. The Spectator, Tatler, Guardian. Pike's Arithmetic. 8^{vo} Pinkerton's Geography. 8^{vo} Whateley on pleasure gardening. 8^{vo} Pope's Iliad & Odyssey. Dryden's Virgil. Milton's Paradise lost. Telemaque. Shakespeare's plays. Dryden's tragedies. Moliere. Racine. Corneille. Don Quichotle. Fr. Gil Blas. Contes Nouveaux de Marmontel. Voyages de Campe. 20. vol^s16^s †The Pleasing preceptor from the German of G. U. A. Vieth [end page 2]</p>	<p>[page 2] Pope's works. Thomson's seasons. Lowthe's Eng. grammar. Walker's pronouncing dictionary Dufief's Fr. & Eng. dictionary. Dufief's Nature displayed. 2. v. 8^{vo} †Novels Evenings at home by mrs Barbauld Miss Edgeworth's works. they are all good. by Madame Genlis^a Lettres sur l'education Veillées du Chateau Theatre d'education. Theatre de societé Godwin's Caleb Williams [end page 2]</p>
<p>Source: Thomas Jefferson to Nathaniel Burwell, Monticello, 14 March 1818, RC (MoSHi) and an unverified transcription by <i>The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Series</i> provided by the Thomas Jefferson Library.</p> <p>† Indicates items <u>not</u> included on the “Lady’s” list (Figure 2) prepared sometime after 1821; nor were the “Novels” listed in that later compilation.</p> <p>^a Indented items were grouped with a bracket opening left in the manuscript.</p>	

No more talk of “graver sciences,” “best poetry and prose writers,” or even a “systematic” presentation; rather, the response took a critical and derisive tone. Novels were a “great obstacle to good education,” being a “mass of trash” that produce “bloated imagination, sickly judgement, and disgust toward all the real business of life.” Similarly, “too much poetry should not be indulged,” except for “forming style and taste.” Dancing before marriage only was “healthy exercise;” music, essential in “this country” as a “delightful recreation for the hours of respite;” and drawing, “thought less of” but “an innocent amusement.” Burwell may have found that Jefferson’s embrace of the traditional “ornaments” did not reflect his interest in a “liberal” system of education suited to “the present state of society” and “compartable with the pecuniary circumstances of females.” A few years later, it appears that some members of the Randolph family considered establishing just such a “liberal” school for young ladies.

The Boston Lyceum

A nearly identical copy of the Burwell list (including misspellings) is labeled “List of Books for a Lady’s Library,” and lodged in the Randolph family papers deposited with the Library of Congress. (Given their similarity, this and the Burwell catalogue will be referred to as “Lady’s List.”) This document is filed with two others related to female education: “Boston Lyceum” is a first person account of the curriculum and practices of a school for girls established in 1813 by Dr. John Park; the third, a list of books that typically would have been recommended for women at this time. Each of the three documents is in a different hand.²⁶ The books described to Burwell in 1818 were

²⁶ The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 6, Randolph Family Manuscripts, 1790-1889 (DLC), <http://memory.loc.gov/> (4 February 2009). The provenance of these documents has not been determined, though the “Lady’s” list seems to be on a page from the journal of Thomas Mann Randolph,

considered sufficiently salient by someone to be transcribed and preserved as a “Lady’s” list separate from the letter in which they were originally described. Three entries on this document appear to be in Martha Jefferson’s handwriting which dates the document sometime after 1821 when Segur’s *Histoire* was published.

The breadth, depth, and intensity of its curriculum suggest the Lyceum was a liberal, enlightened institution. “[E]ssential to the education of every young lady,” the writer claimed, were books such as *Paradise Lost*, “as difficult as any author in the language.” The learning process was distinctively competitive and for the times unfeminine, because it publicly ranked students’ compositions each Saturday “according to their relative excellence – the best to the last.” The young Ladies read “elegant” literature that same day, followed by “voluntary criticism of any who wish[ed] to make remarks.” The remainder of the “general exercises included history, geography, and “arithmetic” through algebra. Benjamin A. Gould’s *Adam’s Latin Grammar with some Improvements* would prepare them for Cicero’s orations, Livy, Horace, and Sallust, among others. Each Thursday pupils were “parsed critically” in French; on Friday, in Italian. Added to these for the “highest . . . studies” were readings in the philosophy of the mind (Thomas Upham), literary history (Frederick Schlegel), literary criticism (Hugh Blair), and, moral philosophy (William Paley).²⁷

Jr. and the “Boston Lyceum” was written by some of authority at the school. Perhaps, they were collected by Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge or even Martha sometime after Jefferson’s death, when women of the family were considering supporting themselves by opening a school in Virginia. Martha visited her married daughter in Boston in the winter of 1826-27 following her father’s death. Talk of a school subsided soon thereafter, when Martha received \$10,000 stipends from South Carolina and Louisiana.²⁷ It is not evident what editions of these very popular titles were used by the Lyceum, but some in print at the time are instructive. Thomas C. Upham, professor at Bowdoin College, prepared his 1828, 2nd edition *Elements of Intellectual Philosophy* (Portland, [ME], Shirley and Hyde) specifically as a textbook so young students could study how man “thinks, feels, [and] wills” (page 13, <http://books.google.com/books> [accessed 13 March 2009]). Benjamin A. Gould’s, *Adam’s Latin Grammar with Some Improvements*

