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Isabelle Bour

It has often occurred to us [...] that there is universally something presumptuous in provincial genius, and that it is a very rare felicity to meet with a man of talents out of the metropolis, who does not overrate himself and his coterie prodigiously. In the West of England in particular, there has been a succession of authors, who [...] have fancied that they were born to effect some mighty revolution in the different departments to which they applied themselves. We need only run over the names of Darwin, Day, Beddoes, Southey, Coleridge, and Priestley to make ourselves perfectly intelligible.

It is [...] chiefly, we believe, for want of that wholesome discipline of derision to which everything is subjected in London [...]. There is something [...] in the perpetual presence of the more permanent aristocracies of wealth, office, and rank which [...] teaches aspiring men to measure their own importance by a more extended standard¹.

- ¹ In this outrageous statement – all the more outrageous as it came from a Scotsman – a leading intellectual authority of the early years of the nineteenth century, Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, inextricably links intellectual achievement and the *je ne sais quoi* generated by the presence of the metropolitan Establishment. This kind of social prejudice forecloses the acknowledgement of the “intellectual”, or indeed of the “philosopher”, as a valid categorical ascription. Of course, the word « intellectual » was not used as a noun in a sense akin to its modern one until 1813², and

it did not become current in this sense until the closing decades of the nineteenth century. But the point is that Jeffrey implicitly denied that an important thinker or a *philosophe* often alienated from metropolitan élites such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau had been, could have achieved in Great Britain the recognition he had in France.

- 2 Francis Jeffrey does not mention Richard Lovell Edgeworth, but he might have, as the men he names were either members of the Lunar Society – Erasmus Darwin, Thomas Day, Joseph Priestley – or had some connection with it³. Those men had very different specialities, from botany (Darwin) to medicine (Beddoes), chemistry, rhetoric and theology (Priestley), politics and children’s literature (Day), and poetry (Southey and Coleridge). Clearly, however, in Jeffrey’s mind, they belong to the same kind: they are men with excessive intellectual ambitions of some sort or other.
- 3 Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817) would have seemed superlatively provincial to Jeffrey, as he was Anglo-Irish, and only occasionally visited England after he decided to settle on his County Longford estate in 1782. Yet, he has a place in the intellectual history of the British Isles, primarily as an educationalist, but also as an inventor, a politician and an improving landlord. This essay will not try to project modern definitions of the intellectual onto the achievements of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, but will examine the major aspects of his intellectual career, bringing out the paradoxes and tensions in it, to argue that it embodies and illustrates the tensions and ruptures in the intellectual life of the British Isles at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The “mechanic” and the scholar

- 4 Edgeworth belonged to the Lunar Society of Birmingham from 1766, that is to say that he joined it in its second year of existence. He explains in his *Memoirs* that he also belonged to an informal London gathering of men of learning, which he calls the society of Slaughter’s Coffee House, and whose distinguished members included John Hunter, Joseph Banks and Captain Cook⁴. It is clear that, in his mind, these two societies were not radically different, though twenty-first-century scholars would say that the Birmingham Lunar Society was much more concerned with the technological applications of science than the London coffee house society. Indeed, of the members of the Birmingham Lunar Society, who met at Matthew Boulton’s house, Edgeworth says that they were “men of very different characters, but all devoted to literature and science⁵” and the London society he defines as a “literary society⁶”. The great difference we perceive between those two groups has to do with the increasing differentiation among fields of knowledge which took place from the turn of the nineteenth century and with the attendant widening gap between the meanings of the words “literature” and “science”. To Edgeworth, “literature” still meant polite learning, and “science” was knowledge acquired by study as well as experimental science⁷. The porousness and flexibility of the concepts is confirmed by his definition of a “literary society”: in such a society, he says, “the first hints of discoveries, the current observations, and the mutual collision of ideas, are of important utility⁸”. Edgeworth much enjoyed the collaboration, the mutual help which were defining features of those societies. Such was his altruistic interest in the progress of knowledge that he did not resent other people’s appropriating his ideas or building on them to effect a discovery. As his daughter Maria puts it in the second volume of his memoirs which she wrote up after his death, “he was careless about fame, to a degree that would

hardly be believed by those, who are jealous of every petty rivalry of invention, and who raise the cry of plagiarism at the appearance of every resemblance or coincidence of ideas⁹”.

