effect of a personal "monomania"—a monomania for which she "apologize[s], but not too much" [130].)

When a distinguished scholar with an accessible style muses on a topic as likely as this one is to appeal to all sorts of readers inside and outside of the academy, trouble identifying an ideal audience and an appropriate voice for the occasion is bound to arise. Who is it that one imagines oneself to be addressing? Bowlby seems to be unsure or at least ambivalent. She provides welcome particulars in her history of the London Foundling Hospital, established by the philanthropic shipwright Thomas Coram who, though he may be known to students of modern British history and to especially acute readers of *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), is hardly a household name. Yet it seems a misstep to offer almost the same degree of detail in recounting the stories of Oedipus and Moses—stories that one might reasonably assume to be familiar enough to the general reader so as not to require a plot summary. And while *A Child of One's Own* makes clear that parental stories are ubiquitous, it also stands as evidence that not all such stories are of interest per se, nor do they necessarily enhance our understanding of the texts in which they occur. Illegitimacy (a plot point in several of the works considered) is undeniably a "parental story," but only in George Moore's *Esther Waters* (1894) does it function as more than a source of shame that interferes with—where it does not sever—parental ties. Several chapters focus on well-known novels in which adoption or non-biological parents play a role (*Tom Jones*, *Mansfield Park* [1814], *Great Expectations*, *Silas Marner* [1860], *The Mayor of Casterbridge* [1886], and *What Maisie Knew* [1897]). But of these, only George Eliot's novel makes the question of what it means to be a parent central both to its narrative and its ethical investments (though Charles Dickens here, as elsewhere, as everywhere, decries parental failings aplenty). Indeed, the adoption plot in *Mansfield Park* (Fanny, being a niece-in-residence in the Bertram household, is considered here a virtual adoptee) engages so little of even Bowlby's searching interest that she turns to its sibling stories, which have been frequently discussed by other critics.

Both trade and academic presses—even those with a long history of publishing so-called crossover books, such as Oxford University Press—are increasingly eager (anxious, desperate) in our distressed economy to attract a wider book-buying readership. We can sympathize with their desire without, I think, endorsing their strategies for achieving it. Had *A Child of One's Own* been pitched more forcefully to either scholars or general readers—but not to both simultaneously—its aim might have been truer.

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These books provide a fresh perspective on a topic which both pulls at our heartstrings and tells us about the past: neglected and abandoned children and the parents,
especially the mothers, who left them behind. Their sources—the records of the
London Foundling Hospital and Victorian depictions of children in poems and
novels—are well-known but not yet stale, and both authors promise new and exciting
approaches. Despite some criticisms, I would nonetheless recommend both books for
the ways in which their authors challenge standard ideas about child neglect and
abandonment.

Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen's book is not about children. The actual foundlings
of the London Foundling Hospital (LFH) are unseen and unheard in this book, which
instead tells the story of the single mothers who applied for their infants' admission.
Earlier work on the LFH has focused on the admitted infants, particularly their treat­
ment and chances of survival, as in Alysa Levene's recent book, *The Childhood of the Poor*
(2012), or the history of the institution itself. The LFH aspired to be respectable, to be
"the ornament of the metropolis," and, as the demand for care for illegitimate children
exceeded the supply, the directors could select whose babies they chose to shelter and
whose they rejected. Their criterion was "respectability": whether or not the mothers
had been respectable before their "fall" and therefore had a good chance, if relieved of
their offspring, of again being so (57-58).

Application for admission involved a petition which consisted of three parts:
the application itself, an examination of the mother recorded in a transcript, and
personal references. One important point here, which perhaps deserves greater atten­
tion, is that success was measured by the admission of the child, its separation from its
mother, and her relief of responsibility: events we might consider tragic. If unwed
mothers wept, it was because their petitions failed, not because they had to surrender
their babies. Both successful and failing petitions were retained in the archives. This is
crucial for Sheetz-Nguyen. Her analysis of the details of the cases reveals the prevailing
ideas about merit and morality that motivated the LFH officers.

These petitions have been used before to illuminate the lives of the mothers,
notably by Françoise Barret-Ducrocq in *Love in the Time of Victoria* (1989). However,
according to Sheetz-Nguyen, the earlier analysis was neither systematic nor sensitive to
the mothers' limited but possibly still detectible aims and objectives. As a result, Barret-
Ducrocq cast the petitioners as either prostitutes or victims. In contrast, Sheetz-Nguyen
seeks to uncover women's agency. Her methodology promises to provide "new ways of
understanding the mothers' choices" by taking into account "statistical samples of
discrete pieces of information found in the petitions in order to create a biographical
overview of these women" (5). Sheetz-Nguyen promises a quantitative and qualitative
analysis of this information viewed through four "analytical frames": time, space,
gender, and agency (6).

Chapter 1 describes contemporary attitudes toward unwed motherhood and
details the changes provided in the New Poor Law with its infamous "bastardy clauses."
The account of these changes and the debate that accompanied them constitutes
useful reading for Poor Law and gender historians alike. Chapter 2 provides an over­
view of the petitioning process. Chapter 3 looks at the geography of respectability,
while 4 delves deeper into the backgrounds of the mothers in terms of age, occupation,
and the nature and duration of the relationship with the fathers. Both of these later
chapters summarize various quantitative characteristics of the petitions and petitioners
according to their ultimate success or failure. For example, chapter 3 looks at mothers'
addresses by district, sub-period, and rates of success or failure, thus offering insight into the importance of a respectable address in securing admission.

