

**“Going beyond the Domestic Sphere: Women’s Literature for Children,
1856-1902”**

Submitted by Koeun Kim to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English
In July 2015

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Abstract

My thesis explores how female writers of the Golden Age of children's literature used their domestic stories to convey their visions of a more desirable society to their child readers, and thus to widen their influence beyond the homely sphere. My first chapter reconsiders the nineteenth-century historical circumstances wherein the woman and the child came to be constructed and enshrined as the domestic woman and the Romantic child within the home, and excluded from the public discourses. I then consider how in domestic stories women writers tried to overcome this shared deprivation of autonomy with the child, focusing on the works of Charlotte Yonge, Juliana Ewing, and Mary Louisa Molesworth. It emerges that these women writers were all keen to encourage their young readers to question the boundaries that separate home from the public realm, and to imagine a society wherein these dividing lines would be mitigated and even be extinguished.

The thesis argues that these female writers' literary efforts to exhaust the potential of the domestic story, and that their motivation to provide their child readers a sense of agency were integral in the development of Golden Age children's literature. Charlotte Yonge's technique of evoking sympathy for the child characters forged a more intimate relationship between adult author and young reader, and initiated the unsettling of the hierarchy between old and young, and author and reader. Juliana Ewing's experiments with child narrators and her mingling of adventure and fantasy stories with domestic stories showed successive writers the various directions the domestic story could go. Mary Louisa Molesworth's nursery stories realized the purpose of Ewing's literary experiments, as her stories' natural interweaving of quotidian nursery and fairy tale elements not only alleviated the hierarchy between fantasy and domestic realism, but also opened an era in which the blending of these two modes would become one of the most popular genres in children's literature.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION: INTO THE DOMESTIC SPHERE	4
CHAPTER I. GOING BEYOND THE DOMESTIC SPHERE AND THE DOMESTIC STORY: THE CHILD AND THE WOMAN WRITER	20
The Problem of the Female Domestic Story	22
The Domestic Woman and the Romantic Child	36
The Female Literary Tradition: The Child as the Vehicle for Expansion	46
CHAPTER II. CHARLOTTE YONGE: THE EMERGENCE OF THE POPULAR DOMESTIC NOVEL IN JUVENILE LITERATURE	62
1. The Appearance of Child and Adult Interiority	67
“The Starting Point of a Certain Style of Writing for the Young”	70
Closing the Gap between Child and Adult	78
2. Introducing the Realm of Adolescence	89
The Emergence of “Books for the Young”	91
Adolescence as an Alternative Life Path	98
CHAPTER III. JULIANA EWING: REVISING THE DOMESTIC STORY	119
1. <i>Six to Sixteen</i>: Rewriting the Female Domestic Story	124
Following Maternal Legacy	128
Rewriting Maternal Legacy	137
2. The Child Narrator: New Perspectives on the Domestic Sphere	149
The Voice of the Little Patriarch	151
The Voice of the Sister	161
CHAPTER IV. MARY LOUISA MOLESWORTH: THE BALANCING ACT OF STORYTELLING	177
1. <i>Carrots, Just a Little Boy</i>: Mastering the Art of Storytelling	185
The Problem of Language	191
The Problem of Storytelling	197
The “Nursery” Voice	207
2. Within and Without the Nursery	213
Within the Nursery: Heavenly and Imprisoned Innocence	216
The Flight Out of the Nursery: Mediating Fantasy and Realism	219
CONCLUSION: OUT INTO THE WORLD	239
WORKS CITED	249

Introduction: Into the Domestic Sphere

In the preface to his work *Secret Gardens* (1985) Humphrey Carpenter acknowledges the absence of American children's fiction in his study. His reason for selecting only Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* is "because her choice of subject matter—a realistic novel about family life—throws into relief the British writers with their preference for fantasy" (x). Furthermore, after pointing out the subversive nature of the figure of the King in George MacDonald's *The Princess and Curdie*, he argues that "[t]his subversive attitude to the old structure of the family was not portrayed in any nineteenth-century 'realistic' novel for children written in England. But in the work of an American, Louisa M. Alcott, we see clearly the questioning of parental authority which is hinted at by the English fantasy writers" (87). Not only does Carpenter's generalizing statement about British writers' preference for fantasy ignore a long line of female writers who were expert at the realistic story, from Elizabeth Sewell, Juliana Ewing to Mary Louisa Molesworth, but his argument that MacDonald's *The Princess and Curdie* is the sole example of a subversive representation of the family in Victorian British children's fiction reveals an insufficient insight into the numerous English domestic stories of that era. For even Charlotte Yonge—who Carpenter exemplifies as one of the few writers who "continued to regard the family as the source of moral wisdom" (87)—characterizes Doctor May in *Daisy Chain* (1856), the father of the motherless family, as being far from flawless. Not that Yonge would ever question Doctor May's authority as the *paterfamilias*, which was, as a matter of fact, not even the case in *Little Women*. Indeed, far from Carpenter's assertion of *Little Women's* irreverent stance towards parental authority, Reverend March's

patriarchal influence is so prevalent that despite his absence throughout the whole story, he constantly functions as the moral compass for his wife and four daughters. In stark contrast, Yonge depicts Doctor May as struggling hard throughout the novel to adapt to the role of an authoritative father. There is no need thus to resort to an American book to exemplify a subversive family story in the nineteenth century, for countless works in England, from Harriet Mozley's *The Fairy Bower* (1841), and Yonge's *Countess Kate* (1862) to numerous stories of Ewing, not only present questionable cases of parental figures, but also actively question the dominant ideologies on which patriarchal order is based.

My thesis argues that the female-authored domestic story of the nineteenth century, despite its conventional role to sustain the ideal image of the middle-class home and inculcate the domestic and gender ideologies of the Victorian era in the child, also often interrogated the prevailing ideologies it should endorse, and even questioned its own supposed function of teaching them to the child reader. Beginning in the form of moral tales in the eighteenth-century by female authors such as Maria Edgeworth, the realistic domestic story has traditionally been a significant means for the female writer to exert her influence in a safe and unassuming way outside her designated domestic sphere by addressing and moulding the child, the future adult. Around the mid-nineteenth century, however, when male writers appeared with new genres of children's literature, from adventure to fantasy stories, that not only dominated the attention and respect of the Victorian readership, but also the children's literature market, women writers were forced to search for new ways to catch the attention of their main readers. Their own domestic realism began to be

frequently accused by the Victorian critical world of being overtly didactic and religious, of lacking plot and excitement, of dealing with too trivial matters, and wanting thus any literary merit. Authors like Harriet Mozley, Elizabeth Sewell, and Charlotte Yonge began therefore to create emotionally relatable child characters rather than idealized ones to evoke the sympathy of their young readers, while writers like Jean Ingelow, Christina Rossetti and Juliana Ewing took advantage of the popularity of fairy tales by either mingling the mode of fantasy with their domestic stories, or writing fairy tales themselves. Although in case of conservative writers like Yonge it might not be immediately recognizable, and although certainly they all employed very different strategies, all these female writers had the same goal, as it were, to go beyond the conventional narrative style, literary sphere, and purpose of their literary foremothers. Indeed, as I will further show throughout the thesis, the very motivation of these female writers to widen their literary and actual sphere beyond that of the domestic story and the domestic sphere, to attract their young readers and show them a potential society built according to their beliefs was integral in the development of children's literature in the nineteenth century. To have a more comprehensive understanding of how the nineteenth century became the Golden Age of children's literature, it is therefore necessary to look into the female writers' domestic stories that considerably contributed in shaping the most popular genres of children's fiction today.

Despite the various contributions of female writers in opening up the potential of children's literature, however, women authors' domestic fiction had been critically neglected well into the 1990s. This critical negligence was due to criticism's preference for male-authored fantasies in discussions of Golden Age

children's literature. The concept of the "Golden Age" of children's books was first introduced in 1962 by Roger Lancelyn Green in his essay "The Golden Age of Children's Books." This period is dated by Green to begin in the mid-nineteenth century, with such books as Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River* (1851), and to end "sharply with E. Nesbit" ("Golden Age" 16) in the beginning decades of the twentieth century. Although Green describes the realistic stories of Ewing, Mary Louisa Molesworth and E. Nesbit as having contributed to the period's greatness, his ultimate landmark texts that define the "Golden Age" are fantasies like George MacDonald's *The Light Princess* (1864), Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books (1865, 1872), and Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908). Similarly, Carpenter's study *Secret Gardens*, subtitled *A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature*, identifies the "Golden Age" as a period that begins with Carroll and ends with A. A. Milne. As Carpenter's characterization of this period shows, he also displays a preference for fantasy and male authors. In Carpenter's opinion, Ewing, Molesworth and Frances Hodgson Burnett were merely writers who "[d]uring the 1870s and 1880s, ... made some attempt to create new values in their fiction, to find something positive that could take the place of the old ideas that *Alice* (more obviously than any other book) had helped to sweep away" (103). According to Carpenter, these female authors' attempts to "develop a new kind of children's literature" were, however, not really successful, since Ewing "lacked the conviction to continue" and "the others did not have any real understanding of children" (108). Carpenter's accusation that these female writers "did not have any real understanding of children" raises the question whether those male writers Carpenter favours so much had a better understanding of children. After all, Carpenter himself points

out how the male fantasists' notion of childhood was idealised by their escapist desire to perceive it as "a distant era when things were better than they are now" (x), namely as "Arcadia, the Enchanted Place, the Never Never Land, the Secret Garden" (x). Till the end of the 1990s, this strong association of this period with male-authored fantasies can be found over and over again throughout children's literary criticism. Wullschläger, in 1995, for example, states in her study on Victorian children's literature that "these five writers [Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J. M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame, and A. A. Milne] began and defined the course of our children's literature" (3). In Wullschläger's view, it was "a handful of men" who were standing "at the centre of a golden age of Victorian and early twentieth-century children's books" (3) and created "a radical new literature for children of such fascination and enchantment" (4).

This long critical tradition, which belittled the works of Golden Age women writers, is based on a post-Romantic bias that valorises the imaginative qualities of the so-called innocent child that emerged from the Romantic discourse, and marginalises those works—mostly realistic domestic stories written by female writers—that do not conform to this bias. In the last few decades, however, there have been active attempts to redress this denigration of female children's writers and their domestic realism, and the general critical neglect of their contribution to children's literature throughout the nineteenth century. Julia Briggs, for example, explained Victorian women writers' reluctance to write in the mode of the fantastic, by pointing out how this tendency originated in the eighteenth century when women writers tried to distance themselves from specific traits traditionally associated with their sex, like the irrational, fantastical and emotional, to present themselves as serious-minded rational beings in an

age of Enlightenment.¹ Certainly, eighteenth-century women writers' desire to be perceived as respectable was reflected in their pragmatic and overtly rationalistic moral stories for children, which could still be observed in the nineteenth-century, when female writers like Ewing were wary and surreptitious in their venture into the realm of the fantastic and fairies. From the 1990s, Mitzi Myers made a significant contribution in children's literature-criticism through her numerous in-depth studies of the works of Enlightenment women writers, where she discovered how, against common critical assumption, these woman writers' seemingly instructive tales in fact elude "the binary opposition of moral tale and fairy tale (and the broader cultural contraries which this opposition implies)" ("Romancing" 98). Reproaching critics like Harvey Darton, Carpenter and Geoffrey Summerfield for their post-Romantic bias that promotes a "[w]higgish historical model of progress from quotidian instruction toward the escapist delight of fairy tale and fantasy" ("Romancing" 97), Myers called for a more nuanced reading of the moral tales by earlier female writers that takes into account the cultural context and ideologies in which they have been produced ("Romancing" 97-8).²

Thus, Briggs' and Myers' studies paved the way, not only for a better appreciation of the children's literature of eighteenth and nineteenth-century female authors, but also for proving how the hierarchical relationship between male fantasy and female domestic realism is a patriarchal construct. A

¹ See Briggs, "Woman Writers" 221–51.

² Children's literature historians like Darton and Percy Muir discuss the earlier works of women writers in a rather derogatory way, betraying a predilection for the male authored fantasies of the mid-nineteenth century.

significant impetus for my thesis has been U. C. Knoepfelmacher's *Ventures into Childland* (1998) that also sought to overcome the binary hierarchy of male author versus female author in reference to Golden Age children's literature. In his study Knoepfelmacher explores the fantasy fictions of four male children's authors: John Ruskin, George MacDonald, William Thackeray and Lewis Carroll, and three female ones: Jean Ingelow, Christina Rossetti and Juliana Ewing. Knoepfelmacher observes that as male-authored fantasies became a new popular form of children's fiction, a new wave of female writers like Rossetti, Ewing and Ingelow began to venture into fantasylands, in an attempt to regain a genre they thought had once belonged to them.

Taking into consideration how criticism tended to offer a rather one-sided history of Victorian children's literature by solely emphasizing the liberating effect of male writers' fantastic fictions, Knoepfelmacher's examination of female writers' rewritings of male fantasies provided a more balanced view about the accomplishments of children's writers, male and female, of Golden Age children's literature. Moreover, Knoepfelmacher's work highlights how the contrasting social and cultural status between male and female writers, and the different relationship they have with the child, led to a divergence in women's and men's children's writings. However, despite Knoepfelmacher's inclusion of female authors, his exclusive focus on fantasy also meant that his study only explored female writers' revisions of male-authored fantasies, perpetuating in this way criticism's preference for fantasy when discussing the achievements of Golden Age children's literature. Considering this overwhelming attention to the genre of fantasy even when discussing the works of female authors, I began to question what kind of role the female domestic genre played in making the

nineteenth century such a fruitful age in the development of children's books. Indeed, if women writers were keenly aware of male writers' domination in the literary market and struggled to retrieve their authority in the realm of children's literature, as Knoepfelmacher helpfully showed, what kind of strategies did female writers employ to render their own domestic genre more attractive for the Victorian public? Did female writers' domestic stories prefigure new genres and ways of writing for the child? These questions thus became the very starting point of my thesis.

My question was partly answered by Marah Gubar's *Artful Dodgers, Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (2009), which brought into focus Victorian women writers' involvements in forming children's literature of the Golden Age. Gubar's study argues that, contrary to common critical belief, Golden Age children's authors did not entirely endorse the prevalent Romantic idea of the innocent child that has to be shielded from inimical adult influences. In fact, even prominent male fantasists, from Carroll to J.M. Barrie, who are famous for advocating the Romantic child, had a more critical and diverse stance towards what Gubar terms "Child of Nature paradigm" (5). Most significant for the main argument of my thesis, however, was that Gubar substantiated her claim not only with the works of acclaimed male fantasists, but also with the realist domestic stories of women writers like Dinah Craik, Molesworth and Ewing. Gubar indeed points out that the common conviction that "Golden Age authors represent children as free from the shaping force of social, familial, and scholastic institutions arises out of a long-standing tradition of ignoring or denigrating the contributions of influential female authors of this era, who routinely locate child characters firmly within the domestic realm" (5).

Gubar thus proved not only how criticism's disregard for the female domestic genre caused the misguided assumption that male fantasies mainly defined the Golden Age of children's literature, but also how female writers' domestic fiction played a key role in developing new forms and methods of writing for children over the course of the nineteenth century.

Indeed, all the female writers I deal with in my thesis were actively involved in revising and experimenting with the literary conventions of the domestic genre to appeal to their child readers. The primary motivation of these female writers to exhaust the full possibilities of their domestic genre was, I contend, on the one hand, to push at the boundaries of their designated literary sphere of home and its seemingly small, inconsequential interests, and, on the other hand, to expand their influence through their appointed readership, namely the child. After all, persuading the child reader of the desirability of the ideal world their works envisioned essentially signified persuading the prospective adult.

With regard to female authorship, the Victorian age was certainly much better than the eighteenth century, in which as Charlotte Yonge herself states in regard to Dorothy Kilner's anonymity as a children's writer: "[f]emale authorship was so dreadful a matter ... that the strictest incognito was preserved by the writer" (*Storehouse* vii). Still, when Yonge published her first book in 1844, a family council was held where it was decided that she could only publish under the condition that "she would not take money herself for it, but that it would be used for some good work—it being thought unladylike to benefit by one's own writings" (Coleridge 153). Mary Louisa Molesworth, as well, when she began her literary career concealed her authorship under the pen name Ennis Graham to appease her father and husband who disapproved of women writers and

objected to her writing.³ Juliana Ewing, as the daughter of children's author Margaret Gatty, grew up observing the inauspicious and unequal conditions her mother had to work under, poignantly feeling the social and ideological restrictions a female author was confronted with. It was important, therefore, for all these women writers—though the method and intensity of each female author's works varied—to rewrite their role and position within the Victorian separate spheres ideology, and to expand the sphere of their influence and activity through their writings. Indeed, the figure of the child who shared their subordinate social position and lack of voice and legal rights gave these women writers an apt vehicle to illustrate what they considered a desirable transition from a state of ignorant innocence to a state of autonomy and agency. In particular, speaking to the child through their domestic stories that often strived to blur the dividing lines between domestic and public sphere, fantasy and realism, and author and reader, gave them the opportunity to persuade their child readers of a preferable future based on different ideologies and assumptions.

It is significant thus when exploring and charting female-authored domestic stories for children over the course of the nineteenth century to take into consideration the way the woman author desired to present herself as a writer to the public world, as well as to the child, which could, in fact, easily come into conflict. Did she try to differentiate herself from her child characters and readers so that she could present herself as a mature adult and serious author to the critical world? Or, did she identify herself with the child because of their shared

³ See Cooper 150.

exclusion from the dominant discourses? Briggs confirmed that to trace female writers' children's books "for the first hundred and fifty years is to record the process by which their authors progressed from giving instruction to identification with their readers, from proving themselves responsible adults to allowing themselves to adopt the subversive tones of childhood" ("Woman Writers" 222). Indeed, the woman author's differentiation from and identification with her child characters and child readers were significant factors in the development of the female domestic story, as they considerably influenced the narrative style, perspective, and purpose of her stories.

My intention to explore women writers' domestic stories will, therefore, first begin with a chapter that traces the historical circumstances in the nineteenth century wherein the woman and the child came to be idealized and enshrined as the domestic woman and the Romantic child within the middle-class home, but were simultaneously excluded in turn from the public discourses that constructed and determined their supposed ideal roles within Victorian society. Female writers' children's literature was one of the most conspicuous cultural sites in which one could observe how this shared deprivation of autonomy and legal rights with the young members of society, affected women writers' notions of and attitude towards the child. Sometimes female writers tried to withdraw themselves from their close association with childishness by demonstratively taking on a superior adult-educator narrative stance, whereas sometimes they took on a more equal position by sympathizing with their fictional children's pleasures and troubles. Particularly, domestic fiction was for the female writer an important means to explain and justify to the child reader the woman's and the child's position within the separate spheres ideology, and preserve in this

way the status quo of the society. Ironically, however, more often, due to its intense preoccupation with its own domesticity, the domestic story could become the very genre to reveal and interrogate the various apprehensions about power and self-determination the woman and the child had to deal with in their involuntary and enforced state of innocence within the home.

The following chapters then explore the female domestic stories published from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, charting the various literary strategies female writers employed in their writings to widen their works' appeal in the children's literary market, and consequently to disseminate their visions of a more desirable society through their child readers. As it is impossible to have a comprehensive overview of all the female writers of this given period, I focus specifically on individual writers and their works, analysing those that struck me as being of particular significance in proving how female writers' literary experiments were integral in developing the popular narrative styles and genres of children's literature as we know it today.

The three writers I examine in turn in my thesis are Charlotte Yonge, Juliana Ewing and Mary Louisa Molesworth. Yonge contributed much to the mid-nineteenth century turning point in the history of children's literature, when children's writing began to become more reader-conscious. Juliet Dusinberre, who explored how the literary experiments of Victorian children's fiction influenced Modernist works like those of Virginia Woolf, has observed that one of "the most interesting of the many transitional figures in the movement from Bunyan to Carroll, and from Carroll to the twentieth century, was Charlotte Yonge" (63) due to her wary use of the intrusive and superior presence of the educator-adult narrator in her stories. In contrast to her literary foremothers like

Mary Martha Sherwood who firmly kept their adult-educator stance in their narrative personas, Yonge's narrative perspective was more sympathetic to the mental struggles her young and even grown-up character had to go through to adjust to each of their appointed social positions and duties. It is through Yonge that the hierarchy between adult author and young reader began to be mitigated, and the domestic story became respectable and popular in the Victorian literary scene.

Juliana Ewing emerges in Knoepfmacher's study as the one female writer who attempted to go beyond the battle between female and male writers to define the child, and successfully reinstated a female authority in children's fiction. In fact, more than any other author I deal with in my thesis, Ewing was not only painfully aware of the necessity to expand the possibilities of the female domestic story, but was also the most outspoken in voicing this opinion through her works. She was an experimental author and significantly contributed in showing successive writers the various directions in which the domestic story, from narrative technique to content, could still go, with her skilful use of child narrators, and, as Knoepfmacher pointed out, her appropriation of male genres like adventure and fantasy in her domestic stories. Indeed, in Mary Louisa Molesworth's nursery fantasies that were highly popular at the end of the nineteenth century, one can most clearly observe the gradual process through which Ewing's literary experiments became naturalized and popularized in the female domestic story. Molesworth's numerous nursery stories in which her child characters are led with apparent ease and no self-consciousness from the mundane nursery to the wondrous world of fairy tales and fantasy, not only attest to the gradual abatement of the rigid boundaries between domestic

realism and fantasy, but also suggest the opening of an era in which the combination of these two modes that had an antipathetic relationship for almost a century would become one of the most common and popular genres within the realm of children's literature.

I would also like to clarify here my use of the term "children's literature" throughout the thesis. As it can be realized from the inclusion of Charles Dickens or George Eliot in nineteenth-century literary critic Edward Salmon's 1886 survey about girls' reading habits, the line between "adult" and "children's" literature was much vaguer during the nineteenth century than it is now, and children at that time were introduced early to tomes by Walter Scott or Dickens. Beverly Lyon Clark also confirms in *Kiddie Lit* (2003) that children's literature in the second half of the nineteenth century was approached in a much more egalitarian way than after the emergence of academic literary studies in the twentieth century (56). For instance, although Yonge's lengthy family novels were officially targeting those teenagers who were above fifteen, and her shorter novels like *The Stokesley Secret* (1861) were aiming at younger children, these books were all reviewed by major literary magazines and periodicals like the *Athenaeum* and the *Quarterly Review*.⁴ When taking into consideration that Yonge advised that children should as soon as possible "stretch up to books above them, provided those books are noble and good" ("Children's Literature" 456), it might well be assumed that Yonge's age classification regarding her own novels was only meant as a rough guideline. In this thesis, therefore, which has nineteenth-century children's literature as its

⁴ See Yonge, *What Books to Lend* 38.

main subject, my definition of “children’s literature” will range from what is considered in the Victorian era as nursery stories to those novels aiming at—what is commonly referred to as—young adults.

In 1883, Ewing wrote a story titled “A Happy Family” in which she characteristically and demonstratively made fun of the Victorian domestic ideology. Employing the little boy Bayard as the narrator, the story tells of his project to re-enact a picture, tellingly titled “The Happy Family” on the stage. In a comical way, Ewing shows how the theatrical ends up in a catastrophe through Bayard’s class-conscious attitude towards the village children, and particularly, through his despotic behaviour to his perky little sister Lettice. To be sure, Bayard realizes in the end his prejudices and misbehaviours, promising to himself to become a better brother to his sisters. Indeed, when a godmother visits Bayard’s family, she is so impressed by the harmonious relationship between Bayard and his siblings that she exclaims “What a happy little family!” (*Melchior’s* 279). In a characteristic move Ewing lets the story end with Lettice’s affected retort: “But you know brother Bayard *is* so good to us now, and *that* is why we are such A HAPPY FAMILY” (*Melchior’s* 279). This last sentence of Lettice succinctly comprises all the elements the thesis is about. Not only does the story give precedence to the child’s voice—even a girl’s one—but also Lettice’s last remark explicitly articulates the very state all women writers desired to attain and teach their young readers through their domestic stories. Writing itself was for Victorian women an act of expansion. However, in writing for the child, who was as marginalised as the woman herself, but who nevertheless had the opportunity to change the future, the women writers’ pushing the boundaries of their domestic stories took on a double meaning. It

not only signified an extension of their works' literary sphere, but also promised a future without boundaries.

Chapter I. Going beyond the Domestic Sphere and the Domestic Story: The Child and the Woman Writer

The connection between women writing and children's books might be thought of as originating in a coincidence yet moving beyond it—a coincidence of timing in that women began to take up writing as a profession at about the same time as books specifically written for children began to be published in any numbers; and a coincidence of interests, in that women were committed to the nursery world as mothers, nurses, or governesses in a way that few men were.

(Briggs, "Woman Writers" 223)

The two iconic figures of the Victorian era, the domestic woman and the Romantic child, arose from the middle-class practice of separating public and private sphere, in which the latter was prescribed as the natural realm of women and children. Literally and metaphorically separated thus from the male public sphere, and assigned respectively to the segregated realm of the sacred home and heavenly childhood, the woman and the child came to be the symbolical safeguards against the supposed commercialism and worldliness of the outside world. The development of ideas of true womanhood and of childhood in the nineteenth century were in this way closely intertwined. The Victorian woman and the child were brought together, in that they both symbolized the new middle-class through their roles as the angels of the house. Simultaneously, however, they were both excluded from the public sphere of influence and power, and consequently from any kind of participation in the dominant discourses that shaped and determined their roles and significations within Victorian society.

As a matter of course, nineteenth-century women had a very different relationship with the child compared to their male counterparts. To explore female-authored children's literature of the nineteenth-century, it is, therefore, necessary to consider the woman and the child within the wider historical, social and ideological circumstances in which the female author began to write for the child. This chapter will, therefore, examine how the woman and the child came to be isolated from the public sphere in Victorian society, how this common deprivation of agency and autonomy might have informed women's ideas of the child, and significantly, how for the woman writer children's literature could function as an important instrument to come to terms with and even overcome this shared exclusion from power.

Particularly, however, I will delineate the development and function of the domestic story, the genre that became the specialty of the Victorian female children's writer throughout the nineteenth century. On the one hand, for the woman writer the domestic story could be an effective and useful means to expand her professional and artistic options, to rewrite the dominant notions of the domestic sphere and women's relationship to it, and, most importantly, to attempt a reform from within the home by pointing out to the child reader the contradictory nature of the domestic ideology. On the other hand, however, the content and status of the domestic story could not help but reflect the female writer's own restricted sphere of activity, limited experience, uninformed mind and subordinate status. Indeed, the domestic story's narrow subject matter of trivial domestic affairs, its want of plot and action and its often conservative endorsement of the status quo between gender and the classes not only interfered in its appealing to a larger public, but also—more importantly—in

actually realizing female writers' agenda to go beyond the boundaries that held the male public and female domestic apart. Tracing women writers' various endeavours to overcome this limitation of the domestic story, to render their genre more respectable, and ultimately, to expand the child's mind through their writings, I aim to show how these three female writers' attempts to widen their literary sphere and influence contributed to the development of children's literature.

The Problem of the Female Domestic Story

In 1884, Charles Welsh, a publisher of children's books, despatched to numerous schools in England a circular, asking them to answer questions about their reading preferences like their favourite writers and books. After four years, in 1888, children's literature critic Edward Salmon tabulated the responses to this circular which contained the answers of approximately 2000 boys and girls aged eleven to nineteen, and published them in his children's literature guidebook *Juvenile Literature As It Is*.⁵ The ten favourite writers of boys were Charles Dickens, W. H. G. Kingston, Walter Scott, Jules Verne, Captain Marryat,

⁵ The term "juvenile" is used by Edward Salmon, and generally in the Victorian age, as an umbrella term that includes "little ones", as it were, nursery children who are below the age of circa eleven, and to those from the lower to the upper end of their teenage years. Indeed, the *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines "juvenile" generally as a young person who is below the age of 18, normally the age when criminal prosecution is possible ("Juvenile"). Thus, in recent criticism, as well, "juvenile literature" is alternately used with "children's literature," broadly referring to literature aimed at very little children and young adults. It seems, however, that in some present criticism the term "juvenile" is more associated with adolescents than little children, because studies like *Juvenile Literature and British society 1850-1950* (2010) use "adolescent" and "juvenile" as synonyms (Ferall, Jackson 2). Indeed, Jacqueline Rose also makes a distinction between "juveniles" and "children and babies" (83). I myself use the term "juvenile" in its broad sense, namely relating to young persons who are not yet considered an adult.

R. M. Ballantyne, H. Ainsworth, Shakespeare, Mayne Reid and Lord Lytton, and their top ten books were *Robinson Crusoe*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Pickwick Papers*, *Ivanhoe*, *Boy's Own Annual*, *The Bible*, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, *Valentine Vox*, *Vice Versa* and *St Winifred's, or The World of School*. Girls displayed a more well-rounded taste for different genres and gender of authors, and picked as their ten favourites Dickens, Scott, Charles Kingsley, Charlotte Yonge, Shakespeare, Mrs Henry Wood, E. Wetherell (Susan Warner), George Eliot, Lord Lytton and Hans Christian Andersen. While their top ten books were *Westward Ho!*, *The Wide, Wide World*, *The Bible*, *A Peep Behind the Scenes*, *John Halifax*, *Gentleman*, *David Copperfield*, *Little Women*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Days of Bruce* and *The Daisy Chain*. Contrary to boys' predictable taste in reading—all male writers and primarily adventure and school stories, what Salmon calls the “purely boys' books” (*Juvenile Literature* 28)—the girls' reading list displayed a wider range. Not only did girls read classic English literature of Dickens and Shakespeare, but also adventure and historical stories (*Westward Ho!*, *Ivanhoe*), Evangelical romances (*The Wide, Wide World*, *A Peep Behind the Scenes*), domestic stories (*Little Women*, *Daisy Chain*) and fairy tales (Andersen). The results of Salmon's questionnaire, therefore, indicate that in the nineteenth century, typically boys' books like the adventure story written by male authors, were, in fact, popular with both boy and girl readers. The opposite, however, as the survey suggests, was not the case for female-authored children's stories as they were only consumed by girl readers.

One year before, in 1887, Charlotte Yonge categorized in her handbook *What Books to Lend and What to Give* her recommendations for books according to the age and social standing of the reader. Notably, Yonge includes

a separate chapter on books for boys, but not for girls. Yonge gives as her reason for treating boys as separate subjects that “the mild tales that girls will read simply to pass away the time, are ineffective with [boys]. Many will not read at all. [T]hough girls will often greatly prefer a book about the other sex, boys almost universally disdain books about girls” (29). As Yonge continues to observe, in contrast to boys, girls really read and also like those books specifically aimed at them, and actually imbibe the feminine ideal roles presented in those books: “Those [tales for girls] for whom they are written really do read and like them” (“Children’s Literature Part 3” 454). Thus, as girls are omnivorous readers anyway, Yonge felt no need to include a separate chapter on books for girls.

As Salmon’s and Yonge’s handbooks suggest, in contrast to so-called boys’ books written by male writers, female-authored children’s stories did not enjoy a wide readership. Rather, as Yonge points out, they were mostly shunned or even ridiculed by boys. Why then, were female-authored stories not as popular as male-authored stories in the field of children’s literature in the nineteenth century? Salmon himself in regard to this general unpopularity of female-authored or so-called girls’ books remarks that “startling situations and unflagging movement” that characterise boys’ books but are absent in girls’ ones make girls’ books not “as palatable to girls as boys’ books are to boys” (“What Girls Read” 515). Salmon also conjectures that: “Girls’ literature would be much more successful than it is if it were less goody-goody. It is far more difficult to enlist the reader’s interest in domestic contretemps and daily affairs than in fierce combats between nations, or in the accidents of all kinds into which boys and men, by the very nature of their callings, are for ever being led”

("What Girls Read" 515-6). What Salmon points out here as the failings of girls' books are their overtly didactic nature, small scale and lack of plot and action. It has to be noticed though that Salmon acknowledged that the deficiencies of girls' books are not really the fault of the writers, but rather "of the essence of the subjects which offer themselves for treatment" ("What Girls Read" 515). For girl-life does not simply "lend itself to vigorous and stirring treatment in the manner that boy-life does" ("What Girls Read" 516). Indeed, while male authors naturally explored conventionally male spheres like the public school, the battle field and faraway exotic places, demonstrating virtues like heroism and courage, female authors, in turn, dealt with what was socially prescribed as their natural interests like daily domestic affairs and the cultivation of passive virtues like patience, charity and kindness. Ultimately, therefore, the small readership and eventual low status of female-authored stories for the young in the nineteenth century were consequences of the separate spheres ideology that set down the hierarchical relationship between the public and domestic spheres, and ideologically confined women to the home, limiting the range of their interests, knowledge and perspective.

Indeed, Jacqueline Rose observes, when in the 1880s, children's literature began to be clearly divided into boys' and girls' books in the literary market, it was not really an equal separation that was purely based on target readership but rather based on their hierarchical relationship (84). In fact, as Rose notes, the very emergence of the distinction between boys' and girls' literature came with the development of the adventure story for boys which was a "creation of a wholly new literary space for 'juveniles' (father and son) as opposed to 'children and babies'" who read fairy or domestic tales (83). As Rose

argues: “[t]he sexual differentiation of children’s literature was, therefore, not so much an equal division as a breaking away of one form into a more ‘adult’ space. In this sense, girls’ literature is best described as what got left behind (an old story)” (83). Boys’ books represented tradition, prestige and genre as they could be clearly defined as the adventure story or the public school tale (Rose 84). They were, indeed, genres that seemed at times not even exclusively aimed at children because they could be enjoyed by father and son who were supposed to inhabit the same sphere and share similar experiences that the daughter had no access to. Girls’ books, on the other hand, were regarded as merely domestic sketches, as indefinite, unspecified stories written by women writers. They could not be classified into a specific genre, and were therefore perceived to lack tradition, and, as Rose observes, were regarded as more of a “miscellany” (83) whose most outstanding feature was its supposed main readership of young girls and little children.

Girls’ stories were in this way characterized by their allegedly infantile nature while boys’ stories were endowed with a grown-up respectability. These characteristics that were associated with and attached to boys’ and girls’ stories reveal not only the extent of the impact Victorian gender ideology had on children’s literature, but also how the nature of the woman and the child were closely brought together within the Victorian imagination. Indeed, this blurriness between the ideas of the little child, the girl and the woman can be observed when Salmon, in his article “Literature for the Little Ones” (1887)—“little ones” meaning girls and boys below the age of eleven—first categorized Juliana Ewing as a writer for young children, but later in 1888, in his book *Juvenile Literature As It Is* moved her into the chapter “Books for Girls” that dealt with a

higher age category, namely girls who range from eleven to nineteen. Certainly, Ewing's stories had always been pointed out by authors like Yonge and Molesworth to be a little bit too advanced for very young children, but nevertheless it is conspicuous that in contrast to many female writers like Yonge, Ewing and L. T. Meade who were flexibly classified as children's *and* girls' writers—and who actually wrote for both age groups—male writers who wrote for boys were seldom regarded as writers for the so-called “Little Ones”. Male authors Salmon listed in the chapter “Literature for the Little Ones” were either early writers of the former era like the prominent Rousseauian-pedagogue Thomas Day, or famous fantasists like Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Kingsley, and George MacDonald. Except Kingsley whose historical novel *Westward Ho!* (1855) was also frequently read by boys, none of the male writers in the section “Little Ones” were considered boys' writers. As a matter of course, no male writer wrote what would be regarded as girls' stories, although, according to Salmon, there were apparently some women writers who actually attempted to write boys' stories like, for instance, a certain Mrs. Edward Kennard. Salmon is, however, hesitant to go into these female writers, stating: “Several ladies aspire to write for boys. As a rule their works are pronounced by readers of Mr. Kingston or Mr. Henty childish, and, in fact, they appeal chiefly to those members of the family who are just leaving the nursery” (“What Boys Read” 255). One can observe here again, how boys and the male-dominated critical establishment associated female writers and their works with “childishness”, and considered their writings not suitable for boys but only for girls and those “just leaving the nursery”. It is revealing, therefore, to compare how a male critic like Salmon was disinclined to refer to any boy's book that was

written by a woman, while a female critic like Yonge recommended in her guidebook numerous books sure to arouse the interest of boy readers written by female authors like Barbara Hofland, Mrs. Trail, Harriet Martineau, Ewing, and even herself. Clearly, Yonge trusted that the works of these women were not childish or in any way not exciting enough to be offered to the boy reader.

Notably, almost till the 1990s, children's literature criticism more or less took on the critical stance of the Victorians regarding female-authored stories, accusing them of lacking literary merit, and of promoting the status quo and domestic ideology. Percy Muir stated in 1954 that "[t]he long line of women writers for girls, from Agnes Strickland to Mrs. Molesworth and from Mary Elliot to Juliana Horatia Ewing and Mrs. Marshall, are all inferior in the provision of what children want to their male counterparts" (116), while in 1985, Carpenter could only conclude that Ewing, Molesworth and Burnett's efforts to develop a new kind of literature after the whirlwind of Carroll's *Alice* were not "really successful" (103). Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig observed in 1975 that girls' books in the nineteenth century were merely "a medium for the reinforcement of social prohibitions and expectations" (9), while Judith Rowbotham also confirmed in 1989 that nineteenth-century girls' stories aimed to convince the girl "of the need to conform to conventional expectations of her sphere" (8).

Also problematic, however, besides criticism's sweeping generalization regarding the literary merit and general purpose of female-authored books, is their adoption of the Victorians' practice of generally categorizing female-authored book as "girls' books". As late as in 2006, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* still labels those books that are written by female writers

like Sarah Fielding, Catherine Sinclair and Yonge, or focus on home and community as “Girls’ Books and Fiction.” Even when critics such as Shirley Foster, Judy Simons, Julia Briggs, and Lynne Vallone brought forward feminist readings of nineteenth-century female-authored children’s stories, providing in this way sympathetic insights into their works, some continued the Victorian custom of defining them as “girls’ stories.” For instance, critics like Foster, Simons, and Rowbotham classify female-authored stories written in the latter part of the nineteenth century as “girls’ fiction.” Foster and Simons reason that in contrast to the moral stories of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century that were aimed at a gender neutral child reader, their subject matter indicates “their essentially female orientation,” besides the fact that the majority of their audience were actually girls (24).

To be sure, because nineteenth-century female-authored children’s fiction was indeed primarily read by girls and frequently (but, by no means, not exclusively) dealt with girl protagonists’ adaptation to domesticity, most definitions of so-called “girls’ fiction” can be easily applied to the women authors’ stories I am going to discuss in this thesis. I, however, will call the female-authored fictions I am going to examine in this thesis “domestic stories.” Certainly, even before the deliberate distinction between girls’ and boys’ fiction in the 1880s with the appearance of gender-differentiated children’s magazines like *The Boy’s Own Paper* and *The Girl’s Own Paper*, the primary readership of women writers’ stories was predominantly girls, and it cannot be denied that the nature of the problems they explored in their writings was girl-centred. In most cases, however, female writers of children’s fiction like Harriet Mozley, Charlotte Yonge and later Molesworth rarely wrote having specifically girl readers in mind.