- 5 Edgeworth was particularly interested in mechanics. Over the years, he worked on and designed carriages, carriage wheels, sailing carriages, an improved road surfacing, an early form of the semaphore telegraph, among other things – his home, Edgeworthstown, was full of the results of his “mechanical” ingenuity and that of some of his children. What had started as the desultory research of a dilettante in his youth was “in more mature years” “pursued in the patient spirit of philosophical investigation, and turned to good account for the real business of life, and for the advancement of science¹⁰”. With him, there was never any split between theory and practice. Though, as Talcott Parsons reminds us, “the experimental method necessitated technological operations, and the gentleman was not permitted, except for those of arms, to ‘work with his hands’¹¹”, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, who was the only gentleman among the members of the Lunar Society¹² – insofar as he was the only landowner – never thought that practical work was demeaning. Indeed, in the first speech he made in the House of Commons of Ireland on 6th February, 1800, he stated trenchantly: “One manufacturer is worth more than twenty squires¹³”.
- 6 While Edgeworth, thanks to his direct and epistolary contacts with men such as Matthew Boulton and James Watt, was abreast of the most modern science, he was also a very good classicist, having had the education essentially focused on Latin grammar, rhetoric and “themes” which was still current in the second half of the eighteenth century. He describes his introduction to “ancient learning” as “[o]ne of the great eras in a boy’s life¹⁴”. He would often quote Latin verse in his letters to Thomas Day and Erasmus Darwin. Despite his interest in “experimental philosophy”, he never deprecated the classics, and thought that they should go on figuring prominently in the education of future gentlemen. As Alice Paterson comments, from a twentieth-century standpoint, Edgeworth seems “to have combined in the oddest way a passion for mechanics with a love of classical literature¹⁵”. He appears, at one point, to have carried the taste for *disputatio* to extremes. Thomas Day was a precise and relentless dialectician, and Maria Edgeworth comments that “[d]uring his intimacy with Mr Day, he adopted, perhaps, too much of his friend’s taste for arguments; experience convinced him, that these protracted discussions seldom ended in any satisfactory conclusion, either to the understanding or to the temper¹⁶”.
- 7 Earlier on, she evoked “his earnestness to arrive at truth¹⁷”. Indeed, ultimately, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, in his sensible rationality and thirst for knowledge, matches closely the definition of the *philosophe* given in the *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*¹⁸:

Le philosophe [...] démêle les causes autant qu’il est en lui, & souvent même les prévient, & se livre à elles avec connoissance : c’est une horloge qui se monte, pour ainsi dire, quelquefois elle-même. Ainsi il évite les objets qui peuvent lui causer des sentimens qui ne conviennent ni au bien-être, ni à l’être raisonnable, & cherche ceux qui peuvent exciter en lui des affections convenables à l’état où il se trouve. [...] la raison détermine le philosophe.

