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Did Children Have a Renaissance?

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Joan Kelly's agenda-changing question prompted a generation of scholars to consider whether — as Merry Wiesner would later put it — it is still meaningful to celebrate a period as a golden age, a Renaissance, if it had few positive, or actively negative, effects on women.[1] Such reflections take on additional resonance when the question is directed to the study of children and childhood because the nostalgic construction of childhood itself as a golden age within the lifespan of the individual has been a powerful narrative of Western selfhood since the Renaissance. In turn, this narrative has come to serve as a trope for the celebration of an idealized past: for a number of writers in the period with which we are concerned, Leah Marcus argues, "childhood was a rich and complex symbol . . . for a whole range of values associated with an England of the past and rapidly disappearing . . . in the divided England of their own time."[2] This trope is counterposed, however, by another cultural narrative of considerable power in Western modernity in which, as Susanne Greenhalgh notes, childhood is viewed as a state "imbued with the characteristics of progress, futurity, and thus modernity itself."[3] Childhood — experienced, remembered, and represented — provides us with powerful and evocative tropes and structures

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[1] Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 5.

[2] Leah S. Marcus, *Childhood and Cultural Despair: A Theme and Variations in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), 41.

[3] Susanne Greenhalgh, "Introduction: Reinventing Shakespearean Childhoods" in Kate Chedgzoy, Susanne Greenhalgh, and Robert Shaughnessy, eds., *Shakespeare and Childhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 117–36 (esp. 119).

for telling stories of progress. Consequently, the history of childhood can readily be assimilated to a progressive understanding of historical change and come to be marked by a curious complicity with other progressive historical narratives.

Yet the question of whether the Renaissance was a period of progress and opportunity for children, of whether they might have found in it an opportunity to be, as Kelly suggests men were, "liberat[ed] . . . from natural, social, or ideological constraints" has scarcely been addressed. Kelly herself acknowledged the complicity between feminist and child-centered critical perspectives on culture, declaring that "women will make the world concern itself with children,"[4] and Renaissance and early modern studies as a field is beginning to take stock of the implications of the "embeddedness of women and children within *each other's* lives"[5] (original emphasis). Kelly's work on women transformed the study of the Renaissance by insisting that both the observer's angle of view and the visibility of the object studied were of critical importance.[6] If we now take children as the object of our scrutiny and also look at the Renaissance from the vantage point of children as cultural subjects and historical agents, what further transformations might be wrought? How might doing so change what we know and how we think about children and about the Renaissance? This essay grows out of a project in which I attempt to document an early modern archive of literate childhoods by editing and analyzing the corpus of writings in English produced by children from the mid-sixteenth to late-seventeenth centuries. I follow Joan Kelly's lead methodologically as well as conceptually by focusing on children as producers of culture and taking their texts as sources for both the experience and construction of childhood, just as Kelly used women's writings to make newly visible both their distinctive vantage point on the culture they inhabited and the ideological work that gender did in it. How, then, can studying texts written by children help us

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[4] Joan Kelly, *Cancer Journal* (1982), in Joan Kelly, *Women, History and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), xv.

[5] Ann Oakley, "Women and Children First and Last: Parallels and Differences between Women's and Children's Studies", in Berry Mayall, ed., *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced*, (London: Routledge, 1994) 13–32 (esp. 19).

[6] Joan Kelly, *Women, History and Theory*, vii.

answer the question of whether they had a Renaissance?[7] The archive of childhood inscribed in the papers of the Mildmay-Fane family provides a case study in answer to this question which can help us to understand Renaissance girlhoods from the point of view of some of the girls who lived them.