There were, in fact, female writers like Ewing who strove to widen her audience by writing sea-adventure stories like *We and the World* (1877-78) to attract boy readers.

Indeed, the flaw of this practice of labelling women authors generally as “girls’ writers” can be already observed in Salmon’s guide book. Salmon dedicates four chapters to books for boys, each titled “Books for Boys”, “Historical Stories”, “School Stories” and “Romance and General Adventures”. As can be seen, Salmon takes great pains in trying to show that boys’ literature is not “composed almost exclusively of stories of adventure” but “admits of division into several distinct classes” (*Juvenile Literature* 62). By contrast, Salmon assigns girls’ books to only one chapter, titled “Books for Girls”—naturally all female-authored—as if all books aimed at girls would be of similar nature, as if, indeed, the author and target audience being women and girls would in itself illuminate the characteristics of these books. Again, for Yonge, however, female-authored books themselves did not automatically signify girls’ stories. Yonge’s guidebook not only omits a chapter dedicated exclusively to girls’ reading, but also enlists female writers across various categories, from historical novels even to boys’ books.

As a matter of fact, just as male-authored books of the nineteenth century can be divided into several sub-genres, female-authored books can also be differentiated according to scenery, plot pattern, aesthetic choices, and particularly by a range of different values and beliefs each of them advocated. For instance, there was a clear difference between the works of female writers who were part of the evangelical movement and those who belonged to the high

or broad Church of England. Those which Yonge referred to as “the Sunday story, or religious fiction” (“Children’s Literature Part 2” 307) of evangelical writers such as Maria Charlesworth’s *Ministering Children* (1855), Hesba Stretton’s *Jessica’s First Prayer* (1867), and F. C. Walton’s *A Peep Behind the Scenes* (1877) were not only more explicit in expressing their religious convictions, but displayed a wider range of scenery and social milieu—from the street waifs of London backstreets to child artists of the travelling theatre—compared to the domestic stories of Harriet Mozley, Margaret Gatty, and later Yonge who were more reticent in expressing their beliefs and restricted themselves to the middle-class homely sphere. What I want to emphasize when I term the writings of female authors I am going to deal with in this thesis like Yonge and Ewing “domestic story”, is that it is rather their works’ predominant concentration on the domestic sphere and the various interests and conflicts within it, than their intended readership which brings the stories of these female writers together as a genre.

Indeed, more recently, there have been efforts to revise the dominant notion that the only characteristic of domestic fiction is its readership of middle-class girls, and to identify this female genre based on its deep preoccupation with the homely sphere itself. *The Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature* (2005) for example, labels the section that contains the stories of female-authors from early writers like Maria Edgeworth, Charlotte Yonge and Frances Hodgson Burnett to more modern ones such as L. M. Montgomery and Beverly Cleary, as “domestic fiction”. Instead of focusing on its primary readership, namely the girl reader, *Norton* defines domestic fiction as “ ‘inside’ stories”, as it were, a genre wherein the story’s drama and conflicts mainly take place at

home, between family members and “within the self” (2067), and is, above all, “concerned with communicating life lessons that the child character learns from, or with the assistance of, family members—lessons that will help him or her become a happy and well-adjusted person” (2068). Claudia Nelson as well, in *Keywords for Children’s Literature* (2011), defines “domestic fiction” as a genre that emerged in the eighteenth century from writers such as Maria Edgeworth, and that “may be blended with other genres, such as the historical novel or the animal story”, but whose “classic form uses a contemporary setting and a primary focus on a household” (“Domestic” 67). Significantly, Nelson also notes that indeed the term “domestic fiction” has been heavily associated with middle-class Victorian girls and their adjustment to home duties, and thus also with the conservative and old-fashioned (“Domestic” 67). She concedes that these associations that the genre of domestic fiction evokes might be legitimate, since most writers and readers of domestic fiction have indeed been female, but points out that this one-sided view obscures “the form’s connections with masculinity”, and also occludes those “postmodern tales of alternative domesticity” and “the multicultural domestic novels” that began to appear in the twentieth century (67).

Following most of the critics above, my definition of domestic fiction refers to stories that take domestic realism as their generic model, meaning that they follow the principles of the realist tradition and centre their action on a homely environment. Thus, as the *Norton Anthology* states above, according to my definition, domestic fiction can range from early children’s stories of Edgeworth, to modern ones like Judy Blume’s *Fudge series* (1972-2002). Certainly, as Nelson has already noted, domestic fictions can be merged with elements of

other genres like the adventure story or even fairy tales as in the works of Ewing and Molesworth. Most domestic fictions highlight throughout the story the social and emotional development of their heroes and heroines through an interaction of family members and friends. For this reason, as Rowbotham already criticised, in the nineteenth century many female-authored domestic fictions had as their common purpose “to explain and justify the feminine position in society” and to persuade their readers to conform to ideal gender roles (7). Indeed, for many domestic fictions—that of Yonge would be an ideal example—the inculcation of conventional gender roles was actually their main purpose, but as I will show throughout the thesis, it would be a huge generalization to attribute this as the exclusive aim of this genre. Moreover, as critics like Avery and Nelson pointed out, the works of the representative writers of nineteenth-century domestic fiction like Annie Keary, Elizabeth Sewell, Ewing, Yonge and Molesworth not only were about middle-class families, but they were also “essentially books for the educated middle classes” (*Childhood’s Pattern* 123). To be sure, I admit that the works of the authors I explore in this thesis only deal with middle-class families and probably also had middle-class children as their main readership. In my view, however, this close association of domestic fiction with the middle-class should not be part of this genre’s definition, because not only did writers like Yonge and Ewing also write about cottage children, but modern domestic stories like Eve Garnett’s *The Family from One End Street* (1937) illustrate the life of working-class families, while Rosa Guy’s *The Friends* (1973) explores the cultural shock of immigrant children.

This restriction of most of nineteenth-century domestic stories to the middle-class household, to exclusively homely interests, and particularly its efforts in trying to justify the existence of the domestic sphere and in exemplifying the woman's and the child's ideal function within the home were the reasons it was criticised by critics for being "a medium for the reinforcement of social prohibitions and expectations" (Cadogan and Craig 9). Paradoxically, however, as I will demonstrate, as much as the domestic story did its part in defining the middle-class home and teaching the child reader the role he or she had to assume within this sphere, it also functioned to call into question the premises on which its ideology was based. For the domestic story's intensive preoccupation with its own domesticity, inquiries into the boundaries that separated the private realm from the public, and exploration of the child's adjustment to the cultural, and social conventions made it sometimes an effective means to revise the dominant notions of the home, and to suggest to the child reader a society based on different assumptions. Indeed, very often the domestic story for the child was actively used by female writers as the stepping stone to expand their realm of literary influence and actual activity, and especially the mind of their prospective child reader.

I am using here the term "expansion" because it is my argument that female writers' various adjustments and revisions concerning the theme, subject matter, narrative style and purpose of their domestic stories to cater for the child reader and to deal with the works of their male counterparts throughout the second half of the nineteenth century essentially came down to overcoming the narrowness and restrictions Victorian domesticity imposed on women and children. Indeed, when taking into consideration the special relationship

between women writers and children's literature, as the quotation at the head of this chapter suggests, the expansion of their influence women writers hoped to achieve by writing books for the child, applied to several different levels. First, their profession as a writer of children's books enabled women to widen their realm of occupation from the private to the public world in a safe and justified way, as writing for and thus educating and entertaining children was considered a natural extension of women's domestic duties. On a second level, women writers could also step out of their designated space of home within the fictional field of their own stories. For instance, female authors, by adopting elements of male-dominated genres like fantasy and adventure tales could broaden the background and subject matter of their works from the exclusively domestic to the more exotic and fantastic. In addition to extending the geographical sphere within the realm of the story and appealing in this way to boy readers, female writers revised and experimented with the literary conventions of the domestic story, to render this traditionally female genre more acceptable to the male public world. On the most important level, however, women writers could widen their influence through their appointed readership, namely the child itself. Children's literature was, after all, an effective means for women to disseminate their opinions and outlook beyond the domestic sphere, because by speaking to the child through their stories women had the opportunity to influence the mind and perspective of the growing child, who is, essentially, the future adult.

Indeed, the key issue of children's literature—the problem of “who speaks and to whom, and why” (Rose 21)—is something no children's writer, male or female, could avoid confronting. Particularly, for the Victorian female writer, identifying with, or differentiating from the child reader must have been a more

poignant question considering her lack of voice and autonomy she shared with the child. Just as numerous conduct books and fictional works that were firmly based on patriarchal dictates constructed the ideal Victorian woman, children's literature created an ideal child through a medium that more or less excludes the participation of its subject and target reader, namely, the child outside the book. The Victorian child, as excluded and voiceless as its counterpart the ideal domestic woman in the Victorian imagination, was therefore in female writers' domestic stories often a powerful vehicle for the woman writer to explore and come to terms with the various problems the separate spheres ideology brought with it. Before examining the various methods female authors used in their domestic narratives to go beyond the limitations of the domestic sphere and the insufficiencies of its literary genre, the domestic story, a brief outline focusing on the period during which women and children came to be positioned and confined as the angels at home, might provide a better understanding of the historical, social and cultural circumstances that induced women writers to expand their influence by writing stories for the child.

The Domestic Woman and the Romantic Child

In their study on the lives of the English middle class in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall observe that the segregation of middle-class children and women into the sphere of home began around the eighteenth century when industrialization and urbanization in English society caused an increasing number of people to work outside the home, setting up in this way a clear division between living and the working spaces

(181). As a result of these rapid economic and social changes, the private sphere was designated the central function of a harmonious haven that was supposed to offer men a shelter from a more and more competitive public world. Another significant result of this shift from an agrarian to an industrial society was the rise of the middle class. A growing number of men began to own businesses or pursue genteel professions, becoming in this way what is called the Victorian middle class (Frost 3). This change of professions for fathers meant in turn increased household income and made it possible to exempt women and children, who had been a central workforce in an agrarian society, from work. Certainly, this release of women and children from the workplace was an exclusively middle-class privilege. For while middle-class children and women began to lead a sheltered life within the domestic sphere, working-class children and women still worked as domestic servants and factory-workers outside of home throughout the nineteenth century.⁶

Consequently, it became necessary to find the middle-class woman and the child adequate roles and occupations in their newly gained status in society. In the case of the woman, her role within the home, as daughter, wife and mother was increasingly highlighted and valued, and preserving the home's purity and morality from a demoralizing outside world began to be stipulated as

⁶ Despite legislation that aimed to reduce child labour throughout the nineteenth century, from the 1833 Factory Act to the 1867 Workshops Act, even in 1900, most young people of the working-class "were in full-time employment by the age of thirteen or fourteen" (Mitchell, *Daily* 45). While by 1851, one in three women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four in London was a servant, and more than one in six of any age was in service (Anderson 5). Mitchell, however, observes that probably the "true number of women workers was even larger than the census indicates, because many married women earned money in ways that went unreported" (*Daily* 48).

her prime duty. The popularity of this ideal image propagated in numerous domestic magazines aimed at the middle-class woman, such as Mrs. Beeton's famous *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1852-79), *The Home Circle* (1849-53), and *The Woman at Home* (1893-1917), that proliferated in the literary market throughout the nineteenth century is evidence of how in the Victorian era, home and woman's symbolic role as an emotional and moral centre reached its height, while in the Victorian literary imagination, thanks to Coventry Patmore's famous *Angel in the House* (1854-62) and later John Ruskin's lecture "Of Queens' Gardens" in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), the domestic woman was idolized and ultimately fixed into the image of a heavenly angel.⁷ To be sure, Victorians' glorification of home as the blissful place devoid of worldly problems reflected by no means the reality of all middle-class households (Langland 8).⁸ Rather, as critics like Nancy Armstrong, Elizabeth Langland and Mary Poovey claim, this idolization of the domestic woman, the so-called 'Angel in the House' had not only the function of promoting this dignified notion of home and sustaining separate spheres ideology, but also of constructing and consolidating the power of the middle class.⁹

⁷ See Beetham 3, 6.

⁸ Davidoff and Hawthorn confirm in their study this two-sidedness of the notion of home: "Contact with servants was one of the ways in which middle- and upper-class children were introduced to their social and economic world. They had to learn very early in life that servants were different from themselves" (Davidoff, Hawthorn 84).

⁹ As Langland points out: "[t]he separation of classes raised the question of appropriate "work" for the middle-class woman. Her exemption from the economic imperative made it possible that she might appear to remain, imaginatively and symbolically, wholly outside the realm of commerce in a 'private' sphere" (71).

Meanwhile, the child, who was in an agrarian society merely an incomplete adult, and was urged to grow up to become an economically useful member of the household, became throughout the nineteenth century gradually the centre of social attention and began to be valued within the middle-class home for just being a child.¹⁰ On the one hand, this removal of the child from the economic sphere was due to middle-class families' increasing investment in the child's education—an influence of the educational theories of eighteenth-century pedagogues like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau—which extended the period the child stayed within the protection of the family (Horne, *History* 11) and established a barrier between the adult's world of work and the child's world of financial dependency. Also, it is commonly considered that the increasing influence of Romanticism's sanctification of childhood was an important influence on Victorian ideas and representations of the figure of the child, and on their various efforts throughout the nineteenth century to erect a dividing line between childhood and adulthood.¹¹ To what extent the Romantic poets concretely improved the conditions of actual nineteenth-century children is a contested issue, but within the cultural mind of the Victorians they clearly did their part in initiating a gradual shift with respect to the significance of childhood, namely, from being just a time of preparation for becoming a useful

¹⁰ Viviana Zelizer in her *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (1985) argues that this emergence of the economically "worthless" but emotionally "priceless" child created the essential condition of contemporary notions of childhood (3-6).

¹¹ Coveney, Plotz and Anne Higonnet all examine Romantic notions of the child, and how they influenced representations of children in literature, paintings and photographs in the nineteenth century. For children's writers' various take on Romantic ideas of childhood, see the works of Carpenter, Knoepflmacher, Wullschläger and the three edited books of James McGavran that explore the impact of Romanticism on children's literature from the Victorian to the present age.

adult to being a phase of life that should be appreciated on its own.¹² This idea of the child—what Judith Plotz terms the “Quintessential Child”—that emerged from the Romantic discourse of childhood was equated with “the ancient and abiding realm of nature,” and was attributed with an “autonomous consciousness”—mostly identified as a heightened imagination (*Romanticism* 4, 6, 5).¹³ Thus, according to the Romantics, the child, just like the domestic woman, was thought to naturally inhabit a separate sphere that was kept apart from modern civilization. It is a fact worth noting therefore that the so-called Victorian “cult of the child” was also contemporaneous with what is called by critics the “cult of true womanhood” or “cult of domesticity”.¹⁴ The child was positioned in this way in direct opposition to the male adult, and what this adult stood for, namely, experience, reason and the restrictions of the industrial world.

The Romantics’ assertion of this close relationship between the state of nature and the child, and their idea that childhood should be respected as a

¹² The Romantics’ endorsement of childhood innocence was probably not entirely without its concrete effects. S. T. Coleridge himself campaigned for an Act of Parliament to control the work of children in factories during the factory movements of the 1830s (Cunningham, *Children* 141-2), and Wordsworth’s *Immortality Ode* was frequently cited when Victorian commentators pointed out the dire working conditions of factory children. Barbara Garlitz states how numerous articles in the nineteenth century that dealt with the rights of children started their article by quoting Wordsworth’s *Immortality Ode* (644).

¹³ Of course, as Plotz asserts, this Quintessential Child is not “the” defining Romantic Child as there is no such thing as a “single Romantic type of child” (*Romanticism* 4) considering the wide range of representation of childhood in Romantic novels, poetry and children’s literature. Indeed, James McGavran, Alan Richardson and Mitzi Myers also assert that even among the Romantics there was not a unitary idea of childhood. Nevertheless, as Plotz claims, “it is from Romantic texts, notably those of Wordsworth, Lamb, Coleridge, De Quincey and their epigones that Victorian writers were able to piece together a new Discourse of Childhood that produced and naturalized ‘The Child’ ”(*Romanticism* 4).

¹⁴ It is George Boas who first introduced the term “the cult of childhood” in his study which charts the history of the cult of childhood within the Occidental culture, from the ancient Greeks to the twentieth century. For a detailed account of the late Victorian “cult of the child” and how the Victorians themselves invented the term “the cult of the child,” see Gubar 10. On “the cult of true womanhood”, see Barbara Welter’s essay.

valuable period in itself was partly influenced by Rousseau's educational treatise *Emile: or, On Education* (1762). Rousseau himself adapted the ideas of the Earl of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson who asserted, in contrast to the religious doctrine of original sin, the original innocence of human nature by offering as an example the simple and innocent nature of savages before they are corrupted by civilization.¹⁵ Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* (1807) is commonly cited as having played a pivotal role in disseminating this idea of childhood innocence, as it were, a time that is free from the corruptions that experience brings with it.¹⁶ As critics from Peter Coveney and Hugh Cunningham to Judith Plotz observe, this "Quintessential Child" of Romanticism served to provide the male adult a refuge from the complexities of the present-day, commercial world. Similarly, Jackie Wullschläger claims that the, mostly male, Victorian children's authors' habit to place the child in fairy lands and uncharted territories like wild jungles and deserted islands testifies to their "regressive desire for a preindustrial, rural world" (*Romanticism* 17). Indeed, like its counterpart, the Angel in the House, the Romantic child was essentially a male-authored construct since high Romanticism was, as Myers notes, "a masculine phenomenon" that erased "women's alternative romanticisms" like that of Maria Edgeworth or Barbara

¹⁵ See Coveney 42.

¹⁶ It should be noted though that Mitzi Myers, in regard to the "profound influence" (Garlitz 639) of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" on the Victorians, calls it a gross overstatement, declaring that "what currently canonized Romantics thought about childhood wasn't what everybody thought (nor were Romantics themselves, including Wordsworth, of one mind)" ("Reading Children" 46). Thus, the idea of the Romantic child in the Victorian era should rather be seen as one of the many manifestations that testify to the increasing attention the figure of the child received in the nineteenth century.

Hofland, and paid little attention to genres that either “narrativize development socially”, or place children and females in community (“Little Girls Lost” 135).

Thus, confined to the supposedly heavenly sphere of home, and compelled to embody ultimate innocence and morality, women and children were brought together as firmly established figures within Victorian iconography; as the Romantic child and the domestic woman. Both figures, the domestic woman and the Romantic child, were concoctions shaped by certain Victorian middle-class and patriarchal desires and needs, as their supposed otherness, as it were, innocence and heavenliness could only exist and be preserved under the condition of the sheltered sphere of the middle-class home that excluded them from the commercial world. Their function was, on the one hand, to act as the very signifiers of the Victorian man’s middle-class status, and on the other hand, to be the domestic angels who provide the male adult, disoriented from the corrupted world, with the necessary emotional relief and moral standards. Certainly, the unearthliness of these two angelic figures made them prone to early death in the literary imagination of the Victorians. There are the many deaths of fictional children in children’s literature like Diamond in George MacDonald’s *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), Jessica in Hesba Stretton’s *Jessica’s First Prayer* (1867), Leonard of Juliana Ewing’s *The Story of a Short Life* (1882)¹⁷. While a great number of frail or dead women also populated the Victorian literary world, from little Nell and the child-wife Dora in

¹⁷ See Judith Plotz’s essay “A Victorian Comfort Book: Juliana Ewing’s ‘The Story of a Short Life’”(1991) in which Plotz categorizes Ewing’s *The Story of a Short Life* as a “comfort book” to render the death of a child meaningful for the parents in an age when children began to be emotionally valorized through the increasing influence of Romanticism, but child mortality was still high.

Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840) and *David Copperfield* (1850) to the dead mother and infirm daughter in Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* (1856). These deaths of numerous literary children and women for the sake of converting the man or the adult, or becoming the eternal moral influence reveal the double sidedness of the angelic status of the Romantic child and domestic woman. For as much as these otherworldly figures were hailed for their redeeming qualities, their chances of maturation and development outside the innocent realm of home were also curtailed.

In light of the fact that these two emblematic figures inhabited and fulfilled the same sphere and symbolic function in the cultural mind of the Victorians, there is curiously little work done that compares these two figures within their social and cultural context. Indeed, compared to the substantial critical debate on the role of the Angel of the House within the separate spheres ideology of the Victorian era, criticism that discusses the place of the child within this model is hard to find. A substantial amount of scholarly work has been done, however—respectively on the domestic woman and the Romantic child—that strived to counter the prevailing critical notion that these two figures have been exclusively depicted as helpless victims and artless angels in Victorian literature. For instance, Armstrong argues in *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1990) that as writers and subjects of domestic fictions, the domestic woman created a new form of power and influence, for the eighteenth and nineteenth-century domestic novels were partly the agents of the rise of the middle class, establishing indeed the middle class before even such a class existed. Langland similarly claims in *Nobody's Angels* (1995) that contrary to the dominant image of the powerless Angel in the House, the domestic woman as

the middle-class home maker and the main supervisor of the Victorian class system exerted, in fact, substantial power, which paved the way for an increasing awareness of gender equality in the last decades of the nineteenth century. While in regard to the predominance of the Romantic child in the Victorian culture, James Kincaid in his famous *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (1992) has indicated that contemporary commentators tend to “overstate the dominance of this view of the child in the Victorian period” (72), as the Victorians’ ideas of the child were in fact far more nuanced and conflicted. Expanding and elaborating on this line of argument of Kincaid’s work, Marah Gubar contends in *Artful Dodgers* (2009) that the Victorians’ commitment to Romantic notions of childhood was not as wholehearted as it is commonly assumed by critics. In fact, Golden Age authors were keenly aware of and anxious about the manipulative aspects of their medium that induced children to identify with the innocence, simplicity and naïveté of the child protagonists. Indeed, Gubar states that many Golden Age children’s books, therefore, represented children not as passive and naïve readers but “as capable of reshaping stories, conceiving of them as artful collaborators” (6), and encouraged in this way their child readers “to pay more attention to the constructedness of texts” (52).

Thus, considering how Armstrong, Langland and Gubar all proved that the domestic woman and the Romantic child, despite their confinement to the home, were respectively used in literature as the very vehicles to blur the barriers between private and public sphere, adult author and child reader it is of utmost interest to find out how the woman writer employed the child in her domestic story to assert her and the child’s agency outside home and the book. Penny

Brown who explores women writers' representations of childhood and the child in children's but mostly adult literature has indeed pointed out that "their portrayal of the child at different stages in the century can be seen to reflect women writers' changing attitudes towards their own status" (182). In regard to children's literature, however, except some scholarly works—mainly in the form of articles and chapter contributions—a close examination of how this intertwined relationship between the Victorian woman and the child influenced female authors' children's writings and contributed in turn to the development of children's literature in general is not sufficiently discussed.¹⁸ In the next part, therefore, I will try to answer the following questions "Why have women writers so often been attracted to writing for the child?" and "How did they use children's literature and the child for their own public and private purposes?", examining the various roles children's literature played for the woman writer. Certainly, children's literature was a significant means to reproduce domestic ideology and sustain women's traditional role as the nurturer and educator of the child within the home. I will show how children's literature, however, could also be a powerful vehicle for the woman writer, not only to expose to the child reader the rupture and tensions of the very ideology it should supposedly

¹⁸ One of the few pieces of criticism that occupies itself with the close relationship between the domestic woman and the Romantic child in children's literature is Julia Briggs' essay "Woman Writers and Writing for Children" (1989) that argues that the development of female-authored children's literature throughout history strongly depended on the female writer's identification with or deliberate differentiation from the child she wrote for. Claudia Nelson's *Boys will be Girls* (1991) as well points out how the woman and the child both fulfilled the same function of the domestic angel in Victorian society. Interestingly, Nelson also observes that at some point the angel was so omnipresent and powerful that it was not only propagated as desirable in domestic fictions for little girls, but also invaded typical boys' books like the adventure story in which it was presented as an ideal to strive for even for the Victorian boy.

endorse, but also to point to her young readership a possible future that is based on different assumptions.

The Female Literary Tradition: The Child as the Vehicle for Expansion

As writers for the young, women were from the very beginning of children's literature as prolific and as renowned as men. Eighteenth-century female authors, from Sarah Fielding and Anna Laetitia Barbauld to Maria Edgeworth, played a pioneering and predominant role in the foundation of the genre of children's literature. The quotation from Briggs's essay "Woman Writers and Writing for Children: From Sarah Fielding to E. Nesbit" (1989) at the head of this chapter highlights indeed two seemingly contradicting historical phenomena that coincided with the mass publication of children's literature: first, the appearance of professional women writers, and second, an enforcement of domestic ideology that bound women into the sphere of home and its according duties.¹⁹ This simultaneous appearance of children's literature, professional women writers, and domestic ideology indicates that for the domestic woman, the child was a seemingly safe choice as a subject to probe her way in professional writing, considering the close relation between home and the child. As Showalter observes, "a clear didactic purpose or worthy cause, or a situation that required their earning money" became therefore standard excuses in

¹⁹ Elaine Showalter observes that it is impossible to state exactly when women began to write fiction, though she notes quoting the *Monthly Review* that as early as 1773 the literary trade seemed to be "almost entirely engrossed by the ladies" (16-17). This roughly matches with the year 1780 that Gillian Avery indicates as the point when juvenile literature began in earnest and was taken over by professional writers of whom the majority were women. See Avery, *Nineteenth Century* 13

women writers' memoirs when they were reminiscing about their writing their first book (55). Indeed, Sarah Fielding the author of *The Governess* (1749)—supposedly the first novel for children—stated in her previous work: “Perhaps the best Excuse that can be made for a woman’s venturing to write at all, is that which really produced this Book; Distress in her circumstances; which she could not so well remove by any other Means in her Power” (*Adventures* 3). Whatever the various reasons female writers brought forward to justify their writing—financial distress or high moral purposes—the important point is that when children’s literature began to be published at the end of the eighteenth century, most of the first professional writers of this new genre of literature were women. As Townsend confirms: “By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the writing of children’s books in England was beginning to rank as an occupation for gentlewomen” (24).

Indeed, from the very beginning, children’s literature could be used to expand the sphere of the woman’s occupation for it provided the emerging professional female writer several justifications that facilitated her taking up the male-dominated position of the author. First, compared to those women writers who were trying their hands at poetry, drama and novels, women writers of children’s literature dealing with a relatively new genre had not a long line of male-authored classic works to compete with, and therefore had to deal with less pressure.²⁰ Second, whereas writing and reading were in the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth century regarded as self-indulgent and unsafe

²⁰ Showalter states that “[t]he classical education was the intellectual dividing line between men and women”, and their envy of classical education was one of the outstanding characteristics of the female novelists (40-42).

for a woman, writing for the young had the advantage for the woman writer of being regarded as an extension of her domestic role of the mother who is educating her child (Avery, *Nineteenth Century* 17).

Naturally, when in the mid-eighteenth century, children's literature began to be written and published in a systematic and professional way, the aim of many female writers was first and foremost to educate the child. As a matter of course, they were heavily influenced by the prominent contemporary pedagogic theories of Locke and Rousseau who declared the particularly susceptible and malleable mind of the child, and propagated the importance of children's early education. One of the first pioneer works with this kind of highly educational purpose was Sarah Fielding's *The Governess, or, Little Female Academy* (1749). Fielding's book is clearly influenced by Locke's educational theories considering the crucial role of the adult-educator, the governess, and the book's emphasis on experience rather than acquired knowledge in the process of educating the child. Fielding, however, changed the male tutor into a governess and adapted Locke's educational precepts, which were mainly aimed at boys, to girls. Fielding's work made an impact on successive female writers. Mary Wollstonecraft, inspired by *The Governess* wrote forty years later *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788) that also tells about two little girls who are instructed by a formidable female tutor, Mrs. Mason. In 1820, Mary Martha Sherwood completely rewrote *The Governess*, while in 1870 Charlotte Yonge reprinted Fielding's work in its original form in her anthology *A Storehouse of Stories*.

This long lasting fascination of female writers with Fielding's *The Governess* is probably due to the work's intense exploration of an appropriate education for children, particularly, however, for girls. What kind of education does a girl barred from the public sphere spending her whole life at home need? After all, Locke and Rousseau's educational precepts were primarily aimed at the boy who was preparing himself to be a worthy gentleman. Thus, in contrast to Rousseau's neglect of the education of girls, Wollstonecraft, for instance, highlights in her *Original Stories* how the governess, Mrs. Mason—a fantasy of the perfect, powerful mother figure—educates her protégées, the two little girls, into reasonable and responsible women. Wollstonecraft substitutes here the famous Rousseauian tutor of *Emile* with the rational maternal figure, which attests to her valorisation of enlightened motherhood that raises rational children and thus a rational nation. Wollstonecraft's rational maternal figure also shows, as Myers argues, how Wollstonecraft rejects the traditional notion of woman being irrational, fickle and infantile. Myers, citing Lord Chesterfield who regarded women only as "children of a larger growth", as it were, "passive, weak in mind and body, charming, frivolous, fixated on beauty", observes how rationalist women writers like Edgeworth and Wollstonecraft tried to remove themselves from this stereotype of women by highlighting rational mother figures in their stories ("Impeccable Governesses" 44). As Myers asserts, this state of "enlightened motherhood" was supposed to link private and public spheres, and insist "on the communal consequences of domestic instruction" ("Impeccable Governesses" 37).

This mother figure who extends her influence from the realm of the home to the public would indeed become a common denominator in the works of

female writers. They were of course a given in the pedagogic stories of rationalist female writers like Maria Edgeworth and Barbara Hofland, but even in later female writers' children's stories these mother-educator figures—although with quite different qualities and appearances—who strive to mitigate the binary opposition between the realm of home and public, and the state of child and adult, were a significant component of the story. Indeed, domestic stories like Elizabeth Sewell's *Amy Herbert* (1844), Harriet Mozley's *The Fairy Bower* (1841), Margaret Gatty's "The Fairy Godmothers" (1851), Ewing's *Six to Sixteen* (1875) and Molesworth's *The Boys and I* (1883) all introduce significant maternal figures who function as the moral standard and emotional guide and help the child protagonists in their difficult transition from innocence to experience. If there were no mother figures within the story itself, female writers often appropriated a mother-narrator and child-narratee relationship in which the narrator took on the role of the experienced adult figure and assumed a morally superior position, providing the child reader with guidelines on how to live one's life the right way. Indeed, women writers, as Wall observes, frequently adopted "obvious female roles" (84) in their position as the narrator in the story, for instance, "the governess," "the Sunday school teacher" and the "nursery voice" (84). Thus, these female writers and their domestic stories frequently functioned as literary mothers for their child readers. They could, however, also serve as literary mothers for subsequent women writers of children's fiction, influencing significantly the content, writing style and purpose of their own works.

Thus, early women writers' efforts, not only to form the child, but also the world at large according to their beliefs and principles through their children's books, can be observed again in the works of later nineteenth century writers

like Yonge and Ewing who partly took on the literary conventions of their literary foremothers and tried as well to widen their influence beyond the domestic sphere. The various problems this female literary legacy caused succeeding female writers in their attempts to expand their literary sphere began around the mid-nineteenth century. For around the mid-nineteenth century, new genres, from the adventure, and fantasy to school stories began to appear on the literary scene of children's books. Female writers and their moral stories that primarily reigned over the children's books market till the early nineteenth century had to compete with emerging experimental and new forms of children's literature. The exact reason for this turn of the tide at this point in time is not clear and is a contested issue among critics, but the increasing influence of Romanticism, with its celebration of the child's innocence and imagination, and the rise of Evangelicalism, which was more forbearing concerning the expression of emotion than the rational moralists, is frequently given by critics as an explanation.²¹

Consequently, when the Golden Age of children's literature dawned in the literary scene of England with the appearance of one ground-breaking fantasy after another, the tables were turned for the female writers. In the early years of children's literature, woman writers had been relatively free from male competitors. After the mid-nineteenth century, however, female writers had to keep up with male-dominated genres such as fantasy and adventure stories

21 On the influence of Romanticism on children's literature, McGavran's three collections of essays provide a diverse and insightful overview. For a detailed account of the impact of the Evangelical movement on children's literature and the development of evangelical stories after the mid-nineteenth century see Nancy Cutt's *Ministering Angels: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Writing for Children* (1979).

that began to attract a large Victorian readership.²² In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the didactic works of these female writers were universally read by boys and girls. After the mid-nineteenth century, as Salmon's survey already showed above, female-authored stories were increasingly avoided by boys resulting in female authors being more and more perceived as writers for girls and babies. Nineteenth-century separate spheres ideology not only began to determine the content of children's fiction, but also to control readership along gendered lines. To be sure, children's literature was still the designated literary realm for women writers, but after the mid-nineteenth century, male writers quickly overtook the domestic genre in the book market.

Indeed, in 1898, ten years after Salmon's *Juvenile Literature As It Is*, *The Academy* published an article titled "The Book Market" that showed a census analysing the reports from a number of booksellers all around England that listed the children's books that were in most demand at the present time. The ten most popular books for children, according to the booksellers, turned out in the order of demand: Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Andrew Lang's Fairy Books (1889), Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales (1846), Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863), Mrs. Molesworth's Stories, Frederic W. Farrar's *Eric, or Little by Little* (1858) and *St. Winifred's* (1862), Kipling's *The Jungle Books* (1894), Grimm's Fairy Tales (1823) and lastly, Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1881). As can be seen, Molesworth and her

²² Reynolds suggests that part of the reason that books like Carroll's *Alice* books, and generally fantasy stories were so well sold in the Victorian age was because adults liked them (104). After all, when it came to actually buying books for children, adults had more or less the final say.

stories made the list in the sixth place. Not only was she the only female writer in the list, but also her stories were the only domestic tales among the male-authored fantasy, adventure and school stories that dominated the list. One can clearly recognize in this census proof of the high selling rates of fairy, fantasy and adventure tales in contrast to those of the female domestic story, and of how throughout the nineteenth century female-authored books even those by Yonge and Ewing, who were generally respected by the Victorian critical establishment, often failed to reach a large public.

As a matter of fact, one of the many problems female writers faced when children's literature gradually began to change its style, tone and mode of narration in the mid-nineteenth century was that the explicit didacticism of their books came to be ridiculed and condemned by contemporary and present critics. But even well into the end of the nineteenth century, children's literature, even school, adventure and fairy tales were never completely free from certain didactic agendas. The primary predicaments women writers had to deal with, as Salmon himself pointed out, were the restriction of the subject matter and themes of their work, and the lack of action that let their domestic stories look tame and boring compared to the adventure story, and on the other hand, their general shrinking from employing the mode of the fantastic in their stories. What brought indeed the various strands of female writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century together was their common disapproval of the encouragement of the child's imagination and fancies, and, naturally, fairy tale

as a form of children's literature.²³ As Briggs and Myers have argued, considering their precarious position as female authors in a male-dominated society, these early female writers' distrust of fairy tales indicates their common desire to free themselves from weaknesses associated with their sex, as it were, overtly emotional, unreasonable and infantile, and to prove themselves as serious, rational educators of children (Briggs, "Woman Writers" 233). This is one of the reasons, as Briggs and Knoepfmacher state, that even when fairy tales became acceptable as children's literature, female writers were much more wary than their counterpart male writers when it came to the use of fantastic and fairy elements in their stories for children (Briggs, "Woman Writers" 232-33; Knoepfmacher, *Ventures* 24-5).

Thus, overcoming the limitations of their female literary legacy and widening their literary sphere in order to reach a larger audience was the main challenge female writers faced throughout the nineteenth century. After the 1860s, therefore, as critics like Carolyn Sigler and Knoepfmacher observe, female children's writers like Jean Ingelow, Christina Rossetti and Juliana Ewing who were aware of the increasingly hierarchical relationship between female and male-authored children's books, attempted to counter male writers' domination in the literary market place by writing fantasy stories themselves or

²³ Fielding's *The Governess* already expresses doubts about the effect of supernatural phenomena in stories, and when one of the girls reads a fairy tale, the governess tells her that "by no means let the Notion of Giants or Magic dwell upon your Minds" (68). The inclusion of fairy tales in Fielding's *The Governess* was one of the reasons that in 1820, Sherwood, one of the strictest of the evangelical school, rewrote Fielding's work with a more pious tone, substituting the two fairy tales in the original with realistic moral tales. Indeed, the evangelical writers distrusted fairy tales because they considered them to be lies and thus against their religious principles, and the rationalists condemned fairy tales deeming them as useless, while both schools of thought believed that fairy tales promote irrational fears within the child.

creating what Sigler dubbed “*Alice* imitations” (“Authorizing” 352).²⁴ Indeed, Rossetti herself called her book *Speaking Likenesses* (1874), a collection of fantasy stories she explicitly wrote for the lucrative Christmas book market, “would-be in the *Alice* style with an eye to the market” (Rossetti 44). Revising and appropriating typically “male” genres like the fantasy story was, however, only one of the many tactics women writers employed to expand their literary influence to be on a par with their male counterparts.

Charlotte Yonge, for instance—who popularized the domestic story by rendering it fashionable in the Victorian literary market—attempted to transcend the works of her literary foremothers, by writing books for the young that would “stretch their minds” (“Children’s Literature. Part 3” 450). Her literary efforts are manifested in her meticulous realism, particularly in her careful characterization of lively young protagonists like Ethel May in *The Daisy Chain* and little Kate in *Countess Kate* whose tribulations and difficulties in overcoming their faults and trying to fit into their designated place in society are illustrated in a sympathetic and nuanced way. Although Yonge habitually declared the transmission of the High Church doctrines to the juvenile reader as the most significant purpose of her domestic works, she avoided direct moralizing—which was partly the influence of Tractarian aesthetics which forbid direct preaching. Instead, she attempted to persuade her readers of the desirability of the ideal moral behaviour by creating relatable, flawed characters who go through a painful process to attain this ideal to facilitate the identification of her young readership.

²⁴ These so-called “*Alice* imitations” of the nineteenth and twentieth century, not restricted to those of female writers, can be read in *Alternative Alices: Visions and Revisions of Lewis Carroll’s “Alice” Books* (1997) edited by Carolyn Sigler.

She was certainly influenced by the everyday realism and strong pedagogic purpose of the works of earlier female writers like those of Maria Edgeworth, but decidedly defied the simplicity of character and obtrusive moralism of her literary foremothers. Indeed, Molesworth, reminiscing on her childhood readings, recalled, how after reading Edgeworth's and Sherwood's stories she delighted in Yonge's books which, she says, "seemed to me to open a new world of fiction" ("Story Reading" 773). It is also significant that at the same time, Yonge's artistic integrity, namely her works' subtle characterization and painstaking realism that strived to show rather than preach her religious principles put her works above those from women writers who wrote "*weak religious tales*" (*Womankind* 64), and helped her to be considered by the Victorian critical world as a serious writer. She was indeed admired by a wide range of prominent Victorian male authors such as Charles Kingsley, Lord Tennyson and Anthony Trollope (Hayter 1). Certainly, as I will explore more in detail in the following chapters, Yonge's purpose to stretch the faculty and mind of her young readers with her writings can also be read to be in close relation with her own desire to expand her own sphere of activity, and consequently the realm of her influence.