Figure 2 "List of Books for a Lady's Library"	
<p>†Histoire universelle ancienne & moderne par M. L. Comte de Segur Les Voyages d'Anacharsis Gillies's history of Greece 4. v. 8^{vo} Gillies's history of the world 3. v. 8^{vo} Livy. Eng Sallust. Eng. by Gordon. 12^{mo} Gibbon's Decline of Rome 12. v. 8^{vo} Tacitus. Eng. by Murphy Suetonius. Eng. by Thompson 8. ^{vo} Plutarch's Lives. Lempriere's universal biography 2.v.8^{vo}. + Histoire ancienne de Milot. [Millot] 4. v. 12^{mo} Histoire de France de Milot [Millot] Russell's Modern Europe 5.v.8^{vo} Robertson's Charles 5th Memoires de Sully. 8.v. 12^{mo} Vie d'Henri 4. par Perefice 12^{mo} Louis 14 et 15 de Voltaire Histoire generale de Voltaire Baxter's History of England Robertson's History of Scotland 2.v.8^{mo} Robertson's History of America Botta's History of American Independence Burke's & Girardin's History of Virginia 4v.8^{vo} Joyce's Scientific Dialogues 3.v.16 [end p.1.]</p>	<p>Histoire naturel de Buffon Tully's Office. Eng. Seneque par La Grange 6.v.8^{vo} Morale et Bonheur 2.v. miniature Stanhope's Charron on wisdom 8^{vo} Oeconomy of Human Life 12^{mo} Sterne's, Sherlock's & Allison's sermons Sermons de Massillon et Bourdalow The Spectator, Tatler, Guardian Pike's arithmetic 8^{vo} Pinkerton's geography 8^{vo} Whateley on Pleasure gardening 8^{vo} Pope's Iliad & Odyssey Dryden's Virgil Milton's Paradise lost Telemaque Shakespeare's Plays Dryden's Tragedies Moliere, Racine, Corneille Don Quichotte Fr. Gil blas Contes Moraux de Marmontel Pope's Works Thomson's Seasons</p> <p>[end p.1.]</p>
<p>[page 2] Lowth's English grammar Walker's pronouncing dictionary Dufief's Fr. & Eng. dictionary Dufief's Nature Displayed 2 v. 8^{vo} †Sejournant[']s?] Spanish dictionary †(Noel's) dictionnaire de la fable [end page 2]</p>	
<p>Source: "List of Books for a Lady's Library," The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 6, Randolph Family Manuscripts, 1790-1889 (DLC), http://memory.loc.gov/ (4 February 2009). Transcribed by Billy L. Wayson with the assistance of Endrina Tay, Associate Foundation Librarian, Jefferson Library.</p> <p>† Indicates items added to the "Lady's" list in what appears to be the hand of Martha Jefferson Randolph. Segur's <i>Histoire</i> was published in 1821 after the Burwell letter of 1818.</p>	

(Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Co., 1827-35) enjoyed seven editions from 1827 to 1835. Frederick Schlegel (1772-1829) was an early advocate of what became the Romantic Movement. His *Lectures on the History of Literature Ancient and Modern* (delivered in 1812 and first published in 1818) proposed to examine literature's "influence on the affairs of active [i.e., practical] life" of nations (*Lectures . . .*, trans. John Frost [Philadelphia: Moss & Co, 1878], 1). By the 1820's, there many editions of *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* by Hugh Blair, Professor at Edinburgh. None were certainly in the Romantic mode of Schlegel, but Blair's extensive appeal to "common sense" as rhetorical arbiter was compatible with the former's praise of the newly emerging German-language literature for the masses. William Paley (1743-1805) first published *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* as a critique of Scottish moral sense philosophy and defense of a theological basis of morality. It was not a book that Jefferson would have selected for Martha or any of his young charges; though he did own Paley's *Views of the Evidences of Christianity* (Sowerby #1519).

Both the pedagogy and the readings at Dr. Park's Lyceum were "considerably different" from Jefferson's "plan" and tutorial approach. Nonetheless, they held similar beliefs about education and its purposes. For Jefferson, happiness was always the ultimate goal of education because it brought private honor, social esteem, and garnered the love of others. The writer for the Boston Lyceum considered the "path of happiness" was a "useful education," "sound morals," and amicable dispositions."

Knowledge Most Useful for Girls and Boys

While commenting on genres – fiction, novels, history and poetry -- Jefferson never disclosed specifically how items cited on his various lists would meet his pedagogical standard of "utility."²⁸ Robert Skipwith's 1771 listing was intended for a "gentleman;" the books prescribed for nephew Peter Carr in 1787 were a student's list and at the discretion of his instructor, George Wythe; reading suggested for John Minor in 1814 was preparation for the study of law. Sketchy rationales for specific books were revealed occasionally over the years in family letters, archival scraps, and other documents. What follows is intended to be simply a prolegomenon for a more meticulous thematic and textual interpretation of Jefferson's recommendations for a "Lady's Library" compared with those for the gentlemen.