Primary sources that enable us to consider the experience and construction of childhood from the child's point of view as subject of his or her own life take two principal forms: writings produced by children themselves and those in which adults recollect their earlier childhoods. Neither kind of source provides unmediated and unproblematic access to the lived experience of childhood, of course: each is constructed in a process of dialogue with the textual and social expectations that shape the writing of lives. In the first category, I examine the writings that Lady Rachael Fane produced between the ages of about ten and seventeen, recorded in a set of a dozen small notebooks produced in the 1620s by this aristocratic girl as she approached the transition from childhood to adulthood.[8] For girls of Rachael's social status marriage was socially constructed as the terminus of childhood, and some of her writing anticipates and reflects on the likely presence of marriage in her future. This corpus of material documents both the young Rachael Fane's responses to pedagogic exercises and the creative uses she made of what she learned by doing them. Her manuscripts enable us to track some of the processes by which girlhood was formed in this family and to decipher the extent to which Renaissance values informed those processes. Rachael's early education was overseen by her grandmother Lady Grace Mildmay, whose life-writings document

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[7] For a supplement to this essay which extends its concerns to a case study of writing by a Renaissance boy, please see Newcastle University's digital research repository at http://eprint.ncl.ac.uk/; last accessed 30 September 2013.

[8] Rachael Fane's manuscript writings are in Maidstone Library, Kent: U269 F38/1/1–15, U269 F38/2, U269 F38/3, U269 F38/4, U269 F38/5. Not all of the notebooks catalogued under U269 F38/1/1–15 are in Rachael's hand. For an account of her life, see Caroline M. K. Bowden, "Fane, Lady Rachael [*married names* Rachael Bourchier, countess of Bath; Rachael Cranfield, countess of Middlesex] (*bap.* 1613, *d.* 1680)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); online edition, May 2006, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/93575, accessed 29 January 2013.

her own mid-sixteenth-century childhood and education and serve as an instance of the second category of memory-based textual inscriptions of childhood subjectivity.[9] I focus in particular on the retrospective account of her childhood which Grace composed towards the end of her long life and which she framed as a textual legacy to her daughter and subsequent female descendants, noting that she was moved by her own meditations on the spiritual and ethical imperatives of life to "set them downe vnto my daughter, & her children, as familiar talke & communicacion with them, I being dead, as yf I were aliue."[10]

Juxtaposing the generically diverse textual traces of these two elite female childhoods enables us to explore the interactions of gender, generation, and cultural production over the key period associated with the Renaissance in England. It also makes it possible to reveal the limitations, at least as far as the English Renaissance is concerned, of Joan Kelly's rather gloomy assumption that the extension of formal literacy to girls and women had negative consequences because it brought them under male cultural authority.[11] Over several generations, women in the Mildmay-Fane family set themselves to generate and transmit knowledge and texts in a female intellectual lineage that was oriented towards core Renaissance values. The Mildmay-Fane manuscripts constitute a counter-example to

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[9] Since Lady Mildmay's childhood is the focus, I will use her first name rather than her formal title in this discussion. For a biographical account and edited extracts from Mildmay's copious manuscript writings, see Linda A. Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552–1620* (New York: St Martin's, 1995). A briefer biography is Linda A. Pollock, "Mildmay, Grace, Lady Mildmay (*c.*1552–1620)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edition, May 2010, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45817, accessed 29 January 2013. An annotated transcript of about two-thirds of her autobiography has been published: Randall Martin, "The Autobiography of Grace, Lady Mildmay," *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 18:1 (1994), 33–81. The originals of Mildmay's manuscripts are held in the Northamptonshire Studies Collection, Northampton Central Library. Citations here include both original pagination and that for Martin's edition. Some subsequent quotations are cited in the text.

[10] Mildmay MS, 4; Martin, "Autobiography," 42.

[11] Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" in *Women, History and Theory*, 35.