The disciple of Rousseau and the Baconian empiricist

- 8 As Richard Lovell Edgeworth candidly recounts in his *Memoirs*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile* (1762) made a great impression upon his “young mind”. He explains that he was attracted by the novelty of it, its eloquence and its “plausible ideas”, which contrasted with the “deficiencies and absurdities¹⁹” of the standard education of boys. At twenty-three already Richard Lovell Edgeworth was a man to act upon his convictions and thus, with the agreement of his first wife, he undertook to leave the “body and mind” of his eldest son Richard, born in 1764, “as much as possible to the education of nature and of accident²⁰”. Just as candidly, he admits that while, at the age of seven or eight, Richard was very hardy and bold, he “shewed an invincible dislike to control²¹”. In order to try and make his son more manageable, when Edgeworth went to France in 1771, he sent his son to the school of the Oratorian brothers in Lyon! This was only after taking young Richard to Rousseau in Paris for him to judge of the success of his course of education. Rousseau approved of Richard and was gracious enough to remark that, unlike what he had written in *Emile*, history could be profitably taught to young children, but he also pointed out that young Richard was excessively proud of all things English.
- 9 Always honest and outspoken, Richard Lovell Edgeworth repeatedly says in his memoirs that Rousseau’s educational system is misguided. Edgeworth learnt from his mistakes, and when, with his second wife Honora, he decided to embark on a systematic course of education for his growing family (he had twenty-two children in all, from four different wives), he left dogma and primitivism behind, and decided to adopt a Baconian approach to education. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he became a radical empiricist who now maintained that there is no such thing as “natural genius” – innate predispositions – and that a child’s personality and knowledge are the result of his upbringing and schooling only. Edgeworth devotes most of the preface to his *Essays on Professional Education* (1808) to trying to prove that point; he now advises against letting children develop freely their supposed natural abilities. In the course of the home education which his children received, he and his wife, from 1778 onwards, would make notes on the children’s progress, and those would provide the empirical basis for steering their course of study in particular directions. This first-hand experience of the education of children provided the material for the very innovative educational treatise *Practical Education*, published in 1798, the joint work of Richard Lovell and his daughter Maria. They state in the preface: “To make any progress in the art of education, it must be patiently reduced to an experimental science [...] we lay before the public the result of our experiments, and in many instances the experiments themselves²².” As a Member of the last Irish Parliament, and a member of the committee of the Board of Education, Edgeworth made a speech on the education of children from the lower classes, which was reported in the press; in it he made very similar points, still informed by the disastrous Rousseauian experiment with his eldest son:

On this subject there was vast room for speculation; he did not signify by the word speculation, any wild new theory; he meant to proceed on matter of fact, on the deduction of facts accurately ascertained; this was the right difference between theory and practice, and in it consisted that true useful speculation which was founded in experience. It was by collecting a number of facts in any case, and by

drawing deductions from them, that mankind were properly directed in scientific and moral pursuits²³.

- 10 This might be a very brief summary of Francis Bacon’s inductive epistemology as expounded in *The Advancement of Learning* and *Novum Organum*. And, indeed, Maria Edgeworth proudly says: “I claim for my father the merit of having been the first to recommend, both by example and precept, what Bacon would call the experimental method in education²⁴”.
- 11 In the long term, *Practical Education* was a very influential educational treatise, but initially it was well received only in liberal circles, because 1798 “was not a year for welcoming progressive books²⁵”, with the French Wars going on and the general suspicion towards advanced ideas of any kind. Apart from its empirical approach to learning, *Practical Education* was remarkable for the breadth of topics included in the curriculum – traditional subjects like ancient literature, chronology and history, but also modern subjects such as chemistry and mechanics; the book also discussed moral education, and asked fundamental questions about the balance between memory and invention.
- 12 Edgeworth’s ideas were new both in their quality, “defined as acceptance or rejection of the axio-normative (or value and norm) structures of given systems of thought” and in scope, understood as “the broadening of the area of discussion through the addition of genuinely new or at least newly relevant knowledge²⁶”. The Dissenting Academies, earlier in the century, had already “modernised” the curriculum by including science and practical subjects into it, but the actual pedagogy was not grounded in first-hand experience systematised into learning methods. Edgeworth, apart from his pedagogical experience with his children, used the familiarity with various aspects of science, technology and industry he had acquired in his years as a member of the Lunar Society.
- 13 Where Edgeworth ultimately went back to Rousseau, or perhaps never moved away from him, was in the strong individualistic slant of his educational theory. Each child received an education specific to himself. Being in favour of home education, Edgeworth never considered the dynamics of class teaching. He was such an upholder of individual education that, at least at the time when *Practical Education* was published, he thought that there should be very little contact among the children of the same family, as such contact could only undermine the work done by the tutor or tutors. “Children should not be educated for the society of children; nor should they live in that society during their education”, he wrote²⁷. On this point, as on others, as his daughter is at pains to emphasise at the end of the *Memoirs*, he changed his mind, and partly gave up his *a priori* notions :