The "Lady's," and Skipwith lists shared six history titles; twelve, fine arts; and four classified as "religion." Similar comparisons with the Carr list were, respectively, twelve history, three fine arts, and one religion. Among common items were the "best poetry and prose writers," Dryden, Moliere, Shakespeare, Pope, and Milton. Perhaps as a

²⁸ For a discussion of this concept in Jefferson's educational thought, see Jennings L. Wagoner, "The Knowledge Most Useful to Us": Thomas Jefferson's Concept of Utility in the Education of Republican Citizens," *Thomas Jefferson and the Education of a Citizen*, James Gilreath, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1999), 115-133.

faux autobiography, both boys and girls were expected to read Fenelon's *Telemachus*, the tale of Ulysses' son being led to knowledge and on a search for his father by the goddess Minerva disguised as the male Mentor.²⁹ Both sexes shared the wit, wisdom, and political commentary of publicists Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in collections of *Spectator*, *Guardian*, and *Tatler*. Robert Dodsley's aphorisms in the form of an ancient (but fake) Brahmin text, *The Oeconomy of Human Life*, were a must for the ladies, a student, and the future gentleman.³⁰ A work that Jefferson deemed "the best general treatise on Morals, either antient or modern," *Morale et du Bonheur* by Jean Zacharie Paradis de Raymondis was prescribed for the youngsters Patsy and Peter.³¹

Novels, Fictions & Facts

The most coherent and complete discussion about reading fiction is Jefferson's well-known letter to his future in-law Robert Skipwith on 3 August 1771.³² He would

²⁹ See Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals & Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 46-49. Fliegelman interprets this and other literary works in a broad, socio-political context, but identifies a common theme that could be considered applicable to Jefferson's life course and mentoring role with Martha, Peter Carr, and Robert Skipwith. ". . . [T]he true parent of a child . . . is he or she who has exercised the most influence on the child's mind and character and who encourages and helps develop a self-trust" (49). Martha, unlike her contemporaries who learned household management at their mother's apron strings, experienced a father disguised as a "mother" instructing her in how to manage the enslaved, tend a garden, develop neighborly social relations, and a host of plantation mistress' duties.

³⁰ Ian Gordon, "The Oeconomy of Human Life," *The Literary Encyclopedia* (13 December 2005), <http://www.litencyc.com/> (18 April 2009).

³¹ Thomas Jefferson to N. G. Dufief, Monticello, 18 September 1813, as cited in Sowerby, 2:9 (#1279). The full title was *Traité élémentaire de Morale et du Bonheur Pour servir de Prolégomènes ou de suite à la collection des Moralistes in 2 volumes* (A Paris: [de l'Imprimerie de Delamarre] l'An Troisième, 1795), <http://tjlibraries.dataformat.com/> (April 19, 2009). His conceding to reading about morals, rather than simply exercising the moral sense through fiction and experience, may have been to encourage Dufief to undertake an American edition, as the work "deserves well a good translation into our language."

³² TJ to Robert Skipwith with a List of Books, Monticello, 3 August 1771, *Papers*, 1:76-81. For discussion of how the novel served southern females, see Catherine Kerrison, "The Novel as Teacher: Learning to be Female in the Early South," *The Journal of Southern History*, 69:3 (August 2003), 514-48 (October 27, 2008). Kerrison notes (533) that novels changed over the eighteenth century from ones in which "female characters imitated the behavior of male wits and rakes"; at mid-century, "feminine sentiment" was a dominant theme that by late 1700's was given "religious and moral authority." Jefferson's

later deride novels to Burwell as fostering “bloated imagination, sickly judgement and disgust towards all the real businesses of life” However, he recommended fiction over history volumes to both Skipwith in 1771 and author Charles Brockden Brown in 1800 exactly for their capacity to exercise the mental faculty of imagination and develop the most important of all learning domains – moral sense. Reading fiction, he wrote, “exercises moral feelings [and] produces a habit of thinking and acting virtuously” and serves to “to fix the principles and practices of virtue.” Jefferson distinguished the utility of different genres.

Considering history as a moral exercise, her lessons would be too infrequent if confined to real life. Of those recorded by historians few incidents have been attended with such circumstances as to excite in any high degree this sympathetic emotion of virtue. We are therefore wisely framed to be as warmly interested for a fictitious as for a real personage. The spacious field of imagination is thus laid open to our use, and lessons may be formed to illustrate and carry home to the mind every moral rule of life.³³

“Works of imagination” are not bound by facts, he wrote to novelist and poet Brown, and history books “cannot present virtue in the best & vice in the worst forms possible.” Thirteen years earlier, he had advised nephew Peter Carr: “The writings of Sterne particularly form the best course of morality that ever was written.”³⁴ Similarly,

recommendation of Marmontel’s *Contes Moreaux* (Moral Tales, 1804) to Nathaniel Burwell would fall in the latter category Kerrison identifies.