Sarah Gwyneth Ross's insistence on the importance of father-daughter dynamics in enabling women to have a Renaissance.[12] Ross argues persuasively that for girls and women in the Renaissance, securing the possibility of "cultural engagement depended upon making the best use of 'family' networks" (12). She provides a wealth of examples to illustrate that in the majority of cases where girls gained access to formal learning and the possibility of active literacy, this was because they were raised within an "intellectual family" (2) headed by a learned, patriarchal father who was supportive of female education, enabling them to appropriate for their own purposes "the father-patron/daughter-client topos . . . associat[ed] with the learned daughters of the classical tradition" (11). In taking a male-dominated domain of formal learning seriously and training each other up in it, the Mildmay-Fane women formed a female-centered Renaissance household academy, to borrow Ross's useful concept, in which a distinctive focus on medicine and piety accompanied forms of education and enculturation that were standard for girls of this class. But they also counterposed the classically-inflected father-daughter dyad with a more expansive model of vernacular pedagogic exchange between women. Both the father-daughter and the female-centered paradigms thus show that women and girls could indeed have a Renaissance on the terms in which Kelly and Ross both define it, and they help to expand our sense of what the cultural and intellectual empowerment associated with the Renaissance might mean in gendered terms.

If any woman did have a Renaissance, Lady Grace Mildmay did, and it was her childhood formation that prepared her to benefit from the empowerment associated with the new learning of the period. The combination of pious literacy, polished accomplishments, and magnanimous hospitality documented in her own manuscripts and in contemporary comment on her portrays her as an exemplary Renaissance female aristocrat, conforming to prescriptions for virtuous women while performing an appropriately feminized version of the *sprezzatura* desired in her male

[12] Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). Subsequent page quotations cited in text.

counterparts. She was accomplished in some of the secular skills deemed desirable in elite women, such as drawing, needlework, and musicianship; she also possessed in a high degree the technical skill of confectionery, which relates to her extensive and serious engagement with medical science.[13] Mistress Hamblyn, her childhood tutor, had "good knowledge in phisick & surgerie" (Mildmay MS, 10; Martin, "Autobiography," 46) and introduced Grace to the serious study of herbals, setting her "to reade in Dr Turners Herball, & in Bartholomew Vigoe" (Mildmay MS, 11; Martin, "Autobiography," 47). Thereby, Rebecca Laroche argues, her tutor opened to Grace a new Renaissance intellectual world of medical discourse in print, a public space of learning accessible to the literate rather than the domestic, female-dominated sphere of household medical practice, the knowledge of which was transmitted through shared labor, which women could more commonly access.[14] Mistress Hamblyn was responsible for Grace's education from the age of ten, and Grace's recollections of her childhood are primarily framed as a cross-generational narrative of her profound admiration and respect for this woman who shaped her:

> She proued very religious, wyse, chaste, & all good vertues that might be in a woman were constantly settled in her, (for, from her youth she made good vse of all things that euer she did read, see, or heare; & obserued all companyes that euer she came in, good or badd: so that shee could giue a most right censure & true judgment of any things, & giue wyse counsell vpon any occasion (Mildmay MS, 9; Martin, "Autobiography," 46)

It is significant that Grace Mildmay sees Mistress Hamblyn's exemplary performance of virtuous Renaissance femininity as grounded in her own early learning, for she had been educated by Grace's mother, Lady Anne Sharington. The commitment to female learning in this family thus extends across generations and beyond lineal descent. As well as the

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[13] Pollock, "Mildmay, Grace," http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45817.

[14] Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts, 1550–1650* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

scientific education she offered Grace, Hamblyn's pedagogic practice also focused more conventionally on moral training for virtuous womanhood in conformity with the prescriptions of influential educational theorists of the Renaissance such as Juan Luis Vives, whose publications on such matters coincided with Hamblyn's own education by Grace's mother.[15] It therefore included a very high level of vernacular literacy, which Grace put to intensive use in reading the Bible and composing spiritual meditations. Weaving together these two strands of her education, the medical and the moral/biblical, in the corpus of over two thousand loose sheets of her papers that she bequeathed to her daughter Mary, Grace left a textual legacy that witnesses to her expansion of the intellectual scope of the Renaissance elite woman.