My father became thoroughly convinced, that the separation of children in a family may lead to evils, greater than any partial good that can result from it. The attempt may induce artifice and disobedience on the part of the children; the separation can scarcely be effected; and if it were effected, would tend to make the children miserable. He saw, that their little quarrels, and the crossings of their tempers and fancies, are nothing in comparison with the inestimable blessings of that fondness, that family affection, which grows up among children, who have with each other an early and constant community of pleasures and pains²⁸.
- 14 Though claiming to be a thorough-going empiricist, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, even after his rejection of Rousseau’s “speculation” in *Emile*, remained a doctrinaire – over-reliant on the strength of human reason, under the influence of Locke’s ideas in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), and essentially convinced that education could

overrule any inclinations a child might have towards certain areas of knowledge and certain avocations. With him, the primacy of experience became an axiom which superseded the dogmatism of Rousseau’s faith in the child as noble savage. It is to be noted, however, as has been shown apropos of the isolation of children, that his thinking never ossified, and that his ideas on education kept evolving, at least on certain points.

- 15 What is missing from both *Practical Education* and *Professional Education* is “a clear and precise statement of the aim of education, such as could have given coherence and unity to the whole mass of pedagogical doctrine therein contained²⁹”. This is no doubt owing to the strong utilitarian bias of Richard Lovell and Maria Edgeworth, as well as a Lockean epistemology which was not related to a well-defined conception of the gentleman such as undergirded Locke’s *Thoughts Concerning Education*. Related to this is the strongly individualistic bias of the Edgeworthian pedagogy, already mentioned, which did not leave much room for a consideration of the “social virtues³⁰”. This individualism was also Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s: his large family may have been a testing ground for his educational ideas, but it was also a microcosm, a small world over which he ruled supreme, and which, together with his estate, provided him with a sufficient field of action.

The Irishman : between non-sectarianism and Ascendancy

- 16 Richard Lovell Edgeworth was not lastingly involved in Irish politics, or at least he was not for long a Member of Parliament, though for many years he sat as an expert on various parliamentary committees. He first took an active part in Irish politics in 1782 when he published “a radical address urging the County Longford volunteers to seize the moment to petition the Irish House of Commons for further reform, especially on Catholic emancipation³¹”. He also thought that the House should be more representative of the population, especially of freeholders³². He attended further meetings of the Volunteer movement, including the Congress in Dublin in 1784, but understood that the Congress should not challenge the authority of the House of Commons, as the radical Bishop of Derry wished, and he was instrumental in convincing the delegates to disband³³.
- 17 He first stood for the Irish House of Commons in 1796, in a county election, but was not returned. This failure in a county election probably explains why he agreed to stand for the borough of St Johnstown, though he considered that too many boroughs were unrepresentative. He was elected and thus sat in the last Irish House of Commons before the Union of 1801. He made three speeches in the House in the protracted debate on the Union. No doubt in order that his paradoxical vote should be understood, he had those speeches published by his friend the London radical publisher Joseph Johnson under the title *The Substance of Three Speeches, delivered in the House of Commons of Ireland, February 6, March 4, and March 21, 1800, upon the subject of an union with Great Britain* (1800). About the second speech the historian W. E. H. Lecky said in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* that it was “another of those curious, balanced, hesitating speeches, which are so unlike the general character of Irish oratory³⁴”. The word “hesitating” seems ill suited to Edgeworth’s well-attested forceful and assertive tone in public; his descendants, who could speak more freely than Maria Edgeworth

said that “when he was serious, he was portentously so; hence his ponderous rhetoric and his sonorous didacticism³⁵”. As Lecky could not have heard Edgeworth in 1800 (he was not born until 1838), he must have been referring to the very careful dialectical nature of Edgeworth’s argument, which is particularly striking in the first and longest speech. At the beginning of this speech, he warns his listeners that he will address himself to their “sober reason³⁶”. This is indeed what he does, going through the arguments against a union, and refuting them one by one. To him, what makes the union necessary are “religious dissensions”. He evokes “the horrors on either side”, though he speaks as a Protestant who looks forward to the end of Roman Catholicism. Indeed, he departs from his sober rationality in the following outburst against “popery”:

The popery of the present day is a lion robbed of his teeth and claws – it will expire from necessary causes in a short time – and the less it is stimulated, the sooner it will fall into neglect – the sun of reason has ascended too high to be followed by the mists of ignorance; let it shine on Ireland, and popery is not more³⁷.

- 18 In this speech and the following ones, Edgeworth stresses that the planned union must be “upon a perfect footing of equality”, and explains why he objects to the kind of representation of Irish MPs and peers which has been prepared. While Edgeworth’s arguments in favour of the union are political and economic, his arguments against it are political and moral. He thinks that Irish Members of Parliament should not vote against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people – by which he means men of “property, ability, information and experience³⁸”; he also objects, more and more strongly over his three speeches, to the overt corruption which has been used by the British authorities to ensure success.
- 19 As Maria Edgeworth puts it in her account of the debate on the union:

He stated his doubts just as they had really occurred, balancing the arguments as he threw them by turns into each scale, as they had balanced one another in his judgement; so that the doubtful beam nodded from side to side, while all watched to see when its vibrations would settle. All the time he kept both parties in good humour, because each expected to have him their own at last³⁹.
- 20 Ultimately, moral revulsion prevailed, and Richard Lovell Edgeworth voted, like his patron Lord Granard, against the union. Catholics in County Longford were astonished and enthusiastic.
- 21 The fact is that Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s views and choices, when it came to politics and religion, were complex, and sometimes contradictory. While his condemnation of “popery” was unambiguous, he was completely non-sectarian in his attitude to his dependents: he had Catholic and Protestant servants and tenants, and the corps of infantry he raised in 1798 was also non-sectarian. This is certainly what saved his deserted home from being ransacked by the rebels in 1798. In 1792, while in England, he wrote a letter to the Roman Catholics of County Longford, declaring himself “in favour of a full participation of rights amongst every denomination of men in Ireland⁴⁰”. While he wanted to, and did, improve the miserable lot of his mostly Catholic tenants, he was not a democrat, as he made clear in his second speech on the union, his use of the phrase “the Irish people” in his first speech having obviously been misunderstood. He said on 4th March that, after the 1798 rebellion, “liberty now meant something more than a name, and every man knew that it did not mean democracy⁴¹”. About the same time, in the speech he made to the committee on the education of the poor, he stated that his view of the French Revolution was that of Burke, not that of

Paine, for whom "the Rights of Man [...] were prior and antecedent to all rule", and therefore unconvincing to "any reasonable man"⁴². He was wary of broad abstract concepts, as he made clear in his first speech when he said: "French philanthropists follow the phantom of universal benevolence as their guide, and, becoming abstract citizens, are neither husbands, fathers, nor children"⁴³. It will be clear from this analysis that Edgeworth was not afraid of standing all alone — not siding with his Ascendancy colleagues, nor with Catholics, nor with any of the sectarian groups. To convey how immoral a union enforced by the presence of British troops would be, he pointed out that this meant waiting for the sanction of time and acquiescence, rather as Bonaparte, Britain's arch-enemy, had done when he seized power in 1798⁴⁴. He predicted, about such a union:

the fire may be smothered in its ashes, but the same wind that bears away the English troops, or that wafts an invading army to these coasts, will blow up the embers of Discontent into a flame, which may, perhaps, destroy both countries before it can be quenched⁴⁵.