³³ Thomas Jefferson to Robert Skipwith, with a List of Books for a Gentleman’s Library, Monticello, 3 August, 1771, *Papers*, 1:76-81. This list was still circulating in education circles over 100 years later (Henry Bernard, *American Journal of Education* [Hartford, CT: Office of the American Journal of Education, 1877], 545-51).

³⁴ Thomas Jefferson to Charles Brockden Brown, Philadelphia, 15 January 1800, *Ibid.*, 31:308; and to Peter Carr, with Enclosure, Paris, 10 August 1787, *ibid.*, 12:14-19. Jefferson may not have been so generous to the young writer (1771-1810) had he read Brown’s advocacy for women’s political rights in “The Rights of Women. A Dialogue. Parts I & II” in *Weekly Magazine of Original Essays, Fugitive Pieces, and Interesting Intelligence*, 1:9 (March 31) and 1:10 (April 7), 1798. This is a reference to Laurence Sterne, whom Jefferson regularly recommended. For the young men he specified *Tristram Shandy* and *Sentimental Journey*; only Sterne’s sermons are included on “Lady’s” and Burwell lists. Other examples of religious works included only for women were Thomas Sherlock (*Several Discourses Preached at*

Jefferson advised Burwell that a few novels were “useful vehicles of a sound morality.” Maria Edgeworth, Marmontel, and Stéphanie de Genlis met this criterion. Not all the women in the Monticello household complied with the approved book list.

Just a month after sounding the alarm of “bloated imagination” to Burwell, granddaughter Ellen was reading Catherine Hutton’s work, *The Miser Married*. It had been recommended to her by her sister-in-law, Jane Nicholas Randolph.³⁵ Not quite twenty-two, Ellen was imbibing an epistolary novel recounting romantic tales of an impoverished mother and daughter in England’s Midlands that she could not have concealed from Grand Papa as they jostled their way to Poplar Forest. The heroine deploys the reviled novel genre itself to embellish her worldly adventures. “It is strange how novels possess me!” She disclosed to Harriet, a fictional confidant. The works are ungrammatical, improbable, and undistinguished; yet, she succumbed: “I have no repose till I see the hero and heroine fairly married; I seldom trust myself with a novel.” Nor, she reported, does the “grave and learned” local physician resist the temptations. Even Mr. Sharp, who supplied the rakish books, considered them the “Nastiest, rankest stuff that *iver* I read in my life.” Perhaps in a moment of self-reflection, the fictional heroine, commenting on her neighbor’s college-age son and soon-to-be hero, prays: “God grant I may be able to display my skill on his *phiz*, before it be long!” A “low” word, she acknowledges, derived from “physiognomy.”³⁶

Temple School [London: Printed for J. Whiston and B. White, et al., 1764], Sowerby #1566), Catholic Bishop Jean-Baptiste Massillon (1663-1742), and Jesuit preacher Louis Bourdaloue (1632-1704).

³⁵ Ellen Wayles Randolph to Martha Jefferson Randolph, Poplar Forest, 14 April 1818, <http://retirementseries.dataformat.com/Document.aspx?doc=121834> (4 April 2009). Jane Hollins Nicholas Randolph was married to Thomas Jefferson Randolph and the daughter of Wilson Cary Nicholas (see following footnote).

³⁶ Catherine Hutton, *The Miser Married*, *Letter 10*, <http://www3.shropshire-cc.gov.uk/etexts/> (April 6, 2009). “Physiognomy” referred to facial features. Ironically, the heroine was a nearly impoverished

The romantic, heroic novels may not have been any more to Grand Papa's liking for stimulating the imagination and invigorating the moral sense. The author and partisan of the Tory cause, Sir Walter Scott, did not make his approved list, but granddaughter Virginia asked her betrothed's opinion of the latest in the Waverly series, *The Fortunes of Nigel*. "[E]veryone here," she wrote Nicholas Trist, "agrees in thinking it the least interesting of the Waverly novels" It is clear from this exchange that at least the women in the household had been reading this work as well as Scott's *The Monastery* and *The Pirate*. An epistolary novel recommended by daughter-in-law Jane; a critique of romantic literature, and other references suggest practices in the Monticello household may not have fully complied with the reading guidelines.

Poetry in Jefferson's opinion could have the same deleterious effects as novels. Acceptable writers for "forming style and taste" were "Pope, Dryden, Thompson, Shakespeare, Molière, Racine, the Corneilles."³⁷ He must have considered poetry more acceptable in earlier years. John Bell's 109 volumes titled *The Poets of Great Britain*,

young women, whose inheritance was being challenged in court, provided the context for a quote that made sufficient impression on Ellen that she cited the heroine to her Mother: "I always think of the maxim of some great old philosopher:--'There are two sorts of things you should never grieve at; those you can help, and those you cannot help'. The reasons for both are obvious." It was on this trip to Poplar Forest that Jefferson endorsed two promissory notes totaling \$20,000 for Wilson Cary Nicholas, who later defaulted adding significantly to Jefferson's chronic debt. Hutton's dedication to her father could well have been written by Martha Jefferson: "To you from whom I inherit the Faculties which have enabled me to compose a Book; to whose Industry I am indebted for the Means of Leisure; and by whose Kindness I am permitted to enjoy it; do I dedicate that Book, as I have dedicated my life" (Ibid.).