Interestingly, despite Yonge's efforts to go further than the earlier female writers, and despite her sense of belonging to a newer generation of children's authors, she could nevertheless not escape the scrutinizing eyes of a younger female author, Juliana Ewing. The toll Yonge's confinement to the domestic sphere—literally and actually—and the strict and sometimes narrow outlook of her firm High Church principles took on Yonge's literary outputs could not be missed by Ewing. In 1868, in a letter to her mother in which she confesses her doubts about her own talent as a writer, Ewing also wrote: "If I have any gift for

writing, it really *ought* to improve under circumstances so much more favourable than the narrowing influence of a small horizon—such as prevents Miss Yonge from improving as time goes on” (Blom 98). The circumstances in which Ewing wrote were, indeed, much more favourable than Yonge. Under the auspices of her mother Margaret Gatty—herself the author of some popular children’s books—Ewing’s initiation into the world of children’s publishing was more natural and supportive than her fellow female writers. As I will further demonstrate later, although Ewing respected and followed the literary tradition of the female domestic story—particularly, that of her mother, Margaret Gatty—it was also her ambition to break away from the domesticity of the female literary tradition and create a new kind of literature. Growing up as the daughter of a female author who struggled life-long with insufficient readership and inadequate remuneration, Ewing was poignantly aware of the need to widen the literary sphere and audience of female-authored children’s books. Thus, while Yonge, who was still under the influence of the Edgeworthian school’s distrust of fairies and overtly fanciful fiction, advised children as late as 1894 to be moderate in their reading of fairy tales (“Lifelong Friends” 694), and showed concern about the rising adventure story that feeds the “love of sensation” so that “boys lose their interest in all that is real” (“Children’s Literature Part 3” 453), Ewing eagerly experimented with genre and narrative perspective, merging male-genres like adventure and fantasy stories with the domestic story, and employing children and animals as narrators.

It very well might be that Ewing’s mixture of fantasy and domestic realism displayed in stories like “Amelia and the Dwarves” (1870) and “Benjy in Beastland” (1870) had an impact on successive female writers’ fantasy stories

like those of Frances Hodgson Burnett and E. Nesbit.²⁵ Very possibly, they influenced Mary Louisa Molesworth's nursery fantasies like *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877) and *The Tapestry Room* (1879). Molesworth was only two years older than Ewing, but when she wrote her first children's book in 1875, most of Ewing's experimental fantasy stories were already published. A great admirer of Ewing's works, Molesworth wrote in 1886, just after Ewing's death, a lengthy article in which she discusses and praises the works of Ewing. Notably, Molesworth did not choose to review Ewing's stories that were "universally loved" (676) by the Victorian public, namely *Jackanapes* (1879) and *Laetus Sorte Mea / The Story of a Short Life* (1882), the so-called "soldiering stories" (Lister 136) that were stylistically on a more conventional line. Instead, Molesworth turns her attention to Ewing's less well-known domestic stories like *Six to Sixteen* (1875), *We and the World* (1877-78), "Father Hedgehog and his Neighbours" (1876) and the stories in the collection *A Great Emergency and other Tales* (1877) that are striking due to their experiments in narrative perspective and style and display of a wide range of social milieu. Indeed, Molesworth marvels at Ewing's great power and ability to describe lives, landscapes, incidents, languages and people that were beyond the usual domain of a female writer. Molesworth's own stories restricted their literary sphere firmly to that of the middle-class nursery, but the regular visits her literary children would make into the realm of the fantastic or grown-up world outside, and her frequent use of child narrators are likely partly influenced by Ewing's stories. In contrast to Ewing's experimental stories, however, that were

²⁵ On Ewing's influence on Nesbit's children's stories, see Briggs, *A Woman of Passion* xx.

barely noticed by the public, and were considered an “utter failure” (Maxwell 146) by Ewing herself, Molesworth’s realistic and also fantastic nursery stories were popular and financially successful. She was indeed the only female writer, as the article of *The Academy* above proves, who managed to be in the list of the top ten most demanded children’s books. Unlike Ewing, Molesworth did not consciously seek artistic freedom from the female tradition of children’s writing. She was an author, however, who was deeply concerned with attaining the right balance of perspective between child and adult, delight and instruction, innocence and experience, and even fantastic and realistic mode in her stories. It seems to be exactly this balance Molesworth sought to establish in her stories which enabled her to appeal to and reach a wider audience, and even to succeed to a certain extent in weakening the strict boundaries between realism and fantasy, and even private and public sphere.

Thus, as seen in the case of writers like Yonge, Ewing and Molesworth, female writers employed different literary strategies in their domestic stories to expand their realm of activity, their literary sphere, and the mind of their child readers. The literary outputs of these three writers reflect how their stories’ purpose to disseminate their perspective and conviction outside the homely sphere was not only informed by the works of their literary foremothers who also hoped to connect private and public spheres through their writings, but was also stimulated by each other’s writings. At the same time, in contrast to their literary foremothers, their writings more expressly induced the child reader to question the very premises on which the separate spheres ideology was based, and encouraged the child to become a more critical reader. As a result, they could not help but to revise and even discard the inevitably more conservative literary

forms and conventions of their predecessors. Particularly, when after the 1860s male writers began to dominate the children's literature market with their new forms of fiction that introduced the child to realms more exciting, foreign and fantastic than the day-to-day reality of home, it became necessary for women writers to find alternative ways to address and draw the attention of the child reader.

To be sure, the domestic story was not the only form of children's fiction in the nineteenth century that women authors used to exert their power beyond the domestic sphere and rewrite the social roles of women within and without home. Female writers like Ann Fraser Tytler also wrote adventure stories, such as her famous *Leila, or The Island* (1839)—“an unending favourite” (*What Books to Lend* 24) amongst children as Yonge testifies—and writers like Agnes Strickland, Emma Marshall and Yonge herself wrote historical novels. Indeed, Horne argues in *History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children's Literature* (2011) that before the great rise of the male-authored adventure story in mid-nineteenth century, women writers who wrote adventure and historical stories in their earliest form in the beginning decades of the nineteenth century like Tytler, Barbara Hofland, Strickland found in the deserted islands and distant pasts a safe place in which they could circumvent the restrictive domestic ideology and experiment with the gender roles of their child protagonists (22-24). Additionally, there were of course the prolific female writers of the evangelical school who made active use of their spiritual authority—one of the few influences women could exercise outside home—and produced the very popular street-Arab tales like Stretton's *Jessica's First Prayer*

(1867) that sold “nearly ten times as many as those of *Alice in Wonderland*” (Alderson 268).

Domestic narratives, however, although seemingly telling merely of the everyday matters of home life, disclosed and grappled more directly than their more exotic and sensational counterparts with the various problems and anxieties about agency and autonomy the woman and the child had to face in their confinement to the home and exclusion from public discourses. Indeed, in the following chapters, I will argue how for female writers, from Yonge to Ewing to Molesworth, the domestic story was a significant means by which they could cope with the tensions and restrictions of the domestic ideology, and could even expose (unintentionally and sometimes intentionally) its paradoxes and contradictions. I will show how these women writers reassessed, revised and also resisted the conventions of the domestic story—that essentially was supposed to preserve and reproduce ideology—to investigate and even problematize the very power structure that constructed the hierarchical relationship between domestic and public realm, child and adult, and reader and writer.

Chapter II. Charlotte Yonge: The Emergence of the Popular Domestic Novel in Juvenile Literature

“I cannot forget, however, my father, before taking any steps about *Abbeychurch*, gravely putting it before me that there were three reasons for which one might desire to publish—love of vanity, or of gain, or the wish to do good. I answered, with tears, that I really hoped I had written with the purpose of being useful to young girls like myself.”

(Yonge, “Lifelong Friends” 694)

In E. Nesbit’s *The Wouldbegoods* published in 1901, in the year of Charlotte Yonge’s death, there is a scene in which the children discuss Yonge’s most famous domestic story, *The Daisy Chain* (1856):

It’s by Miss Charlotte M. Yonge,” Daisy interrupted, “and it’s about a family of poor motherless children who tried so hard to be good, and they were confirmed, and had a bazaar, and went to church at the Minster, and one of them got married and wore black watered silk and silver ornaments. So her baby died, and then she was sorry she had not been a good mother to it. And—”. “*The Daisy Chain* is not a bit like that really. It’s a ripping book. One of the boys dresses up like a lady and comes to call, and another tries to hit his little sister with a hoe. It’s jolly fine, I tell you.”

(*The Wouldbegoods* 207-08)

Daisy and Denny’s contrasting opinions in regard to *The Daisy Chain* might accurately illustrate the two-sidedness of Charlotte Yonge’s literary world. On the one hand, Yonge’s books for the young firmly aimed to teach the young the

significance of their duties towards home and the Church. Indeed, sometimes the didacticism of her works could go so far that violation of leading moral principles could lead to appalling consequences, like—as Daisy above illustrates—Flora’s famous punishment of losing her baby for her transgressions of the female sphere. On the other hand, however, she was very adept in constructing relatable, nuanced characters, depicting in a sympathetic and lively way the daily naughtiness, fun and mishaps of her young protagonists, and their hard mental struggles to overcome their flaws and come to terms with the increasing social restrictions imposed on them. Indeed, this contradiction between the high moral purpose and the sympathetic depiction of identifiable young characters of Yonge’s works resulted in a gap that J. S. Bratton once called a “discrepancy of intention and effect” (189).

In the last decade Yonge’s books have begun to receive new attention from critics such as Tamara Wagner, Kristine Moruzi and Talia Schaffer who have attempted to free Yonge from the one-sided critical opinion that disparagingly regarded her as a woman writer who produced works that were didactic and outrageously antifeminist (Bratton, Thomson, Zeiman). To be sure, it is not easy to withstand the compulsion to label Yonge’s works as overtly pious and conservative when looking at her domestic novels with their highly principled mothers and fathers, and of overtly conscientious sisters and brothers who sacrifice themselves for the common good of the family. Yonge’s biographers commonly assume that filial piety and deep religious feelings that are brought forward as the most significant virtues in Yonge’s writings were

influenced by the principles and teachings of her father and John Keble—one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement (Battiscombe, Coleridge, Romanes).²⁶ Particularly, John Keble—Yonge’s “chief spiritual influence” (Coleridge 116)—and his Tractarian doctrines were the guiding religious principles on her writings. The Oxford Movement and its Tractarianism displayed a deep respect for institution and tradition, and accordingly required absolute obedience to established hierarchies and social orders which might explain Yonge’s notions on gender—she famously declared her “full belief in the inferiority of woman” (*Womankind* 24)—and her strong faith in the institution of the family.

In light of these familial, ideological and social circumstances, it seems to be only natural, as the citation at the head of this chapter shows, that it was only after the approval of Yonge’s father and the observance of his condition of “doing good” through her writings that Yonge’s works were allowed to see the light. “Doing good” and “being useful” were indeed always the ultimate purposes of Yonge’s literary efforts. She herself stated that she “viewed [herself] as a sort of instrument for popularising church views” (Battiscombe, *Charlotte Mary Yonge* 14). Interestingly, Yonge’s very purpose of “popularizing” her beliefs to the public through her literary works has received much attention in recent criticism. Critics have begun to pay attention to Yonge’s keen awareness of contemporary literary trends and fashionable formula that she actively employed and experimented with to convey her convictions in a popular form in

²⁶ Critics for some reason display an inordinate amount of interest in how Yonge’s relationship with her father was instrumental in her development as a writer and general outlook on life. For criticism on Yonge’s relationship with her father, see Battiscombe, *Charlotte Mary Yonge* 22, Sturrock 18, Mare 143 and Wilson 98.

order to reach a larger audience and extend thus her influence. Wagner for instance refers to Yonge's "genre crossing" that helped her to "translate her belief system into compelling fictions of everyday life" ("Introduction" 216) and to hold the attention of the Victorian mass readership. Similarly, Susan Walton discusses how Yonge "marketed" the genre of the missionary story to disseminate missionary interests to homes that did not subscribe to these concerns.

Considering this rising critical interest in Yonge's conscious engagement with the literary trends of her time, and her great ability to revise and rework literary traditions to create popular domestic novels that, as Schaffer notes, are "curiously addictive" ("Taming" 204), it is strange that recent scholarship on children's literature overlooked Yonge's literary efforts in improving the condition of children's literature. In the criticism of children's literature from the 1980s and 90s, Yonge has been regularly referred to as an author who introduced so-called "realistic" characters in the realm of juvenile fiction, who provided wholesome domestic novels for Victorian middle-class girls, and, significantly, inspired, with *The Daisy Chain*, Louisa May Alcott to write the exceedingly more popular American counterpart *Little Women* (1868-69) (Thwaite 146; Gubar 5; Townsend 61).²⁷ Beyond these textbook examples of Yonge's position within the development of children's literature, criticism has paid little attention to the various literary strategies Yonge employed to make her novels more appealing

²⁷ After all, there is a close resemblance between Jo March and Ethel May concerning their harum-scarum way. Also Jo is weeping over Yonge's *The Heir of Redclyffe* in the first book of *Little Women*. The alliterating family name "March" and "May", both signifying months of the year might also be considered quite telling.

for the young such as her creation of relatable young characters, detailed insight into the mind of the young and adult figures, the closer relationship between young and old and a more sympathetic narrative perspective.

It is indeed significant to note that just as Yonge's initiation into authorship was motivated by the wish "of doing good", as it were, promulgating her belief system to a wide readership, it was also with the wish "of being useful to young girls like myself." After all, Yonge had a firm position as a well-respected author and critic of juvenile literature in the Victorian era. During her long authorship, that began in 1839 and lasted till her death in 1901, she wrote little village stories for cottage children, wrote her famous domestic novels and historical romances, and edited a magazine *The Monthly Packet* (1851-99) for those young persons who were out of the schoolroom. Furthermore, she was also actively involved in initiating and supporting the writing career of subsequent female writers by taking on the role of "Mother Goose" to an essay society that consisted of young girls from genteel families that called themselves the Goslings.²⁸ Yonge's literary career and output were in this way dedicated to provide the young better books, books that would convey in a more pleasurable and convincing way her religious principles and moral lessons. Just as recent criticism reveals "how Yonge capitalized on seemingly divergent literary trends as well as on topical controversies within the domestic novel's confines" (Wagner, "Introduction" 216), I will demonstrate how in regard to juvenile fiction Yonge also made use of various narrative strategies to attract the attention of

²⁸ For criticism on Yonge's significant role as storyteller, mentor and inspiring model of a successful woman writer within the Gosling Society, and the production of their in-house magazine *The Barnacle*, see the works of Julia Courtney, Georgina Hill and Elizabeth Lovegrove.

the young reader, to narrow the gap between adult and child, and adult author and young reader in order to render the didacticism of her books more palatable and popularize the female domestic novel for the young reader.

Moreover, just as Yonge's popular domestic fictions are thought by critics to have redefined and widened the confines of this genre (Wagner, Walton), I will also show how Yonge's construction of identifiable child and adult characters and her granting insights into her young characters' inner bewilderments and struggles not only extended the subject that can be dealt with in children's stories, but also caused to unsettle the hierarchical relationship between child and adult, and the boundaries of gender in children's literature inadvertently opening up new possibilities and areas in the genre of the domestic story for children.

1. The Appearance of Child and Adult Interiority

In the history of children's literature the appearance of Charlotte Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* in 1856 is frequently marked as one of the first works that began to depict child characters and their surroundings in a so-called "realistic" or "true-to-life" way. Eighteenth-century moral literature mostly characterized their literary children either as the "good" child, or its counterpart, the "bad" one. This gradual shift from exemplary characters to more complex ones in literature for the young did, however, by no means indicate that the purpose of children's literature also shifted—as critics commonly note—from "instruction to delight". Didacticism was still a crucial function of children's books, but the method of conveying the moral lessons changed. Rather than displaying the model child,

children's books began to present slightly flawed characters and thus facilitated an easier emulation for the young reader. Jackie Horne notes that by "the mid-nineteenth century, with the publication of the work of Charlotte Yonge, flat characters designed to model moral exemplarity appeared far less often in novels for children than round characters designed to improve readers via a different means, the evocation of identification and emotional connection" (*History* 18).

As a significant literary influence on her first literary ventures, and indeed as a general turning point in juvenile literature, Yonge would always cite Harriet Mozley's *The Fairy Bower* (1841) which Yonge called "the starting point of a certain style of writing for the young" ("Lifelong Friends" 695). Harriet Mozley was a High Church Anglican, like Yonge, and according to the High Church doctrines, whose aesthetic programme demanded reserve, her work refrained from the blatant piousness and explicit preaching of the popular Evangelical stories.²⁹ Mozley herself highlighted in the preface of the book the very difference of her story from other children's fiction:

It is hoped that the following little Tale may be looked upon as an attempt rather to represent characters as they really are, than to exhibit moral portraiture for unreserved imitation or avoidance. In this respect it may perhaps differ from most publications of the same class, and though it may not possess their poetical beauty, it

²⁹ More on how Yonge employs the principles of Tractarian reserve in her novels and how it influenced her development of novelistic techniques can be seen in Gavin Budge's *Charlotte M Yonge. Religion, Feminism and Realism in the Victorian Novel* (2007) and in Susan Colon's essay "Realism and Reserve: Charlotte Yonge and Tractarian Aesthetics" (2010).

may perhaps have the advantage over them, that it introduces young persons to those scenes and situations of life, which are their actual sphere and trial. (5)

Mozley emphasises here how her story differs from other children's books in that she presents "real" characters that are neither perfectly good nor bad. Mozley defends her unusual character construction by explaining that in this way the book is able to explore the "actual sphere and trial" of young persons. There is an assumption behind this statement that usually children's stories have only two types of characters, namely the ideal one to imitate and the bad one to avoid, and that these characters often have to deal with unnatural and unrealistic circumstances and tribulations. Mozley does not mention what kind of "advantage" her book's realism of character, scenes and situation exactly has over those other children's stories. But in light of Horne's argument that realistic, or, when putting it more accurately, ordinary characters with whom the young can identify were gradually perceived as more conducive in convincing young readers of the desirability of moral behaviour, one can conjecture that Mozley by displaying more relatable characters and situations aimed to improve her readers in a more effective way.

The Fairy Bower indeed presented more round characters and a detailed depiction of common home scenes, and, significantly, rather than introducing a narrator who suggests a solution to a moral problem, the story let the characters discuss the problems themselves via long conversations. The pioneering aspects of those books were, as Yonge explains, its curious combination of wholesomeness and entertainment, for while it was full of "humorous

descriptions” and did not “inculcate any distinctively High Church doctrines”, there was no doubt “that they did their part towards the Church movement” (“Children’s Literature Part 3” 449). Yonge herself, when stepping into the realm of children’s publishing in the 1840s felt that she was part of this newer movement of juvenile literature. Yonge succinctly described this feeling in the 1886 preface of her republished book *Scenes and Characters* originally published in 1847. Yonge reminisces that in 1847, when this novel had been originally published, it was a point of time in which there was generally a feeling of change in the juvenile literary scene. It was felt that children needed “something of a deeper tone than the Edgeworthian style, yet less directly religious than the Sherwood class of books” (viii). It was, as Yonge says, “on that wave of opinion, my little craft floated out into the great sea of the public” (viii).

“The Starting Point of a Certain Style of Writing for the Young”

Indeed, Yonge’s articles and books on juvenile literature reveal that she was not only aware of the limitation of children’s literature of the past century—the Edgeworthian school’s predilection for cold reason and the Sherwood school’s flagrant religious instruction—but was also very conscious of the general trend and changes in children’s literature. As the juvenile book market grew, the various needs of this emerging young readership also began to be classified and diversified according to age, gender and social standing. It became quickly clear that to satisfy these various demands with the simple stories of the eighteenth century and the overtly pious Sunday-school stories was not enough.

Yonge's keen awareness of children's literature of the former and present generation can be observed more in detail in her three-part article titled "Children's Literature of the Last Century" which she published in 1869 in *Macmillan's Magazine* when she was already a respected writer and critic of juvenile literature. From the eighteenth century when nursery books first made their appearance to the last thirty years when children's books emerged as a commercially lucrative item in the literary market, Yonge offers in this article a mid-nineteenth century perspective on the history of children's literature. Although Yonge mostly admires the works of her literary foremothers, her appreciation was of course not unqualified. She valorised the clear moral purpose, refined language and the occasional glimpses of humour displayed in the works of women writers like Sarah Kilner and Hannah More, but she also perceived the forcedness of religious instruction, the overt simplicity and contrived moral as the main flaws in most of their writings. About the works of Barbara Hofland, for instance, she would criticise that she exaggerated "the Edgeworth fashion" ("Children's Literature Part 2" 305)—alluding to the diligence and independence of Edgeworth's child protagonists—by making her literary children too exemplary and wonderful. In regard to Sherwood's stories she acknowledged their "simplicity and earnestness of detail" ("Children's Literature Part 2" 308) but pointed out how "the lessons at the end of each chapter reflect the shifting opinions of a very untaught and conceited though pious mind" ("Children's Literature Part 2" 308). Indeed, Yonge described Sherwood's stories and the numerous deaths of her fictional children as the "first in the field of pious slaughter" ("Children's Literature Part 2" 308).

As can be seen, piousness itself did not satisfy Yonge's standard of good

children's writing. The inconsistent, uninformed and complacent outlook of Sherwood's works constituted a problem for Yonge. For similar reasons, Yonge objected to most of the "religious fiction" ("Children's Literature Part 2" 307) like Maria Charlesworth's *Ministering Children* (1854), or Hesba Stretton's *Jessica's First Prayer* (1867) not because of their sameness of formula—the sudden conversion and early death of children—but rather their manner of conveying their doctrine, which Yonge considered "undesirable, because obtrusive" ("Children's Literature Part 2" 309). It is no wonder, notes Yonge, that this class of literature, as it were, "a religious tale"—written mainly by pious Evangelical women like Sherwood and Charlesworth—is "given up to utter reprobation by the critical world" ("Children's Literature Part 2" 310) considering how the narrative is utterly sacrificed to point the moral.

Yonge did not object to a moral per se, on the contrary, she vehemently criticised the current tendency of children's stories for not having a moral at all. Indeed, she called it a "foolish notion that didactic stories must be dull", and was strongly against those books pretending to have no moral and being "absolutely proud of themselves for writing a perfectly unmeaning story" (*Womankind* 63). Yonge herself made sure to inform the reader of the moral of her tales, either through the books' prefaces, or, the subtitles of the books that hint at the work's subject of lesson, like *Abbeychurch, or, Self-Control and Self-Conceit*, or *Daisy Chain, or, Aspirations*. In the preface to *The Two Guardians or, Home in this World* (1852), Yonge even summarised the morals of her previous novels *Abbeychurch* (1844), *Scenes and Characters* (1847) and *Castle Builders* (1854), because she was "anxious to say a few words of the design of these stories; ... in hopes of pointing to the moral, which has been thought not sufficiently

evident, perhaps because it has been desired to convey, rather than directly inculcate it.” (3). Indeed, the anxiety one can feel in this preface of an earlier work of Yonge, is that of a young author who is concerned that her novels’ irreproachable and useful intentions will not be recognised by the public due to her more sophisticated narrative style that avoided direct preaching and deviated thus from the more outspoken religious stories of the Evangelical school. Clearly, Yonge’s apologetic and anxious tone suggests that her literary style of trying to “convey”, “rather than directly inculcate”, the moral of the story was yet not that common.

Thus, despite her strong emphasis on the tale’s didacticism, Yonge was very adamant that the moral should not be enforced but be inferred by the child.³⁰ She indeed deeply felt the urgent need for a kind of literature for the young that was sophisticated enough to help them in the transition from the simple nursery readings to more advanced works. What worried Yonge was that the overt simplicity and somewhat crude nature of some of the past and also the multitude of new emerging children’s books might prevent children from reading more advanced books resulting in the child’s mind becoming absolutely “cramped” (“Children’s Literature Part 3” 450). Indeed, Yonge considered it “a real lowering of the faculties to confine a child to books of fiction, history, and science, written *down* to it”, since the child “fails to learn the meaning of language, and finds ‘grown-up books’ difficult and incomprehensible, even when

³⁰ Criticizing the overt morality of the religious tales Yonge notes that the extreme opposite of having no moral at all is also not preferable: “And yet while we are sure that it is a mistake to put preachments such as no mortal can be supposed to make into the mouths of the dramatis personae, we think that the notion that a book is really better as mere literature and more amusing for not having a moral is an error” (“Children’s Literature Part 3” 452).

outgrowing childhood” (*Womankind* 63). Yonge strongly suggested that in due time children should be trained to attend to sophisticated books that stretched their faculties. She was particularly anxious therefore about girls because they were more exposed to the danger of becoming infantile and frivolous in their taste for literature.³¹ Yonge was aware that due to their home confinement girls were naturally avid readers of books, and expressed thus her dissatisfaction about the insufficiency of the contemporary education system that did not induce girls to cultivate their reading taste beyond the simple nursery stories: “The system that keeps girls in the school-room reading simple easy stories, without touching Scott, Shakespeare, or Spenser, and then hands them over to the unexplored recesses of Mudie’s boxes, has been shown by her [Elizabeth Sewell] to be the most *frivolizing* that can be devised” (“Children’s Literature Part 3” 450). Yonge’s ultimate advice on children’s reading was indeed: “Bring children as soon as possible to stretch up to books above them, provided those books are noble and good” (“Children’s Literature Part 3” 456).

In *The Two Sides of the Shield* (1885), for instance, Yonge presents the contrasting consequences of the different reading habits between little Dolores Mohun and the children of the Merrifield household. The Merrifield children are encouraged not to limit their books to children’s tales but also to extend their reading material to “grown-up books” (46). As a result, they display a wide range of general knowledge, from ancient history to the up-to-date events of the

³¹ Yonge observes: “There are so many hours of a girl’s life when she must sit still, that a book is her natural resource, and reading becomes to her like breathing” (“Children’s Literature Part 3” 454).

day. Dolores, on the other hand, who restricts her reading to simple and rather sensational children's stories, is not only ignorant of the greater issues outside the homely sphere, but also narrow in her outlook on the world. To be sure, Yonge lets Dolores read just the kind of books she herself would strongly disapprove of. When Dolores arrives at her aunt Lily's home, to be under her guardianship while her father is away in the Fiji Islands, her head is crammed with the popular children's stories in which golden-haired girls are abused by wicked aunts, and are later saved by kind cousins. Being under the spell of these stories, Dolores perceives every kind act of her aunt as an attempt to undercut her communication with her own relatives and even the teachings of her own deceased mother. Just as Yonge was opposed to simplistic children's stories that deliver their didactic intention in a too forced manner, she was against stories that were unrealistic and promoted a worldview not in accordance with the world outside the book. Not surprisingly Yonge objected to the Evangelical romances like the one Dolores reads—which is evidently modelled after Susan Warner's popular tearjerker *The Wide, Wide World* (1850)—about ill-used orphan girls, and the protecting cousin who “always turns into the lover” (*Womankind* 64) fearing that this highly unrealistic narrative interferes with the child's wholesome perception of him or herself and the world.

Dolores indeed has a hard time in adjusting herself to the Merrifield household imagining herself to be the victimised heroine and to be mistreated by the family members. The story highlights how her unhappiness is particularly exacerbated due to her animosity towards the well-meaning adults around her, and her refusal to communicate her difficulties to them. Yonge was strongly against children's books that depreciate adult-figures such as governesses,

aunts and uncles, and represent them as authorities who are a “tedious, hateful infliction” (*Womankind* 63), not only because it went against the significant doctrine of filial piety, but also because it hindered a close and honest relationship between the young and old, and consequently a smooth conversation between child and adult.

To be sure, Yonge was sensitive to the uneven power relations between the adult and the child, and the child’s precarious position in this relationship. In Yonge’s guidebook *What Books to Lend and What to Give* (1887) in which she recommends suitable books according to age, gender and class, her keen awareness of the individual tastes and preferences of her target readers is revealed. To reach the child, to catch his or her attention, to convey the moral, and to convince the child of its very desirability, Yonge knew it was necessary to gain the sympathy of the child. She knew from her long experience as a teacher in her Otterbourn village school that to address children from above can have a perverse effect on the child, that indeed, children even refuse to listen to a story that is too explicitly written for them: “[Children] are much more willing to listen to, or to read, what is not too obviously written for them” (12).

Thus, although the ethical ideals that Yonge and her fictional adults exacted of the child, within and without the book, seem to be highly demanding and even domineering from today’s point of view, it is significant to note that Yonge’s books also underline the great importance of an intimate relationship between child and adult. This can be observed not only in Yonge’s depiction of the relationship between her fictional children and adults, but also in Yonge’s sympathetic narrative perspective towards the inner troubles of the child and

adult characters. One can recognize the extent of the much closer relationship between the fictional grown-up and the young, and adult narrator and child-reader in Yonge's works, when comparing them with the eighteenth-century moral stories in which rarely a heartfelt conversation takes place between child and adult characters, and the narrators as well have not much access to the interiority of its fictional children and adults and describe and judge their actions and emotions from a detached narrative perspective.

As mentioned, Horne observes while in the eighteenth century writers created exemplary characters, ideals which children "could strive to emulate but could never actually completely embody" (*History* 32), in the nineteenth century "readers were now being asked to identify with the characters in their texts, to construct a bond through sympathy" (*History* 32). Indeed, Yonge's method of creating a narrator that has access to the commotions that go on *within* the child *and* adult character—on the adult's side, doubts whether he or she educates the child in the right way, while on the child's side, the painful struggle in adjusting to the adult value system—not only helped to emotionally connect the child reader with the fictional child *and* the adult, but also to establish a closer relationship between the adult narrator and the young reader. Yonge's narrowing the distance between these two parties had the effect of persuading the child in a convincing way of the desirability of the moral ideals put forward by the book. Providing the child reader insights into the inner struggles of the child and the adult, on the one hand, guaranteed the young reader's identification with the child protagonist—after all, the essential condition to form the child reader according to the wishes of the author. On the other hand, the young reader also experiences a more sympathetic feeling towards the grown-

up character which in turn facilitated the child's appropriation of the adult's moral doctrine. It is not surprising then, that in Yonge's fictional world grown-ups were rarely depicted as unapproachable others to be vilified or to be idolized from the distance.

Closing the Gap between Child and Adult

Ironically, the disclosure of the inner turmoil of the child and adult characters to the young reader also had the effect of levelling the essentially hierarchical relationship between child and adult. Certainly, an open communication of the inner life of the child and adult character strengthened the bond between the young and the grown-up—inside and outside the book—and even endowed the adult character and the adult narrator with greater reliability as the guardian and teacher of the child. Simultaneously, however, Yonge's dwelling on the doubts and conflicts of her literary adults and children, opened up—whether intentionally or unintentionally—the possibility, first, of the child reader's undermining the authority and respectability of the adult, and second, of the young reader's over-sympathizing with the child character's emotional suffering and fantasies of power, and thus a questioning or ignoring of the adult code of values.

This two-edged effect of Yonge's children's stories, as it were, setting up a sympathetic bond between child and adult and thus facilitating the inculcation of ideology, but simultaneously, releasing the potential for destabilizing the power relation between child and adult, is a common denominator in most of Yonge's domestic stories for young and older children. Spurred on by the pioneering

example of Mozley's *Fairy Bower* rather "to represent characters as they really are, than to exhibit moral portraitures for unreserved imitation or avoidance" (5), Yonge introduced in her stories flawed but likeable characters like Dolores Mohun, Elizabeth and Gillian Merrifield striving to gain the young reader's identification by depicting their struggles in overcoming their shortcomings in everyday home life.

Maybe the most remarkable example among Yonge's works that discloses the interiority of the child with all its intense desires and fierce struggles to conquer those childish longings might be *Countess Kate* (1862). The character of little Kate in *Countess Kate* is indeed unique in Yonge's oeuvre, for no child character of Yonge was as wild, wayward and fanciful as Kate.³² She is depicted as having an unmanageable character and is constantly referred to throughout the story by the narrator and her decorous aunt Lady Barbara as "a chimpanzee asking for nuts" (25), "a little wild harum-scarum creature" (37), and "a troublesome little incomprehensible wild cat" (38). *Countess Kate* tells the story of eleven-year-old Kate who is unexpectedly elevated to the peerage, and becomes the Countess of Caergwent. As a consequence, Kate has to leave the country parsonage where she grew up with her uncle Mr Wardour—a clergyman who adopted her as his daughter—to live with her two great-aunts in London. Yonge effectively employs here the title of countess to initiate Kate into the grown-up world with its orderliness, cultivation, and gender division, and to cure

³² Yonge's characterization of Kate was so painstakingly detailed that many biographers of Yonge assumed this little story to be an autobiographical novel about Yonge's own childhood experience. See Mare, Percival 200.

her of her flaws: her “love of being important” (107), self-conceit and selfishness. Indeed, it is a story of initiation that illustrates how the unruly child gradually learns to be sensible, and brings forward the moral that titles and riches alone are not what make you truly great, but that one has to acquire self-restraint and graces to be worthy of the title.

As it is significant that the young reader sympathizes with Kate to deliver the moral in an effective and convincing way, Yonge carefully depicts Kate’s emotions, from her delight in becoming a countess to her intense struggle in adjusting to the limitations the title imposes on her. The double-sided signification of the title, as it were, restriction and promise of power, serve to teach Kate self-restraint and humility, but also trigger in turn Kate’s wild imaginations of independence, influence and power. For just like Dolores Mohun, Kate is a hyper-literate and fanciful child and constantly refers to the type of fictions in which artless children are elevated into countesses and lords and surprise their elders with their innocence.³³ For instance, before going to London Kate imagines how her aunts will “be dreadfully fashionable” and “play at cards all Sunday” (13) and how she, as the young, artless countess, will present “a remarkable contrast in her ingenuous simplicity” (13). Moreover, after being informed of turning soon into a countess, Kate enthusiastically plans to buy Mr. Wardour “lots of big books” and to present a pony-carriage and ponies to her cousins, only to be checked by Mr. Wardour: “My little Katharine, you

³³ The parodic dimension of *Countess Kate* has also been pointed out by Hayter who mentions a novel *Rank and Beauty, or the Young Baroness*, “in which a girl unexpectedly inherits a peerage in her own right, becoming Lady Umfraville, and dazzles the world by her loveliness and wit (10).” This novel was strongly attacked by George Eliot in her famous article “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists”. Hayter observes that with fair certainty “Miss Yonge actually read this article” (10). See Hayter 10-11.

have yet to understand that ‘the heir, so long as he is a child, differeth in nothing from a servant, but is under tutors and governors. You will not have any power over yourself or your property till you are twenty-one’ (7). By exposing thus in a sympathetic way Kate’s desires for influence and independence, the narrative perspective acknowledges the strong wish for autonomy a child might have who is inevitably in a subordinate position in an adult-world, and secures in this way a bond with the child reader who will certainly empathize with Kate’s emotions.

As much as the title promises power, though, it also involves restrictions, from Kate’s strict obedience to her great-aunts to her acquirement of social manners and accomplishments. Kate’s grievances in coming to terms with these restrictions, and her wild fantasies of freeing herself from the various constraints the title inflicts are therefore also significant components of the story. Yonge gives insight into Kate’s fantasies that range from harmless wish-fulfillments of becoming a queen and putting an end “to aunts and calisthenic exercises” and choosing her “own governesses and playfellows” (34), to radical, almost transgressive imaginations:

She would ... go off into some dreamy fancy ... of a great revolution, in which, after the pattern of the French nobility, she should have to maintain Aunt Jane by the labour of her hands! What was to become of Aunt Barbara was uncertain; perhaps she was to be in prison, and Kate to bring food to her in a little basket every day; or else she was to run away: but Aunt Jane was to live in a nice little lodging, with no one to wait on her but her dear little niece, who was to paint beautiful screens for her livelihood, and make her coffee with her own hands. (32)

Kate fantasises here a revolution that not only upsets the hierarchy of class, releasing Kate from the title of countess, but also turns over the present guardian-ward relationship—based in turn on age-hierarchy—and places Kate in the guardian position and her aunts in the subordinate, dependent one. Moreover, Kate’s feeling like a “state prisoner” (154) under Aunt Barbara’s guardianship, and Kate’s permanent fear of being actually sent to prison by her for not behaving like a proper countess, are directly reflected in this fantasy of revolution in which Kate, in turn, considers sending Lady Barbara to prison. Indeed, Kate’s wild fancies reverse in every possible way the adult order to which Kate is subjected, and thus is clearly calculated by Yonge to catch the attention of child readers and gratify their own wish-fulfillments. Considering, however, the great extent to which Kate’s fantasies here digress from the moral stance of the story, it is questionable whether Yonge’s aim to teach the necessity of self-restraint and humility by emotionally bonding the reader with Kate might always have its desired effect. This is particularly questionable in light of the fact that Kate’s fantasies are conveyed by the narrator just as they occur in Kate’s mind, and not in an evaluating tone as in the earlier moral tales. After all, Victorian children read the far more rigorously didactic *The Fairchild Family* of Sherwood purely enjoying the Fairchild children’s play, quarrels, trips and their little mishaps of lying and overeating, but ignoring and deliberately skipping the sermons. Molesworth reminisced how *The Fairchild Family* was her “favourite by far” as a child, “excepting for the prayers and hymns at the end of each chapter” (“Story-Writing” 162). Molesworth was a conscientious child, and although the prayers “were a sore trial” she “hit upon the plan of *reading forward* a certain number of them, so that I could then go back and enjoy the story

straight on for several chapters without the uncongenial break!" ("Story-Writing" 162). Advertently, or inadvertently, therefore, such moments of pure deliverance of transgressive fantasies of the child that are unadulterated by any kind of moralism point to the potential of unsettling the hierarchical relationship between child and adult.

To be sure, Yonge, not to extend for too long the child's sympathy with Kate's rather mutinous feelings, also takes great care to invite the reader to sympathize in turn with the adult figures in the story and their great difficulties in educating the child. For a long time, in early moral and religious stories, the adult-educator figures, coming in the form of parents, tutors and governesses, were endowed with an unquestionable authority. Indeed, in religious stories they were more or less perceived as God's delegate on earth. Adults were therefore presented as essentially unapproachable ideals, and very rarely the child reader was granted access to the feelings of the adult let alone their own doubts and flaws. In providing a sympathetic insight into grown-ups' own mental struggles, however, it became possible that the young reader, not only sets up a bond with the child but also with the adult. Naturally, the reader's identification with the adult-educator figure became conducive to the child reader's appropriation of the right behaviour this adult character sought to teach the child character.