And what did Rachael, Mary's daughter, who was educated by Grace, do with this legacy? She recorded a recipe for meringues which has brought her a certain modest celebrity in the world of twenty-first century food bloggers.[16] (So much for progress narratives.) But that is not the whole story. The recipe for "Pets," the famous meringues, then a novelty in English cookery, actually suggests a level of culinary expertise approaching Grace Mildmay's excellence as a confectioner. It is recorded in Maidstone Library, Kent, manuscript U269 F38/2, identified by the catalogue entry as a "Recipe book compiled by Lady Rachael Fane . . . c. 1630," which was when she was about seventeen years old. The catalogued item is not quite a recipe book, however: it consists of one notebook, plus ten loose sheets containing recipes and medical instructions and a further sheet with a little meditative piece on it. The recipes in the notebook are all medicinal, variously curative and preventive, and include cures for shingles, bloodshot eyes, falling sickness, and rickets as well as "A Vomite for on much stuffed in y^{e} stomach" and "How to make a Glister." The loose sheets include both medicinal and culinary recipes, many of them frequently found in similar

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[15] Juan Luis Vives, *De institutione feminae christianae* [The Education of a Christian Woman] (London, 1524).

[16] See, for instance, http://www.inmamaskitchen.com/FOOD_IS_ART/meringue2.html and http://coreytazmania.weebly.com/1/post/2012/10/meringue.html, both accessed 31 January 2013.

manuscript compilations of the period, such as "To make sirrop of Lemons" and "A marche-paine tart." The commingling of medicinal, confectionery, and devotional writing in this notebook clearly reveals the influence of Lady Grace Mildmay, whose personal archive combined similar materials. And it documents a version of Renaissance womanhood that required the daughter of the elite to acquire multiple modes of cultural literacy.

The complexities of the ways in which these literacies bore on the possibility of cultural empowerment and liberation for the Renaissance aristocratic girl are richly documented in another of Rachel Fane's manuscripts (Maidstone Library, Kent U269 F38/1/5). This small notebook, its cover inscribed "R.F. Ianuary 29. 1626" (one day after Rachael's thirteenth birthday) in firm, clear print, contains a mixture of items that testify to the sometimes contradictory nature of the ideologies of femininity that shaped the early life of an aristocratic girl. It contains some religious writing reminiscent of Grace Mildmay's devotional practice, most notably a passage headed "meadetations upon ye 50 psame" (11) as well as a sermon note (10). Note-taking as a means of shaping and recording the girl's engagement with sermons and meditating on the psalms were both key forms of intellectual and spiritual discipline that loomed large in the education of Protestant girls and women; their influence is pervasively evident in Grace Mildmay's manuscript writings as well as in this notebook.[17]

But these much-encouraged textual practices are juxtaposed in the notebook with very different, secular material, namely passages in French accompanied by Rachael's translations of them into English.[18] Most of these passages (setting aside a brief devotional excerpt on pages 2–3) are drawn from the ninth book of *Amadis de Gaul*, for example, "Lettre du Prince Anaxartes A L'infante Oriane" (6–7). *Amadis de Gaul* and its

[17] For an overview of these pedagogic practices, see Kate Chedgzoy, *Women's Writing in the British Atlantic World: Memory, Place and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 25–27.

[18] On the role of French in the education of girls in early modern England, see Jerome de Groot, "'Euery one teacheth after thyr owne fantasie': French Language Instruction," in *Performing Pedagogy in Early Modern England: Gender, Instruction and Performance*, ed. Kate Moncrief and Kate McPherson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 84–107.

derivatives were favorites among the chivalric prose romances that provided popular reading matter for the young throughout the Renaissance, along with English fictions such as Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, of which twelve-year-old Mary Rich had a copy in her personal library a decade after Rachael Fane compiled her notebooks.[19] Noting the "suspect" nature of the material from *Amadis de Gaul*, Nandini Das questions whether it would have been deemed a suitable translation assignment by a tutor and suggests that rather than constituting a pedagogic task, it may, along with the masque I discuss below, represent "another of [Rachael's] voluntary youthful forays into the world of fiction."[20] What the translation exercises share with the masque is an exploration of romance tropes as a way of negotiating the expectations of heterosexual courtship and marriage that would shape Rachael's life in the coming years as she made the transition from girlhood to adulthood.