³⁷The French "poetry" writers refer to seventeenth-century dramatists Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), Molière (or Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, 1622-1673), and Jean Racine (1639-1699). "Madame Genlis" was Stéphanie Félicité Ducrest de St.-Albin, Comtesse de Genlis, 1746-1830 who has four titles included on the Burwell list, among them was the epistolary novel *Adelaide and Theodore; or, Letters on Education: Containing the principles relative to three different plans of education: to that of princes, and to those of young persons of both sexes*,

Complete from Chaucer to Churchill (Edinburgh: np, 1777-84) were purchased for young Patsy in 1785, during their Paris sojourn.³⁸

History

It may be begging rebuke among historians to ask: “Why were so many history entries included on the “Lady’s” lists? Among twenty-four entries associated with memory were the ancients, such as Sallust, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Plutarch, and more contemporary volumes by Robertson, Voltaire, Burk, and Millot. Only six of these twenty-four correspond to the Skipwith recommendations; twelve to Peter Carr’s. The abundance of histories was “considerably different” from, say, the mere thirty-six categorized as “history & biography” in the 384-title library collected by Jefferson’s contemporary, Lady Jean Skipwith. This avid collector owned 156 “novels & tales.”³⁹

A clue for so many history titles is found in Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* that he prepared for Marbois. Knowledge of the past was no less than the centerpiece for preserving future liberty. *Notes* described his three-tiered schema proposed in 1779 to “diffuse knowledge more generally through the mass of the people.” He recalled that it envisioned both boys and girls at the first level would have their “memories . . . stored with the most useful facts from Grecian, Roman, European and American history.” The very first collection of readings at the third- or university-level was proposed “to be chiefly historical.” Familiarity with mankind’s collective memory would protect republican government.

³⁸ James A. Bear and Lucia C. Stanton, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 597.

³⁹ Mildred K. Abraham, “The Library of Lady Jean Skipwith: A Book Collection from the Age of Jefferson,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (July, 1983), <http://www.jstor.org> (9 August 2008), 310-11

History by apprising them of the past will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it to defeat its views.⁴⁰

Without such an elaborate system of schooling, however, reading history was relegated to the more leisurely hours of the day, and it was “a waste of time to attend a professor of this [subject].” Such reading was among the “lighter occupations” intended to ease the mind.

[Knowledge of history] is acquired from books . . . to fill up those chasms of time not otherwise appropriated. There are portions of the day when the mind should be eased. Particularly after dinner it should be applied to lighter occupations. History is of this kind. It exercises principally the memory. Reflection also indeed is necessary, but not generally in a laborious degree.⁴¹

America’s Minister to France recommended to young Thomas Mann Randolph, Jr. history books identical with those on the Burwell and “Lady’s” lists.

This communiqué recommended reading the works by original authors in chronological order.

The answer to “why so many history titles?” perhaps resides in Jefferson’s conception of the gendered role women would play in his “America.” In the plantation household he imagined, “order and economy in the house [were] as honorable to the mistress as those of the farm to the master,” so they shared responsibility for avoiding “ruin” and providing their children with a “means of living.” With or without the feared spousal shortcomings, Martha had made the education of both her daughters and sons

⁴⁰ Thomas Jefferson *Notes on the State of Virginia*, edited with and Introduction by Frank Shuffelton (New York: Penquin Books, 1999 paperback edition), 152-55. In 1783-84, Jefferson was describing Bill #79 he had introduced in 1779, while representing Albemarle County in the Virginia House of Delegates.

⁴¹ Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Mann Randolph, Jr., Paris, 27 August 1786, *Papers*, 10: 306-07. Afternoon reading was suggested to John Minor & Bernard Moore (see footnote above). America’s Minister to France recommended to young Randolph history books identical with those on the Burwell and “Lady’s” lists and directed that he read works by original authors in chronological order.

“the object of her life.” One of the reasons for studying history cited in *Notes* was to qualify youngsters as “judges of the actions and designs of men,” to “know ambition under every disguise,” and to be prepared to defeat its chicanery. Monticello’s plantation mistress was playing a gendered role that historians would later tag the “Republican Mother.” This construct educated her sons to the “service of civic virtue,” where spotting and defeating “ambition under every guise” would be a critical skill.⁴² Reading history, then, was preparation for nurturing prospective republicans and exercisers of civic virtue.

Languages

Historical texts may collect memory, but studying languages was the means for exercising it. This mental faculty was best learned “from eight to sixteen years of age, when the mind, like the body, is not yet firm enough for laborious and close operations.” But there were other objectives for studying languages: “The books put into the hands of the youth for this purpose may be such as will at the same time impress their minds with useful facts and good principles.”⁴³ Though the ladies in Jefferson’s vision would remain primarily in gendered domesticity, they were to learn French and Spanish for exactly the same reasons as the men.