- 22 Some clear-sightedness cannot be denied him for adding: "I cannot help suspecting that this [the imposed union] is an experiment upon a limb of the British Empire, to try whether the whole body can bear the violence of such measures"⁴⁶.
- 23 Edgeworth's insistence on viewing the planned union from many different angles, on shifting his perspective to come to the best possible decision, did not include his challenging the rule of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, surely because he saw the bulk of the Catholic population as very poor and ignorant and as needing to be educated before they could be given any form of political agency. As he said in a letter to Erasmus Darwin, written in September 1794: "the peasants, though cruel, are generally docile, and of the strongest powers, both of body and mind. A good government may make this a great country, because the raw material is good and simple"⁴⁷.
- 24 Edgeworth was too scrupulous and too thoughtful to become a popular politician, and, here again, he behaved as a *philosophe* :

Le philosophe est jaloux de tout ce qui s'appelle honneur et probité.
La société civile est, pour ainsi dire, une divinité pour lui sur la terre ;
il l'encense, il l'honore par la probité, par une attention exacte à ses devoirs, & par un désir sincère de n'en être pas un membre inutile ou embarrassant. Les sentimens de probité entrent autant dans la constitution mécanique du philosophe, que les lumières de l'esprit⁴⁸.

- 25 The best field of action for the implementation of his political ideas was his own estate of Edgeworthstown, where he did away with the patronage system, with very long leases which provided no incentive for exertion on the part of tenants, offering them in exchange moderate rents, and making no distinction between Catholics and Protestants⁴⁹.

Conclusion

- 26 Richard Lovell Edgeworth was never an intellectual figurehead with the fame of a Jonathan Swift or a Voltaire, but like them he stood up for his ideas and, because of his multifarious interests and his personal circumstances, was able to implement them: he tested Rousseauian primitivism and then his own educational empiricism on his

children, he ran his estate along non-sectarian and meritocratic lines, he built the mechanical devices which he had first designed. His political career in the strict sense of the term was very short, but much of his action was intrinsically political – his management of his estate was controversial, his joint writings on education showed “how the apparently private realm of child-rearing and early education might become a source of social transformation and of challenge to established authorities⁵⁰”, his membership of the Lunar Society identified him with the rising scientific and industrial élite, and thus with the major changes taking place in British society in the second half of the eighteenth century. That he was perceived as a man of advanced views is confirmed by his friendly acquaintance with such progressive Whigs as Sir Samuel Romilly and Lord Landsdowne, and with Etienne Dumont, the translator of Bentham. His indifference to publicity and to fame no doubt explains that he should be mainly remembered nowadays, if he is remembered at all, as the father of the novelist Maria Edgeworth. However, he also deserves to be remembered as a *philosophe*, an “experimental philosopher” and as an enlightened Irish patriot; as a man who could embrace humanist culture as well as the most up-to-date science, support the power of the Ascendancy and promote Catholic emancipation. He was both a committed intellectual, and one of the last universal *savants*⁵¹.

NOTES

1. Francis Jeffrey, ‘Memoirs of Dr Joseph Priestley’, *Edinburgh Review*, n° 9, 1806, p. 147. Quoted in Robert E. Schofield, *The Lunar Society of Birmingham*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1963.
2. According to the OED quoted by Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 18.
3. Francis Jeffrey knew Richard Lovell Edgeworth through the latter’s collaborative work with his daughter Maria. He reviewed several novels and series of tales by Maria Edgeworth in the *Edinburgh Review*, and they started a correspondence.
4. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, London, Hunter, 1820, vol. 2, p. 188.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
7. In the educational treatise *Practical Education* (1798), which Richard Lovell Edgeworth wrote with his daughter Maria Edgeworth, “science” usually means “experimental science”, but that is because of the nature of the work in question.
8. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, p. 188.
9. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 139.
10. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 329.