Rachael's active use in her writing of such tropes to consider the meanings of the end of childhood is illuminated by comparison with Elizabeth Brackley's work two decades later, in collaboration with her sister Jane Cavendish, on the play *The Concealed Fancies*, which plays with the materials of romance, and the "Pastorall" masque.[21] Several scholars have identified the enabling influence of William Cavendish on his daughters' writing, and to that extent Cavendish family culture conforms to Sarah Gwyneth Ross's model of the patriarchally-directed household academy.[22] But the textual collaboration between sisters counterposes paternal influence with a feminine co-creative effort that echoes the culture of female

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[19] Edel Lamb, "The Literature of Early Modern Childhoods," *Literature Compass*, 7 (2010), 412–23 (esp. 413). Ramona Wray, "Recovering the Reading of Renaissance Englishwomen: Deployments of Autobiography," *Critical Survey* 12.2 (2000): 33–48 (esp. 35).

[20] Nandini Das, *Renaissance Romance: The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570–1620* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 157.

[21] "Poems Songs a Pastorall and a Play by the Right Honorable the Lady Jane Cavendish and Lady Elizabeth Brackley," Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Rawlinson poet. 16.

[22] Margaret J. M. Ezell, "'To Be Your Daughter in Your Pen': The Social Functions of Literature in the Writings of Lady Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 51 (1988), 281–96.

textual interaction found in the Mildmay-Fane family. William Cavendish may have educated his daughters for authorship, but it was during his prolonged absence from the household that they produced their substantial original writings. Elizabeth had been married in 1641 at the age of fifteen to John Egerton, Viscount Brackley and Earl of Bridgewater, but remained at the Cavendish family home for several years thereafter because she was considered, as her step-mother Margaret Cavendish would later put it, "too young to be bedded"; Alison Findlay suggests that in the "Pastorall" Elizabeth wrote for herself the role of Chastity, a "'shee Priest' [who] remains icily chaste even though she is married."[23] Elizabeth's experience of marriage and textual reflections on it illustrate the complexities associated with identifying the end of childhood for aristocratic girls in the Renaissance. The part played in such girls' lives by dynastically-motivated marriages as the terminus of childhood makes plain that the liberations offered by the Renaissance could at best be no more than partial and compromised for them.

The particular significance that the narratives, tropes, and values embedded in romance might have for girls such as Brackley, Rich, or Fane is signaled in Fane's notebook by an English passage evidently drawn from a romance narrative in the same mode as the extracts from *Amadis* (F38/1/5, 8–9), followed by its translation into French (F38/1/5, 9–10). The passage begins "Ther is nothing in this world of more greater danger to ceepe, y^{n} A yong woman or made y^{t} Loue has struke w^{it} his golden dart, here is asartaine excampell" (F38/1/5, 8). The vulnerability of young women to the "golden dart" of love and the likely disruptive consequences of them being so struck are tropes that recur frequently in secular romance fiction. They contribute to a cultural perception of girls as emotionally labile and in need of discipline and constraint to ensure that their seduction into adult heterosexuality does not make them exceed the bounds of

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[23] Margaret Cavendish, *The Life of William Cavendish*, cited in Alison Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Both quotations are found on p. 108.

parental moderation.[24] The "golden dart" is Cupid's weapon, and Rachael's engagement with the Cupid of romance narrative via this translation exercise appears to have been an influence on her original writings for performance, which are recorded in Maidstone Library MS U269/F38/3. In particular, the figure of Cupid is prominent in the "May masque," which employs attributes of the masque form — a large cast of characters, songs and dances, and direct address to a familiar audience — to create a familial entertainment in which five siblings, a cousin, and three other child members of the household, ranging in age from four to twelve years, can all participate.[25]

Rachael's masque uses Cupid and his mother Venus to explore the role of sexuality and marriage in the transition from girlhood to adulthood. The dramatic action acknowledges the disruptive and potentially risky effects Cupid's arrow could have in young women's lives but draws back from heterosexual romance by recasting the mischievous boy Cupid as a virtuous child submitting to his mother's authority and superior understanding:

Cupite I am com for to accord
To what my mother has done
For yt I know
Her wisdom is soe
Yt she cane more good
Yn I unto ye shew (Maidstone Library MS U269/F38/3, f. 3v)

Fane takes up the dynamic of female instruction and pedagogic authority that characterized her own family culture and education, transforming it so that the adolescent boy acknowledges and submits to maternal

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[24] Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2000.