How effective this strategy of aligning the child reader with the adult-educator can be might be observed in another story of Yonge, *The Stokesley Secret* (1861). This story charts the development of the Merrifield children who are left in the hands of the young governess Miss Christabel Fosbrook after the sudden departure of their parents due to their mother's illness. Had *The Stokesley Secret* been a traditional governess-story of the eighteenth century

like Sarah Fielding's *The Governess* (1749) or Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories* (1788), Miss Fosbrook would be a perfect female educator like Mrs. Teachum, or Mrs. Mason who impress their protégées with their impenetrable sensibility and rationality. Yonge, however, chooses to give insight into the young governess' interiority:

“Well,” thought Christabel, as she hurried away for five minutes' peace in her own room before the dinner-bell, “it is a comfort to have one pupil whose whole endeavour is not to frustrate one's attempts to educate him.” Poor young thing! that one little bit of sense had quite cheered her up. Otherwise she was not one whit less weary than the children. She had been learning a very tough lesson too—much harder than any of theirs; and she was not at all certain that she had learnt it right. (92)

The passage describes Miss Fosbrook's first disastrous experience in school-room lessons in the Merrifield household. Rather than dwelling only on the children's perspective, namely the unpleasantness and drudgery of school lessons, Yonge also discloses the governess' doubts concerning the correctness and judiciousness of her pedagogic methods. Sympathetically the narrator describes her frustrations at having been unsuccessful in teaching her lessons to the children, and her delight in having been at least helpful to one child. Significantly, Yonge closely associates Miss Fosbrook with the children, by stating how she was “not one whit less weary than the children”, how she “had been learning a very tough lesson too” and “was not at all certain that she had learnt it right”.

In *Countess Kate*, one gets a glimpse of the adult's point of view after the narrator details Kate's feeling of great annoyance at what Kate considers to be the oppression of her aunt Barbara. Indeed, the narrator directly points out to the child reader the necessity of having to look also at great-aunt Barbara's view on things: "Most likely everyone is of Lady Caergwent's morning opinion—that Lady Barbara Umfraville was cross, and that it was a hard lot to live in subjection to her. But there are two sides to a question; and there were other hardships in that house besides those of the Countess of Caergwent" (34). Subsequently, the narrator tells of Lady Barbara's estranged relationship with Kate's deceased father, her quiet civilized life as a refined Lady with her weak sister, and how indeed it was very hard on her and her sister "that their niece should turn out a little wild harum-scarum creature, such as they had never dreamt of.... To have such a being to endure, and more than that, to break into the habits of civilized life, and the dignity of a lady of rank, was no small burden for them" (37). Certainly, the reader must be reconciled with Lady Barbara's oppression of little Kate, which, by the way, the child reader is eventually to find out through the story's revelation of aunt Barbara's point of view, was, after all, not an oppression. Surely, just as for Kate the change from a free country life to a fashionable one as a countess in London was demanding, for Lady Barbara as well the transition from a childless lady with a quiet life to a guardian with a child as wild and uncouth as Kate could not have been easy.

Granting the child reader insight into the thoughts, emotions and even weaknesses of the adults, however, always entails the danger of undermining, or, at least, diminishing the authority of the adult-educator figure. After all, there is the possibility that the child reader insists on his or her identification with the

child character, and refuses to sympathize with the adult's point of view offered by the narrator. Horne, exploring the effect of the rise of emotion in children's stories during the period 1800-1840, observes how allowing young readers to see the emotions of the adult figure within the story, could render the adult's authority "no longer omnipotent", and even "open to suspicion" (*History* 70). The same effect indeed can be observed in Yonge's domestic stories for the young. The readers of *The Stokesley Secret* and *Countess Kate*, after finding out about adults' own doubts and difficulties in dealing with children, are faced with two choices: to sympathize with the grown-ups' mental struggles, or, to question their capability as authority figures. Certainly, to offset this potential of the upsetting of the hierarchy between child and adult, Yonge makes sure that within the story as well her fictional child and adult gain a better understanding of each other via a heartfelt conversation which eventually contributes to build a stronger relationship between them. Moreover, Yonge frequently lets the narrator adopt a particularly didactic tone to point out to the young reader the child character's inappropriate behaviour. For example, in *Countess Kate*, the narrator—lest the child reader not discern Kate's fault—is keen to clarify what exactly has been wrong about Kate's attitude in her daily lessons with her aunt: "It was not right—a really diligent girl would have won for herself the peaceful sense of having done her best, and her aunt would have owned it in time" (105). Since the narrator, however, is also endowed with the significant function to sympathize with Kate's perspective and feelings, the narrative perspective in *Countess Kate* is throughout the story rather inconsistent, which, in fact, is a general phenomenon in Yonge's works.

Indeed, maybe for some Victorian readers Yonge's various attempts in

Countess Kate to catch the attention of her little readers might have gone too far, for *The Athenaeum*, although it thought the conflicts between Kate and Aunt Barbara very entertaining, concluded in its review that though “[t]he story will amuse children; ... upon the whole it deserves more censure than praise” (394). *The Saturday Review*, on the other hand, seems to have grasped Yonge’s aim of delivering moral instruction via the child reader’s identification with her likeable, flawed characters, for it not only admired the book’s realistic depiction of the child: “[i]t is so lively, so various, so original, so childlike in its precocity, feelings, perversities, fancies” (543), but also praised its wholesome moral message: “the moral value of the story lies in its honest, generous truthfulness, its good sense, and pure religious tone, which will make even a child understand that there are higher and nobler distinctions than rank” (543).

As a matter of fact, this divergence between the didactic narrative presence and the ostentatious display of a child’s wild fantasies is common in Yonge’s books as variously pointed out by critics. Barbara Dennis called this division Yonge’s “two voices” (“The Two Voices” 181), while David Brownell notes that “a source of tension that animates all of Yonge’s best books” was her ability to sympathize deeply with children who struggled to adapt themselves to social identity, while at the same time, Yonge “sufficiently accepted her parents’ system of values to judge her characters by these standards, and to condemn the characters with whom she sympathizes” (171). Sandbach-Dahlström tried to solve this problem of these diverging two stances within Yonge’s novels by using Wayne Booth’s concept of the implied author. As Sandbach-Dahlström states about Yonge’s novels: “The reader senses the existence of two presences in the texts: the didactic presence of the narrator and the creative

presence of the implied author” (12).³⁴

Booth’s theory is helpful in illuminating Yonge’s stories that often display a surprising amount of complexity regarding their characters, who, indeed, behave and feel sometimes in direct contrast to the general moral stance of the story.³⁵ Rather than reading the two-folded effect of Yonge’s story as an unintended consequence of the division of the narrator and the implied author, however, I would argue that the breach between the moralizing adult voice of the narrator and the story’s carefree exhibition of her characters’ inner struggles and wild fancies is a calculated effect of Yonge who aimed to facilitate the inculcation of her moral message by creating flawed characters her readers can easily identify with. Whether Yonge deliberately intended to unsettle in this way the hierarchical relationship between child and adult, and endow her child characters with more agency, and whether she always succeeded in attaining the desired effect of moral conversion by her young readers is of course a question difficult to answer. After all, there might have been compliant child readers like Daisy in Nesbit’s *Wooldbegoods*, as cited above, but also readers like Denny who overlooked Yonge’s pedagogic agenda and read her stories just

³⁴ The “implied author”, according to Booth, is a picture of the author the “reader will inevitably construct” (72) throughout his or her reading experience. As Booth states: “The ‘implied author’ chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read; we infer him as an ideal, literary, created version of the real man; he is the sum of his own choices” (74-5). The narrator—the speaker or the ‘I’ of a work—might, or, might not be identical with the implied image of the artist. The narrator, therefore, is “only one of the elements created by the implied author” (73).

³⁵ This breach between artistic creativity and the restrictions imposed on it by Yonge’s avowed intention of “doing good” has been also observed by Hayter: “Was her authorial voice expressing the real meaning and message of what she wrote? A number of attempts have been made to deconstruct Yonge’s works, starting perhaps as early as George Eliot’s remark that when reading Miss Yonge one ‘has a sense ... of the incomplete narrative which cries out for further exploration’ ” (12-3).

to pick out the fun that can be derived from her characters' various blunders and lively fantasies.

2. Introducing the Realm of Adolescence

While Yonge's children's stories focused on improving the relationship between child and adult, and aimed to reconcile the seemingly opposite perspectives of these two different parties, her books that address those older children freshly out of the schoolroom sought to reconcile the seemingly contradictory duties these young persons began to have towards home, religion, and the public world. Yonge's numerous domestic novels such as *Scenes and Characters* (1847), *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853), *The Daisy Chain* (1856) and *The Pillars of the House* (1873) would play a substantial role in establishing a section of juvenile literature that is nowadays commonly called "young-adult" fiction. It was a genre that was supposed to assist the young in their difficult and sometimes painful and confusing transition from childhood to adulthood. Different from Yonge's stories for younger children, however, that mainly dealt with the misunderstandings between children and their guardians, Yonge's books for those older children above the age of fifteen explored the question of social duties and vocation which inevitably involved the issue of the separate spheres that divided the fates of girls and boys. Like her stories for little children, in her books for young adults Yonge promoted reader identification by introducing sympathetic, flawed characters whose innermost wishes and struggles Yonge meticulously depicted in order to convince her young readers of the desirability of her moral principles in the most effective way.

Like Yonge's introduction of flawed characters and the interiority of adult and child figures which had the inadvertent result of destabilizing the hierarchical relationship between child and adult, and, thus, of endowing the child within and outside the book with more agency, in Yonge's books for older children, her exploration into the queries and mental struggles of her fictional adolescents frequently threatened to blur Victorian gender division. Indeed, in problematizing directly the tension the young experience between personal aspirations and social duties, she ironically discloses the contradictions of the ideology her novel was to endorse and preserve. In her children's stories, Yonge tried to resolve the intermittent undermining of adult authority by an honest, heart-to-heart conversation between her fictional adult and child figures that functioned not only to strengthen the bond between the young and the old, but also to retrieve the adult's authority. The problems and occasional unsettling of Victorian separate spheres and gender ideology that can be observed in Yonge's domestic stories for young adults, were, however, more difficult to contain. First, the relative absence of a didactic narrative voice in young-adult stories compared to stories for little ones rendered the potential of disrupting the dividing lines between the public and domestic spheres, and femininity and masculinity inevitably higher. The very premises which defined the qualities of ideal femininity and masculinity, and set apart the domestic and public realms were of a greater arbitrary and contradictory nature than those which separated child from adult. Adolescence, which in the nineteenth century began to be perceived as a period that allowed for a short time the blurring of boundaries between childhood and adulthood, femininity and masculinity, and even domestic and public activities, therefore served for Yonge as a safety valve to

display her detailed depiction of the dreams, hopes and feelings of frustration of her young protagonists. Adolescence thus emerges in Yonge's novels as a useful means to contain the transgressive impulses of her fictional young characters. Significantly, however, it could also function sometimes as the ultimate solution and alternative way to reconcile the conflicting social demands imposed on the young character.

The Emergence of "Books for the Young"

When talking about Yonge's contribution to children's literature Darton observes how Yonge's domestic stories and Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) "sprang up" at the same moment when a class of reader appeared on the scene who were neither "fit for *Aunt Judy* nor the milder sort of adult fiction" (288). The specific needs of this kind of reader, namely, those who were in "the intermediate stage between Alice-hood and womanhood", so far scarcely provided for, were now looked after by Yonge, who met their needs, as Darton says, "sanely and copiously" (289). As a matter of fact, the appearance of Yonge's *Daisy Chain* in 1856, which charts the maturing process of the teenage members of the May family, and the publication of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* in the following year, which accounts Tom's school life and his development into the true English gentleman, testifies, on the one hand, to the Victorians' acknowledgement of those young people who are situated in a transitional stage of life, and on the other hand, to their realization of the necessity for a kind of literature that satisfies the specific needs of the young in their interval phases.

Indeed, around the mid-nineteenth century with the fast expansion of juvenile publishing, children's writers and publishers began to pay more attention to the individual taste and needs of their juvenile readers according to their age, class and gender. Yonge was well aware that her domestic novels belonged to a new kind of literature that catered for a freshly emerging age group. As above discussed, Yonge's immediate examples when she first began to write for juveniles were Mozley's *The Fairy Bower* (1841) and the sequel *The Lost Brooch* (1842). In addition to their contribution in introducing more ordinary characters, and, in trying to subtly guide the young reader in the right direction through the behaviour and action of the fictional characters in place of explicit preaching, they also created, as Yonge notes, "the class of literature now termed 'books for the young,' standing between the child's story and the full-grown novel" ("Children's Literature Part 3" 449). As a matter of course, Yonge herself categorized her most famous domestic stories like *Heartsease* (1854), *The Daisy Chain* (1856), *The Pillars of the House* (1873) and *Magnum Bonum* (1879) as books for those who are "beyond the child story" but do not read "actual novels" (*What Books* 70) yet.

What kind of readership Yonge had in mind, and what purpose exactly her writing for those older children was to fulfil, can be observed in more detail in the introductory letter of Yonge's juvenile magazine *The Monthly Packet*. *The Monthly Packet* (its full title was the *Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church*) was edited by Yonge from 1851 to 1894, and many of her famous domestic novels for older children saw their first light in serial form in this magazine. The magazine aimed chiefly at "young girls, or maidens, or young ladies" between the ages of fifteen and five-and-twenty—

although Yonge did not forget to add that it is also “purposed to make it such as may be pleasant reading for boys of the same age”—who are out of the schoolroom and “pursuing the most important part of education, namely, self-education” (“Introductory Letter” iii, i). The purpose of the magazine, Yonge declared, was to help those young people who pursued this “self-education”, “not as a guide since that is the part deeper and graver in books, but as a companion in times of recreation, which may help you to perceive how to bring your religious principles to bear upon your daily life”, and “to make you more steadfast and dutiful daughters of our own beloved Catholic Church in England” (“Introductory Letter” ii, iii).

Similar to the strategy Yonge employed in her books for little children she promises to fulfil for her magazine readers the didactic purpose of helping them to internalize their religious principles in daily life, and of making them “steadfast and dutiful daughters” of the Church, not in the position of a superior guide who instructs and preaches, but as an equal “companion in times of recreation”.³⁶ While Yonge’s books for little children strived to forge an intimate bond between child and adult, Yonge highlights here the young’s relationship with the Church of England, in other words, God. Noteworthy in relation to this is Yonge’s stress on the period between the ages of fifteen and five-and-twenty as a phase of what she calls “self-education”. Yonge’s emphasis on this period is only natural, since in the Anglican Church around the age of fifteen children began to receive their Confirmation, which, after all, Yonge considered one of the most important

³⁶ Indeed critics often pointed out how in Yonge’s prefatory declaration of the story’s strong didactic purpose, her “prefatory bark was worse than her bite” (Mare, Percival 140).

rites of initiation in the maturing process of the young. For when during the earlier part of childhood years the child was formed under the strict obedience to parents, tutors and governesses, after Confirmation the child is gradually “outgrowing them”, and his or her character is, as Yonge declares, “to be formed between God and itself. Nobody else can do it” (*Womankind* 67). Thus, although the promise of absolute subjection to God’s laws was a new restriction, on the other hand, it offered the young a certain kind of autonomy because he or she was permitted to form his or her character on his or her own which was not the case when under the sole guidance of the parents.

As a matter of fact, this transitional period that comes after proper childhood began to receive more attention in Victorian society more generally (Ferrall and Jackson, Springhall, Vanden Bossche). Certainly, in the nineteenth century the term “adolescence”—as we call this interim period today—was not as frequently used as now, and did not have the same connotations of today. The word itself existed in the nineteenth century, but did not come into vogue until the twentieth century when the first major psychological study of this age, G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence*, was published in 1904.³⁷ “Adolescence”, therefore, was by no means clearly theorized in the Victorian age, and its exact nineteenth-century definition is contested among critics. Sarah Bilston, citing several critics, observes that in the early nineteenth century youth—what is considered as the equivalent of adolescence—was considered to be from the middle teens to the middle twenties, whereas from the 1870s, there was an

³⁷ Springhall notes that “modern concept of adolescence as an autonomous age group was created almost singlehandedly in America by G. Stanley Hall It took G. Stanley Hall’s work to transform earlier ideas of ‘youth’ into the modern concept of ‘adolescence’ ” (28).

increasing tendency to define youth as the years from fourteen to nineteen. Yonge herself declared in her guidebook that her domestic novels in the vein of *The Daisy Chain* are for the “growing maidens who are beyond the child-story” (*What Books* 70) who are, as observed above, “between the ages of fifteen and five-and-twenty”. Indeed, Yonge’s young protagonists in these books are mostly around this age, as it were, between fifteen and twenty-five, which is clearly in contrast to her characters in books for little ones who are all below fifteen (Dolores Mohun in *The Two Sides of the Shield* is thirteen, Countess Kate is eleven, while the eldest child in *The Stokesley Secret*, Susan Merrifield, is thirteen). Yonge did not, however, use the word “adolescent”, but rather “elder-children” or “the young”. For lack of any better word, I use in this chapter the term “adolescent”, which I define, following Yonge, as those Victorian boys and girls from their mid-teens to mid-twenties.

Nevertheless, although “adolescence” might not have been as meticulously theorized as today, there existed during the nineteenth century certainly an awareness that these years from mid-teens to mid-twenties were different from the childhood years. Just as the modern idea of childhood came into being in the eighteenth- and nineteenth century through the rise of the middle class that was able to offer its offspring prolonged years of parental protection, adolescence was also the result of the extended years of dependency of middle-class children. In the case of boys, the public schools that appeared around the mid-nineteenth century to meet the educational need of the upper-middle-class children provided the transitional place between the childhood realm of the home and the adult world of working. As John Springhall states, widespread education for the middle-classes contributed to “the

institutionalisation of a separate adolescent way of life” (25), although of course this only applied to the middle-class boy.

The situation of his sister was naturally different. The well-off middle-class girl, after leaving the schoolroom, remained at home under the guardianship of her parents, till marriage put her under another guardianship, as it were, that of her husband. Critics like Carol Dyhouse even claim that if adolescence for the boy was a transitional phase of exploration and choice before he entered the public world of the adult and gained financial independence, for the Victorian girl this supposedly interim period had relatively little meaning (118). According to Dyhouse, if adolescence is defined as a period of free search and infinite possibilities, the Victorian girl, in fact, never enters into this state. Indeed, if for Victorian women adulthood meant marriage and maternity, Victorian girls went straight from childhood to womanhood skipping the transitional phase of adolescence (Dyhouse 118-19).³⁸

Sarah Bilston, however, observes that Victorian girls also had a transitional stage after childhood that distinguished itself from the state of womanhood, namely the so-called “awkward age”, in which “a girl who has left the schoolroom lacks a clear location in her home or out of it” (2). This “awkward age” of the girl is frequently illustrated in women’s popular fiction as “a phase of relative ‘liberty and choice’ ” (Bilston 4). Possibly, precisely because for girls girlhood was destined to end in permanent domestic restriction, the short freedom that preceded it might have been more meaningful than it was for

³⁸ Dyhouse observes that “for girls, on the other hand, ‘maturity’ is likely to be defined in terms of accepting economic dependence on a husband’s pay-packet and the equation of her personal goals in life with maternity” (118-9).

the boy. Indeed, Sally Mitchell states that those fictional adolescent girls that are depicted in nineteenth-century novels to be in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood are given “permission to behave in ways that might not be appropriate for a woman” (*New Girl* 25). Just as the boy then, the girl in Victorian literature was confronted in the transitional phase of adolescence with various possible, or rather hypothetical life choices, even if for her the options were more circumscribed and the ultimate choice she would have to make was probably more predictable—most likely marriage and maternity—than her brother’s.

Bilston, therefore, notes that in the nineteenth century, the adolescent girl was often employed even by conservative women writers as “an exemplary figure” even a “figurehead” to display the author’s endeavour to combine “the ideology of domestic womanhood with women’s desires for meaningful public action” (23-4). Yonge, as well, for the sake of reader identification, was careful in depicting in her stories the tension between social restrictions and the transgressive desires within the liminal phase of adolescence, not only of the girl, but also of the boy. To be sure, Yonge’s granting insights into these rather dangerous impulses of her fictional young was only possible because they could be safely contained through the very nature of her subject, as it were, the temporariness and liminality of adolescence. Thus, although her young characters in *The Daisy Chain* (1856), *The Pillars of the House* (1873) or *Beechcroft at Rockstone* (1888) are certainly allowed the privileges of adolescence, namely, the expression of restlessness and discontent, and self-exploration, their paths are eventually prescribed to lead to a whole-hearted acceptance of ideology and an adult value system. As I will further demonstrate,

however, adolescence in Yonge's novels could also go beyond its stipulated function of containment, and become the very solution to Yonge's quest of providing her young readers a meaningful position in the world.

Adolescence as an Alternative Life Path

Probably the domestic novel of Yonge that most appropriately fits into the formula of the emerging genre of what Yonge called "books for the young" is *The Daisy Chain*. This novel can be summarized as a meticulous record that traces how the teenage members of the May family overcome throughout the period of adolescence their faults and weaknesses. In its own time, *The Daisy Chain's* popularity was comparable to that of Yonge's highly successful *The Heir of Redclyffe*, and by 1868 it was already in its ninth edition (Foster and Simons 61). Even in 1888, when Yonge's popularity as a writer for the young was on the wane, *The Daisy Chain* proved its popularity among girls by being in the tenth place in "Girls' top 10 books" of Edward Salmon's survey (*Juvenile Literature* 21-2).

When looking at its 1856 preface, it declares in typical Yonge-fashion, its form, intended readership and purpose, echoing the guidelines of the juvenile magazine *Monthly Packet* in which it was indeed first serialised. The book introduces itself to be merely "a Family Chronicle—a domestic record ... during those years of early life when the character is chiefly formed" to "trace the effects of those aspirations which are a part of every youthful nature" ("Preface" v). Also, the book indicates its readership of adolescences by explaining that it

is “neither the “tale” for the young, nor the novel for their elders, but a mixture of both” (“Preface” v). Yonge does not forget to declare the moral of the story: “the young should take one hint, to think whether their hopes and upward-breathings are truly upwards, and founded in lowliness” which “may be called the moral of the tale” (“Preface” v).

Indeed, when the story of *The Daisy Chain* opens, the May children find themselves suddenly removed from a significant parent figure, the moral centre within their home, and are faced with the difficult task of finding on their own the right moral path. In the first chapter the mother and moral guide of the family, Mrs May dies in a carriage accident that happens mainly through the headstrong nature of her husband Doctor May. Her death leaves behind Dr May, a widower who is as helpless as his children in his boyishness, eleven motherless children, and the eldest daughter bedridden for life through the accident. The adolescent characters on whose development the story focuses are Richard, Margaret, Flora, Norman and Ethel May, who are entering into the more mature part of their teenage years, or are—as Margaret says in regard to fifteen-year-old Ethel—going through a “difficult, dangerous age” (60). The main moral task the leading characters are faced with throughout the story is, as the preface declares, the overcoming of unworthy aspirations. Thus, the first part of the book relates how, in the first year, these motherless adolescents make resolutions and plans for their so-called “self-education” and future life path, while the second part tells of the remaining six years, in which the designs and hopes of the characters, their “self-education,” gradually show their results, and evaluates whether their plans and aspirations were “truly upwards, and founded in lowliness” (v).

Certainly, just as in her stories for little children, Yonge facilitates the inculcation of the moral message of her story by employing the strategy of reader identification. The adolescent characters Yonge introduces are therefore likeable flawed characters the reader can easily sympathize and identify with. The eldest child of the May family, Richard is not clever enough to meet the expectations of his father, pretty Flora cares too much about being the most important person within the household, while talented Norman's cleverness makes him proud and keen on worldly distinction, whereas Ethel is of a harum-scarum nature and has too high intellectual ambitions. Just as in *Countess Kate* and *The Stokesley Secret*, Yonge's adult-narrator has access into the interiority of the young and old characters—to some characters more, while to some less—and lessens in this way the breach between adult author and the young characters and thus also the young readers.

As a matter of fact, from the very beginning of the story, Yonge establishes a strong bond between her adult and young characters. For instance, when Ethel, through her distracted and unheeded nature, causes her baby brother to catch fire by not paying enough attention to him, Dr May, instead of blindly scolding Ethel confesses to her his own reckless and heedless nature: "I grew up, thinking my inbred heedlessness a sort of grace, so to say, rather manly—the reverse of finikin. By the time I had sense enough to regret this as a fault, I had grown too old for changing of ingrain, long-nurtured habits—perhaps I never wished it really" (137). To be sure, Dr May's reckless nature caused the carriage accident, and functions thus as a concrete warning for Ethel about the catastrophic consequences of not learning early enough the qualities of self-restraint and carefulness. More significant, however, is how Yonge depicts the

adult figure as just as fallible as the adolescent figure, and even carefully describes how Dr May tries to restrain his temper, and learns to become a better parent figure throughout the novel. Dr May, in this way, rather than an unapproachable patriarch, becomes an adult figure even the young reader can sympathize with.³⁹ Certainly, Dr May's likeable character, and his intimate relationship with his children make the May children's eagerness to gain his approval through their own moral and spiritual progress only natural in the eyes of the reader, which in turn promotes his or her own emulation of the May children's moral behaviour.

Different from the stories for little children that focus on bringing into balance the perspective of the child and the adult, however, *The Daisy Chain* is more concerned in reconciling the conflicting interests of the adolescent's desire for meaningful activity in the public world, and the restrictions religious principles and gender ideology impose on these aspirations. Indeed, as this transitional phase is significantly marked as the point when gender and religious feeling expressly come to the fore, Yonge is preoccupied in showing how her young characters begin to adapt to the order of gender and religion. Thus, Yonge presents Norman and Flora with the flaw of "the desire of being first" (18)—respectively in academic achievement and in usefulness—to show her readers their progress as they both overcome their transgressive desires and attain the Christian virtue of modesty and self-abnegation. In addition to these

³⁹ The popularity of the character of Dr May among dedicated Yonge readers can be observed in the 1944 biography of Yonge written by Georgina Battiscombe who declares Dr May the central character after Ethel, and enthusiastically exclaims: "Dear Dr. May! Many are the readers who have longed to meet you in the flesh. In all her innumerable books Charlotte never created a more attractive character" (*Charlotte Mary Yonge* 96).

faults that go against religious principles, however, Yonge also furnishes each of her young characters with qualities that go against their respective gender traits, complicating in this way the characters' attainment of ideal manliness and womanliness.⁴⁰

In fact, Yonge's frequent habit of destabilizing conventional gender qualities has been often pointed out by critics who argue that it is a consequence of her Tractarianism whose teaching of "modesty and humility as requisite Christian virtues" was by no means gender specific (Sturrock 23).⁴¹ Catherine Sandbach-Dahlström, for instance, notes that Yonge's ideal society consists of "Christian androgynies" (171). While Gavin Budge even goes so far to argue that Tractarianism "enabled Yonge to formulate a feminist position which, as expressed in her fiction, questioned or subverted many aspects of Victorian gender ideology" (13). To be sure, Yonge's feminized male characters like Guy Morville, Richard May or Felix Underwood who actively practice humility and self-sacrifice can be read as Yonge's idea of an ideal Christian. I do not agree, however, with Elizabeth Juckett's claim that for Yonge the essential binary is not between male and female, but "between a docile or a delinquent response to church authority" (118). After all, in *The Daisy Chain* and even in Yonge's later novels like *Beechcroft at Rockstone* (1888) and *The Long Vacation* (1895) the question to what extent an adolescent girl like Ethel May or

⁴⁰ Foster and Simons as well observe the blurring of typical gender roles in *The Daisy Chain* (77-81).

⁴¹ In regard to the relationship between the gender-crossing tendencies of Yonge's young characters and Tractarianism, see June Sturrock's "*Heaven and Home*" (1995), Catherine Sandbach-Dahlström's *Be Good Sweet Maid* (1984) and Elizabeth Juckett's essay "Cross-Gendering the Underwoods" (2009).

Gillian Merrifield is allowed to step out of the homely sphere and explore her vocation without losing her propriety is intensely explored throughout the story which proves that the gender binary was by no means insignificant for Yonge. Particularly, the fact that Ethel's devout project of reforming the poor neighborhood of Cocks Moor is problematized within the family due to its dangerous potential of blurring the boundaries between female and male spheres shows that Yonge was interested not only in boys' and girls' appropriation of the religious virtues of piety and self-denial, but also in their adherence to gender binaries. Yonge's unsettling of conventional gender traits in her adolescent characters ultimately serves therefore to provide her girl and boy readers, who might also be struggling to fit into expected gender roles, with figures they can identify with, to help them to assume appropriate femininity and masculinity, and persuade them of the desirability of these gender norms.

For this reason, *The Daisy Chain* displays a disruption of typical gender expectations regarding its leading adolescent characters. That Ethel and her father share the same flaws of heedlessness, which is alluded to as a typically "manly" flaw, has already been mentioned above. The eldest son Richard, who fails to gain Dr May's approval through his constant academic failure and is outshone by Norman and Ethel's intellectual superiority, proves his worth by taking on the role of the mother after her death. It is Richard who is able to deal with the little children "watching over the little ones more like a sister than a brother" (45). And, it is again Richard who teaches Ethel "to thread a needle, tie a bow, and stick in a pin" (57), all feminine accomplishments that Ethel finds more difficult than "double equations" (76). This upsetting of normative gender behaviour can also be observed in Norman and Flora's different reaction to their

mother's death. While Norman due to his "weakness of nerve" (210) has a nervous breakdown and is useless in assisting his father, Flora is able to check her emotions and to manage the practical matters of nursing and household matters.

In contrast, both adolescent girls, Ethel and Flora, display features that would be called manly from a Victorian perspective. The death of the mother and the bedridden state of the eldest sister make Flora the lady of the house which gives her the freedom to manage the household in her own way, and to use this position to influence the Ladies' Committee of the parish. Flora's desire for power that is facilitated through her good looks, sharp practical mind and control of feeling prompt her later to marry George Rivers, who is intellectually inferior to Flora, but can provide her through his wealth and status an influential position in society. Flora's superiority over her husband is underlined when George is campaigning for Parliament and Flora secretly writes the speeches for him. While Flora's masculine trait is her eagerness to rule and control, in Ethel's case it is her exceptional cleverness. When Ethel muses that probably no woman should marry a man her inferior, Norman retorts: "My dear Ethel, if you wait to marry till you find some one as clever as yourself, you will wait long enough" (394).

To be sure, these gender-reversing qualities are, as discussed above, depicted by Yonge as impediments that can be, and have to be gradually overcome and contained through the adolescent years. As the fates of Richard, Norman, Ethel and even Flora at the end of the story show, although they do not completely overcome their inherent faults, they all succeed in attaining a certain balance between the realisation of their talents and internalisation of

religious principles and gender ideology. Naturally, the very ways in which flaws are overcome and overbearing aspirations are subdued during adolescence differ between the girl and the boy. In the case of the boy, Yonge shows how Richard's unmanly docility and simplicity are sublimated and shine in turn in his work as a preacher, while Norman's weakness of nerves and presumptuous academic ambitions find a worthy vocation in his missionary work in Australia.

How then is an adolescent girl to come to terms with her aspirations when she is as ambitious and talented as Flora and Ethel? On the one hand, from a didactic point of view Yonge's juxtaposition of these two intelligent girls enables her to show the young reader the different consequences of a bad and good example. By making Flora an equally accomplished girl like Ethel who does not, however, follow the spiritual way as Ethel does, Yonge shows through Flora the catastrophic consequences that occur when a girl does not comply with the principles of the Church and domesticity. The didactic purpose of the figure of Flora gets more conspicuous in the last chapters of the story in which Flora's child dies due to her neglect, and Flora suddenly converts from a worldly, confident character into a conscience-stricken, humble one.

On the other hand, however, because Yonge had the ambition to draw sympathetic characters her young readers could identify with, the novel cannot help when depicting the girls' process of social adaptation but to display their hard struggles and failures to find the right path for their future and even to point to the limited options that lie before them. Indeed, while Yonge's literary boys only had to subject themselves to the ideology of the Church, the girls' life options were additionally restricted by the domestic ideology. Yonge created Flora and Ethel as gifted girls whose talents constantly threaten to step out of

the domestic sphere to effectively show the gradual process through which these two girls learn to restrain their ambitions and subject themselves to Victorian domesticity. Just as in *Countess Kate*, however, there are moments when in the conversations between Yonge's characters the tension between individual talents and domestic duties is disclosed to such an extent that inadvertently the ideology the story is supposed to endorse is undermined. This is most notable when Dr May asks Flora to reconsider her marriage with George Rivers on grounds of his intellectual inferiority: "Compare him with—I'll not say with Norman—but with Richard, Alan, Mr. Wilmot. Do you think you could rely on him—come to him for advice?" (Flora never did come to any one for advice.)" (391). This aside functions to indicate the narrator's confidential knowledge of Flora, and also an intimate interaction with the reader, and lessens in this way the disparity between adult author and young reader. However, this narrator's aside also points to the futility of Dr May's question, suggesting either an accusation concerning Flora's self-sufficient and overbearing nature, or, even a questioning of the very notion of Flora's necessity for a superior husband. To be sure, the didactic purpose of the novel clearly points to the former intention, but the aside is ambiguous enough that it allows for a different kind of reading.

Indeed, the undermining of the story's purpose to sustain ideology is also enforced through the fact that, in contrast to the strong presence of a didactic narrator such as the one in *Countess Kate*, who sometimes takes on the role of the adult-educator, the voice of the narrator in *Daisy Chain* is less intrusive. Instead of the narrator's moralizing comments, therefore, Yonge's famous lifelike dialogues, inner monologues of the characters and the plot itself serve to

convey the maturation of the leading figures, and the overarching moral lesson of the novel. Certainly, the narrative voice of *Daisy Chain* carefully regulates its tone according to the age of the character it deals with, and can thus be intrusive and reprimanding, when it tells about the younger members of the May family, like little Tom May's first schooldays. On the whole, however, the narrator adjusts the tone of the narrative to the more mature age of the book's adolescent characters and readers, adopting a more reserved stance when conveying the inner life of older characters like Norman or Ethel.

As a matter of fact, the danger of Yonge's minute depiction of Ethel and Flora's struggle to adjust to Victorian gender ideology is that it unintentionally unsettles the ideology it seeks to endorse and gives rise to the justifiable question: why would someone so self-reliant and accomplished as Flora or Ethel need a superior husband? Particularly, in light of Norman's jesting comment on the unpropitious marriage prospects of clever girls like Ethel, this struggle renders Flora's sin somewhat ambiguous. Because, when following Norman's logic, for intelligent girls like Flora and Ethel not so many options seem to be left except giving up the idea of marrying, or shifting the very standard of their future husband. Not surprisingly, therefore, Yonge is especially concerned to convince her young readers of the validity and desirability of domestic ideology through the figure of harum-scarum Ethel. After all, she is a girl as talented and ambitious as Flora but unlike her manages to find a way to reconcile the conflict between self-interest, individual talents and the ultimate necessity to conform to social identity. As I will further discuss below, Yonge would provide Ethel an alternative life path, namely that of an unmarried home-

daughter who retains her adolescent state which would allow her to circumvent the conflicting demands of personal desires and gender conformity.

Interestingly, when Yonge began to write *The Daisy Chain*, the figure of Margaret, as Battiscombe notes, was to have been the chief character, but “Ethel, dear, clever, untidy Ethel, stole the story for herself” (*Charlotte Mary Yonge* 92). As most of the tension in the story comes from the hard struggle the adolescent goes through to overcome his or her shortcomings, unambiguously feminine girls like Margaret and Meta, who omit this transgressive period and directly enter into the sphere of heaven and matrimony, can hardly contribute to the story’s suspense, and attract the attention of the young reader. It is no wonder then that Ethel is therefore the story’s central character who is charged with the responsibility to show the reader the progress from a struggling, ambitious tomboy to a dutiful daughter who attains the feminine qualities of patience and self-abnegation. The most famous episode where this didactic purpose of Yonge comes to light is when Ethel is forced to abandon her Greek and Latin studies. Her sister Margaret reminds her how “the sort of woman that dear mamma wished to make you [Ethel]” was a “useful, steady daughter and sister at home”, and “a comfort to papa” (181), and that becoming this woman is her first duty. Ethel ultimately has to reduce the study of Greek to only half an hour a day, because otherwise it would take up too much of her time, interfering with the home duties that have been specified by mother as Ethel’s utmost obligation. Yonge provides at this moment a clear insight into how Ethel gradually comes to understand that her academic ambition is wrong because as a girl her first priority must be to devote herself to the domestic comforts of her family: “I suppose it is a wrong sort of ambition to want to learn more, in one’s

own way, when one is told it is not good for one. I was just going to say I hated being a woman, and having these tiresome little trifles—my duty—instead of learning, which is yours Norman” (182). Indeed, Ethel clearly acknowledges here the absoluteness of this law, namely the division between a boy’s and girl’s sphere.

Nevertheless, Yonge also illustrates how this process of accepting these laws is by no means easy, presenting how later Ethel painfully struggles to find a comprehensible logic behind these social stipulations:

... when she went to bed, she tried to work out the question in her own mind, whether her eagerness for classical learning was a wrong sort of ambition, to know what other girls did not, and whether it was right to crave for more knowledge than was thought advisable for her. She only bewildered herself, and went to sleep before she had settled anything, but that she knew she must make all give way to papa first, and, secondly, to Cocks Moor. (182)

Since Yonge does not employ here an omniscient narrator who offers a clear answer to Ethel’s question about the exact reasons that determine “worthy” and “wrong” ambition for a girl, the problem remains somewhat unresolved. Clearly, this passage that details Ethel’s bewilderment and her subsequent ultimate solution to “give way to papa first, and, secondly, to Cocks Moor” is aimed to make Ethel more sympathetic to readers, and to aid them to emulate Ethel’s behaviour. However, as Ethel’s question about the reason that lies behind this law of domesticity is left unanswered, her contemplation and doubts open up

the potential for the reader to call into question the very principles that substantiate Victorian gender ideology.

It is therefore significant to pay attention to the alternative life path Yonge provides her central character Ethel who diverges so much from conventional Victorian femininity that is represented in the novel through the various Margarets. From Mrs Margaret May, her daughter Margaret, to the beautiful Margaret "Meta" Rivers, all are icons of ideal femininity who, in contrast to Ethel, fulfil their domestic roles as the perfect mother, the invalid girl and the sweet wife. The ending that showcases Ethel's great vow to devote her life to her father and Cocks Moor has been much discussed by critics. Foster and Simons claim that Ethel's decision suggests that "only by relocating womanly self-expression in other-worldliness can the tensions between varying alternatives to gender orthodoxy be resolved" (82). Schaub, on the other hand, argues that within the context of *The Daisy Chain*, Ethel's missionary project and ambition to excel at Greek are equally subversive, as in the nineteenth century, female philanthropy was in fact regarded to be destructive of the doctrine of separate spheres (69). Thus, Foster and Simons see religious piety as a conservative force that promotes gender conformity and regard the end of *Daisy Chain* as a safe containment of Ethel's subversive impulses. Schaub, however, recognizing the feminist potential of philanthropy, notes that despite the novel's clear ideological agenda, the end fails to resolve the conflict between domesticity and religious ambition.