As early as 1787, Peter Carr was advised that “future connections with Spain and Spanish America will render that language a valuable acquisition” and the “antient history . . . of America too is written in that language.”⁴⁴ A similar rationale was advanced in a report for Virginia’s legislature that Jefferson was drafting when he and

⁴² Linda Kerber, “The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment – An American Perspective,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Special Issue: An American Enlightenment (Summer, 1976), 202.

⁴³ *NSV*, 154

⁴⁴ Thomas Jefferson to Peter Carr, Paris, 10 August 1787, *Papers*, 12:14.

Martha replied to Burwell. Drafting had commenced in late 1817 on what would become the “Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia.” It was forwarded to Madison on 28 June asking him for a “free revisal of it both as to style and matter”⁴⁵ The Commission, chaired by Jefferson, met in early August at Rock Fish Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains and approved his draft in all its essential features.⁴⁶ “French is the language of general intercourse among nations,” the Commission reported, “and as a depository of human science, is unsurpassed by any other language, living or dead.” So, Jefferson had been thinking systematically about education for some months – just not for females. Nonetheless, the thoughts drifted into his and Martha’s response to Burwell: “The French language, had become that of the general intercourse of nations, and . . . the depository of all science,” he explained. “[It] is an indispensable part of education for both sexes.”

What’s Missing

Some clues to what was “considerably different for her sex” can be gleaned from what was missing for “Lady’s” but included for the boys and vice versa. Only a few of these are presented here for illustrative purposes. The recommended reading for Carr and Skipwith was much more comprehensive, lengthy, and clearly differentiated for their individual situations. Jefferson’s nephew was an active student, so Pike’s *Scientific Investigations*, botany, chemistry, and anatomy were included along with many history

⁴⁵ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Monticello, 28 June 1818, *The Republic of Letters: The Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, 1776-1826*, ed. James Morton Smith (New York: W. W. Norton & Company), 3:1805 and 1799-1801. Jefferson acknowledged that including “some leading ideas on the benefits of education” was a political strategy to convince the “wavering men” in Virginia’s General Assembly who do not have “judgement enough for decisive opinion.”

⁴⁶ James A. Bear and Lucia C. Stanton, *Jefferson’s Memorandum Books* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 2:1346, n86. The drawn out machinations from 1814 to 1819 to locate a university at Charlottesville are described in Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time: The Sage of Monticello* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1981), 6:241-82.

books. The “gentleman’s” library proposed for Skipwith was aimed toward genteel refinement with a far majority on the “fine arts” and their “criticism,” a few, classical political titles, and history from the ancients to the moderns. On the other hand, Richardson is totally absent on the “Lady’s” lists; no *Clarissa* or *Pamela* for lessons on overweening patriarchs, disasters from arranged marriages, or romantic adventures with unfaithful rakes.⁴⁷ Papa’s favorite, Laurence Sterne, was only honored by his *Sermons*, missing the ribald humor of *Tristram Shandy* or the extramarital liaison with *Eliza*. Tobias Smollett’s French translation of *Gil Blas* and *Don Quixot* were shared by the sexes; whereas his *Roderic Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* were reserved for the boys. Rousseau was ignored completely for the girls, circumventing the issue of naturalistic, child-centered education in *Émile* and the romantic triangle of *Héloïse*. Also notably absent were works on what Jefferson categorized for Skipwith as “politics”: Montesquieu’s *Spirit of the Laws*, for example, and Locke’s *Treatise on Government*.

These and other examples elaborate the meaning of “considerably different for her sex” that could be further enhanced with a careful thematic and textual exegesis of books shared and omitted for girls and boys.

Text Books

The few remaining scientific and mathematical books reflect what could well have been intended for a mother to “educate [her] own daughters, and even to direct the course for sons, should their fathers be lost, or incapable, or inattentive.” During the late Colonial and Early Republic periods, girls typically were taught from gendered texts

⁴⁷ Jan Lewis has observed that the American edition of Richardson’s *Clarissa* was abridged to assign even more blame to the “masculine arrogance of father and Lovelace,” her lover (“The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 44 [October, 1987], [http:// www.jstor.org/](http://www.jstor.org/) [January 23, 2004], 693).

such as *Newton's Ladies Philosophy*, *The Ladies Geography*, *The Ladies Compleat Letter Writer*.⁴⁸ However, the "Lady's" list made no such concessions. Three volumes of Jeremiah Joyce's *Scientific Dialogues* and Buffon's *Historie Naturelle* were the only titles in Natural Philosophy.⁴⁹ Gravitation, motion, levers, and other topics of "Mechanics" opened volume one of Joyce's volumes and over 100 pages on astronomy finished it off. We know for certain that Martha was familiar with her father's sometimes irritant, French naturalist Buffon, and that the grandchildren at least were perusing his work. After sending granddaughter Ellen a gift of Bantam chicks, Grand Papa proposed a "question of natural history": "Whether this is the Gallina Adrianica, or Adria, the Adsatick cock of Aristotle? For this you must examine Buffon." Two weeks later, fourteen-year old Ellen reported she was busy with "Grecian History," was doing multiplication, reading "Plutarque," and had copied the "historical part of Lord Chesterfield's letters." However she conveyed in no uncertain terms that "Mama says Buffon cannot answer the question you propose to me."⁵⁰

"Pike's *Arithmetic*" and "Pinkerton's *geography*" completed what might be considered preparation for teaching children. Mathematics had the dual purpose of being "useful in the most familiar occurrences of life" and providing the "exercise"

⁴⁸ Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 201-02.