11. Talcott Parsons, "The Intellectual: A Social Role Category", in Philip Rieff (ed.), *On Intellectuals: Theoretical Studies, Case Studies*, New York, Doubleday, 1969, p. 15.
12. Thomas Day bought two successive estates, but that was mostly because he wanted to live away from the world; he did not come from a landed background.
13. Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *The Substance of Three Speeches, delivered in the House of Commons of Ireland, February 6, March 4, and March 21, 1800, upon the subject of an union with Great Britain*, London, Johnson, 1800, p. 10. [ECCO].
14. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 46.
15. Alice Paterson, *The Edgeworths: A Study of Later Eighteenth-century Education*, London, University Tutorial Press, 1914, p. 13.
16. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 361.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 329.
18. Diderot et d'Alembert, *Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, Paris, Briasson, 1751-1772, p. 509. [ARTFL]
19. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 177.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
22. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 1798, 2nd ed., London, Johnson, 1801, vol. 1, p. vi.
23. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 246.
24. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 185-86.
25. Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1972, p. 172.
26. J. P. Nettl, "Ideas, Intellectuals, and Structures of Dissent", in Philip Rieff, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
27. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 1798, 2nd ed., London, Johnson, 1801, vol. 1, p. 290.
28. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 399.
29. Alice Paterson, *The Edgeworths*, p. 36.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
31. Christina Colvin, Article on Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004.
32. See text of this speech in Richard Lovell and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 49-51.
33. See Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends who made the Future 1730-1810*, London, Faber, 2002, p. 341.
34. W. E. H. Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 8, p. 456. Quoted in Harriet Jessie Butler and Harold Edgeworth Butler, *The Black Book of Edgeworthstown and Other Edgeworth Memories 1585-1817*, London, Faber and Gwyer, 1927, p. 182.
35. Harriet Jessie Butler and Harold Edgeworth Butler, *Black Book*, p. 232.
36. Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Substance*, p. 3.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
39. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 243-244.
40. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 148.
41. Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Substance*, p. 28.
42. Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 247.
43. Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Substance*, p. 23.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
47. Quoted in Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men*, p. 342.
48. Diderot et d'Alembert, *Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, Paris, Briasson, 1751-72, p. 510. [ARTFL]Ø
49. See Gary Kelly, "Class, Gender, Nation, and Empire: Money and Merit in the Writings of the Edgeworths", *The Wordsworth Circle*, vol. 25 n° 2, Spring 1994, p. 88.
50. Susan Manly, "Maria Edgeworth and 'the light of nature': artifice, autonomy, and anti-sectarianism in *Practical Education* (1798)", in Heather Glen and Paul Hamilton (eds.), *Repossessing the Romantic Past*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 143.
51. One could perhaps apply to Richard Lovell Edgeworth what Edgar Morin says of the Marxist: "*Le marxiste cesse d'être un intellectuel tout en élargissant le champ de l'intellectualité, parce qu'il devient à la fois praticien et penseur, militant et savant.*" Edgar Morin, "Intellectuels : Critique du mythe et mythe de la critique", *Arguments*, special issue on Intellectuals, n° 20, 1960, p. 37.

ABSTRACTS

Although Richard Lovell Edgeworth is more often remembered for being the father of Maria, the novelist, than for his ideas on politics and education, he was conversant with Rousseau's theories as well as a champion of experimental philosophy. He set great store by the kind of atmosphere prevalent in the Lunar Society, where "the mutual collision of ideas" was favoured as a method of reaching truth, and when it came to religion, his views and choices smacked of anything but dogmatism. In short, as this article tries to demonstrate, Edgeworth, living as he did at a time when the concept of the intellectual had not yet been devised, was a *philosophe* in the eighteenth-century sense of the word.

Richard Lovell Edgeworth est plus connu comme le père de Maria, la romancière, que pour ses idées sur la politique et l'éducation, et pourtant il était familier des théories de Rousseau ainsi qu'un ardent défenseur de la philosophie expérimentale. Il attachait beaucoup de prix à l'atmosphère de « la Lunar Society », où la confrontation réciproque des idées était perçue comme un moyen d'atteindre la vérité, et ses idées ou ses préférences en matière de religion

n'avaient rien de dogmatique. En un mot, ainsi que cet article entend le démontrer, Edgeworth, qui vivait à une époque où le concept d'intellectuel n'avait pas encore été forgé, était un philosophe au sens où l'entendait le XVIII^e siècle.

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