I agree with Foster and Simons that Ethel's devotion to Cocks Moor ultimately serves as a more gender-conforming alternative for her transgressive ambition of learning Greek. However, I also agree with Schaub that just

because Ethel's missionary project was accepted within the May family, does not mean that her project of building a church on Cocks Moor is generally considered to be in line with her feminine propriety. In fact, the story clearly depicts how the ladies in the parish and Margaret herself are anxious that Ethel's plan of reforming Cocks Moor might lead her to step out of the proper feminine sphere, while the governess suggests downright that Ethel should quit this philanthropic activity. The only reason that within the family Ethel's Cocks Moor project was accepted as a "worthy" ambition more than learning Greek was its Christian aspect of helping other people, just as Yonge's first book was accepted by her father on condition of its doing good to other people. Indeed, Ethel, after Flora's marriage, dejectedly muses about the upcoming domestic obligations that will fall upon her, listing them in order of importance: "boys, holidays, callers, engagements, Dr. May, would all conspire to turn half her days upside down, and Cocks Moor itself must often depend not only on the weather, but on home doings" (409). A clear ranking exists among Ethel's duties, and Cocks Moor is only at the bottom of this list. It has to be recalled that the ultimate reason for Ethel's decision to remain unmarried and stay at home was her great vow to stay with her father, who would be helpless without her domestic assistance. Her devotion to convert Cocks Moor is added as an afterthought, as almost an indulgent activity.

I would argue therefore that it is not Ethel's devotion to religion alone that provides Ethel either a more orthodox or even potentially transgressive way—as Schaub argues—to follow her ambitions and realize her intellect and talent, but paradoxically it is Ethel's remaining at the parental home that allows her to retain the state of adolescence and thus the little freedom that comes with it.

Rather than religion itself, it is Ethel's adolescent state that releases her to a certain extent from the restrictions of Victorian gender ideology and gives her the liberty to pursue her devotion to religion in a more active way. One has to take into consideration that in the very beginning when the propriety of Ethel's self-imposed project of reforming the poor neighbourhood of Cocks Moor is discussed among the family members, her plan was mainly allowed by her family because it was regarded as a less transgressive way to release Ethel's dangerous adolescent spirit of energy that might otherwise have found less acceptable outlets. Thus, the adolescence that functions throughout the story to justify and safely contain the flaws, gender-crossing tendencies, and dangerous desires of the May children ironically serves in the case of Ethel as the ultimate solution to circumvent the conflicting demands of her desires and Victorian domesticity. After all, the amount of liberty Ethel will be allowed will significantly differ between the "parental" and the "marital" home she stays in.

As a matter of fact, a girl in the Victorian age often remained a "girl" until she married, because the term "girl" served as "a useful signifier of marital status" that suggested that she was not yet "contained within the domestic space of marriage and maternity" (Moruzi 9). Moreover, in addition to the common Victorian idea of home as the moral sanctuary, in *The Daisy Chain* the parental home also signifies the sphere of childhood and adolescence. Naturally, this parental home is closely associated with the kind of freedom childhood and adolescent years still granted. The parental home, therefore, stands for a place of relative liberty where the blurring of gender like the feminine aspects of boys like Norman or Tom, and the tomboyishness of girls like Ethel and Mary can be tolerated. It is also a place in which propriety is looser for the May children who

are allowed to call each other by their pet names within home whereas using them outside the parental home is strictly forbidden.

On the opposite side of the parental home, however, lies the marital home and the transition to it meant for girls and boys alike the very point of reaching the state of ultimate adulthood. For the girl this transition might be less meaningful than the boy, because as Mitchell says, “girlhood, in its archetypal form is bounded on each side by home: by parental home on one side, by marital home on the other” (*New Girl* 9). However, despite the seeming continuation of the same domestic duties for the Victorian girl and woman, Yonge makes it explicit through the case of Flora that ambitious projects that might be tolerated within the parental home are a clear violation of female duty within the marital home. Indeed, Bilston remarks that writers who supported “traditionalist ideals were prepared to represent *girls* yearning for self-actualization and self-determination when they were unwilling to depict *women* exhibiting these desires” (7). Therefore, although Ethel is fully domesticated at the end, the domesticity she is subject to in the parental home is nevertheless different from that of the marital home, for unlike Flora, Ethel is allowed to follow her missionary ambitions.

Yonge indeed indicates her awareness about the contrast between parental and marital home life, the conflicts between the demands of self-interest and domestic duties by contrasting Ethel’s life as a submissive home-daughter and Flora’s failed married life. Flora’s role as the mirror image of Ethel is underlined through the fact that the boy Ethel had an attachment for—tellingly named—Norman Ogilvie, is a Member of Parliament which would have made Ethel, like Flora, a wife to a Member of Parliament. Yonge even dwells on the

possible outcome of a marriage between Norman Ogilvie and Ethel by letting Ethel's brother Norman concede that it might be better that Ogilvie married in the end a girl not as clever as Ethel: "She is a good little girl; he will form her, and be very happy; perhaps more so than with a great soul and strong nature like Ethel's" (636). Norman's conjecture implies that Ethel's "great soul and strong nature" might have interfered with a happy married life, probably because it might have been harder to "form" a strong natured girl like Ethel into a proper angel of the house. Thus, by remaining in the adolescent state that sanctions Ethel's "strong nature", Ethel escapes the restrictions the conventional adult role of wifedom would have imposed on her. The adolescent girl, the unmarried home-daughter, situated in the liminal space of adolescence is able to enjoy a modest liberty, on condition of her staying within the sphere of the parental home.

By depicting Ethel's careful and objective assessment about the prospects of her future life as an "unmarried" woman, as it were, the loneliness and the marginalisation that, however, will be counterbalanced through the everlasting bliss in heaven, Yonge offers her adolescent reader—particularly the girl—an alternative model of life. Bilston said of the numerous Victorian novels that deal with the experiences of adolescent girls that "by concluding their fiction within the tropes of marriage and domesticity, writers were able to extend certain freedoms to these girls of an "awkward age" without fearing for the implications of this freedom" (1). Whereas those novels Bilston refers to mostly addressed adults, however, Yonge's novels were—as the citation above declared—"written with the purpose of being useful" to the young. Yonge was, therefore, not only interested in revealing and sympathising with the identity struggles and

transgressive desires of her fictional adolescents, but also providing her young readers concrete advice on the available and appropriate possibilities and direction of their future lives, which naturally included alternative and additional life paths distinct from matrimony and maternity.

Certainly, Yonge also depicted happy fulfilments of matrimony and maternity in case of such characters as Lady Merrifield—the former Lily Mohun—who leads a harmonious and blissful marriage and family life. Not all Victorian girls did or could marry, however—one has to consider that in the nineteenth century there was a surplus of women—and the question of where and how these girls were to find a vocation that did not come into conflict with Victorian gender and separate spheres ideology was therefore a legitimate one.⁴² Thus, Yonge's interest in exploring and finding the right path that reconciles the contradictory demands of ideology explains the frequent appearance of young characters like Felix, Clement Underwood, Dolores Mohun and Elizabeth Merrifield who withdraw from marital life in her novels. That Yonge was, after all, not unaware about the progress of time, can be observed in the gradually changing fates of the teenage characters of her later novels. In fact, in a letter written in 1896, Yonge herself, after reflecting on the commercial success of *The Daisy Chain*, admits how she finds herself now preferring *Pillars of the House* (1873), “as brighter, and on the whole less pedantic than is the effect of *Ethel* in parts, and with more of hope throughout” (Coleridge 338). In the 1870s and 80s, indeed, Yonge permits Geraldine

⁴² Pat Hudson states: “The number of femmes soles rose in the nineteenth century with the increasing surplus of women in the population (365,159 by 1851, over a million by 1914)” (27).

Underwood, the talented girl painter of *Pillars of the House*, to pursue her artistic bent, to present her work to the National Academy, and even to marry. While in her last novels about the Mohuns and Merrifields written at the end of the nineteenth century, *Beechcroft at Rockstone* (1888), *The Long Vacation* (1895) and *Modern Broods* (1900), Yonge could suggest further career options to her young readers that exist outside the domestic and the religious realm. Her fictional girls were therefore allowed to work as a mosaicist in a marble factory like the beautiful Kalliope White, go to college like Gillian Merrifield—who even postpones her marriage to finish her education—and even find a vocation as a lecturer of science like Dolores Mohun.⁴³

Bratton noted that “[s]ome readers have felt that Charlotte Yonge’s great strength as a writer was the capacity to make goodness interesting” (183), while Darton observed “that stories like *The Daisy Chain* (1856) intensified the home interest until it became almost exciting” (289). As Bratton’s and Darton’s efforts to explain Yonge’s popularity among the Victorians suggest, Yonge’s most notable characteristic as a children’s writer was her talent to make “goodness” and “home interest” interesting and exciting. Indeed, Yonge’s primary contribution in children’s literature was her rendering the domestic story a popular and respectable genre in the literary scene of the mid-nineteenth century. In Yonge’s hands, the seemingly trivial domestic concerns and happenings became meaningful and highly relevant to the child’s moral and social development and thus to the world outside home, while the moral path of

⁴³ For a discussion about the role of Kalliope in *Beechcroft at Rockstone*, and of the mosaic industry in Victorian discourse of female labour, see Patricia Zakreski’s essay “Piece Work: Mosaic, Feminine Influence, and Charlotte Yonge’s *Beechcroft at Rockstone*” (2010).

attaining the religious and domestic virtues became a turbulent and exciting story worth pursuing. Her strategies to catch the young reader's attention, from reader identification to endowing the fictional child *and* adult with a complex interiority and autonomous voice facilitated a better transmission of her moral convictions and a more intimate relationship between child and adult inside and outside the story. Significantly, though, Yonge's literary efforts to close the gap between fictional child and adult, child reader and adult author had, at the same time, the effect of levelling the relationship between child and adult, endowing thus the child within and without the book with more agency, and even unsettled—intended or not—the very premises upon which child-adult hierarchy and Victorian gender and separate spheres ideology were based. Yonge's domestic stories opened up, in this way, new possibilities for subsequent female writers' domestic stories for children.

With good reason, it can be assumed therefore that Yonge's intense exploration of domestic affairs, her sympathetic insights into her young characters' mental struggles, and her attempt to stabilize the link between young and old certainly influenced subsequent writers like Molesworth and female writers of her ilk in their likewise keen focus on the nursery sphere, the little child's mind, and a reconciliation between the child's and adult's perspective. In regard to Juliana Ewing's works that frequently tend to digress from the traditional narrative form and style of the domestic story, Yonge's literary impact might seem at first sight less obvious. It is important to note, though, that it was Yonge's magazine *The Monthly Packet* that provided Ewing the very first public platform to launch her stories, and that Ewing's much lauded depiction of the "real mid-Victorian child" (Avery, *Nineteenth Century* 150)— that

was a given after the mid-nineteenth century—had been in fact popularized in children's literature to a substantial extent by Yonge's domestic stories. Like Yonge, Ewing's fame was based on her realistic domestic fictions, and just like Yonge, she was keen to offer her young readers stories that stretch their mind and faculties, and help them in their transition from childhood to adulthood. However, while Yonge worked to reconcile the interests between child and adult, and between self-realization and social identity, without directly addressing the contradictions of dominant ideology, Ewing explicitly highlighted in her stories how Victorian separate spheres and domestic ideology restrict the expansion of the child's mind and perspective. Different from Yonge who rather sought to find ways for her young readers that circumvent a direct collision with the prevailing ideologies, Ewing actively encouraged her child readers to step out of the confining boundaries of gender and domesticity. In the next chapter, therefore, I will explore how Ewing attempted to blur the dividing lines that held adult-author and child-reader and public and domestic sphere apart by employing child narrators, and appropriating male-dominated genres like fantasy and adventure stories in her domestic stories. Indeed, I will show how Ewing tried to go beyond Yonge and her literary foremothers' legacy by pointing to the insufficiency of the ideology they promoted, and thus to the dangers of literary strategies like reader identification they employed to persuade young readers of the desirability of gender and domestic conformity. To discover how Ewing's literary experiments changed the purpose and form of the domestic story, and in turn influenced subsequent children's literature, particularly female domestic fiction, will be one of the main aims of the next chapter.

Chapter III. Juliana Ewing: Revising the Domestic Story

On my part, I do so greatly want a *larger public*, that I am disposed to think that if my name could be carried to forty or fifty thousand readers, this fact might be in itself a remuneration. It seems worth sacrificing something to emerge from the small way in which mother's work was kept *to the end*. ... I want a larger public. I've been nearly twenty years at it and never got beyond our old groove with nine volumes. Some doing well up to a few thousands, others (like *Lob Lie by the Fire*) having brought me in about 7-10 pounds in six or seven years!

(Ewing qtd. in Maxwell 223)

This is, however, for the Editorial ear, and to gain your unbiased criticism. But, above all, don't tell any friends that they are mine for the present. Of course if they did succeed, I would republish and add my name. But I want to be incognito for the present—1st, to get free criticism; 2nd, to give them fair play; 3rd, not to do any damage to my reputation in another "walk" of story-writing. I do not in the least mean to give up my own style and take to fairy tale-telling, but I would like to try this experiment.

(Ewing qtd. in Blom 257)

Juliana Ewing's entry into the literary world was in many ways different from the author of the previous chapter. While Charlotte Yonge barely managed to publish her first book by promising her father to use the profits of the book only for charity and assuring him about their useful and edifying intentions, Ewing's first published book *Melchior's Dream and Other Tales* (1862) had a preface written by her mother Margaret Gatty who expressed her "feelings of pride and pleasure" at introducing a daughter into the literary world (*Melchior's* 7). In the first few years of Yonge's literary career, her works had to be censored by her father and John Keble and their moral purity approved before they could be

published. Ewing's children's stories, on the other hand, were promoted by her mother who was herself a children's writer renowned for her children's books *Aunt Judy's Tales* (1859) and *Aunt Judy's Letters* (1862). "Aunt Judy" was the nickname of Juliana Ewing, who was the designated storyteller in the Gatty nursery. The popularity of Gatty's books seemed to have been quite considerable, because in 1866 Gatty was approached to edit a children's magazine titled *Aunt Judy's Magazine* (1866-85). Gatty heavily relied on her daughter's stories to hold up the popularity of the magazine, because, after all, Ewing was the "real" Aunt Judy behind it.⁴⁴ It can well be assumed thus that for Ewing, whose literary career was managed and fostered by her mother and whose own nursery nickname became the very title of a children's magazine, writing and publishing were activities that did not need to be justified as in Yonge's case.⁴⁵

Indeed, although both writers, Yonge and Ewing wrote to address the child, to help him or her to attain the right perspective to perceive the world, they significantly differed in that Ewing struggled throughout her career to free her writings from the domestic and religious principles Yonge's literary works so

⁴⁴ After the successful debut of Ewing's first children's story—which was in Yonge's *Monthly Packet*—Gatty would write: "Thankful indeed I shall be when the end comes and *Aunt Judyism* is over! It is impossible to continue it now that the real Aunt Judy has wings, and has soared so far above the imaginary one" (Maxwell 117).

⁴⁵ The encouraging atmosphere in which Ewing cultivated her literary career is evident from Gatty's reaction, who, instead of being scandalized, rather hoped that her daughter would pursue the more respected area of adult literature when Ewing once dabbled in romances. Maxwell relates how Ewing "... preferred romances, historical or otherwise, all of which were greeted enthusiastically by her mother, who approved of the fact that each succeeding tale got further away from *childish* work, and who added: 'I do not think she will write much more for children. It appears to me that the higher flight suits her best, and is her natural vocation'" (143-4).

strictly followed. As the first letter cited at the head of this chapter shows, growing up as the daughter of a talented mother whose intellectual ambitions were thwarted due to the boundaries of Victorian domestic ideology, Ewing was intensely preoccupied in attaining the serious critical recognition, the adequate amount of financial remuneration and the large readership her mother was not granted in her lifetime. The letter above discloses indeed Ewing's firm resolution to "emerge from the small way" in which the former generation of female writers like her mother were kept to the end. Ewing herself, at the end of her career in the 1880s, suspected that the reward and recognition she had received for her works throughout her approximately twenty-year-old literary career did not accurately reflect her ability and reputation as a children's author.⁴⁶ A universal success, critically and financially, such as Yonge had with her *The Heir of Redclyffe* were in fact rare, and even this more or less widely acclaimed book was mocked by Wilkie Collins who made fun of what he calls this "fatal domestic novel" that has a "disastrous effect" on young ladies rendering them sentimental and narrowing their mind ("Doctor" 622).⁴⁷ While Henry James, paying respect to Yonge's literary craft, was sceptical towards the female domestic genre, describing them rather disparagingly as "semi-developed novels" which "grown women may read aloud to children without either party being bored" (Helsing 52). In light of this generally ambiguous critical stance toward female-authored domestic novels—acknowledged, patronized but at the

⁴⁶ Ewing's biographer Christabel Maxwell observed: "What made Julie suspicious that the terms she was getting were inadequate was the fact that at this time she was being solicited for contributions by other periodicals; an American publisher was pressing for her work; and she was asked to contribute her biography for *Women of the Time*" (232).

⁴⁷ See Collins' article "Doctor Dulcamara, M.P." in Charles Dickens' *Household Words* (18 December 1858).

same time also trivialized and infantilized—it is not surprising that for women writers like Gatty and Ewing who were doubly marginalised by writing domestic stories that were indeed explicitly aimed at *children*, to attain the respect of the predominantly male critical world and draw the attention of a larger public was a matter of deep concern.

Ewing was indeed keenly conscious of these restricting social and ideological circumstances that hampered the life and literary career not only of her mother but numerous Victorian fellow female writers, and could affect in fact the very quality of the works of women. She knew that the lack of imagination in her mother's works was partly due to "the narrowness of the lines in which her lot in life was cast" (Ewing, "Margaret Gatty" xxi), and also thought that it was "the narrowing influence of a small horizon" that prevented Yonge—in Ewing's opinion—"from improving as time goes on" (Blom 98). The second letter in the opening of this chapter in which Ewing discusses with Gatty her secret experiments with the male-dominated genre of fairy tales reveals therefore not only Ewing's awareness of the urgent need to expand the literary sphere of female writers, but also how Ewing herself tried to realize her resolution to emerge from "the small ways" of her literary foremothers. Indeed, although Ewing eventually built her literary fame with her more conventional domestic stories like *Jackanapes* (1879) and *Story of a Short Life* (1882), the wide range of genres her children's stories cover suggest that she was a writer who liked to experiment by trying out various kinds of narrative techniques, and by combining the female domestic story with other typically male genres. For instance, in a time when the use of a child narrator or a child's perspective was a rare narrative technique that could be observed more frequently in adult

novels like Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1849-50), Ewing employed child's voices and perspectives in stories such as "A Great Emergency" (1874), "A Bad Habit" (1877), *A Flat Iron for a Farthing* (1872) or *Six to Sixteen* (1875). In "A Great Emergency" and *We and the World* (1877-78) Ewing transplanted elements of the adventure tale into her essentially domestic stories, whereas in works such as "Amelia and the Dwarfs" (1870), "Benjy in Beastland" (1870) and "Timothy's Shoes" (1870-71) she appropriated elements of fantasy stories into the domestic sphere.

Ewing's experiments with the genre of fantasy have been already the subject of a meticulous study by U. C. Knoepfmacher. He cogently showed that Ewing with her successful mingling of domestic realism and fantasy attempted to find a form of transmission that went beyond the rivalries of gender and genre that existed in the nineteenth century between the female moral realists and male fantasists (*Ventures* 385). While Knoepfmacher's study, however, exclusively focuses on Ewing's experimental phase with fantasy, analysing her stories only in relation to the male fantasies she revises, I am more interested in exploring how Ewing's various literary experiments were conducive in opening up new possibilities of the female domestic story, and in ultimately widening the influence and readership of this female genre. Different from Knoepfmacher, therefore, I am going to focus in this chapter on the phase after Ewing returned from her secret experiments with fairy tales to her what she herself calls "usual walk" of story-writing, as it were, the realistic domestic story. Indeed, as I will further discuss below, in her later domestic stories like "A Great Emergency" (1874), *Six to Sixteen* and *We and the World*, Ewing would not merely follow the traditional style of the domestic story, but would begin to explore and call into

question its boundaries, characteristics, and its supposed purpose to merely record “the trivialities of our everyday lives” (Ewing, *Six to Sixteen* 12). Thus, although all of Ewing’s stories I am going to explore in this chapter are of a domestic nature, they also all strive to reach beyond their conventional narrative style, perspective and scope, and reflect Ewing’s attempt to find ways to broaden the possibilities of this traditionally female genre. I will show how Ewing’s narrative experiments and her appropriation of typically male genres like fantasy and adventure stories expand the domestic story’s subject matter and sphere of activity, and significantly also obliterate the hierarchical relationship between female and male-authored children’s fiction.

1. *Six to Sixteen*: Rewriting the Female Domestic Story

From 1868 to 1871 was a phase of literary experimentation for Ewing in which she ventured into the genre of fantasy. The results of these experiments were the fairy tale imitations first published anonymously in her mother’s *Aunt Judy’s Magazine*, later compiled as *Old Fashioned Fairy Tales* in 1882, and the domestic fantasies like “Amelia and the Dwarfs” (1870), “Benjy in Beastland”(1870) and “Timothy’s Shoes” (1871). The domestic fantasies were especially admired by Gatty who, after reading “Amelia and the Dwarfs” praised Ewing’s ingenious mingling of the real and the supernatural and urged her to write more stories on this pattern.⁴⁸ Ewing followed this suggestion, and the

⁴⁸ Gatty wrote to Ewing: “You are rather singular in keeping the domestic part so *real* in spite of the introduction of supernatural machinery. In *nine cases out of ten* the *real* suffers, but in

stories that were written in this style were collected and published as *The Brownies and Other Tales* (1871) with high expectations for a big success. As Gatty's enthusiastic reaction concerning these stories' original nature shows, Gatty shared with her daughter the desire of attracting a larger readership through this new approach on the domestic story. After all, Gatty suffered through her literary career from insufficient financial income of her stories.⁴⁹ Mother and daughter had in this way a lot in common: their occupation as children's writers, and their writing "at times for money to pay off debits accumulated by their men-folk" (Maxwell 81), but most of all their position as *women* authors in a male-dominated society yearning to gain more credit for their artistic endeavours. It was only natural, therefore, that Ewing dedicated this book to her mother with the hope that this might "carry a benison with it" (Maxwell 185).⁵⁰

Just like Ewing's secret experiments with fairy tales, this collection of domestic fantasies was a cautious attempt to expand her readership and to probe a wider field for female authors' children's writings that was restricted to

your case not, and you seem to have such a tendency to it that I say it is a vocation, and I should at any rate have my fling at it in the new volume" (Maxwell 185).

⁴⁹ Maxwell, looking over Gatty's letters writes how much Gatty suffered that her stories did not receive the right amount of financial remuneration as they were supposed to. Much of the "fundamental rivalry" between Gatty and Charlotte Yonge is ascribed by Maxwell to Yonge's success in reaching a large readership and consequently in earning enough money (135). Moreover, Victorian prescribed feminine modesty was also a factor that did not help mother and daughter to attain what they deserved: "Both Julie and Mrs Gatty suffered from over modesty when they assessed their own work, and this inhibition did not seem to be dispelled by the business interviews that they had with their publishers" (232).

⁵⁰ As Ewing wrote to Gatty: "You do encourage me immensely, dear Mum! Sometime I hope against hope that *The Brownies* may succeed. Perhaps the dedication to you will carry a benison with it!" (Maxwell 185).

the realistic domestic story. Against Ewing's high expectations, however, the stories in this collection except "The Brownies" (1865)—which Baden-Powell would later use as the name for the Girl Guides—achieved little recognition. Even in her later literary career, Ewing would regret the failure of this book believing that it contained some of her best works.⁵¹ As can be seen, critical recognition and amount of readership were a significant factor in Ewing's creative process, which was only natural considering how in her and Gatty's literary career the smallness of their readership had been a serious lifelong problem. Indeed, in the sixteen years of existence of Gatty's magazine *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, there was only one year in which it had succeeded in paying its way (Maxwell 231). As the publisher Bell stated "the magazine had too limited an appeal and was confined to a select class of reader which was not large enough to place the periodical on a firm financial basis" (Maxwell 231).

After her failure to attract a larger audience with her domestic fantasies, Ewing went back in 1871 to what she calls her "usual walk" of story-writing, the realistic domestic story by which she would finally make her name. The longer domestic novels *A Flat Iron for a Farthing* (1870-71) and *Six to Sixteen* (1872) mark therefore Ewing's return to the genre of her mother and literary foremothers. The two domestic novels with which she returned back to the female literary scene of home life reflect, however, Ewing's attempt to widen the

⁵¹ As late as in 1882 Ewing wrote:

The Brownies and *Lob* each had a dog's life in their present form, and it is an utter failure. I shall break them up and try and make them a success myself—and not leave it for some one else to do 40 years after I am dead. I believe these books contain some of the best work I have ever done, weighted with some of the worst (my fault)—and that they are also too dear, and too little gay for children's books. (Maxwell 146)

literary style of the conventional domestic genre in that both novels experimented with narrative techniques. *A Flat Iron for a Farthing* was written in the style of Dickens' *David Copperfield* by employing a first-person adult narrator who looks back on his own childhood years. Slightly concerned, however, that this novel was "taking an older turn" and was not sufficiently a "thorough *child's* book" (Maxwell 185), in her next project *Six to Sixteen* Ewing employed a young girl as the narrator of the story. If one views therefore Ewing's experimental phase in which she ventured into the male-dominated genre of fantasy as an attempt to break away from a female literary realm that restricted her literary ambition, her return to domestic stories is clearly a gesture of recognizing, but also of reappraising the literary legacy of a long line of female children's writers.

Indeed, *Six to Sixteen* is a notable work in Ewing's oeuvre because it does not only follow to a certain extent the conventional form of the domestic story, but also explores and re-evaluates simultaneously its nature, particularly its supposed purpose and its relationship with its intended reader, the child. The novel can be regarded therefore as partly a justification but also a reassessment of the female form of the domestic story. On the one hand, Ewing acknowledges her female literary inheritance in this novel, especially that of her mother Margaret Gatty, by adapting her mother's lifelong motto as the main message of the story. More important, however, is how Ewing, at the same time, attempts in this novel to go beyond her mother's and thus her literary foremothers' legacy. Not only does Ewing employ a young girl as the narrator of the story, changing in this way the conventional narrator-narratee relationship of mother-narrator and child-narratee of the domestic story, she also interrogates

the essential purpose of the domestic story by questioning the validity of the moral message she derived from her mother's works within Victorian domestic ideology. In the following part, I will examine how Ewing revises and rewrites the conventional domestic story in *Six to Sixteen*, and draws attention to the limitation of this female literary legacy in her effort to widen the scope and readership of female writings, and significantly to encourage her young readers to overcome the social boundaries that confine their sphere of activity.

Following Maternal Legacy

Looking at a long line of women's writing for children beginning in the eighteenth century, Foster and Simons observe that domestic stories from the mid-nineteenth century, "not only exhibit pervasive motifs in their narrative and representational patterns, but contain a marked degree of self-referentiality in locating themselves within a line of women's writing for children" (24). Thus, Yonge acknowledged Harriet Mozley and Elizabeth Sewell as her literary foremothers, while Louisa May Alcott's Jo March weeps in turn over Yonge's *Heir of Redclyffe* (1853). In Susan Coolidge's *What Katy Did* (1872), the children read Sherwood's works and Elizabeth Sewell's *Amy Herbert* (1844), and Katy receives Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) for Christmas. Molesworth picks up Mary Hughes' *Ornaments Discovered* (1821) as the children's leading clue to a family secret in *The Palace in the Garden* (1887), and Nesbit let her literary children cite and make fun of Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* in her *Wouldbegoods* (1899) and *The Railway Children* (1906).

Indeed, when Ewing began to write her children's stories in the mid-

nineteenth century, the great bestsellers of female writers of the Victorian era—that were interestingly often juvenile books—from Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World* to Yonge’s *Heir of Redclyffe* had already been published.⁵² Most of those female-authored novels followed the tradition of domestic realism with its realistic and homely background, its interest in domestic and emotional life, and its preoccupation with the ideal roles women should assume at home and in society. Published in 1872, Ewing’s *Six to Sixteen*, also presents the conventional features of female writers’ domestic story in that it took place mainly within the domestic realm, charted the development of Margery, the heroine of the novel, and aimed to present to its young reader the ideal virtues deemed desirable in a girl. In this way, Ewing aligned her *Six to Sixteen* firmly with the female literary tradition by following the recurrent plot patterns, themes and purposes which constituted the traditional female domestic story. *Six to Sixteen* displays, however, also a more personal touch in its adherence to the genre of its literary foremothers. After all, for Ewing, her mother Margaret Gatty is naturally one of the most significant influences in her development as a *female* children’s writer. In the novel, Ewing makes direct references to the intellectual and spiritual influence of Gatty by letting her be the model of the ideal mother in the story, and also by adopting the moral of Gatty’s story “The Fairy Godmothers” (1851) as her own novel’s message. In this light, *Six to Sixteen* can be read as a revalidation of the female domestic story, and, more personally, also a demonstration of the importance of the mother in Ewing’s own growth as a female writer of children’s stories.

⁵² In regard to the accomplishments of so-called lady novelists at the mid-nineteenth century, see Helsinger 47-48.

Six to Sixteen, however, not only adapts the moral teaching of Gatty's story "The Fairy Godmothers", but also follows its structure. The plot of Gatty's story is the conventional one of fairy godmothers endowing various gifts to their goddaughters to find out the very gift that makes humans most content. The presents the fairies grant their goddaughters in Gatty's story are beauty, riches, limitless power and "love of employment" (16). As might be expected, the goddaughter who emerges in the end as the model of human happiness is the girl Hermione who received the fairy gift "love of employment". At first sight, Ewing's own realistic novel has not so much in common with her mother's allegorical story about the perfect recipe for human happiness. Narrated by the heroine Margery Vandaleur, *Six to Sixteen* tells of Margery's life from the age six to sixteen. Margery is an orphan, having lost both of her parents in India through an outbreak of cholera at the age of six. Brought back to England, Margery is taken care of by a range of guardians, and comes into contact with a variety of English homes in which she is influenced by different mother figures. Thus, while Gatty's story tells about the fairy godmothers' search for the perfect gift for their goddaughters, Ewing's novel records the Victorian girl's search for the perfect mother figure. Not surprisingly, when the perfect fairy gift in Gatty's story for the lifelong happiness of a girl was "love of employment", in Ewing's novel the perfect mother emerges as the one who is able to teach her daughters the importance of "love of employment" for a happy life.

Moreover, just as the structure of Ewing's novel reflects that of Gatty's story, the various mother figures that are introduced in *Six to Sixteen* correspond to the fairy gifts of Gatty's fairy godmothers. While Gatty shows the untoward effects wrong gifts can have on the girls on which they are bestowed, Ewing, in

making Margery motherless and letting her experience various mother figures, presents the unfortunate influences unwise mothers can have on their daughters. The first mother figure that makes her appearance in Ewing's novel is Margery's real mother. Without doubt, what distinguishes Margery's mother is her great beauty. As Margery reports: "My mother was the prettiest woman on board the vessel she went out in, and the prettiest woman at the station when she got there. Some people have told me that she was the prettiest woman they ever saw" (20-21). According to Margery's description of her mother, who is "glittering with costly ornaments, beautiful and scented, like a fairy dream" (22), she could easily have been Aurora or Julia, the girls in Gatty's story who were bestowed the fairy gifts of beauty and riches. That beauty alone is insufficient, however, is pointed out in both stories. As Margery narrates, she would forego all this vision of her mother's dazzling beauty "for one—only one—memory of her praying by my bedside, or teaching me at her knee" (22). Since beauty and an obsession with appearances are the only legacy Margery's mother left her daughter, in the first few years after her mother's death, Margery recalls how, as a little girl, her mind was solely engaged "with the question whether I did or did not inherit my mother's graces" (66). Just as her mother, who—rather than caring for her daughter—sought the pleasure of gentlemen friends to flaunt her beauty and fashionable clothes, Margery narrates how her imagination at that time was intensely preoccupied with making herself the center of attention in which she "always took care to fancy some circumstances that led to my being in my best dress on the occasion" (64).

Ewing presents, however, a more serious case of an obsession with beauty through the girl Matilda, Mr and Mrs Buller's daughter. Mr and Mrs Buller, or

rather Aunt Theresa as she is called by Margery, are Margery's relatives and are Margery's first guardians after her parents' death. Aunt Theresa is not a self-centred beauty like Margery's mother, but she is a mother who thinks of appearances and fashionable dresses as the decisive factors in the future happiness of her daughters. How Mrs Buller's value system has a pernicious influence on her daughter's self-perception is illustrated through Matilda's heightened consciousness about her personal appearance and eventual social awkwardness. Ewing makes a point through the case of Matilda about the fatal consequences of bad mothering that only focuses on beauty, pretty clothes and approbation in the public eye, but does not teach her daughters the pleasures of employment. Matilda's social awkwardness parallels Aurora's self-centredness in Gatty's story in which the unlucky Fairy gift of beauty gets in the way of everything Aurora does, "for it took away her interest in every thing but herself" ("Fairy Godmothers" 20). In both Gatty's and Ewing's story, therefore, the girls' obsession with appearances reinforces their self-centredness which interferes with the girls' wholesome interaction with the world and consequently with the opportunity to expand their vision and sphere of activity.

The last and the finally ideal mother figure in Margery's narrative is Mrs. Arkwright, the wife of Mr. Arkwright who is the second appointed guardian of Margery. In the first scene in which she appears she is laden with tin cans full of small sea creatures which she promptly examines through the magnifying glass, strongly alluding thus to Ewing's mother's own lifelong interest in the study of

seaweeds.⁵³ The similarity between these two mothers, however, does not end with their shared love for seaweeds, for just like Gatty, Mrs. Arkwright etches on copper, has a good collection of old etchings, and is of course a naturalist. Also, just like Gatty, Mrs. Arkwright is versed in Italian, and when the girls begin to translate Dante they often have to “fall back” on Mrs. Arkwright’s scholarship (238).⁵⁴ Moreover, just as two of Gatty’s learned friends named their discoveries of sea creatures after her, in *Six to Sixteen* the water weed discovered in the Arkwright household is “described and figured in the *Phycological Quarterly*, and received the specific name of Arkwrightii” (254).⁵⁵ As can be seen, Mrs Arkwright is more or less Margaret Gatty. Through her influence, Margery begins to pursue intellectual hobbies like collecting, drawing, and translating. Also, following Mrs Arkwright’s warning “against despising interests that are not our own” (260), Margery learns to perceive the world in a more open-minded way. Margery indeed later confirms that “every fresh experience which has enlarged our knowledge of the world—has confirmed the truth of her sage and practical advice” (261). The Arkwrights’ home, just as the Gatty household was, becomes in this way an intellectual centre in the novel

⁵³ Margaret Gatty’s deep interest in seaweeds led to a two volume work, *The History of British Seaweeds* (1863), which served for some time in Britain as a standard text book on the subject.

⁵⁴ Ewing tells about Gatty’s so-called “Dante fever” in *Memoriam, Margaret Gatty*: “To Dante she dedicated some of her best efforts in this art. In 1826, when she was seventeen, she began to translate *The Inferno* into English verse” (480).

⁵⁵ In 1855 Gatty’s scientist friends Dr Harvey and Dr Johnston named their separate discoveries after her. As Maxwell reports: “Dr Harvey had found a new genus of Algae in Australia, which he named Gattya Pinella, ‘in honour of Mrs Margaret Gatty of Ecclesfield, Yorkshire, a diligent explorer of British Algae and Marine Animals.’ When Margaret told this to Dr Johnston, she heard that for six months one of his worms or sea-serpents had been known to his worm correspondents as ‘Gattia Spectabilis,’ and that it was an interesting and beautiful beast” (99).

that pushes the girls' vision beyond the typically feminine realm. For instance, Margery who was unable to understand Major Buller's interests in natural sciences, confesses that "[t]he fonder I grew of the Arkwrights, the better I seemed to love and understand Uncle Buller. Apart as we were, we had now a dozen interests in common – threads of those intellectual ties over which the changes and chances of this mortal life have so little power." (219).

Naturally, Eleanor Arkwright, daughter of Mrs Arkwright, who grew up in the liberal atmosphere of the Arkwright home, is the model for the outcome of perfect mothering and the direct successor of the perfectly happy Hermione of Gatty's "Fairy Godmothers". Like Gatty's Hermione who could find in everything she does the greatest pleasure thanks to her godmother's gift, Ewing's Eleanor is industrious, but, most significantly, she is energetic and passionate about everything she does. Thus, Margery describes Eleanor: "I used to think that she was only anxious to get all the good she could out of the school But I afterwards found that she did just the same everywhere, strained her dark eyes over books, and absorbed information whenever and wherever she had a chance" (180). Being the daughter of an intellectual mother, Eleanor Arkwright is, however, also a mixture of Ewing and the family friend Eleanor Lloyd. Like Margery, Lloyd, during the frequent visits she paid the Gatty household shared the "somewhat desultory, if intellectual, home education" "with the zest of a sister" (Eden 27, 28). Indeed, Ewing's *Six to Sixteen* is dedicated to Eleanor Lloyd "in affectionate remembrance of old times and of many common hobbies of our girlhood in my Yorkshire home and in yours" (vi). Thus, all of these women, the two Eleanors, Margery and Ewing, enjoyed the advantage of having an intellectual mother or mother figure, who endowed her daughter with the

maternal legacy of “love of employment”. It is noteworthy that all four women, fictional and real, would be writers at some point. Ewing and Lloyd were both children’s writers, while Eleanor Arkwright and Margery Vandaleur would narrate their fictional autobiographies. Ewing pays tribute in this way to the literary legacy of mother figures who—progressive and liberal such as Gatty—paved the way for the literary careers of successive daughter writers.

Not surprisingly, the final passages of both Gatty’s and Ewing’s story declare the essential lesson they attempted to illustrate throughout their stories:

Dear Children! though you may not have so many talents as Hermione, you may call all those you do possess, into play, and make them the solace, pleasure and resources of your earthly career. for increased knowledge of the world, and your own happy experience, will convince you more and more that no Fairy Gift is so well worth having, as, THE LOVE OF EMPLOYMENT.
(Gatty “The Fairy Godmothers” 60)

“Oh, Margery dear, I do often feel so thankful to my mother for having given us plenty of rational interests. As to social ups and downs, and not having much money or many fine dresses, a ‘collection’ alone makes one almost too indifferent. Do you remember Mother’s saying long ago, that intellectual pleasures have this in common with the consolations of religion, that they are such as the world can neither give nor take away?”