[25] This masque is the most accessible of Rachael's writings, having been edited by Marion O'Connor, "Rachel Fane's May Masque at Apethorpe 1627," *English Literary Renaissance*, 36:1 (2006): 90–113. For a reading of it which complements the analysis offered here, see my "Playing with Cupid: Gender, Sexuality, and Adolescence," in Diana Henderson, ed., *Alternative Shakespeares* 3 (London: Routledge, 2007), 138–57.

wisdom. Staging an assertion of maternal authority over sons, otherwise scarcely seen in Renaissance literature beyond the pages of the mother's legacy genre, Fane inverts the father-daughter dyad that structures Sarah Ross's claim that women were able to access the cultural benefits of the Renaissance.

For Rachael, as for many of the other elite girls who came to literacy during the English Renaissance, a familial context that promoted girls' education and cultural engagement was crucial in allowing her to access some of the empowerment associated with traditional narratives of the Renaissance. But her upbringing within the context of a feminized "household academy" did not, as far as we know, enable her to establish, in adult life, a "household salon,"[26] which would have been characterized by intellectual collaboration between husband and wife. Account books reveal that Rachael bought books and musical instruments and paid to have her portrait painted by Anthony Van Dyck, but no surviving evidence testifies to her own creative or intellectual production in adult life.[27] Rachael Fane's unique childhood archive proffers the scholarly temptation to associate that early period of productivity with the trope of childhood as itself a golden age, like the Renaissance, that cannot but be lost. Across the various genres she worked with, her writings both recognize the force of the expectations that will shape her adult life as a member of the Renaissance elite and create a textual space where she as a girl on the threshold of adulthood can, at least in play, articulate a critical perspective on them. How do these writings enable us to determine whether children had a Renaissance?

First, as the site of a girl's engagement with the forms, genres, conventions, and compositional practices that characterized a complex and self-conscious literary culture, they offer a concrete illustration of the way that Renaissance pedagogy formed girls as readers *and* writers. Rachael's lesson-books directly illuminate the ways in which elite children encountered, through their education, the cultural and ideological formations that defined the Renaissance as a period concept. Her dramatic texts reveal a sophisticated knowledge of adult literary and dramatic culture, address

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[26] Ross, *Birth of Feminism,* 8 and 13.

[27] Pollock, "Mildmay, Grace," http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45817.

mixed-age audiences, and employ a dramatic mode highly characteristic of Fane's late-Renaissance moment, in which the dividing lines between performers and audience, adults and children, are frequently traversed. These writings reveal the porosity of the worlds of adults and children to each other as far as the cultural practices of the Renaissance elite are concerned, revealing that the question of whether children had a Renaissance is also a question about the nature of the Renaissance itself.

To this extent, then, Rachael Fane certainly participated in the literary culture of the Renaissance during her childhood and derived a degree of cultural empowerment from doing so. But is saying that much tantamount to saying that she "had" a Renaissance? And to what extent would making such a claim about her legitimize a broader generalization that children as a social group had a Renaissance? The fact of her literacy, the circumstances in which she acquired it, the opportunities she had to undertake literary composition, and the material conditions that enabled the preservation of the work she wrote, all set her apart from the vast majority of children, and only in a very limited sense could these writings be seen as representative of childhood in the Renaissance more generally. My research into children's writings produced in early modern Britain shows that as the period goes on, the extension of literacy associated with the Renaissance enabled children from a wider spectrum of society to become writers; but it is only the writing of elite children that engages with characteristically Renaissance forms. If studying the writings of elite children enables us to offer a more positive and confident answer to the question of whether they had a Renaissance than Joan Kelly was willing to venture for women, nonetheless, it is plain that to affirm that some children had a Renaissance is also to affirm the elite and exclusive nature of the Renaissance itself.