Chapter 5 explores the transcripts of the oral examinations which are of particular interest since they are less heavily mediated than the written petitions. A woman's story in her own words might reveal the extent and nature of her agency, or at least what she thought she had done and was now doing. However, even under cross-examination, surely unwed mothers would seek to position themselves within the rhetoric of respectability so as to maximize the chances of their children's admission. The quantitative analysis of the measurable aspects of a woman's background, in conjunction with the details of the oral depositions, might have exposed the fault lines between self-representation and experience. Unfortunately, the qualitative case studies are used as general illustrations rather than as a complement to the quantitative evidence. More generally, the book is marred by the presentation and analysis of the quantitative material so painstakingly extracted from difficult archives. Regression analysis could have been used to relate a petitioner's success or failure to indicators of a mother's perceived respectability. This would have provided an elegant way to summarize the extent to which factors such as the mother's address, age, occupation, whether marriage was promised, whether force was used, the number of times intimacy (or "criminal connection" as it was called) took place, the social rank of referees, and where the mother was delivered influenced the probability of success (63). But even if the author did not want to go down this route, there should have been greater clarity on table headings and sample selection methods, and some testing for statistical significance.

Galia Benziman's book is also not about children. It deals instead with their representation in philosophical and fictional writings. A concern with childhood as a distinct and formative phase of life characterized both mid-nineteenth-century British social policy and literature. Benziman promises awareness of these two contexts: "both the socio-political implications of the responsibility for children as part of the class conflict in nineteenth-century Britain and the textual representation of the neglected and abandoned child as a poetic image" (2). The question is whether or not these were parallel developments, whether or not literary images of neglected children reflected the issues of the day or, more interestingly, whether or not these images had an independent effect in galvanizing class anxieties, challenging ideas about state responsibility, and shaping social reform. Benziman suggests the latter. Social reform involving children (labor laws, education, and poor laws) awaited the Victorians' development of a more liberating and empathetic view of children and childhood, which, Benziman argues, was "inseparable from the attribution of point of view to real and fictional children" (22). Cultural representations helped to turn children as objects to be owned and exploited (but mainly ignored) into subjects with minds and rights and so triggered a wave of social and political reform. However, although Benziman's analysis of important literary texts offers support for a conventional progressive history of childhood, she sees this development as far from smooth and continuous and indeed detects "inconsistencies" in the process (4). She also offers literary work "its own space of artistic freedom" (21).

Chapter 1 discusses theoretical concepts of childhood and educational philosophies, focussing in particular on influential writers such as John Locke, Jacques Rousseau, Hannah More, and Maria Edgeworth. The material on Locke and Rousseau is familiar, but More and Edgeworth have been more neglected and are well worth the
attention given them. Inconsistencies are exposed here between empathetic theory and less empathetic practice, particularly evident in the accounts of Rousseau and Edgeworth. Chapter 2 explores the ways in which the poetry of William Blake and William Wordsworth depicts the child’s subjectivity, with inconsistency again identified in the way in which both poets overlay the child’s voice with that of the adult. Although the bulk of the book deals with canonical authors, chapter 3 rediscovers Frances Trollope and Charlotte Tonna, early producers of social problem fiction and hugely influential in their day. Chapter 4 is devoted to Charles Dickens, whose work drove forward a new tolerance and empathy toward the child. This chapter is a tour de force as Dickens’s depiction of the neglected child is shown to splinter into a middle-class self and a working-class other. Benziman’s reading of Dickens’s autobiographical fragment alongside his literary representations of déclassé middle-class children reduced to labor alongside proletarian others exposes his abandonment of the child’s subjectivity. The marginal figure of the working-class child threatens to devour the middle-class protagonist’s distinct identity. Chapter 5 culminates with the suggestion that in Jude the Obscure (1895), with its unforgettable depictions of damaged children in Father Time and Jude himself, Thomas Hardy confronts the gaps and inconsistencies of “the idealizing, dialogic concept of childhood” (213). The novel establishes a link between parental neglect and a refusal to tolerate the strains of adulthood, manifested here in suicidal inclinations. I was left regretting that Benziman had not turned her sharp eye to Hardy’s other poems and novels to see if this sensitivity to the contradictory inheritance from the Romantics was sustained.

Benziman’s is an elegantly written book which draws on some beautiful literature and so, unsurprisingly, is a pleasure to read. I only wished that she had spent more time on autobiographical accounts of childhood offered by working-class authors, which, though only mentioned in passing, seem rich with inconstancies which could nuance Benziman’s progressive meta-narrative. Attention to this corpus of material might have strengthened the link from the literary to the social and political worlds which rather fades as the book unfolds and Benziman digs deeper into the texts.

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In her contribution to Women Writers and the Artifacts of Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century, Linda H. Peterson observes of the poet and essayist Alice Meynell that, as she "came to realize, it mattered not only what a poet wrote, but also how she presented herself in public. Literary success required talent and genius, but also a keen sense of