(Ewing, *Six to Sixteen* 296)

As can be seen, it is hard to miss how Ewing reiterates here the moral lesson of

her mother's "Fairy Godmothers" through the mouth of her character Eleanor. This last passage of Ewing's novel in which Eleanor declares her great appreciation for her mother's teaching represents therefore not only Ewing's own appreciation for her mother's legacy, but also serves as an affirmation of the actual efficacy of her mother's lesson that is so demonstratively expressed in Gatty's own closing sentences. Indeed, what Ewing does here is offer herself—an acknowledged writer of children's literature—and her own domestic novel as the very proof of the success of her mother's spiritual and intellectual legacy. Nevertheless, despite the same message forwarded in the closing words of each of Gatty's and Ewing's stories, it is notable how these two passages sharply differ from each other in their narrative perspective. Gatty's text is that of a mother addressing her children, while the narrator of Ewing's text is a girl addressing a fellow friend. Indeed, as will be further explored below, Ewing's employment of Margery as the narrator of her story not only changed the traditional mother-narrator and child-narratee relationship of the domestic story, but also had the effect of providing a different, a more scrutinising view on the domestic sphere and its entailing duties and practices. This change of conventional narrator-narratee relationship is, however, not the only point in which Ewing's novel begins to separate itself from her mother's story. The next part will show how Ewing's *Six to Sixteen* also revised Gatty's story, its message and the narrative formula of the domestic story, and actually pointed to the limitations of the domestic story's conventional form and lesson.

Rewriting Maternal Legacy

Although *Six to Sixteen* displays Ewing's attempt to pay homage to her mother's literary and spiritual legacy, it also expresses Ewing's resolution to overcome the restraints the female domestic story puts on the woman writer, and thus, to differentiate herself from her mother's work. Ewing's most notable revision of the traditional female domestic story is the employment of Margery, a girl of sixteen, as the narrator of her novel, in contrast to the conventional mother-narrator and child-narratee relationship of the domestic story in which the mother-narrator possessed the moral superiority. Indeed, this change of the nature of the relationship between narrator and narratee can already be observed in the preface of both books. Gatty states in the preface of *The Fairy Godmothers* that she dedicates her book to her children to illustrate for them her "favourite and long cherished convictions" (xi) on life, establishing in this way from the beginning of her work a mother-narrator and child-narratee relationship so common in the female literary tradition of domestic and moral stories. The narrator of Gatty's story, therefore, constantly addresses "dear little readers" (1) and "my dear children" (88), signalling in this way an intimate but also essentially hierarchical relationship with the audience. Ewing's *Six to Sixteen*, however, has a very different premise. Ewing declares in the preface that her novel "contains no attempt to paint a model girl or a model education, and was originally written as a sketch of domestic life, and not as a vehicle for theories" (v). In contrast to Gatty, Ewing consciously keeps herself apart from a superior maternal role who can offer her target readers positive moral advice. Instead, Ewing places her work in a rather indefinite, even transitional position: for it is neither a conventional domestic story (although it was originally meant to

be), nor does it offer like a moral story in the Edgeworthian style “a complete theory on the vexed question of the upbringing of girls” (v). Also, although the novel is clearly a meditation on the literary legacy of Gatty, Ewing dedicates the work to Eleanor Lloyd, a fellow female writer of children’s fiction who shared with her from their girlhood years Gatty’s intellectual education. Thus, despite the novel being a eulogy for Gatty, its dedication to a fellow writer and its withdrawal from a superior narrative position attests to Ewing’s intention to distance her work from certain conventions of her mother’s genre. The novel is, therefore, an act of homage, but, above all, a gesture to a younger generation of daughter-writers and readers of Gatty’s devoted “magazine children” (Ewing, “In Memoriam” 479) to reassess together the female domestic story.

Six to Sixteen is, in fact, Ewing’s first attempt in using a young narrator. As I will discuss later, Ewing would further develop this narrative technique in stories such as “A Great Emergency” (1874), “A Very Ill-Tempered Family” (1875) and “A Happy Family” (1883) in which she effectively disclosed the contradictions of the Victorian gender and domestic ideologies by displaying and making fun of the young narrators’ own social prejudices while they are themselves unaware of their own follies. In *Six to Sixteen*, however, Ewing depicts Margery as being fully conscious of the various tensions and problems that are going on within the middle-class Victorian home. As a matter of fact, employing a young girl as the narrator of her novel enables Ewing to convey her criticism of Victorian domestic ideology in a safer way than it would have been through a mother-narrator. Margery’s not-always-orthodox opinions on the various English homes she goes through are, owing to her youth, not expressed in the authoritative voice of the mother-like narrator who is burdened with the

responsibility to offer child readers absolute precepts. Rather, Margery is allowed the freedom to articulate her thoughts as such, and not as positive truths, often using verbs like “believe” and “think” when she expresses her opinions.

Indeed, Ewing’s most conspicuous use of Margery’s young voice is when she aims to criticize the Victorian separate spheres ideology that renders women uninformed outside their designated field of domesticity and thus narrow-minded in their conception of the world. For instance, in regard to Matilda’s increasing social awkwardness, Margery is of the opinion that her psychologically unstable state is partly a natural consequence of the mentally-cramped atmosphere of home life: “as she [Matilda] had heard Aunt Theresa and her friends discuss, approve, and condemn their friends by the standard of appearances alone, ever since she was old enough to overhear company conversation, I hardly think she was much to blame on this point” (124). Moreover, Margery notices how Aunt Theresa and her lady friends use speculative and sensational anecdotes from fashionable domestic magazines instead of scientific facts to deal with Matilda’s deteriorating mental health, observing: “when Aunt Theresa took counsel with her friends about poor Matilda, they hardly kept to Matilda’s case long enough even to master the facts, and on this particular occasion Mrs. St. John plunged at once into a series of illustrative anecdotes of the most terrible kind” (132). After her observations on the mismanaged upbringing of Matilda within Aunt Theresa’s home, Margery comes to the conclusion that the girls of the St. Quentin household are happier and healthier because “they always seemed to have plenty to do, which perhaps kept them from worrying about themselves” (126). Subsequently, Margery

conjectures: “I *believe* that their greatest advantage over poor Matilda was that they had not been accustomed to hear dress and appearance talked about as matters of the first importance” (126; emphasis added). Not only does Margery illustrate here how the Victorian domestic ideology limits women’s and girls’ interests to the petty activities of the private domestic sphere and stifles the mind of the adolescent girl, but she also suggests how this might be prevented by keeping the girl occupied with work. When she states how Uncle Buller “seldom interfered” in domestic matters, particularly in the education of his daughters, Margery identifies the lack of communication between the domestic and public sphere as the fundamental reason for Matilda’s poor upbringing. As Margery presumes: “I *think* Aunt Theresa would have been glad if he would have advised her oftener” (134; emphasis added). Ewing, in this way ensures that Margery’s sometimes too direct criticisms of the present status quo are not conveyed in a too assured way. In fact, Margery herself gives her youth as an excuse for the possible incorrectness of her opinions: “We have confessed that our experience is very small, and our opinions still unfixed in the matter, so it is unlikely that I shall settle it to my own, or anybody’s satisfaction, in the pages of this biography” (45). Thus, focalizing from the still developing mind of Margery offers Ewing a liminal space to explore and also call into question the prevailing value systems.

It is, however, not only in Ewing’s use of a young narrator that the novel deviates from the conventional formula of the domestic story. While Ewing’s other child narrators in “Our Field” or “A Happy Family” are not overtly conscious about their role as tellers of a story, in *Six to Sixteen* the act of telling and writing a story itself becomes the subject of Margery’s narration. Indeed,

the novel begins with an introduction in which sixteen-year-old Margery tells of her and Eleanor's joint project to write the stories of their own lives for one another. The main narrative of the novel takes therefore the form of an autobiography in which Margery attempts to narrate in a coherent way her life from the age of six down to the present date. In the narrative that frames this autobiography, however, Margery reflects on the act of writing, the various difficulties involved in this process, her position as an author, and the purpose of her work. The act of writing a domestic story itself becomes a significant subject of Margery's narration, from narrative difficulties in keeping the story straight—"I must not allow myself to wander off" (14)—to serious doubts whether writing about one's own life might not be too vain an undertaking for a Victorian girl. "It seems an egotistical and perhaps silly thing to record the trivialities of our everyday lives," she says, "even for fun, and just to please ourselves" (12). In this way, Ewing uses Margery to take issue not only with the conventional features of the domestic story, but also with the common criticism that was levelled against this genre. Listing the domestic story's limited readership, its supposedly petty and narrow subject matter, and its explicit moralism, Margery expresses her lack of confidence in regard to the authority and validity of her chosen genre. Indeed, Margery questions the value of writing a story that takes place entirely within the homely sphere and merely deals with every day "trivialities" (11). In response to Margery's complaint, Eleanor reassures her by arguing "that the simple and truthful history of a single mind from childhood would be as valuable...as the whole of Mr. Pepys' Diary from the first volume to the last" (12).

Margery, however, not convinced of Eleanor's arguments, asserts that her

own “biography will not be the history of a mind, but only a record of small facts important to no one but myself” (12). In fact, just as the domestic story was dominantly written by *female* writers for young *female* readers, Margery’s and Eleanor’s records of their lives are to be read only by themselves as they promise to exchange them when they are finished. Eleanor, however, is depicted to be enthusiastic about this exchange: “[I]f ever we are separated in life, how I shall enjoy looking over it again and again” (19). Showing Eleanor’s great pleasure in sharing life stories with other female writers, Ewing acknowledges the great appreciation this female genre receives from those for whom they are specifically written, namely girls and young women. Thus, Ewing presents in *Six to Sixteen* two contrasting opinions on the female domestic story, as it were, noting on the one hand its triviality in subject matter and the smallness and fixedness of its readership, but on the other hand the valuable insights one might derive from its simple record of domestic life. These two opposing perspectives reflect Ewing’s own divided view on her and her mother’s genre: first, its supposed insignificance as a literary genre and second, its crucial function of satisfying the specific needs of a tight-knit group of young female readers and future female writers.

Thus, by presenting a young girl’s perspective on the domestic realm and the domestic story Ewing addresses the insufficiency of her maternal legacy. In addition, however, Ewing and Gatty also differ significantly in how they deploy the guiding principle “love of employment.” In contrast to Gatty’s story, which implies that any kind of constant labour will keep a girl fulfilled as long as she is doing her best, Ewing’s novel clearly means intellectual labour. Ewing is explicit about the fact that this love of employment should expand the girl’s vision, help

her to understand realms designated primarily to male experience, and possibly widen her own sphere of activity. In Gatty's story, however, Hermione's love of employment is illustrated by her finding pleasure in various activities, from simple tasks like winding up the worsted to more sophisticated ones like "French and music and drawing" (39). Although the latter activities seem intellectual, they represent ideal feminine accomplishments that were appreciated within the Victorian drawing room and would eventually "attract a good husband" (Poovey 128). Indeed, there is a great difference between Hermione's aimless love for any kind of labour that lies in front of her and Eleanor's methodical and determined "fervour against 'the great war of ignorance'" (177). From this point of view, Gatty's teaching of an uncritical love of employment can almost be read as conservative in that it encourages girls to be content with whatever duties they are burdened with. From Ewing's point of view, Hermione's indiscriminate love for any kind of labour as illustrated in Gatty's story will not develop her intellect and expand her perspective.

Moreover, Ewing attempts to disclose the limitations of the principle of "love of employment" by applying it to a range of mother figures in *Six to Sixteen*. Despite Aunt Theresa's wrong educational methods, for example, Margery depicts her as a caring mother and very industrious housewife. Aunt Theresa's busyness is underlined when Uncle Buller, sick of wasting his time in social obligations, complains to his wife that she cannot know his feelings arguing that: "If you had any one occupation, you'd know how maddening it is" (53). Whereupon Aunt Theresa angrily retorts:

"I'm sure, Edward, I'm always busy. I never have a quiet moment

from morning to night, it seems to me. But it is so like you men! You can stick to one thing all along, and your meals come to you as if they dropped out of the skies... and when one is ordering dinner and luncheon, ... and looking after the children and the servants, ... from week's end to week's end—you say one has no occupation.” (53-4)

As can be seen, while Uncle Buller pursues his intellectual hobbies in his room and shows no interest in assisting his wife in domestic affairs, Aunt Theresa is absorbed in managing them, having time for nothing else. Ewing points out here how in this way the separate spheres between men and women are maintained, and how the possibility for both sexes to widen their perspective is eschewed. What Ewing wishes to emphasize here is that Aunt Theresa cannot but be uninformed and also limited in her point of view, because being overwhelmed with domestic chores she simply does not have the time to cultivate her mind. Thus, although Aunt Theresa clearly abides by Gatty's motto of love of employment, it is questionable whether these domestic occupations will bring her fulfilment and happiness. Aside from happiness in life, Ewing makes it clear that the various domestic duties that dull Aunt Theresa's mind and make her a less than ideal mother, are the direct causes of Matilda's unknown illness, nervousness and social awkwardness.

Ewing's most notable disclosure about the insufficiency of her mother's message within the Victorian society comes, however, through Margery's great-grandmother who is another mother-character who is modelled after Ewing's mother, Margaret Gatty. While Mrs. Arkwright personifies with her scientific

pursuits the progressive aspects of Gatty's legacy, Margery's great-grandmother represents the ineffectiveness of Gatty's guiding principle "love of labour" within the confining mores of Victorian society. Just as Gatty, the wife of a poor clergyman, worked to make ends meet, Margery's great-grandmother, having a hopelessly impractical husband, is the one who holds the household together financially.⁵⁶ Gatty contributed to the household income by writing—one of the few socially acceptable occupations for a lady—despite the fact that her inclination was natural history.⁵⁷ For Margery's great-grandmother, who is described as an intelligent and energetic woman like Gatty, the only way to economize within social propriety is to secretly do the lowly housework herself. In showing how Gatty's and Margery's great-grandmother's love for labor essentially functions to keep the household financially afloat—after all, the very duty the Victorian man had to fulfil—Ewing challenges the conventional Victorian assumption that women's work should be domestic in nature. Significantly, however, by illustrating how these women had to limit their work within the home despite their abilities that reached beyond it, Ewing also points out that an indiscriminate following of her mother's life motto "love of employment" within the boundaries of Victorian gender and separate spheres ideology is ineffective in widening the working sphere of women.

It is however not only the mother Gatty who is split into two characters,

⁵⁶ Ewing was aware of her mother's great efforts in keeping the household afloat, as she wrote "of the dear Mum's years and years of work and earnings, poured as a matter of course into the leaky bucket of a large family's expenses" (Maxwell 81).

⁵⁷ Ewing also stated in her eulogy on her mother that: "[s]he did so keenly enjoy everything at which she worked that it is difficult to say in which of her hobbies she found most happiness; but I am disposed to give her natural history pursuits the palm" (Ewing, "In Memoriam" 481).

Mrs. Arkwright and Margery's great-grandmother, in Ewing's novel. For Ewing also divides herself into two characters, namely Margery Vandaleur and Eleanor Arkwright. The teller of her own story of spiritual and intellectual development, Margery is simultaneously the object and observer of Ewing's experiment about the ideal upbringing of girls. Being an orphan, Margery is able to form her own opinions of the world from scratch without the intrusion of a mother-educator. Margery, the young narrator of the novel, is therefore the part of Ewing who wants to free herself from the narrative restrictions of her mother's literary legacy.⁵⁸ Eleanor, daughter of the model mother, Mrs. Arkwright, is the product of perfect mothering and represents therefore Ewing's deepest respect for her mother's spiritual legacy. That not Eleanor but Margery, the motherless girl, has been chosen as the narrator marks *Six to Sixteen* as Ewing's first step of artistic separation from her mother's literary influence. Indeed, Eleanor, who represents after all Ewing's own personal—rather than literary—relationship with Gatty, would have been an unsuitable narrator to evaluate the domestic novel together with all its shortcomings.

Six to Sixteen surprisingly ends conventionally with the marriage of Eleanor Arkwright. This ending seems to be on first sight a rather conservative move—after all, Margery and Eleanor promised each other to stay old maids.

⁵⁸ Jackie Horne, who discusses Ewing's *Six to Sixteen* in the context of the British imperial project, notices how Mrs. Arkwright, in contrast to the so-called mentoria figures of Georgian children's writers like Maria Edgeworth, "does not take center stage in Margery's narrative as she would have in earlier works" ("Empire" 266). Horne observes that the work "clearly values and espouses such direct maternal instruction," but states that Ewing as a novelist seems to prefer to filter maternal advice through Margery's voice ("Empire" 266). Indeed, Claudia Mills who compares Ewing's *Six to Sixteen* with Louisa May Alcott's *Eight Cousins* (1875)—both stories that explore the question of upbringing of girls—also points out how in contrast to *Eight Cousins*, in Margery's story "the dominant influence is Margery's friend Eleanor, not some pontificating adult figure" (74).

Within the context of the novel's overarching message that urges girl readers to widen their point of view and realm of activity, Eleanor's moving out of her intellectual but isolated home on the Yorkshire moors into the world outside is only appropriate. For Eleanor, following in the footsteps of her creator, Ewing—who married an army officer—marries a Captain of the British army widening her realm from home to that of the regiment. Indeed, Ewing herself, the wife of a military officer who was often stationed abroad, led a nomadic life coming into contact with various army camps, different households, milieus and countries, which naturally contributed to the diversity of style, subjects, and themes of her stories. Ewing's horizon of experience and activity, therefore, differed from that of her mother, who spent the majority of her life at her Yorkshire home. Indeed, as Ewing reminisces about her mother's life that was so limited in its sphere of activity: she "never travelled beyond the British Isles, and the holidays she took away from 'home' and 'the children' were only too rare," even though she "longed at times for foreign travel" ("Margaret Gatty" xxi). Thus, like herself, Ewing endows Eleanor with the opportunity to broaden her outlook on the world and the realm of her influence. It is also significant that through Eleanor's marriage, the domestic narrative of the girls finds a larger audience, for the story that was destined to be read only by a girl comes into the hands of Eleanor's husband, who is eager to read the story of his bride's girlhood. In this way, a girl's view on the world is communicated to a male audience. This communication between what is commonly regarded as two separate spheres can therefore be considered as Ewing's call for an expansion of vision on both parts, men's and women's.

In light of *Six to Sixteen's* agenda that encourages the young, especially

girls, to look beyond the boundaries of their designated realms, the fact that this novel was published shortly after Gatty's death gains additional symbolic meaning.⁵⁹ Indeed, it almost seems that through the death of Gatty, Ewing is finally able to gain enough distance from this traditionally female genre—a genre she attempted to break away from in her experimental phase—to evaluate it, perceive its drawbacks, and create her own version of the domestic story that transcends the limitations of her mother's genre. Indeed, it is hard to miss the great difference between Yonge's Ethel who, despite her great tribulations and afflictions, stops short of exposing the contradictions of the Victorian domestic ideology, and Margery who dares to voice the inconsistency between prescription and practice. As a matter of fact, Ewing's experiments with the domestic story for the young did reach far. Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), which begins in India during an epidemic of cholera that orphans the heroine Mary Lennox, exactly replicates the beginning of *Six to Sixteen*. Burnett's heroine Mary even follows her predecessor Margery Vandaleur to the wide moors of Yorkshire, a place Ewing depicted in *Six to Sixteen* as the ideal surrounding in which to free and expand the mind of the growing girl. Like Ewing's, Burnett's story will follow how Mary—also the daughter of a beautiful but self-centred mother like Margery—gradually frees herself from the constraints of maternal legacy by creating her very own sphere,

⁵⁹ Ewing mournfully states to Eleanor Lloyd in the dedication of *Six to Sixteen* that

... whatever labour I may spend on this or any other bit of work – whatever changes or confirmations time and experience may bring to my views of people and things—I cannot now ask her approval of the one, or delight in the play of her strong intellect and bright wit over the other, is an unhealable sorrow with which no one sympathizes more fully than you. This story was written before her death: it has been revised without her help.

the secret garden. Additionally, glimpses of the questioning voice and scrutinizing look of Margery can be found again in the more irreverent child narrators of E. Nesbit's stories.⁶⁰ *Six to Sixteen*, Ewing's nod to the legacy of her literary foremothers, would, in turn, become a significant literary influence on subsequent female children's writers.

2. The Child Narrator: New Perspectives on the Domestic Sphere

Six to Sixteen, Ewing's comeback novel to the domestic genre, was a meditation on and reassessment of the female domestic story in which Ewing called for the need to revise the conventional message and purpose of the domestic story, and significantly to expand its sphere of activity. In her later stories indeed Ewing attempted to realize her resolution of broadening the domestic story's scope by appropriating elements of the so-called masculine adventure story, varying the social milieu she deals with, and making active use of child narrators. The literary outcomes of Ewing's efforts to prove the wide potential of the domestic genre are novels such as *Jan of the Windmill* (1876) and *We and the World*, or the story collection *A Great Emergency and Other Tales* (1877). To be sure, these experimental books were by no means as well-known and well-loved by the Victorian readership as Ewing's later works such as *Jackanapes* (1879), *Daddy Darwin's Dovecote* (1884) and *The Story of a Short Life* (1882) that display more conventional narrative techniques. Although

⁶⁰ Gubar also points out the significant influence Ewing's use of young narrators had on subsequent children's writers, as she asserts: "Ewing in particular excelled at this kind of writing, and as I will demonstrate, her work exerted a major influence over Nesbit and thus, indirectly, on a vast array of contemporary authors" (40).

not as popular as those three books, Ewing's more experimental works present most conspicuously Ewing's attempt in widening the landscape of women's children's stories, in reaching a larger readership—especially more boy readers—and in attaining the respect of the Victorian critical world. Indeed, after Ewing's death, Molesworth, in an article in which she shows her great appreciation for Ewing's stories highlights those "much less well known" works like *Jan of the Windmill*, *We and the World* and *A Great Emergency and Other Tales* emphasizing their "originality," "the novelty of its scenery," their appeal to "both sexes and of varying ages," and how they also contain much "which only ripened judgment and matured taste can fully appreciate" ("Juliana Horatia Ewing" 677, 681).

Particularly notable is *A Great Emergency and Other Tales*, which is a collection of four domestic stories that conveniently displays in one volume the various literary strategies Ewing employed to rewrite and renew the domestic story; from her use of a wide range of child narrators, to her adaptation of adventure and fairy tale elements. "A Great Emergency", for instance, is a parody of the adventure story transplanted into the domestic genre and attests to Ewing's desire to include boys in her readership. "Our Field", on the other hand, can be read as a modern-day fairy tale that appropriates the formula of the fairy tale into domestic surrounding, while "A Very Ill-tempered Family" is an inversion of the typical Victorian family story for it exposes and deconstructs the common belief of the harmonious, happy family life at home. "Madam Liberality," the only story in this collection that does not employ a child narrator, was written right after Gatty's death, and is inspired by Ewing's memory of her mother's generosity and unselfishness (Avery, *Mrs. Ewing* 17). The story indeed seems

to be at first sight a portrait of a generous, self-sacrificing child, but following the example of *Six to Sixteen*, betrays an ambiguous attitude towards the unselfishness of this child in that it wavers between deep admiration for the child's unconditional goodness, and serious doubts whether this goodness might not in the end have been in vain. In this part of the chapter, however, I will explore Ewing's effort to widen the possibilities of the domestic genre by having a closer look at the stories "A Great Emergency" and "A Very Ill-Tempered Family." Employing respectively a boy and girl narrator, and mixing and upsetting genre conventions, these two stories are apt examples that show how Ewing's narrative and genre experiments not only opened up new potentials and perspectives in the domestic story, but also disclosed the contradictions of the domestic ideology, and even blurred the boundaries between the designated spheres of female and male.

The Voice of the Little Patriarch

Barbara Wall in *The Narrator's Voice* observes how Ewing pioneered the narrative technique of the child narrator to resolve what is considered by Wall the common problem every writer of children's literature faces, namely, writing down to the child. "Writing down" is described by Wall as an effort on the part of the adult writer to adopt his or her words and style to the level of a reader of inferior intelligence and little knowledge, as it were, the child reader (15). Indeed, that Victorians already confronted this problem can be observed in Molesworth's praise of Ewing's works that discarded so thoroughly "the old and altogether false system ... of writing *down* to young readers" ("Juliana Horatia Ewing" 679).

Despite these negative connotations that surround the act of “writing down,” however, Wall concedes when considering the inevitable gap between child and adult, the children’s writer’s “writing down” to the child reader cannot probably be completely be avoided. The child narrator came up therefore as a particularly apt solution to this problem because this narrative technique made it actually possible to dismiss the authoritarian narrator, and to attain, if not a completely equal, a more balanced relationship between adult-narrator and child-reader.

The use of the child narrator in children’s literature has, however, not been entirely free from criticism. Although Wall proclaimed its equalizing effect on the power relationship between narrator and narratee, critics such as Jacqueline Rose attacked the use of the child narrator in children’s fiction, regarding it as a kind of ploy of the adult author to manipulate the child reader into identifying with the child speaker. In other words, the child reader through identification with the purported innocence of the child narrator is in fact taught and indoctrinated with what the adult author wants him or her to learn. Rose indeed claims that adventure stories that feature a child narrator like R. M. Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* (1858) make use of the Romantic notion of the inherent innocence of the child, and demonstrate in this way the absolute truthfulness of their story: “seeing with their own eyes, telling the truth and documenting without falsehood—what characterises the child’s vision is its innocence in both senses of the term (moral purity and the undistorted registering of the surrounding world)” (79). For Rose, therefore, the use of the child narrator is not necessarily the means to balance the hierarchical relationship between author and reader. Recently, however, Gubar has disputed Rose’s claim about the manipulative aspects of the child narrator. Significantly, Gubar offers Ewing’s

works as proofs of how Victorian writers also employed child narrators not to induce mindless identification, but to unveil the flaws of the child speaker and his or her narration, and to prompt in this way the child audience to become a more critical reader who is able to look beyond the text's surface.⁶¹

Gubar is certainly right when she argues that Ewing employed child narrators in her stories to point out the limitations of her child speaker's outlook on the world and consequently the possible unreliability of his or her narration, and to encourage thus young readers to become more discerning, critical readers. Thus, against Rose's accusation that the adult-author's use of the child speaker is based on their assumption of "the child's direct and unproblematic access to objects of the real world" (8), Ewing's use of the child narrator frequently serves to reveal the inconsistencies in his or her stories, and to point out how these, in fact, are the very consequences of the child's prejudices and wrong interpretation of his or her surroundings. Interestingly, as I will further explore below, Ewing's disclosure of the child's wrong and biased reading of the world, often functions, at the same time, as a disclosure of the discrepancies of Victorian domestic and gender ideology.

Written originally in 1874, two years after *Six to Sixteen*, "A Great Emergency" has the pedagogic agenda of criticizing Charlie's prejudiced notions about girls and indiscriminate devouring of adventure tales, but also

⁶¹ As Gubar argues, a lot of nineteenth-century children's fictions that employ child narrators do not hide the presence and the intention of the adult author behind this child speaker. Rather, by presenting child narrators who are "fully socialized beings who have already been profoundly shaped by the culture they inhabit, often as a result of their extensive reading ... [y]oung audience members are encouraged to recognize the conventions and prejudices the child speaker has absorbed, rather than indulging in unreflective identification" (Gubar 41-42).

serves to provide a nine-year-old boy's view of the domestic realm, its daily life, regulations and duties. Thus, although Charlie's running away from home with his friend Fred to seek adventures is at the centre of "A Great Emergency", the first half of the story follows the conventional domestic genre in that Charlie records his daily home and school life, its everyday troubles and affairs, and his interaction with his siblings in a Victorian middle-class household. Significantly, what emerges in this narrative of quotidian domestic life as Charlie's greatest concern is his serious doubt about the extent of his own manliness. Indeed, the story revolves around Charlie's ongoing struggle not only to attain those qualities that are supposed to make him manly, but also, in fact, to find the right kind of definition of manliness.

Within the story two significant sources crucially influence Charlie's notions about ideal manliness, namely his elder brother Rupert, and the adventure stories of his friend Fred about his courageous grandfather, the navy captain. Charlie's older brother Rupert indeed plays a pivotal role in Charlie's life, as he represents the perfect exemplar of an English gentleman to which Charlie constantly aspires. Rupert's sportsmanship in cricket, his class-consciousness, his condescending attitude towards girls, especially his sister Henrietta, and his emphasis on having presence of mind in case of a great emergency are the very manly qualities that Charlie attempts to acquire throughout the story. Ewing, however, effectively discloses the incongruities of Charlie's notions about ideal manliness by highlighting how his narration in fact constantly undermines the gender ideology he seeks to sustain. An appropriate example of how Charlie unintentionally reveals the inconsistencies of his notion of manliness can be found in his account about the daily squabbles between his

brother and sister:

Rupert and Henrietta often squabbled, and always about the same sort of things. I am sure he would have been very kind to her if she would have agreed with him, and done what he wanted. He often told me that the gentlemen of our family had always been courteous to women, and I think he would have done anything for Henrietta if it had not been that she would do everything for herself.

(9)

As can be seen, the very flaws of Rupert's idea of "courteousness" and manliness that Charlie here so unconsciously exposes disclose in turn the fallibility of the Victorian gender ideology. Clearly, Ewing points out here to her young readers not only that Charlie is not quite a reliable narrator, but also that the gender ideology he advocates does, in fact, not accurately represent the actual state between the sexes within the home. Indeed, when telling about the everyday activities of his siblings, Ewing even lets Charlie unwittingly list the various things Henrietta can do better than Rupert, from being clever in arguments, being inventive and creating stories to being a better pony rider. In spite of these various facts that run counter to Rupert's notions of the female gender, like "girls oughtn't to dispute or discuss"(9) or that "women are not expected to do things when there's danger" (4), Charlie eventually chooses to imitate Rupert., From his manner of speaking to his patriarchal outlook about the superiority of boys over girls, Ewing leads her readers to realize how Charlie's ideas on gender roles are based on a mindless acceptance of prevailing gender ideology, which is established on precarious assumptions. It is

thus this great discrepancy between Charlie's observations of the gender dynamics within the nursery and his belief in the Victorian domestic ideology on which Ewing's didactic intention and also her social criticism hinge.

Ewing does not only use Charlie as a narrator to unveil the instability of Victorian gender ideology, but in constructing Charlie as a great devourer of adventure tales, Ewing takes also the opportunity to unsettle the hierarchical relationship between the domestic and adventure story. Indeed, as explored in the first chapter, the female-authored domestic story during the nineteenth century was surpassed in the children's literature scene by the greater popularity and authority of the male-authored fantasy and adventure stories.⁶² As critics note, while male-authored adventure stories were widely read, from adult men to girls, and were critically held in high regard, this was not the case for female-authored domestic stories that were mostly read by girls and were regarded by boys—as Edward Salmon and Yonge observed—with great derision due to the narrowness of their setting, lack of plot and action, and their interest in “girlish” domestic matters.⁶³

When Ewing depicts how Charlie, after his uncritical consumption of adventure tales in which manliness is defined in terms of bold actions amidst

⁶² Reynolds notes how in the 1880s with the Victorian obsession with gender differentiation, boys' and girls' stories began to be separated in a more distinctive way, and how in this process girls' stories began to slide down the literary ladder (xvi). Rose as well observes how the division between literature for girls and boys was not really based on readership (as evidence suggests that girls read both), but rather on status (84).

⁶³ In trying to find out the reason for this different reading habit between boy and girl, Reynolds uses in her study *Girls Only? Gender and Popular Children's Fiction in Britain 1880-1910* (1990), Nancy Chodorow's work *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Reynolds suggests what Chodorow calls “the learned nature of masculinity”, namely that masculinity is less available and accessible to boys than femininity is for girls which could be a reason for boys' aversion to typical girls' genres like the domestic story.

unexplored lands, runs away from home believing that the world outside will endow him with the manliness home cannot grant him, she is criticizing how this separation of sphere and literature along gender lines produces unbalanced, wrong notions not only of so-called gender roles, but also of the world. Ewing is indeed keen to persuade her young readers of the instability of the boundaries that keep apart domestic and public sphere, domestic and adventure story and femininity and masculinity. Ewing's purpose to problematize these dividing lines becomes particularly clear when she lets Charlie explain his motivation for running away: "Some people seem to like dangers and adventures whilst the dangers are going on; Henrietta always seemed to think that the pleasantest part; but I confess that I think one of the best parts must be when they are over and you are enjoying the credit of them" (43). Again, Charlie's unconscious disclosure here of his own lack of real courage that, as he also unknowingly reveals, his sister ironically possesses, serves to unsettle not only the notion of courage as an exclusively manly quality, but also the notions of manliness and womanliness themselves.

Indeed, in her attempt to show how seafaring life outside fiction does not automatically provide boys opportunities to assert their courage and manliness, Ewing inverts in "A Great Emergency" the familiar formula of adventure stories that depict self-reliant, courageous boy heroes alone on a lonely island quickly in control of this unexplored, alien environment. For not only do Charlie and his friend Fred notice that they are not as independent and streetwise as they imagined themselves to be, but also their little journey is marked by their constant struggles to renounce the assistance of grown-ups and home influence with no real success. Although Charlie and Fred manage to go as stowaways

on a barge they are immediately discovered by the barge-master Mr Rowe. Being actually an employee of Fred's father, Mr Rowe secretly puts the boys under his protection, and thus the barge journey that should have been an adventurous and dangerous journey for the boys, turns into a little tame trip under the continual guardianship of an adult.

It is, in fact, hard not to compare Charlie with another boy narrator of an adventure story, namely the young hero Ralph Rover from Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858). On the one hand, both boys are constructed as being confident about their position as faithful recorders of their experiences. While in *The Coral Island*, Ralph vows that he recounts "everything relating to my adventures with a strict regard to truthfulness" (86), in "A Great Emergency" Charlie continually demonstrates his truthfulness through phrases like "to say the truth" (4) or "to speak the strict truth" (5). What separates these boy-storytellers, however, is their function as supposedly truthful narrators. Going along with the Romantics' idea of the child's innocent state, *The Coral Island* employs Ralph's voice relying on his supposedly unambiguous use of language, and thus faithful and straightforward communication of the unmapped places he explores to the child readers. Unlike Ballantyne, however, Ewing emphasizes how Charlie's supposedly truthful narrative constantly displays inconsistencies partly due to the various ideologies and texts he imbibed and consumed uncritically. Unlike Ralph, therefore, Charlie is not in control of his new surroundings, physically and linguistically, as the journey outside home lets him acutely realize his own lack of courage and independence, and his mistaken ideas about the world he wrongly picked up from Fred's adventure stories.

Ewing's attempt to show her readers through Charlie's barge trip, the danger of mindless absorption in texts, and the instability of the boundaries between home and the world, masculinity and femininity reaches its peak when the great emergency for which Charlie waited so long finally happens, not at sea, against Charlie's expectations, but in his absence in his own small village, at his own familiar home. A fire breaks out at home in Charlie's absence, and Henrietta turns out to be the true heroine of the family by saving the baby from the burning house. The irony of the situation is reinforced when Charlie has to give way his position as a narrator to Henrietta at the important point when something like a real adventure finally happens. Indeed, Henrietta emerges as the only one who is able to give an account of the emergency, because none of the boys can, Charlie, because of his absence, and Rupert, because he is simply a bad story-teller. In this way, Ewing finally asserts that heroic deeds and great emergencies can each be done and happen in fact everywhere, at home and at sea, while courage and the ability to tell a good adventure story are also qualities that are not bound to gender, but can be found in a boy as well as a girl.

On account of the mock nature of Charlie's journey and the story's inversion of the adventure story formula, Gubar noted that this story and Ewing's other sea-faring novel *We and the World* are essentially "anti-adventure stories" (63) that "characterize imperialism as a morally suspect form of masculine overreaching" (63). Although the story certainly expresses aversion to adventure stories' function of inculcating separate spheres ideology and indeed is critical towards the genre's imperialistic aspects, unlike Gubar, I do not

think that Ewing is essentially against the adventure story.⁶⁴ For Fred's stories not only convince Charlie to leave home and perceive it from a different viewpoint, but also help him eventually to have a wider and more balanced outlook on the world. After his sobering little journey, Charlie declares that he does not believe in Fred's fanciful stories anymore referring to a particularly imaginative story that takes place on the shores of Dartmouth. It is noteworthy that Charlie's more experienced friend Weston, who is visiting Charlie on his training ship which is coincidentally docked in Dartmouth, rectifies him: "In this sleepy, damp, delightful Dartmouth, who but a prig could deny the truth of a poetical dream?" (102). In Weston's opinion, therefore, Fred's fantastical stories are not without their own certain kind of truth. Most significantly, Weston not only suggests here how much more a sleepy, little town needs poetical dreams, but also points out how great poetical visions can be in fact produced everywhere even in a secluded, quiet place like Dartmouth. Indeed, it is important to note that it is, after all, through Fred's stories and the barge trip that Charlie discovers his honest love for the sea and his curiosity to explore the wide world which finally leads him into a sea-faring career. Charlie's narration in the end when he dreams about his future on the wide sea makes it clear that Ewing's story, rather than "an anti-adventure story" is, above all, a story that wishes to expand the child's horizon: "the harbour's mouth is now only the beginning of my visions, which stretch far over the sea beyond I hope it is not wrong to dream" (102). This passage in which Charlie imagines his ever-

⁶⁴ Interestingly, the argument of Donald Hall's essay "We and the World": Juliana Horatia Ewing and Victorian Colonialism for Children" (1991) is the exact opposite of Gubar in that it claims that Ewing through stories such as *We and the World*, *Jackanapes* and "Mary's Meadow" (1883) clearly supported colonial exploitation and imperialist practices.

expanding journey indicates Ewing's sympathetic attitude towards the adventure story that served as the starting point of Charlie's widening vision. What Ewing criticises, therefore, is not Charlie's reading of fanciful adventure stories, but their exclusive consumption which might interfere in acquiring a balanced outlook on the world. Edward Salmon, in his guidebook *Juvenile Literature As It Is* encouraged girls' liking for boys' books like adventure and school stories, because "[i]t ought to give sisters a sympathetic knowledge of the scenes wherein their brothers live and work" (28). The question whether boys also ought to have a sympathetic insight into the homely sphere wherein their sisters live and work is not considered by Salmon. It is, however, exactly this question, as it were, the possibility of straddling, transcending and even erasing the boundaries between these two supposedly separate spheres, that Ewing explored in this story.

The Voice of the Sister

As explored so far, "A Great Emergency" displays Ewing's acute awareness concerning the gender dynamics within the nursery. Whereas "A Great Emergency" thus focused on the relationship between brother and sister from the point of view of the brother, the second story "A Very Ill-Tempered Family" is a direct counterpart of it, in that the story is conversely told from the point of view of the sister. While "A Great Emergency", however, pointed to the fragility of the boundaries that kept the domestic and public realm apart by parodying the genre conventions of the male adventure story, "A Very Ill-Tempered Family" calls into question the adequacy of conventional gender roles by dismantling the

Victorian ideal image of the harmonious family. Both stories employ a young narrator to expose the contradictions of the Victorian domestic ideology, but, as I will show below, the difference of their gender results in contrasting methods in attaining these purposes.