⁴⁹ Jefferson's retirement catalog lists the following: "Scientific dialogues. 8. to. in 4. vols. 16^s." The last entry is probably *Histoire Naturelle générale et particulière* (Sowbery # 1024) prepared by Georges Louis LeClere, Comte de Buffon with whom Jefferson had a long-running dispute over the inferiority of North American flora and fauna.

⁵⁰ Thomas Jefferson to Ellen Wayles Randolph, Washington, 30 November 1806, and Ellen Wayles Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, Edgehill, 12 December, 1806, *The Family Letters of Thomas Jefferson*, Edwin M. Betts and James A. Bear, eds. (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1986 paperback edition), 291 and 292, respectively.

necessary for strengthening and improving the mind.⁵¹ The ambitious title of Pike's work, *A New and Complete System of Arithmetic Composed for Use of Citizens of the United States*, first published in 1788, became so ubiquitous it attracted the inaccurate label as the "first American work of its kind."⁵² Martha may have introduced her eldest son Jeff to the rudiments of *Arithmetic* with this text, but it was Grand Papa in his retirement years that took up responsibility for the lad's mathematical tutoring. "I have resumed that study [of mathematics] with great avidity," he wrote friend Benjamin Rush in 1811. "It was ever my favorite one."⁵³ Pinkerton's *magnum opus* of some 1600 pages in two volumes (1802) purported to describe all countries, including historical origins, ethnicities, religion, government, military, climate, zoology, and on and on.⁵⁴ It would have provided, through reading, a firm foundation for inspecting experientially the many maps adorning Monticello's entry hall.

Conclusion

Memory, reason, and imagination were more than convenient Baconian categories for arraying Jefferson's many books; they were the very mental faculties that the "exercise" of reading these books would develop. Books of fiction were the

⁵¹ Thomas Jefferson, "Thomas Jefferson Libraries, 1783 Catalog," <http://tjlibraries.dataformat.com/transcripts/greatlibrary/>, (29 March 2009), 154. Jefferson considered these two volumes as "elementary" and a background for young men preparing to study law (Thomas Jefferson to John Minor, Monticello, 30 August 1814, Ford, *Works*).

⁵² E. R. Sleight, "Early American Arithmetics," *National Mathematics Magazine*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Mathematics Association of America, October, 1935), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3028246> (29 March 2009), 9-12, . Given the multiplicity of weights, measures, and currencies in this period, even a simple "arithmetic" could be complicated. Pike's original enjoyed eight editions; the abridged without logarithms, etc. was published from 1804 until 1830. Jefferson apparently owned several editions of Pike over the years (Sowerby #3666) and the 1804 edition of Pinkerton's *Geography* was part of sale to the Library of Congress (Sowerby # 3827).

⁵³ Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, Poplar Forest, 17 August 1811, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Series*, eds. J. Jefferson Looney, et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 4:87-88.

⁵⁴ O. F. G. Sitwell, "John Pinkerton: An Armchair Geographer in the Early Nineteenth Century," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 138, No. 4 (December, 1972), <http://links.jstor.org/> (18 March 2008), 470-479.

preferred source in Jefferson's pedagogy for enlarging the moral sense; unfortunately for us, they just were not history titles. The printed storehouse of collective memory had an even more critical function in his "country" and beloved Republic: "to judge of the future . . . [to] qualify them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it to defeat its views."⁵⁵ It was a "labyrinthian" path from book catalog, to pedagogy, to mind, to a university, to republican ideology.

The ground-breaking work of the Jefferson Library to make his many lists available in electronic form will open the archive to a broader array of scholarly disciplines and, hopefully, encourage more nuanced, detailed, and complex interpretations of not only the Sage's literary interests but also his radical educational theories and revolutionary political ideologies. As suggested in the brief review of the "Lady's" lists presented here, even Jefferson's views on women's intellectual capacities may prove to have been more than a poetic "amazons and angels" or a romantic "head and heart" that are so popular in many contemporary writings.

It seems the "America" he envisioned for women in responding to Marbois in 1783 would be one in which women mastered "domestic oeconomy;" instructed their children (and boys if their father was blockhead, lost, unavailable, inattentive); amused themselves with music, and eschewed dancing. What might have been "considerably different" were the social and cultural environments Patsy experienced, a father's letters brimming with "precepts," and the books she read.