Where in the former story Charlie is plagued by his lack of manliness, Isobel, the heroine and narrator in this story, is afflicted with what she calls a great family failing, namely ill-temper. Just as Charlie's story revolves around his doubts about his own manliness before the actual adventure of the barge journey begins, much of the narrative of "A Very Ill-Tempered Family" is preoccupied with Isobel's feelings of guilt about her ill-temper and her uncertainty whether she is really ill-tempered at all before the main event of the story, the Christmas theatricals actually happens. The opening sentences, indeed, already point to the main problem that will be explored and scrutinized by the young narrator throughout the story: "We are a very ill-tempered family. I want to say it, and not to unsay it by any explanations, because I think it is good for us to face the fact in the unadorned form in which it probably presents itself to the minds of our friends" (107). As the more reflective tone of the narrator indicates, Isobel is a more mature and reflective storyteller than Charlie due to her more advanced age and, accordingly, is able to weigh other people's point of view against her own. Isobel juxtaposes here two contrasting opinions on the supposedly "ill-temper" of her family—that of her friends and that of her own and her family—and although she seems to concede that the view of her friends might probably be more accurate, throughout the story Isobel is nevertheless intensely involved in questioning the veracity of her friends' opinion.

As a matter of fact, despite Isobel's declaration that she will not "unsay" her and her family's ill-temper "by any explanations", Isobel continually discloses her own and her family's point of view about their temper: "We allow that we are firm of disposition; we know that we are straightforward; we show what we feel. We have opinions and principles of our own" (107). The qualities listed here by Isobel, from being "firm of disposition", "straightforward", to having "principles of our own," are hardly indicative of ill-temper, but rather hint that strong will, honesty and independence of thought are the main characteristics of Isobel's family. The doubts about the ill-temper of Isobel's family are further aggravated when Isobel concedes that she believes in fact that intellectual superiority distinguishes her family from their friends: "Our friends allow that some quickness of wits accompanies the quickness of our tempers" (132). The problem of the veracity of the ill-temper of Isobel's family is further complicated when Isobel maintains that: "[s]ometimes I feel inclined to think that ill-tempered people have more sense of justice and of the strict rights and wrongs of things ..." (125). Throughout the story Ewing plays with these two opinions on "ill-temper", the first one which is advocated by Isobel's friends, and the second one implicitly understood among Isobel and her family. Indeed, Ewing meticulously describes how Isobel herself is constantly suspicious whether her ill-temper might be not an expression of her cleverness and strong sense of justice. Thus, Ewing, by presenting different and even conflicting perspectives and opinions about the ill-temper of Isobel and her family, challenges her readers to find out for themselves whether Isobel's declaration about the ill-temper of her family can really be trusted.

Thus, although on the one hand, the story charts Isobel's quest in

conquering her family flaw of ill-temper, on the other hand, the story is also about Isobel's constant feeling of uncertainty whether her friends' opinions on the ill-temper of her family are really justified. Crucially, Isobel's search for truth concerning her family's ill-temper is strongly affected by her relationship with her brother Philip. The relationship between Isobel and Philip is symbolically significant not only because they are twins, but also because Philip functions as a significant source that fuels Isobel's feeling of guilt about her ill-temper. A childhood incident in which Isobel almost killed Philip with a hatchet in her rage when he destroyed her doll's house is regarded by Isobel as a definitive proof of her ill-temper. Significantly, what Ewing points out throughout the story is the contrasting social attitude towards an ill-tempered boy and girl. Although both Isobel and Philip are equally afflicted with the family flaw of ill-temper, Isobel is charged with a heavier sense of duty to control her temper than Philip. In a discussion about the right methods to restrain one's temper, Isobel complains that while she always has to keep a gentle countenance despite the bad emotions and great anger she sometimes feels inside, Philip can "go back to school, and when he and another boy quarrel, they'll fight it out, and feel comfortable afterwards" (123).

What Ewing criticizes here is therefore not only the higher pressure on the girl to restrain her temper, as it was considered a more unnatural trait in a girl than in a boy, but also how intellectual superiority, and a strong sense of justice in a girl are frequently read as ill-temper in Victorian society. Ewing's awareness about the stigmatization of the ill-tempered girl within the Victorian cultural imagination can be also observed in *Six to Sixteen*. In a scene in which Aunt Theresa worries about Matilda's unstable mental state, she cites a medical

opinion of ill-tempered women at that time: "... Dr. O'Connor's brother, who is the medical officer of a lunatic asylum somewhere in Tipperary ... declares all mad women go out of their minds through ill-temper. He's written a book about it" (128). How cleverness and ill-temper in a girl constituted a problem, even across the Atlantic, can be seen in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, in which tomboy and aspiring writer Jo receives comfort from her mother who confesses that she as well used to have a dreadful temper as a young girl, and had a hard time to learn to control it so that she might be an exemplary mother at home. Similarly in "A Very Ill-tempered Family" Ewing presents Isobel with two models of grown-up female figures who had to fight most of their life with ill-temper. The first figure is Isobel's namesake aunt who is also like Isobel burdened with the family flaw of ill-temper. Aunt Isobel lost her fiancé because after an argument with him—where she was indeed in the right and he was in the wrong—in an outburst of ill-temper she did not give him the opportunity to make amends for his mistakes. The second figure is Mrs Rampant who is sweet-tempered, but has to lead a subservient life under a hot-tempered husband. Different from Jo, therefore, Isobel is not provided here with an exemplary female figure who learns to control her temper and leads at the same time a happy and fulfilling life with her male partner. Whether ill-temper is understood under the conventional definition of Isobel's friends, or, that of her family is not explicit, although in case of aunt Isobel, Ewing strongly hints that she had simply more sense of the "strict rights and wrongs of things" (125). What is clear, however, is that Ewing uses the motif of "ill-temper" as an important factor that hinders a smooth interaction between women and men. Isobel, as an ill-tempered girl herself, is charged thus in her relationship with her twin brother—who is also ill-

tempered—with the difficult task to find a middle path that avoids on the one hand, the tragic fate of her aunt Isobel, and on the other hand, the self-abnegating life of Mrs Rampant.

The Christmas theatricals, which is the main event of the story, is significant, for it occurs shortly after Isobel and Philip's confirmation in which Isobel renewed her vow to cure her ill-temper. The preparation for this theatrical functions therefore to illustrate how Isobel's resolution to control her temper and her search for the truth about her family's great flaw are finally brought to test and verified. Significantly, as a collaborative family effort, the theatrical is an appropriate opportunity to evaluate how well a family functions in their working harmoniously as a team. Ewing effectively uses here the aspects of preparation, practicing, staging and acting of the theatre in pointing to the various efforts and collaboration among family members that are necessary to create and preserve the ideal image of the family for the outside world. Indeed, in another story "A Happy Family" (1883) in which Ewing's criticism on the Victorian domestic ideology was more pronounced, she also made fun of Bayard's—the little patriarch in this story—efforts to stage a picture, which is ironically titled "The Happy Family," for the entertainment of his family. In presenting how through, Bayard's autocratic conduct, overbearing attitude to his little sister, and snobbish behaviour to the working-class children, Bayard's little theatrical effort comes to a complete disaster, Ewing points out in a humorous way how exactly Bayard's patriarchal attitude interfered in producing the picture "The Happy Family." Nursery theatricals therefore frequently serve in Ewing's stories to probe the validity of the conventional Victorian picture of the harmonious family, and to expose the various endeavours of the family members to hold this ideal

picture together.⁶⁵ In light of this function of theatricals in Ewing's works, it is telling that Ewing made Isobel a talented writer "paramount in nursery mummeries" (185) and her sister Alice truly gifted in acting. While these girls, therefore, actively contribute in sustaining the image of the perfect family, Philip, in contrast is, just as Bayard, depicted as a disruptive element. Isobel indeed admits that although Philip is the stage manager in their family theatricals, he is "not very reliable when steady help was needed" (132). As a matter of fact, it is difficult not to notice how the theatrical talents of the fictional sisters in this tale reflect Ewing's own role in the theatricals of the Gatty nursery. As Ewing's sister Eden recalls, Ewing not only proved her talent in being the author of the nursery theatricals, but also "[h]er powers of imitation were strong indeed" (10).⁶⁶ What Ewing effectively highlights in this story through the home theatricals, however, is the great amount of responsibility female members of the Victorian family were burdened with, to uphold and sustain the ideal image and beautiful façade of the Victorian home.

As expected, a harmonious preparation for this nursery entertainment—so important in establishing the family's public image—is seriously brought into chaos through Philip's overbearing and uncooperative behaviour. Although having been initially the most ambitious in the theatrical's preparation, when his school friend Clinton visits him, Philip spends most of his time going out hunting with him, neglecting his responsibility in the theatrical preparation and leaving

⁶⁵ Another story of Ewing in which nursery theatricals play an essential role in bringing to light old family tensions is the Christmas story "The Peace Egg" (1871).

⁶⁶ As Eden reminiscences: "Some of the indoor amusements over which Julie exercised great influence were our theatricals. Her powers of imitation were strong indeed" (10)

all the work to his siblings. Naturally, his inconsiderate behaviour causes uproar within the nursery. His little sister Alice bitingly remarks that “Philip began things hotly, and that his zeal cooled before they were accomplished—that his imperiousness laid him open to flattery, and the necessity of playing first-fiddle betrayed him into second-rate friendships” (140), and that “[i]f we hadn’t given way to Philip so much he wouldn’t think we can bear anything” (146). According to Alice’s description of Philip he bears a close resemblance with Bayard, Rupert and Charlie of the former stories who were as well brothers condescending in their attitude towards their sisters, and in their insistence on their central position within the family hierarchy. Eventually, Isobel after a heated argument with Philip about the theatrical preparation, does finally lose her temper despite her resolution, and gives up the idea of ever curing this unfortunate disposition: “We’re an ill-tempered family—a hopelessly ill-tempered family; and to try to cure us is like patching the lungs of a consumptive family, I don’t even wish that I could forgive Philip. He doesn’t deserve it” (151). Taking into consideration Philip’s irresponsible attitude at this point, it seems only natural that anybody, even without a particularly ill-temper, would lose one’s temper at this point. The fact that contemporary readers of this story considered Isobel’s family not particularly more ill-tempered than other families can be evidenced in several reactions of writers and critics to this story. Molesworth, for instance, noted in regard to this story that “ ‘A Very Ill-Tempered Family’ is, as some families who do not think themselves so very ill-tempered might testify, painfully true to life” (“Juliana Horatia Ewing” 684). Indeed, Ewing discloses in the scene in which Philip’s domineering behaviour comes into conflict with the common good of the family, that, rather than suffering from a particularly bad

case of ill temper, Isobel's family, in fact, deals with the differences of interests between male and female family members a Victorian family probably often had to face in everyday home life.

Instead of the conventional meaning endorsed by Isobel's friends, the term "ill-temper" turns out to point to the strong tension and power imbalance between the sexes in Isobel's household. Isobel's final outburst of temper after the great fight with Philip serves, therefore, to finally decide on the two conflicting opinions on the supposedly ill-temper of Isobel's family. Additionally, as a matter of course, this ultimate confrontation between Isobel and Philip also functions to reassess and redefine Isobel's ill-temper and that of Philip. Ewing, therefore, in Isobel's speech about the injustice of nursery politics, lets her clearly articulate the different nature of her and Philip's so-called "ill-temper": "Put on your gloves next time, Master Philip! at a crisis like this, I can no more yield to your unreasonable wishes, stifle my just anger, apologize for a little wrong to you who owe apologies for a big one, and pave the way to peace with my own broken will, than the leopard can change his spots" (152). In letting her young readership members compare here Philip's impetuosity and "unreasonable wishes" with Isobel's "just anger" about Philip's neglect of familial duty and the unequal gender relations within the nursery, Ewing attempts to let her child readers perceive by themselves, how, in fact, the truly "ill-tempered" member of the family has not been Isobel but Philip.

Naturally, this confusion and ambiguity in regard to the "ill-temper" of Isobel's family throughout the story were only possible because the story is told by Isobel and thus entirely from her perspective. Lois Kuznets, citing Henry

James' criticism on the first person narrator, points out that the first person narrator can paradoxically prevent "real contact' with the consciousness of the narrator, who can be an unreliable witness even of his or her psychological events" (189). Kuznets therefore regards this unreliability of the first person speaker concerning his or her own psychological events as one of the limitation of this type of narrative technique. Ewing, however, effectively made use of this limitation in both of her stories "A Great Emergency" and "An Ill-tempered Family", where she employed unreliable narrators like Charlie and Isobel who were unable to realize the fallibilities of their own prejudiced ideas of masculinity and femininity. Moreover, Ewing infused conventional gender characteristics into the narrative perspectives of Charlie and Isobel. While Charlie's perception of himself and his family is predominantly saturated with patriarchal pride, Isobel's firm belief in her and her family's ill-temper is imbued with feminine modesty. Thus, in using children who are already deeply inculcated in conventional notions of gender as the tellers of her stories, and in making the narrative stance of her young narrators conform to gender expectations, Ewing was able to let her readers discover the discrepancies between what these young narrators tell and how they perceive themselves, and thus to call into question the practices of Victorian gender and domestic ideology.

Importantly, the fact that Ewing made Isobel and Philip into twins attests to the fact that this problem of ill-temper ultimately and essentially comes down to

the problem of the unequal gender relationship within the domestic sphere.⁶⁷ As explored above, Isobel's self-perception and consequently her view of her own ill-temper are strongly determined by the responsibilities she feels towards Philip. To be sure, in making Philip Isobel's twin brother Ewing attained an additional familial intimacy between these two, and endowed in this way Isobel with a greater sense of sisterly duty towards her twin brother. It is, however, also clear that Ewing intended to use this twin relationship between Isobel and Philip to examine Isobel's emotions towards her twin brother which are mixed with awe for his male superiority, and an acute consciousness that since they are twins they must be essentially alike and equal. Indeed, differentiation and identification are constantly involved in Isobel's emotions towards her brother, as for instance when Isobel observes that "Philip is a very good-looking boy, much handsomer than I am, though we are alike" (158). Similarly, as explored in the former chapter, Yonge as well presented in *Daisy Chain* a heavily emotion-laden brother-sister relationship between Ethel and Norman. Like Isobel, Ethel's feelings towards Norman are mingled with reverence and love but also with rivalry. Also, just as Isobel suspects that her ill-temper might be only a strong sense of justice concerning the power imbalance between the gender within home, Ethel is uncertain whether her wish to excel at Greek and Latin like her brother Norman is really blameable.

Indeed, Valerie Sanders in her study of brother-sister relationships in nineteenth-century literary culture also pointed out the strong emotional

⁶⁷ Ewing's use of girl-boy twins to explore and criticise the unequal gender relationship of the Victorian age can be also observed in New Woman novelist Sarah Grand's work *The Heavenly Twins* in 1893.

significance such relationships assumed at that time in fictions such as George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, contending that "by using the sibling bond as a model, nineteenth-century novelists and poets were better able to explore the full emotional range between men and women within the limits set by contemporary censorship" (183). Ewing as well displayed in her stories a keen awareness about the complexity of the brother-sister relationship, extensively exploring the inequalities between the sexes through the various tensions and emotions that are involved in this relationship. Brothers often acted in Ewing's stories as deputies for their sisters when it came to occupations sisters could not pursue due to their restricted sphere of activity. In "A Great Emergency," Charlie feels guilty when he embarks on his sea journey knowing very well that it was actually a pursuit his sister Henrietta would have loved to follow. In *Six to Sixteen*, Margery pointed out the narrowness and monotony of girls' lives, recording how her and Eleanor's chief events in their isolated life in Yorkshire were the coming and going of their brothers, and how often they "counted the days to the holidays" (235). In a reading of Ewing's earlier story "Friedrich's Ballad" (1862), Knoepfmacher observes how the promising young author Ewing—at that time, Julie Gatty—integrates two aspects of herself into the figures, the genius poet Friedrich for whom a brilliant literary career awaits, and his sister, the self-effacing Marie for whom marriage is the only available option for her future (*Ventures* 384). Thus, mostly through the voices of her young narrators, Ewing surreptitiously revealed how, despite their equality or even superiority over their brothers, Victorian girls were forced to be dependent on their brothers to experience the outside world, prompting her young readers to perceive for themselves the inherent contradictions of prevailing gender roles.

Because Isobel does not explicitly articulate, like Charlie in the former story, how her lifelong guilt about her ill-temper has been the result of forced gender roles, and because she eventually learns to control her temper adapting thus to the conventional femininity, it almost seems that “A Very Ill-Tempered Family” follows the common ending of the domestic genre in which the heroine is ultimately tamed into the model Victorian girl.⁶⁸ The fact, however, that Isobel made the first step in communicating and reconciling with Philip, saving thereby his life, reiterates the ending of “A Great Emergency” and indicates again Ewing’s intention to let her readers realize that the really “ill-tempered” member of the family has not been Isobel. The real hero, or rather heroine of the story, like in “A Great Emergency,” turns out again to be the girl in the family. Just as her young readers are supposed to discover, Ewing also lets Philip finally perceive that he himself has “behaved like a brute” (159) and that Isobel has “the temper of an angel” (159), which indeed parallels Charlie’s realization of his distorted notion of manliness and his sister’s superior courage. Thus, although the message might be less explicit in the second story due to Isobel’s feminine reticence, in both works, Ewing points out to her young readers the fallacy of conventional gender roles by letting them see how gender binaries not only interfere with a smooth communication between family members, but also paradoxically threaten the harmony and peace within the home. In other words, what Ewing criticizes here are the very precepts of the Victorian domestic

⁶⁸ Indeed, Ewing’s sister Eden stated that although the story “is most powerfully written, and has been ardently admired by many people who found help from the lessons it taught”, for her own part, she preferred “the tales in which Julie left her lessons to be inferred, rather than those where she laid them down in anything approaching to a didactic fashion” (37). Eden was also disturbed about “the very vividness of the children” and confessed that “Julie’s ‘horrid’ children give me real pain to read about” (37). It would be very interesting to know whether Eden considered both Philip and Isobel horrid, or only Philip.

ideology that demand their family members, particularly female members, sacrifice themselves, even to give up their own voices for the sake of preserving and keeping up the ideal image of the happy family. Indeed, if Isobel's and Philip's so-called "ill-tempered" family turned in the end into a more harmonious one, it is because Isobel's attempt at a dialogue and Philip's realization of his domineering behaviour contributed to mitigate the existing gender hierarchies within the family.

The two stories "A Great Emergency" and "A Very Ill-tempered Family" represent the literary outcomes of Ewing's resolution to go beyond the literary sphere and conventions of the traditional domestic story, and to seek the attention of new audiences. Indeed, through the genre experiments in "A Great Emergency", Ewing pushed the boundaries of her literary sphere from the domestic to the outside world, and also alleviated the hierarchical differences between the female domestic and the male adventure story, rendering the story more attractive for boy readers. Ewing's employment of child narrators served, on the one hand, to equalize to a certain extent the relationship between adult-author and child-reader, and on the other hand, to perceive the domestic sphere from a different perspective, exposing in a more effective but safer way within Victorian conventions the power imbalance between the sexes within the home. To be sure, these two stories were not completely new with regard to their subject matter. Like "A Great Emergency," Yonge's *Countess Kate* was also about a child who is deeply steeped in fiction and runs away from home, cautioning child readers against overheated fancies, and mindless absorption of fiction. Similarly *The Daisy Chain*, which also deals with the conflicting emotions involved in a sister-brother relationship, charts Ethel's transformation from a

tomboyish, ambitious girl to a self-negating home daughter and mirrors Isobel's transformation from an ill-tempered to a patient girl. However, the didactic messages, and the narrative strategies these two writers employed to convey these messages significantly differ. In trying to persuade her young readers of the desirability of her story's moral in a more effective way, Yonge constructed relatable young characters the reader might easily identify with, meticulously describing the characters' hard but supposedly rewarding struggle in assuming the ideal moral behaviour. Although Yonge's works contributed through their sympathetic approach to their young fictional characters and, consequently young readership, to narrow the gap between the adult author and the child reader, their ultimate purpose was to sustain ideology and the status quo within and without her books. Ewing, on the other hand, by employing child narrators who already deeply imbibed prevalent ideologies, challenged young readers not to believe easily and identify with these child storytellers, and to be more critical readers who are able to detect the inconsistencies of the ideologies these young speakers endorse within the story. Ewing's works, in this way, not only went beyond the literary conventions of the conventional domestic story, but also beyond its common purpose, as it were, the preservation of the status quo, by disclosing the fallacies of the fundamental notions of the domestic ideology, and by inviting child readers to project a future that is built on different assumptions.

Ewing's children's stories are, therefore, testaments of a female writer's attempt to enlarge the scope, not only that of a traditionally female genre, but also the literary and actual sphere of the female writer. Certainly, Ewing's efforts in opening up the potential of the female domestic story had their impact on

succeeding children's writers not restricted to women. The voice of the little patriarch can be heard again in the figure of Oswald Bastable in Edith Nesbit's *The Story of the Treasure Seekers* (1899), while Ewing's skilful combination of domestic realism and fantasy she displayed in "Amelia and the Dwarfs" and "Benjy in Beastland" would be further honed by successive writers, and become a genre of its own that would enjoy great popularity and respect in the next century. Indeed, Ewing's pioneering role in her use of the child narrator and her great ability of mingling various genres definitely had a significant influence on the writer that will be dealt with in the next chapter, Mary Louisa Molesworth. Unlike Ewing, Molesworth was relatively free from the pressure to expand the scope of the female domestic genre and its readership, and accordingly, she was not as intensely preoccupied with the problems of gender and genre as Ewing. The ease with which Molesworth combined the mode of fantasy and domestic realism in her stories, and her free and skilful use of child narrators testify, however, not only to the extent of literary influence she owed to Ewing, but also how Ewing's literary experiments began to be fully realized and popularized through Molesworth's stories. How indeed Molesworth's works contributed in making Ewing's literary experiments a natural part of children's literature, and created thus a whole new genre, and how these works did their part in obliterating the hierarchical differences between the various genres in children's literature will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter IV. Mary Louisa Molesworth: The Balancing Act of Storytelling

Writing for children calls for a peculiar gift. It is not so much a question of taking up one's stand on the lower rungs of the literary ladder, as of standing on another ladder altogether— one which has its own steps, its higher and lower positions of excellence.

(Molesworth, "On the Art of Writing Fiction for Children" 16)

The whole position is strangely complicated, much more so than outsiders imagine. You have to be yourself, with your experience, your knowledge of good, and alas! of evil too; and at the same time you must be the child, or at least in the child's place, and that, again, without any *apparent* stepping down. The very writing that appeals to its own feelings and sympathies, that makes the boy or girl conscious of being 'understood,' should have a reserve of something more—something higher and yet deeper. While you amuse and interest, you should all the time be *lifting*; yet, above all, without preaching. Children's stories should be like the pure air of some mountain height—unconsciously strengthening towards all good, while assimilated with no realised effort.

(Molesworth, "Story-Writing" 164)

Like many middle-class Victorian children, Mary Louisa Molesworth was brought up with the typical Victorian nursery classics—the female tradition that consisted of Maria Edgeworth, Barbara Hofland, Anna Laetitia Barbauld and Mary Sherwood—but the greatest influence as she herself states were "the story-books of my own day" (Molesworth, "Story-Reading" 773), namely the modern children's books of the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus, on the one hand, in contrast to Yonge's cautious attitude towards fantasy tales, Molesworth belonged to a generation who "were very favoured as regards fairy tales" (Molesworth, "Story Reading" 773). She was thus an avid reader of fairy

tales by the Grimm brothers and Hans Christian Andersen and of the modern retellings of mythologies like Charles Kingsley's *The Heroes* (1856) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *A Wonder-Book for Boys and Girls* (1851). On the other hand, however, like Yonge, Molesworth also enjoyed the domestic novels of Elizabeth Sewell, and delighted in Yonge's own books which, she says, "seemed to me to open a new world of fiction" ("Story Reading" 773). She was particularly enthusiastic about Susan Warner's sentimental novel *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), although she was well aware of the harsh criticism the book received; that it was "full of weak and unreal sentiment", "the hero a prig" and "the heroine an impossible little personage" ("Story Reading" 773). Molesworth, in fact, actively defended this domestic work, declaring that she would not accept these criticisms "because I remember with so much gratitude the many hours of intense enjoyment I owe to it" ("Story Reading" 773).

Molesworth's equal fondness for literature of the fantastic and domestic mode gives a glimpse of the nature of her own nursery stories that would so easily and naturally combine these two forms of storytelling that were mostly kept apart during the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Molesworth's eclectic childhood readings, from fairy tales to domestic novels, and her impartial and non-judgemental attitude towards all these genres, indicate not only how diverse children's literature had become throughout the nineteenth century, but also how for Molesworth the boundaries that divided the female domestic genre from other forms of fiction constituted less of a problem than for Ewing. Making her debut as a children's writer in the mid-1870s, after the most prominent works of the Golden Age of children's literature significantly changed the climate of the children's books market, Molesworth's outlook on children's

literature was broader and more assured than that of preceding female writers.

Her success as a children's writer came with her second book *Carrots* in 1876. At first sight, the book seemed to be a conventional nursery story in the vein of the female domestic genre, detailing the everyday nursery life of its little hero Carrots and his sister Flossie. *Carrots* certainly took domestic realism as its generic model, but the inset stories in this book that ranged from the old-fashioned moral tale to the fairy story, suggest that the book not only drew upon the wide range of genres of children's fiction, but also served to display Molesworth's ability in producing various forms of stories. The book, however, that would firmly establish her as a leading writer of children's fiction in the last decades of the nineteenth century was *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877). It is in this book that she for the first time merged domestic realism with fantasy in what would become throughout her literary career one of her most frequently used formula, and which indeed evolved into a genre of its own that would become a staple in successive children's fiction.

Molesworth was a prolific writer and beginning with her first children's book *Tell Me a Story* in 1875 till her last work *Fairies Afield* in 1911, she wrote over a hundred children's books. Her literary career, in fact, began with three-decker novels aimed at adults that, however, never really received much attention. According to an article in *The Monthly Packet* in 1894, she switched to children's stories after her friend the artist Noel Paton—the illustrator of the first edition of Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863)—advised her: "Better do a small thing *well*, ... than a great thing indifferently" ("Story-Writing" 163). Even if Molesworth in the beginning of her literary career considered children's books as "small things" compared to adult's books, clearly by 1893, at the height of her

career as a children's writer, she was confident enough about her profession to declare—as the first citation at the head of this chapter shows—that writing for children required “a peculiar gift” (“On the Art” 16). Indeed, it was “not so much a question of taking up one's stand on the lower rungs of the literary ladder, as of standing on another ladder altogether—one which has its own steps, its higher and lower positions of excellence” (“On the Art” 16).

Notable in Molesworth's statement is not only her rejection of the hierarchy between children's and adults' books, but also her assured stance concerning her role as a children's author. It was probably well grounded, as in the 1880s and 90s her works were highly regarded in literary circles. In 1884, Algernon Swinburne praised: “Any chapter of *The Cuckoo Clock* or the enchanting *Adventures of Herr Baby* is worth a shoal of the very best novels dealing with the characters and fortunes of mere adults” (563). Children's literature critic Edward Salmon went so far as to claim in 1887: “Mrs. Molesworth is, in my opinion, considering the quality and quantity of her labours, the best story-teller for children England has yet known” (“Literature for the Little Ones” 575), while a younger generation of children's writers like Rudyard Kipling and E. Nesbit were great admirers of Molesworth's works (Moore 148, Cooper 341, “Well-Known” 556).⁶⁹ Her books were also to a certain extent commercially successful, much more than Ewing's books ever had been. Indeed, when in 1886 Salmon did not include her works in his article “What Girls Read”, Molesworth was “exceedingly disappointed” and immediately wrote

⁶⁹ In 1899, Kipling wrote to Molesworth stating how much he had enjoyed her books when he was a youngster. Mentioning works from *Carrots*, *Herr Baby* to *Grandmother Dear*, Kipling also states that *The Cuckoo Clock* “even now I know by heart” (Cooper 341).

Salmon a letter asking “on what grounds” he objected to her works, also expressly pointing to the commercial success of her books: “Of course if one is to judge by practical results in such matters, it would be false modesty in me to deny that my books are *exceedingly* popular” (Cooper 255).⁷⁰

Why Molesworth’s stories were immediately so well received by the Victorian public, in contrast to, for instance Ewing’s works is indeed an interesting question. When looking at Victorian and some twentieth-century commentators’ opinions on Molesworth’s works, they were much occupied with Molesworth’s supposedly realistic writing; her ability to look deeply into the child’s mind, and to represent it most truthfully in her stories. In 1887, Salmon wrote that Molesworth’s “great charm is her realism—realism, that is, in the purest and highest sense” (“Literature for the Little Ones” 575). Swinburne, a great admirer of Molesworth’s stories and renowned for his baby idolatry, drew favourable comparisons between Molesworth’s skill in realistic writing with that of George Eliot, declaring Molesworth as the only writer in England whose depiction of the child “is so exquisite and masterly” and “whose bright and sweet invention is so fruitful, so truthful or so delightful” (563).

Ironically, the much praised qualities of Molesworth’s stories, namely her supposed realism, became the main targets for criticisms in the 1950s and 60s. The most frequent criticism that was levelled against Molesworth’s works was her accurate replication of the incorrect speech of the little child, the so-called “baby-talk”. Already in 1950, Marghanita Laski complained that Molesworth’s

⁷⁰ Salmon included Molesworth’s works in his article “Literature for the Little Ones” published a year later. So it seems, after all, that Salmon listened to Molesworth’s complaints.

“phonetic reproduction of the most peculiar child language” was one of her “most trying little tricks” (64). Carpenter called Molesworth’s representation of children’s speech “glutinous” and accused Molesworth of capitalizing on a “commercial potential”, as it were, the Victorians’ fascination with the Romantic idea of the innocent child (Carpenter 106).⁷¹ Indeed, Barbara Wall as well claimed that Molesworth’s imitation of child language indicates her patronizing attitude toward the child, and declared, like Carpenter, that it was an exploitation of the child for the benefit of the amusement of the adult “whose superiority in that regard could be felt to be unchallenged” (83).

While Molesworth’s use of “baby-talk” was attacked for ingratiating Victorian adult readers, and patronizing the child character and child reader, critics like Wall disapproved of Molesworth’s “all-knowing” narrative voice that did not allow “a free interaction between the story and her child reader” (83). Wall also objected to Molesworth’s so-called nursery voice which might sound “cosy, intimate, friendly”, but was, in fact, highly “superior and self-conscious” (82). Indeed, even Molesworth’s small, self-contained nursery world was the subject of criticism by twentieth-century commentators who criticized that it satisfied grown-ups’ desire for an idealized idyllic childhood. Carpenter, for instance, observed that although Molesworth’s *Carrots* and Ewing’s *Mrs Overthway’s Remembrances* both explore the notion of childhood as a “state of being set apart” and “a time of special perceptions”, Molesworth’s work “is crude and sugary where Mrs Ewing’s book is subtle” (104). Carpenter reasoned that the

⁷¹ Carpenter complains about Molesworth’s *Carrots* that “[q]uite apart from its ludicrous inaccuracy in describing a six-year-old (even a strictly brought up Victorian one), ‘Carrots’ is written exclusively from the mother’s point of view and not the child’s (106).

“portrayal of Carrots’ world as blissful and Arcadian totally ignores the emotional ups and downs that real children experience from the hour of birth” (106). Avery as well described Molesworth’s insular nursery world as a “small teacup” that “excludes all that he [the child] cannot understand, all adult motives, all matters outside the nursery” (*Nineteenth Century* 162). In other words, in stark contrast to those who praised Molesworth’s works for their truthful representation of the child, recent critics have accused Molesworth because she idealized the child. Her representation of the child’s imperfect language ability, her grown-up nursery voice, and the isolation of her literary world, were all considered by critics to highlight the otherness of the child, to promote the Romantic notion of childhood innocence, and to erect a firm barrier between childhood and adulthood.

This chapter will argue that Molesworth was, in fact, far more acutely conscious about the inherently unequal position between adult author and child reader than all these listed criticisms of Molesworth’s works claim. Far from being unaware of the inevitable gap between adult and child, within and without the book, Molesworth was keenly engaged in narrowing this distance, writing stories that tried to reconcile the conflicting demands and perspectives between child and adult. Following Yonge’s works that were also concerned in establishing a stable and confidential relationship between the old and the young, and Ewing’s stories that were occupied in blurring the boundaries that divided readership along gender and generic lines, Molesworth’s stories are also characterized by their efforts to straddle the opposition between adult and child. Indeed, Molesworth’s ambition to attain a balance between the interests of the adult writer and child reader, were certainly facilitated by the appearance

of numerous new genres, literary techniques and forms that were pioneered and developed by writers like Yonge, Ewing and Carroll, and became available and also acceptable in the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus, as I will prove below, the very characteristics of Molesworth's stories that were attacked by the critics were, in fact, the consequences of her literary endeavours to assimilate and harmonize the conflicting conditions a children's story inevitably had to address and deal with.

As a matter of fact, the second citation at the head of this chapter clearly shows how deeply preoccupied Molesworth was with the very question of what kind of qualities a children's writer had to possess to be able to overcome the child-adult binary. Referring to the complicated position of a children's writer, Molesworth stipulates the impossible task that a children's writer should remain one's adult self, with all the advanced experience and knowledge of good and evil, but, should, at the same time, take on "the child's place". For, as Molesworth asserts, a children's story must give children the feeling that they are "understood", but also offer "something higher and yet deeper" which only a mature adult mind could provide. The practice of "stepping down" was, therefore, inevitable when writing for the child, as sympathizing with and addressing the child naturally involved the adult author's adaptation to the simple language and small horizon of experience of the child. Thus, as Molesworth declares, the children's author's greatest challenge was to bring into harmony apparently incompatible conditions, namely to be an adult and a child "without any *apparent* stepping down", to sympathise with the child's feeling while also offering sagacious advice, and to amuse and edify the child, "yet, above all, without preaching".

Against common critical assumption, therefore, Molesworth was by no means unconscious about the various dilemmas a children's author had to confront and deal with when writing for the child. This chapter explores what literary strategies Molesworth employed in her stories to attain the right balance in the relationship between child and adult, innocence and experience, and delight and instruction. In the first part of this chapter, I will focus on the role of language in Molesworth's stories, particularly on Molesworth's much criticised use of a nursery voice and baby-talk by way of analysing one of her earlier stories *Carrots*. I will examine how this work not only explores the act of telling stories to the child, but also evaluates the various forms of children's literature throughout its short history, trying to find a mode of storytelling that manages to maintain the power balance between the adult author and child reader. Subsequently, I will investigate Molesworth's frequent plot sequence of nursery-outside/fantasyworld-nursery. I will contend that Molesworth, although highlighting the importance of the nursery's function to act as a sanctuary, points out to her child readers how the stability of the nursery ultimately relies on a balanced relationship between adult guardian and child ward which, paradoxically, can only be attained through the child's initiation into the world of experience.

1. *Carrots, Just a Little Boy*: Mastering the Art of Storytelling

Molesworth's first great success as a children's writer came with her second book *Carrots: Just a Little Boy* which was published in 1876 under Molesworth's

pen name Ennis Graham. Right after its publication it turned out unexpectedly to be a commercial success.⁷² In 1906, Molesworth herself, looking back on this unanticipated popularity of *Carrots*, tried to explain it in a letter to Macmillan's: "You see when "Carrots" came out, there were very many fewer books for children than is now the case—it perhaps struck a new vein to some extent, for without being conceited, I do think it has been greatly copied!" (Cooper 191).

What new vein was it exactly that Molesworth struck with *Carrots*? When looking at the reviews published when *Carrots* came out, one perceives indeed unanimous approval. *John Bull*, in 1876, praised it as "a story of child life by one who thoroughly understands children and draws them from the life, neither oppressively good nor preternaturally wise" ("Reviews"). *Punch*, in 1877 congratulated Macmillan & Co. calling *Carrots* "a genuine children's book" ("Some Christmas" 297). *The Examiner* described the books as "pretty and charming", adding that "Carrots and his sister are delightful little beings" ("Carrots" 276). While *The Academy* approvingly stated in regard to *Carrots* and *The Cuckoo Clock* that "Mrs. Molesworth's stories are so easy and natural in their style that they have all the charm of a really *impromptu* narrative" ("Book Review" 558).

On the one hand, in light of *The Academy's* comment that praised the book's "easy and natural" style that has the charm of an "*impromptu* narrative", it seems that there existed a belief that Molesworth's *Carrots* was ideally

⁷² In winter 1877, Molesworth met her publisher "who asked her if she knew that the book was selling extremely well" (Woolf 675).

adjusted to the simple and spontaneous nature of the child. This supposed simplicity and artlessness of *Carrots* probably worked in the book's favour amid the increasing concern in the second half of the nineteenth century that children's fiction was becoming too sophisticated for the child reader. Indeed, in 1869, the *Spectator* in an article titled "The Worship of Children" criticized the elaborateness of Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863) and John Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River* (1851), demonstrating that children's literature should "above all, avoid the finesse and complexity of real life" and that instead "[s]implicity, and we may almost say monotony, are of the essence of a true child's amusements" (1299). Salmon, in 1887, also pointed out that the allegorical beauty of George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* "soars above the intelligence of children of tender years" ("Literature for the Little Ones" 572), while in regard to Ewing's works he stated that he "cannot fancy it is among children that her success has been, or will live" ("Literature for the Little Ones" 572)." In light of this general concern that children's literature was growing too sophisticated, and overtaxed the child's intellectual capacity, Molesworth's more sensible approach to children's literature which could be observed in *Carrots*' clear, easy language, simple plot, and exclusive occupation with nursery affairs might have seemed the perfect antidote to what was considered as the highly intellectual and self-conscious works of MacDonald, Kingsley, Carroll and even Ewing.⁷³

⁷³ It is this conflict between the Romantic notion of the simplicity of the child and what was regarded in the Victorian age as the overt sophistication of children's books of famous fantasy writers Marah Gubar's study *Artful Dodgers* (2009) examines. Showing how in fact golden-age authors like Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald were criticised in the nineteenth century for their too intellectual and self-conscious children's books, Gubar argues that against common

On the other hand, clearly, in light of *John Bull's* praising of Molesworth's realistic portrayal of the child, and *The Examiner's* admiration of the little hero and heroine of the book, the “delightful little beings” (“Carrots” 276), *Carrots* also managed to strike a chord with the Victorians' increasing subscription to the Romantic conceptions of childhood. Carrots and his sister Floss, who were depicted as naïve and “old-fashioned”, and their self-contained nursery world, not only displayed the common characteristics of the Romantic notions about the child's innocence and primitivism, but also satisfied the Victorians' desire for an Edenic childhood free from the complexities of modern society.⁷⁴ Moreover, the praise for *Carrots'* “*impromptu* narrative” brought the story in close association with the spontaneous and artless nature of the oral tradition, which was considered an apt mode of storytelling for the child due to its primitive cultural form.