Martha lamented that she was "unfortunately . . . educated as heiress to a great estate and was learning music, &c., &c., when [she] ought to have been acquiring

⁵⁵ NSV, 152-55.

dexterity with [her] needle”⁵⁶ Nonetheless, her learning was an integral part of her “America” in the plantation South. As future Harvard Professor George Ticknor discovered during a pleasant Monticello evening:

The ladies sat until about six, then retired, but returned with a tea-tray a little before seven, and spent the evening with the gentlemen; which was always pleasant, for they are obviously accustomed to join in the conversation, however high the topic may be⁵⁷

Likewise, the late President’s admirer, Margaret Bayard Smith, considered the results of his teaching remarkable. Martha “unites a strong and highly cultivated intellect, with a soft, tender heart and a frank communicative disposition. Oh, I earnestly hope she may determine on Washington” as a residence.⁵⁸

What if America’s philosopher of education had been as explicit and forceful for female as he was for male education? Would Harvard’s President Eliot have been able to claim as late as 1883: “The male and female minds are not alike. Sex penetrates the mind and the affections, and penetrates deeply and powerfully”?⁵⁹ Would social convention have required Alice Freeman Palmer to construct what she called a “cultural

⁵⁶ Martha Jefferson Randolph to an unnamed daughter, 12 December 1826, as cited in Sara N. Randolph, “Mrs. Martha Jefferson Randolph,” *Women of Our First Century*, eds. Mrs. O. J. Wister and Miss Agnes Irwin (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), 55.

⁵⁷ G. S. Hilliard and Anna Eliot Ticknor, eds. *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor*, 2 vols. (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1876), <http://books.google> (30 March 2009), 1:36. Ticknor (1791-1871) was visiting Monticello following his graduation from Harvard. Obliquely recruiting for his emerging “college of general science,” Monticello’s sage pleaded to Ticknor in late 1817: “Would to god we could have two or three duplicates of yourself, the original being above our means and hopes” (Thomas Jefferson to George Ticknor, Poplar Forest, Ford, *Works*, 12:76-79). Unsuccessful, he lamented to his friend in Quincy: “I should have been much more pleased had he accepted the Professorship in our University . . .” (Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, 9 July 1819, *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, ed. Lester J. Cappon [Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959], 544).

⁵⁸ Margaret Bayard Smith to Maria Boyd, Sidney, 12 April 1828, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society in the Family Letters of Margaret Bayard Smith*, ed., Galliard Hunt (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1906), <http://www.alexanderstreet4.com> (April, 2008), 424.

⁵⁹ *Liberal Education*, “Remarks of President Eliot” (Social Science Convention, May 14, 1873); ed. James Orton, *The Liberal Education of Women: The Demand and the Method, Current Thoughts in America and England* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1873, reprinted Garland Publishing, Inc., NY, 1986), iii-iv.

hybrid” of Woman to justify her science curriculum at Wellesley?⁶⁰ Or for that matter, could Thomas Jefferson’s hobby of his old age, the University of Virginia, have forestalled becoming fully coeducational until 1970? Not just idle speculations, if we take seriously this Founder’s belief that we read history to be apprised of the past so we can “judge of the future.”

The future envisioned by a grieving Father in 1783 came to fruition with Martha’s installation as plantation mistress and devotion to his republican civic virtue. “America” was changing, but painfully slow for women. Forty-one years after the “plan of reading” was devised and after his eldest granddaughter had been thoroughly instructed by Grand Papa and Mother, Ellen (age 27) confided to her sister’s betrothed:

I have been all my life in the custom of reading a good deal, but I can truly say that I never knew how I ought to read until I had grown too old . . . I read because it amused me & because I wished to make myself a companion for those intelligent and well-informed persons in whose society I most delighted . . . Was I a man, could my studies have any object of sufficient importance . . . I would now, even now, commence my education. . . . [A]s it is, I am nothing but a woman, and could promise myself no competent reward for so much trouble.⁶¹

Books by themselves were insufficient, even for this well read and reflective young woman in a hospitable and genteel social milieu. Bringing after-dinner tea and discussing “high topics” were not “objects of sufficient importance” to warrant vigorous mental exercise.

Happiness, as Jefferson repeatedly reminded his young charges, was life’s pursuit and attained only through private honor, social esteem, and being loved by

⁶⁰ Roberta Frankfort, *Collegiate Women: Domesticity and Career in Turn-of-the-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 41.

⁶¹ Ellen Wayles Randolph to Nicholas P. Trist, 30 March 1824, transcript of manuscript, Papers of Nicholas Philip Trist (DLC), Family Letters Project, Thomas Jefferson Foundation, <http://familypapers.dataformat.com> (13 April 2006). Hereafter, cited as *FLP*.

others. "Inform me what books you read, what tunes you learn," Father wrote to a Philadelphia boardinghouse. The stakes were high for both an eleven-year old and her single parent.

I have placed my happiness on seeing you good and accomplished
If you love me then, strive to be good . . . and to acquire those
accomplishments which I have put in your power Keep my letters
and read them that you may always have present in your mind those
things which will endear you to me.⁶²

Martha read the books, kept the letters, and, when Papa died, acknowledged that for her "nothing will remain but an education given in happier days and for very different purposes."⁶³

⁶² Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson, Annapolis, 28 November 1783, *Papers*, 6:380.

⁶³ Martha Jefferson Randolph to Anne Cary Randolph Morris, Boston, 4 December 1826, *FLP* (PPAmP), <http://familypapers.dataformat.com> (10 September 2006).