As a matter of fact, Molesworth's *Carrots* indeed consciously adhered to the works of the leading Victorian cultists of childhood like John Ruskin, George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll, who all subscribed to the idea of childhood innocence disseminated by the Romantics. *Carrots* boasts in the beginning of its chapter citations from MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) and Carroll's *Alice* books—notably the notoriously sentimental prefatory poem of *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). Curiously, while these fantasists were

assumption a lot of Victorian children's writers did not wholeheartedly support the Romantic notion about childhood innocence.

⁷⁴ In fact, old-fashioned children abound in Molesworth's stories: Peggy from *Little Miss Peggy: Only a Nursery Story* (1887) is described as “one of those quiet ‘old-fashioned’ children”, Helena from *My New Home* (1894) calls herself an “old-fashioned” child, and Ferdie from *The Oriel Window* (1896) is described to have a “quaint old-fashioned way”. Clearly, these “old-fashioned” children were associated with a nostalgic past in which everything was apparently in a more natural, simple and artless state.

frequently accused of harming the innocence of children with their overly artful work, Molesworth's *Carrots* was regarded by the Victorian commentators as "a genuine children's book" ("Some Christmas" 297). *Carrots*, therefore, seems to have had an additional kind of appeal to the Victorian public which could not be provided by the fantasies of MacDonald or Carroll.

Indeed, it is my argument that Molesworth's *Carrots* struck a "new vein" in the scene of children's literature by attaining an agreeable balance between the Romantic notion of childhood innocence and the female domestic story's more pedagogic approach to the child. On the one hand, as indicated above, *Carrots'* sheltered nursery world resonated with the increasingly dominant Romantic nostalgia for an idyllic childhood in the late Victorian imagination. On the other hand, *Carrots'* simple language, its replication of baby-talk, its pragmatic take on the various dilemmas in the nursery, and its motherly but also gently chiding narrative voice provided the need for a more accessible literature that took into account the child's simplicity but was simultaneously beneficial from an educative viewpoint. Molesworth, in this way, not only followed the fantasists, but also the female tradition of moral and domestic stories, from the writers of the Edgeworthian style down to those in the so-called "school of Miss Yonge" (Godley 101). As a matter of fact, the 1870s and 80s saw an increasing demand that the books of "Miss Edgeworth and Mrs Barbauld" should be restored to the nursery book-shelves due to their simplicity and satisfying combination of entertainment and moral teaching.⁷⁵ Avery indeed observes, that before the

⁷⁵ See Ainger 75. The *Spectator*, for example, complained of "the high art of modern days in which both the bitters and the sweets are too finely mixed to be easily discriminated and apprehended by children" (1300), while Alfred Ainger, in 1895, praised the didactic writers like

1870s, there were “many who assumed a vocabulary and a mastery of syntax and of ethical and religious truths far beyond the reach of any five year old, but “few authors who wrote, as Maria Edgeworth and Mrs Barbauld had, of simple everyday things in a simple style” (Avery, *Childhood’s Pattern* 147-48). With *Carrots*, thus, Molesworth began to fill in this deficiency and provided “a link between the mid-Victorian family story and the new style” (*Childhood’s Pattern* 147).⁷⁶

What one can detect from the various requirements children’s literature was supposed to fulfil in the late nineteenth century is the same irreconcilable conditions of ideal children’s literature Molesworth listed at the head of this chapter. The binary oppositions between innocence and experience, delight and instruction, and fantasy and realism that Molesworth attempted to synthesize in her children’s stories are in fact also the very oppositions that the male-authored fantasy story and the female-authored domestic story each stood for. It seems that to a certain extent Molesworth managed to reconcile these seemingly irreconcilable conditions in her works. For on the one hand, her stories about little innocent babies earned the praise of famous Victorian admirers of childhood such as Swinburne, who in his own poems on babies exulted in the innocence and heavenliness of the child. At the same time,

Edgeworth and Barbauld who produced an ideal “combination of fiction or legend with moral teaching” which he considered as wholesome “for minds and natures in process of forming and training” (75).

⁷⁶ Gubar points out that against common critical assumption about the domination of the Romantic child in the nineteenth century, Romantic notions of childhood existed side by side with a more practical idea of the child that goes back to the rational children’s writers of the eighteenth century. Indeed, Gubar asserts that the late Victorian cult of the child was also the very site where the Romantic idea of the child “clashed most dramatically with an older vision of the child” (*Artful* 10).

Molesworth's everyday nursery stories also satisfied those who wished for a simpler literature in the vein of the didactic female writers that takes into consideration the intellectual need of the child reader. Indeed, the fact that Molesworth's works were able to meet the requirements of both positions of what ideal children's literature was supposed to be suggests not only her stories' effective combination of these two apparently contrasting approaches to children's fiction, but also points to the general instability of this opposition.

The Problem of Language

Carrots, despite its relative unknown status today compared to Molesworth's fantasy stories like *The Cuckoo Clock*, was the one story that Molesworth's name was most associated with among Victorian readership.⁷⁷ Indeed, the story is one of the best examples in Molesworth's oeuvre in which one can observe, not only how she attempted to reconcile, but also explicitly addressed the conflicting ideas on what ideal children's literature should be. *Carrots* is the story of Carrots and his sister Flossie who are at the beginning of the story respectively six and ten years old. The simple plot revolves around an intense nursery drama wherein little Carrots is wrongly accused by the adults of having stolen a half-sovereign. Illustrating the misunderstanding between children and adults and the ensuing repercussion of this happening on the children within the small sphere of the nursery, Molesworth meticulously presents and explores the various diverging interests, desires and perspectives within the relationship

⁷⁷ *Carrots*' popularity can be observed in "the frequency with which it was used as the book mentioned on the title page of her other works in the little advertising phrase 'Author of...'
Macmillan's till as late as in 1906 (Cooper 191).

between adult and child, innocence and experience.

Indeed, by heading the chapter which tells of Carrots' birth with a verse from MacDonald's *At the Back of North Wind* which is sung by another unearthly urchin Diamond, "Where did you come from, Baby dear? Out of the everywhere into here? But how did you come to us, you dear? God thought about you, and so I am here!"(1), Molesworth introduces Carrots as a heavenly baby born straight from the thoughts of God. In this way, Carrots' otherness is constantly emphasized throughout the story. He is perceived by the other family members as an otherworldly, belated child, a "red-haired little stranger" (7) who is unexpectedly pushed into their middle-class household that is laden with financial worries. Carrots' father thinks him "a timid, fanciful, baby-like creature" (71), Carrots' mother observes how her son looked "so fair and innocent" (74), while cousin Sybil calls him "a boy in a fairy story" (194). The narrator as well confirms that Carrots "had a queer, baby-like way of not seeming to take in quickly what was said to him, and staring up in your face with his great oxen-like eyes" which provoked his elder brother to tell him he is "half-witted" (93). All these features of Carrots, as it were, his fancifulness, innocence, his fairy tale origin, his baby-like way and his pondering nature point to the ideas of the Romantic child as explored in the first chapter, solitary, highly imaginative, innocent, otherworldly and autonomous in his consciousness.

Molesworth juxtaposes in this way Carrots' heavenly innocence with the secularity of the rest of the family members which she highlights in the incident of the half-sovereign which involves the most ultimate representation of worldliness, namely money. This great misunderstanding happens when Carrots accidentally discovers a half-sovereign in his sister's drawer, and comes to the

conclusion that this pretty yellow sixpenny has been sent by the fairies so that he can buy his sister Floss a new doll. Carrots is ignorant of the fact that the coin he picked up is also called a “half-sovereign”, associating the word “sovereign” only with the kings and queens in his sister’s play cards. Thus, when the nurse later misses her half-sovereign and asks the children about it, he truthfully replies that he knows nothing of a half-sovereign wondering, however, how a sovereign can be broken in halves. The catastrophe comes about when Carrots’ brother Maurice discovers the money in Carrots’ paint-box, and Carrots is brought in front of his strict and not very understanding father who scrupulously cross-questions the little boy as to why he took the “half-sovereign”.

In this misunderstanding between Carrots and his father, Molesworth underlines not only the child’s ignorance of the word “half-sovereign” but also how completely detached Carrots’ idea of money is from its conventional associations. In contrast to his father, for whom the idea of money is deeply imbued with worldliness itself, the origin of money being the “rough-and-ready world” (84), for Carrots the origin of the “sixpennies” with the “pretty yellow colour” are the fairies (53-4). That this close association of childhood innocence with the child’s imperfect language ability in *Carrots* had a wide appeal to the Victorian public can be observed in the numerous children’s stories like Yotty Osborn’s *Pickles: A Funny Little Couple* (1878) and Ismay Thorn’s *Only Five* (1880) that followed *Carrots* and also featured, but also overworked, this image

of the pretty dimpled toddler who speaks baby-talk.⁷⁸ It is perhaps unsurprising thus that most recent critics saw Carrots' and his fellow dimpled babies' naivety, simplicity and fancifulness as an obsequious subjection to the fascination the heavenly innocence of the child held for sentimental Victorian adults.⁷⁹

Molesworth's choice of presenting Carrots' imperfect language ability is, however, by no means only a device to gratify a child-loving adult reader. Rather, this choice was the result of a careful consideration on Molesworth's part to illustrate the real difficulties of the child who is in the process of learning language and thus to evoke the sympathy of the child reader who deals with similar difficulties. Indeed, it is my argument that Molesworth's phonetic replication of Carrots' imperfect speech had the important function to fulfil her demand that the children's writer had to take on the child's perspective and thus sympathize with the child's emotions.⁸⁰ Significantly, therefore, *Carrots* is above all a story in which Molesworth aimed to depict how insufficient language could appear, from the point of view of the child, and to sympathize in this way with the child's feelings of anxiety and puzzlement in his or her relationship with language.

⁷⁸ See Carpenter 106.

⁷⁹ Carpenter, for example, asserts that Carrots is not even a "real child", but rather embodies the adult's dream child, as he argues: "His [Carrots'] perpetual goodness suggests that he belongs to some minor order of angels" (106).

⁸⁰ That, in fact, Molesworth's representation of imperfect child speech was motivated to faithfully reproduce the child's use of language rather than to bring out the child's innocence, can be confirmed by a letter of Molesworth to Macmillan in which she complains about the proof-reader's work: "In most instances his corrections are quite wrong ... young children do not talk perfect English and cannot be represented as doing so" (Cooper 351). Molesworth carefully took into consideration that not every child character made the same error in his or her speech, and also had a strict age range in which she regarded baby-talk as realistic. Indeed, Carrots, who was in the beginning six years old, does not use child language anymore after he turns seven.

The incident of the “half-sovereign” in *Carrots* most notably underlines how language could, from the child’s perspective, be a restriction in his or her self-assertion, and could sometimes even be felt as insufficient in describing the outside world. Before the incident of the sovereign, Molesworth presages the commotion the ambiguity of language would incur by depicting Carrots and Floss’ conversation on the definition of the word “killing”. When Carrots muses what the exact meaning of “killing” could be, Floss answers:

If there was no killing we’d have nothing to eat. “Eggs,” said Carrots; “eggs and potatoes, and—and—cake?” “But even that would be a sort of killing,” persisted Floss, though feeling by no means sure that she was not getting beyond her depth, “if we didn’t eat eggs they would grow into chickens, and so eating stops them; and potatoes have roots, and when they’re pulled up they don’t grow; and cake has eggs in, and—oh I don’t know, let’s talk of something else. (20-21)

As can be seen, the children’s discussion about this problem of the meaning of “killing” is brought to an immediate standstill owing to the fact that the boundary the word “killing” applies keeps on shifting. Molesworth carefully illustrates here the emotions of bewilderment and uncertainty of Carrots and Floss who are confronted with an idea that is difficult to lay hold of with language. The children’s feeling of confusion in the face of the complex relationship between word and reality and the less-than-precise nature of language is heightened in the scene in which their father asks Carrots whether he took the half-sovereign requiring an answer of yes or no, and Carrots—quite honestly—denies this act by repetitively wailing: “I don’t under’tand” (65) and “I didn’t know—I can’t

under'tand" (65-6). Molesworth's depiction here of Carrots' ignorance of the word "sovereign"—indeed, the very concept of synonym itself—his imperfect pronunciation and consequently his lack of words to defend himself, all point to her endeavours to sympathize with the child character's and child reader's feelings of helplessness when faced with the limitations of language.

Discussing the difficulty of the children's writer's task to straddle the opposite positions of child and adult, Molesworth stated that "even the choice of language partakes of this double position" ("Story-Writing" 164). On the one hand, language was for Molesworth a significant tool to explain to the child reader the world. She declared as general rules in regard to language in children's fiction: "Good English, terse and clear, with perhaps a little more repetition, a little more *making sure you are understood* than is allowable in ordinary fiction" ("On the Art" 343). In other words, when the narrative voice took on the role of the adult-educator, Molesworth was adamant that the language that reveals the world to the child should appear to the child reader as simple, pure and precise, as it were, unproblematic. On the other hand, however, as Molesworth aimed to sympathize with her child readers about the various problems that inevitably emerge in the process of acquiring language, she was also obligated to disclose the little gaps between the word and the world, between signifier and signified. Indeed, although Molesworth did not demonstratively problematize and make fun of the slipperiness and arbitrariness of language as for example Carroll did in his *Alice* books, the unreliability of language frequently turns up in her stories as the very cause of the misunderstandings and tensions within the nursery. From the inset story "The Two Funny Little Trots" in *Carrots* to her later book *This and That* (1899),

Molesworth would repeatedly point out to her child readers the strangeness and ambiguity of language inevitably exposing in this way that language was not as innocent and unproblematic as she liked it to be. Thus, when Jacqueline Rose perceived the kind of realism displayed in the nursery stories of the 1880s and 1890s “represented by a writer like Mrs Molesworth”(82) as part of the manipulative agenda of children’s writing to present language as an “unmediated reflection of the real world” (72), she is partly right and partly wrong.⁸¹ Certainly, from the position of the adult-educator Molesworth resorted to an idea of language that is pure and immutable, but in describing the troubles of learning language from the perspective of the child she could not help but point to the instability and inconstant nature of language.

The Problem of Storytelling

Besides the problem of the right kind of language in children’s literature, *Carrots* also explores the more practical question of how to tell or write a story for the child who is still in the process of learning language. For this purpose Molesworth inserted three independent stories in *Carrots* that are told by various family members to present different narrative modes of storytelling. The first inset story is named “A Long Ago Story” and is told by the old nurse to Carrots and Floss and represents the most basic mode of storytelling, namely the orally-transmitted nursery tale. The second tale is called “The Bewitched Tongue” and is read by Carrots and Floss’ older sister Cecil. The book she

⁸¹ See Rose 65, 82.

reads from is described as ancient, and seems to date back to the eighteenth-century moral tales considering the story's stiff and long vocabularies and explicit moralism. The last story is titled "The Two Funny Little Trots" and is read to Carrots and Floss by their aunt who is also the author of the story. This third story uses simple vocabulary and addresses the reader in an intimate narrative voice and stands for the modern Victorian children's story. Looking at these three imbedded stories that each represent the most popular form of children's literature in the history of children's fiction, *Carrots* can also be read as an exploration, and evaluation of children's literature from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Indeed, by displaying a wide array of narrators who avail themselves of different narrative modes, and by presenting the reaction of child listeners—Carrots and Floss—to these varied form of stories, Molesworth, on the one hand, can present the various difficulties the teller has to overcome in the storytelling process, from the child's still incomplete language ability, to the child's desire for amusement and need for emotional and moral education. On the other hand, she can point to the valuable aspects one can find in each form of children's fiction to combine them and create in the end the ideal mode of storytelling for the child.

The first story nurse tells Floss and Carrots on their request to relieve their boredom is the tale of little Miss Janet and Master Hugh. It is an old story that the nurse herself was told by her own mother who in turn was the nurse of little Janet and Hugh. The tale is therefore an example of the most primitive mode of storytelling, namely the oral tradition, and presents Molesworth the opportunity to explore the narrative style, language and the relationship between teller and listener in oral storytelling. Molesworth herself was influenced by this basic form

of storytelling as she grew up listening to the stories of her own grandmother who was “a genius at story-telling” (“Story-writing” 163). Her grandmother’s storytelling sessions had indeed a significant and lasting influence on Molesworth’s own literary output, not only on their narrative voice which often adopts that of a familiar oral storyteller, but they also laid the foundation of Molesworth’s “two kinds of writing for children—fantasy and fairy tale, and the realistic story of everyday child-life” (Cooper 42).⁸²

Molesworth stresses the benefits of oral storytelling by showing how this mode can be more dynamic, interactive and more adjustable to the needs and desires of its target readership than the act of “writing” a story. For instance, Molesworth illustrates how nurse’s storytelling allows the child listener to assume to a certain extent the control of the story, for it is the child who initiates the beginning of the tale, who asks for the particulars that specifically interest her or him and who determines in this way the content and direction of the tale. Throughout the nurse’s tale, therefore, Floss and Carrots interrupt the flow of the nurse’s narrative by asking her about the fates of minor characters or incidents, and sometimes by even joining in the storytelling process through their own predictions and wishes about the next happening. Moreover, Molesworth also shows how “telling” a story sometimes enables a smoother transmission of its intended meaning to the child than a “written” story. As the nurse tells the story directly to Floss and Carrots, the children can immediately ask her when they do not comprehend a word or an idea. For example, when

⁸² The fairy story “The Brown Bull of Norrowa”—another inset tale in *The Tapestry Room* (1879)—and the realistic nursery stories in *Grandmother Dear* (1878) have all been told by Molesworth’s grandmother to Molesworth. See Molesworth, “How I Write” (1).

Floss does not understand the Scottish custom of Sunday preaching, nurse immediately explains it to her mentioning that there are “many different ways of saying and doing the same things in churches” (101). Molesworth presents in this way how it is possible for the oral tradition to avoid the confusion the arbitrary nature of linguistic signs can cause. It is no wonder thus that Locke and Rousseau, who displayed such hostility towards written language, preferred the immediacy of the spoken word to teach the child.⁸³

However, although Molesworth clearly values the immediacy and flexibility of oral storytelling that contributes to make the story livelier and easily adaptable to the wishes of the child listeners, she also points out that this spontaneity can also prevent the teller from weighing and considering the appropriate word choice and the effect the story would have on the child listener. When Floss asks nurse about what happened afterwards to Miss Janet and her mother, nurse falls in a nostalgic mood and talks about the inevitability of the course of time. Molesworth illustrates here how nurse’s sentimental reminiscences on childhood are too sophisticated for little Carrots who eventually becomes tired of nurse’s story “for he hardly understood all that nurse was saying” (107). Indeed, Molesworth herself compared in an article the differences between “writing” and “telling” stories for the child, noting the lack of control over the story on the teller’s part when one is “telling” it. She also admitted that since she *writes* her stories for children, which involves careful and considerate “weighing of words,” she can no longer *tell* stories “with ease or

⁸³ In regard to Locke’s and Rousseau’s aversion to the written word in the education of the child, see Rose 46-49.

satisfaction” because the “careful choice of language” which she considered of utmost importance in children’s literature was not possible when *telling* a story (“How I Write” 3). In light of Molesworth’s emphasis on the children’s writer’s control over the language of the story, the opposition between oral and written story becomes the opposition of control the child and the adult have over the story, which, as Molesworth suggests, is not brought into balance in oral storytelling.

In direct contrast to nurse’s oral tale, therefore, the second interpolated story is “read” out to Carrots and Floss by their older sister Cecil. In response to Carrots’ wish that she tell them a story since nurse’s stories are all worn out, Cecil promises Carrots to read on the first rainy day a story out of “a funny old-fashioned little book” (110) a certain Miss Barclay lent to her. Cecil appears indeed on a rainy day in the nursery bringing a “little old brown book” (111) which is called “Faults Corrected or, Beneficent Influences” and must be, as Cecil conjectures, “rather ancient” (114) as it originally belonged to Miss Barclay’s mother when she was a little girl.⁸⁴ The narrator explicitly links this book to those early forms of children’s literature of the eighteenth century: “It [the book] was about the size of the first version of ‘Evenings at Home,’ which some of you are sure to have in your book-cases. For I should think everybody’s grandfathers and grandmothers had an ‘Evenings at Home’ among their few, dearly-prized children’s books” (111). In bringing Cecil’s “little old brown book” in close connection with Barbauld’s *Evenings at Home* (1792-96)

⁸⁴ Molesworth herself possessed this “little brown book” as she enthusiastically remembers: “There was one perfectly delicious fat little brown volume which we looked upon as an inexhaustible treasury of delight, handed down to us from the end of the last century” (“Story-Reading” 773).

which certainly is the most famous example of eighteenth-century didactic literature, Molesworth prefigures not only the language, narrative style, and purpose of Cecil's story, but also the nature of its limitations.

Indeed, as expected, the language in Cecil's story turns out to be high-flown, the narrative voice dry, the plot formulaic, while the purpose is explicitly didactic. Before reading the story, therefore, Cecil reassures the children: "When there come very long words, ... there often are in old books—I'll change them to easy ones, so that Carrots may understand" (115). Cecil's story is a didactic fairy story, a typical case in which the fairy tale is appropriated for pedagogic ends, as numerous moral stories did, like the inset fairy tales in Fielding's *The Governess* (1749) or Sinclair's *Holiday House* (1832). The simple plot tells about a girl who possesses a hasty tongue, but learns in the end to restrain her rash words through the help of a fairy spell. Rather than describe the girl's emotional struggles of overcoming her flaws through a sympathetic narrative perspective, stir up the reader's identification and persuade in this way the young audience of the necessity of correct moral behaviour, as probably Molesworth would have done, the story relies on explicitly spelled out adages like "Think before you speak," or, "Second thoughts are best" (115). Although the story succeeds in convincing ten-year-old Floss to be more careful of her choice of words, in the case of five-year-old Carrots, it fails not only to keep his interest, but also to communicate the moral lesson. Despite Cecil's explanation of difficult words, Carrots is unable to understand and follow the story: "'Cis,' interrupted Carrots at this point, 'I don't understand the story.' 'I'm very sorry,' said Cecil, 'I didn't notice what a lot of long words there are'" (120). Consequently, when at the end of the story, Cecil asks Carrots whether he liked

the story, Carrots admits that he did not understand the moral, and only liked the fairy part.

What Molesworth points out here as a significant limitation of Cecil's story is not its didacticism, but the lack of a sympathetic narrative presence that attempts to adjust and mitigate the adult-author's superior position in regard to knowledge, language, experience and even morality to the child reader's inevitably inferior one. Indeed, this awareness of the insufficiency of the early moral stories stems from Molesworth's own experience. Enjoying those early didactic tales—her particular favourite was Sherwood's *The Fairchild Family* (1818-47)—Molesworth recalled how she was nevertheless “conscious even then of some inward revolt against the *forcedness* of the religious, and even moral teaching it strove to impart” (“Story-Reading” 772). In regard to Edgeworth's works she even “missed *something* in these stories—a lack of sentiment, possibly of sentimentality only! They seemed to me hard, but slightly, if at all, sympathising” (“Story-Reading” 772). In describing her own emotions of “revolt” against the moral superiority of the narrative perspective of those early children's books, Molesworth stresses again the great importance of alleviating the power imbalance between adult author and child reader within children's literature. In contrast therefore to nurse's story where the insufficient control of the teller over the story emerged as a problem in reconciling the interests of the adult teller and the child listener, Molesworth points out how in Cecil's story it is in turn the dominant authority and control of the adult author that threatens to upset the precarious relationship between adult author and child reader.

The last interpolated story is told by Carrots' and Floss' young aunt and strives to amend the problems of the two former stories. Indeed, Molesworth

creates Carrots' aunt as an emerging writer of children's fiction who is keenly interested in the reaction of her main audience and reads out her stories to the children because "it would help her to judge if other children would care for them when they were 'bounded up into a book'" (204-5).⁸⁵ Thus, different from the children's stories of the former generation, the aunt's tale not only aims to instruct and inculcate moral messages from the superior position of an adult educator, but is also eager to consider and reflect the needs, tastes and preferences of the child reader. Accordingly, the aunt's story avails itself of simple, clear language, and is told by an intimate, friendly narrator. In fact, the story mirrors in many aspects the primary characteristics of *Carrots*. Just like *Carrots*, the narrator in the aunt's story mimics its two little heroes' incorrect pronunciation of words, which causes—as also happens in *Carrots*—a great misunderstanding. The story is also written as if it were directly "told" to a child in that the narrator directly addresses and questions the child reader, a feature which is one of the main characteristics of *Carrots* and generally of most of Molesworth's children's stories. At first sight, indeed, the aunt's story seems to be the kind of work Molesworth would have written herself according to the very rules she thought ideal children's fiction should abide by.

Titled "The Two Funny Little Trots", aunt's story tells of aunt's own encounter and relationship with two little children—the "two little trots" of the title—she met when she was on vacation as a sixteen-year-old girl. Curiously, though, despite the various attempts of the aunt's story to narrow the distance

⁸⁵ Molesworth herself used to test her manuscripts on her children and grandchildren. She mentioned how this "greatly helped by seeing the effect" which the stories made on the children, and that "the criticism, which you may be pretty sure will not be too flattering, of a group of intelligent boys and girls is invaluable" (Cooper 181, 182).

between adult author and child reader through its simple language and warm narrator's voice, within the aunt's story, in contrast to *Carrots*, the narrator shows little interest in the interiority of the two little trots it tells of. Although the aunt-narrator constantly observes these two children from her window, tries to hold their attention with her little dog, plays childish games with them on the shore and repeatedly declares her great love for these "funny little trots", she gives few insights into what, in turn, the little trots might think of her. Thus, given the story's purely adult-centred focus on the child figure, it is clear that Molesworth intends to criticize through the aunt's story the Victorian cultural fad, of "the interest of many of the charming and delightful stories about children, which ... depends very greatly on the depicting and description of childish peculiarities and idiosyncrasies" (Molesworth, "On the Art 342"). Giving Florence Montgomery's *Misunderstood* (1869) and Ewing's stories such as *Jackanapes* as examples, Molesworth pointed out that although these books are "beautiful" and "inimitable" ("Story-Reading" 774), they cannot be called books "for" children as they do not "see through child-eyes", "hear with child-ears" and "feel with child-heart", in short, do not take on the child's perspective ("Story-Reading" 774).

In fact, the only glimpse of some insight about what these two trots might perceive is given through the perspective of the aunt-narrator:

[T]here they stood, legs well apart, little mouths and eyes wide open, staring with the greatest interest and solemnity at Gip and me. At Gip, of course, far more than at me. Gip was a dog, *I*, was only a girl!—quite a middle-aged person, no doubt, the trots thought me, if they thought about me at all (213-4)

The narrative voice here is kind and full of emotion with its use of exclamation mark and italicised word. Moreover, the narrator even playfully attempts to adopt the little trots' point of view by declaring her inferior position compared to her dog and claiming that, after all, she is only a "girl", even a quite "middle-aged" one, that should naturally not be worthy of attention in the eyes of little children. Ultimately, though, the passage reveals more about the narrator, her emotions concerning the little trots, her attitude towards them and her own ideas about those children, whereas the two little trots essentially remain obscure and unknowable. The mysteriousness of the children is, in fact, furthered through the aunt-narrator's own refusal to find out whether the trots are girls or boys or where they live, because "[i]t would spoil them to fancy them growing up into great boys or girls ... I want them to be always trots—nothing else" (218). By displaying in this way the narrator's desire for the immutable, singular child Molesworth alludes to the practice of the Victorian cult of childhood to isolate and separate the child from its social and developmental context.

Thus, the first part of the aunt's story, with its loving observation of the idiosyncrasies of the little two trots and its abrupt end with the apparent death of one of the children, seems to follow this new fad of books that idealise the child from the adult's point of view. The second half of the story, however, inverts this formulaic plot device of heart-rending deaths of angelic children as in Montgomery's *Misunderstood* or Hesba Stretton's *Jessica's First Prayer* (1867). The narrator accidentally meets the trots again, and it is revealed that the death of one of the trots was only a misunderstanding caused by the child's ambiguous use of language. Molesworth, therefore, comically depicts how the

narrator's refusal to place the children in a cultural and social scene, and her sole reliance on the trots' baby-talk, in other words, her rather unhealthy insistence to preserve the trots forever as children, ironically led to the miscommunication between her and the two little trots.

Aunt's story of the two little funny trots is, therefore, an inverse version of the story of Carrots and Floss who resemble so much their fictional counterparts in their earnestness and also innocence concerning language. While *Carrots* concentrates on the child's emotions during his difficult process of adapting to the grown-ups' world, the aunt's story focuses, in turn, on the similarly demanding process of the adult to grasp the perspective of the child. In this light, the story of the two trots is not only a parody of the popular Victorian stories that glorified and sentimentalized childhood, but also an exploration of the adult's and thus the adult writer's various endeavours to catch and hold the child's attention. Interestingly, the end of the aunt's story in which she informs her child listeners how the trots eventually grew up into adults, seamlessly passes over to the ending of *Carrots* in which the narrator declares her love for Carrots and Floss who, the narrator reveals, are also by now adults. Molesworth in this way overlaps all the narrative voices of the three inset tales suggesting how all these different storytellers that in various and differing ways tried to entertain and instruct the child contributed to create her own narrative voice that tells the story of *Carrots*.

The "Nursery" Voice

The narrative voice in *Carrots* therefore is where one can most strikingly

observe Molesworth's efforts to overcome the problematic relationship between adult author and child reader, which she showed through the ways in which the three interpolated tales could go so easily out of balance. The narrative voice in *Carrots* vacillates thus between a sympathetic and a morally superior position to sustain this balance and satisfy Molesworth's principle that a children's writer should have the power to straddle the perspectives of the child and the adult: "It is to some extent the power of clothing your own personality with theirs, of seeing as they see, feeling as they feel... and yet—*not* becoming one of them: remaining yourself, in full possession of your matured judgement, your wider and deeper views" (Molesworth, "On the Art" 341).

Sanjay Sircar, who has examined the narrative voice in Molesworth's *Cuckoo Clock*, also noted this double narrative perspective, and pointed out how Molesworth's seemingly "warmly inviting auntly voice" provides in fact "the sugarcoating for the moral pill" ("The Victorian" 15). Analysing the narrator in *Cuckoo Clock*, Sircar shows how Molesworth employs in her—what he calls—"auntly narrative voice" various rhetorical devices like "the rhetoric of equality", "rhetoric of participation" and "rhetoric of nonsubversive irony" (21) to "undo the hierarchic relationship" between adult narrator and child narratee inherent in children's fiction ("The Victorian" 20). Although Sircar focuses on Molesworth's *Cuckoo Clock*, most of the rhetorical devices he enumerates are also applicable to *Carrots*. The rhetoric of equality is defined by Sircar as the narrator's adoption of the "'nursery' adjectives which reflect a childish viewpoint" and "the child-protagonist's manner of speech" ("The Victorian" 6) to establish an equal and familiar relationship with the child reader. In *Carrots* this rhetoric of equality can be observed in the narrator's own use of Carrots' mispronounced words like

“under’tand” (90), “kite under’tood” (90) and “dedful” (95) and also his childish fancy words like “fairies’ sixpennies” (54) and “storm songs” (95).

Indeed, for Molesworth this rhetoric of equality seems to be one of the main features of modern children’s fiction, as it is in the third of the inset stories wherein the aunt-narrator uses for the first time the mispronounced words of the two little trots. It is, however, not only through the rhetoric of equality Molesworth attempts to build a close and trustworthy relationship with the child reader. Sircar also mentions the “rhetoric of participation” of Molesworth which attempts to engender a playful atmosphere by creating the illusion of “shared knowledge and of direct interplay between the narrative voice and the fictive listener” (“The Victorian” 8). The narrator constructs this interplay by directly addressing the child readers as “children” and “you”. This rhetoric in fact has been examined already in nurse and also aunt’s story above. In nurse’s story, it involved the direct interaction between teller and listener, while in the aunt’s case it consisted of asking the child listeners questions throughout the story, and inviting them in this way to take part in the storytelling process. In *Carrots* this rhetoric can be observed in the part that tells about Carrots’ birth, and the narrator asks the child reader whether he or she can imagine Floss’ great delight about it: “Can you fancy, can you in the least fancy, Floss’s delight ... ?” (5). Sometimes, indeed, the narrator even admits his or her own ignorance regarding the very purpose of its own narration:

Why Carrots should have come to have his history written I really cannot say. I must leave you, who understand such things a good deal better than I, you, children, for whom the history is written, to find out. ... There was nothing very remarkable about him; there

was nothing very remarkable about the place where he lived ...
and on the whole he was very much like other little boys. (2-3)

The narrator adopts here a casual and conversational tone to set up an interactive relationship with its child reader, in the way nurse and Carrots had above, constructing in this way a similar atmosphere of oral storytelling. Significantly, however, the narrator endows the child with superior knowledge concerning the purpose of the story. This kind of appeal to the child reader's superior comprehension when it comes to children's fiction and actually to children's way of thinking can be found over and over again throughout the story. For instance, when the narrator records how Floss said something "half to herself, half to Carrots, and half to nurse", the narrator quickly adds: "I shouldn't have said it so, for there can't be three halves of anything, but no doubt you will understand" (15). By using this, supposedly, childish manner of speaking—which the narrator nevertheless points out is an impossible idea from an adult's perspective—the narrator not only gives priority to the child's point of view, but is also able to establish a conspiratorial relationship with the child reader.

Significant, however, is, how Molesworth—despite her use of various rhetorical devices that align the narrator on the child's side—never completely closes the gap between child reader and adult author, but rather highlights at the same time the narrator's grown-up position. The nursery adjectives, childish words and the wrongly pronounced words of children the narrator adopts are clearly signalled through quotation marks and are, in this way, clearly differentiated from the style of the rest of the narration. Throughout the story the narrator also frequently stresses his or her own advanced age: "[Y]ou must forgive me, boys and girls—when people begin to grow old they get in the habit

of telling stories in a rambling way” (42-3). Also, in inviting the child reader to participate in the process of storytelling by reasoning that a child knows better how a children’s story should be told, the narrator paradoxically further underlines the barrier between child and adult. Thus, on the one hand, Molesworth employs this so-called “auntly” narrative voice to catch the child reader’s attention, to gain the reader’s confidence and to invite the child reader to participate in the story narrowing thus the distance between adult author and child reader. Simultaneously, however, Molesworth uses this intimacy she built between these two parties, to impart her didactic message to the child reader in a more effective way. As Sircar states: “All the previous devices are then used to make the topoi of moral instruction acceptable under cover of playfulness” (“The Victorian” 20-21).

Carrots has therefore moments in which the narrative voice leaves the sympathizing stance and morally assesses the child according to the value system of the adult. An apt example of this alternating stance of Molesworth’s narrative voice in *Carrots* would be when the narrator tells of Floss’ loneliness in the nursery before Carrots’ birth:

So, till Carrots appeared on the scene, Floss had had rather a lonely time of it, for, “of course,” Cecil and Louise, who had pockets in all their frocks, and could play the ‘March of the Men of Harlech’ as a duet on the piano, were far too big to be “friends to Floss,” as she called it. They were friendly and kind in an elder sisterly way, but that was quite a different sort of thing from being “friends to her,” though it never occurred to Floss to grumble or to think, as so many little people think now-a-days, how much better

things would have been arranged if she had had the arranging of them. (4-5)

The first half of this passage is a perfect example of Molesworth's rhetoric of equality. The narrative stance sympathizes with that of a child in that it acknowledges aspects that might probably be of utmost importance from a child's point of view like the "pockets" in the frocks, or the ability to play the "March of the Men of Harlech". The narrator also uses words that reflect the nursery child's perspective like "of course" and "friends to her" that are indicated by quotation marks and should assure the reader that the narrator is versed in the nursery rules. The narrative voice, however, changes this sympathetic perspective in the second half of the passage. The voice that assumed the language and viewpoint of the child is suddenly a morally superior adult who reprimands those children who do not behave as well as Floss. This sympathetic perspective of the narrator, which takes on in significant moments the role of the adult-educator providing the child reader the necessary moral order, faithfully reflects Molesworth's principle that children's literature should not merely entertain and sympathize, but also provide "something higher and yet deeper" ("Story-Writing" 164).

Certainly, in his reading of Molesworth's *The Cuckoo Clock*, Sircar concedes that there is always the danger that an "auntly" or, what Walls terms, "nursery" voice might convey adult condescension ("The Victorian" 20). Sircar also points out, however, that Molesworth's narrative voice averts this danger in that her rhetorical devices are in control, namely, not "annoyingly obtrusive" but "tactfully proportioned to accommodate the moral of the novel" ("The Victorian" 20). As a matter of fact, *Carrots* and *The Cuckoo Clock* present only the

beginning of Molesworth's search for an adequate voice to address her child readers. The explicit and the sometimes even obtrusive shift from a sympathetic to a superior instructive stance displayed in the narrator's voice in the passage above became a less frequent feature in Molesworth's later works. Indeed, her ongoing attempts to find a voice that accommodates in a more unassuming and subtle way the perspective of child and adult, and the purpose to amuse and instruct can for instance be observed in her frequent use of the child narrator in her later stories. Following Ewing, Molesworth would further develop this narrative technique in a plethora of stories, from *The Boys and I* (1883) and *The Carved Lions* (1895) to *Peterkin* (1902), in which she managed to combine in an easy and natural manner the child's point of view with the story's pedagogic purpose. The problem of language and narrative address are however, not the only aspects that point to Molesworth's efforts in striking the exact balance between the perspective of child and adult. As I will demonstrate in the next part, the recurring plot trajectory of nursery-(fantasy) world-nursery of her stories would also be a significant literary strategy to provide the child, within and without the story, a well-adjusted point of view in presenting the world, and a well-adjusted balance of innocence and experience.

2. Within and Without the Nursery

The significant role the realm of the nursery plays in Molesworth's children's stories is probably partly a faithful reflection of the actual conditions of the middle-class Victorian household. As Judith Flanders observes in *Inside the Victorian Home*, throughout the nineteenth century, in middle-class homes the living space of children was gradually being segregated from those of the adults.

The nursery was established at the top of the house because first, it was desirable to keep apart the children's space for the sake of domestic convenience, and second, because the upper rooms were regarded as the healthiest place in the house which was significant in an age when child mortality rates were still high (Flanders 28-30). On the one hand, as Flanders states, this kind of separation of the child's own sphere symbolizes the kind of distance that "was in place between parents and their children" in the nineteenth century (31). Flanders cites a household advice book of a certain Mrs Panton who wrote as late as 1888 that children should have rooms where they do not "interfere unduly with the comfort of the heads of the establishment" (37). On the other hand, however, the assignment of the nursery at the top of the house for the sake of the child's health suggests how the Victorian home became gradually child-centred. These two opposing functions the nursery was supposed to fulfil—seclusion and protection of the child—indicate the still ambiguous and contested attitudes of the Victorians towards the child. The ultimate consequence was, however, that children increasingly spent most of their time among themselves and their nurse, except when they were sent down to see their parents. Avery claimed thus that the increase in the number of children's authors who began to write in the vein of Molesworth's nursery-centered stories "during the 1880s and 1890s is not so much a tribute to the power of Mrs Molesworth's lead as a reflection on the organization of the prosperous middle-class household of the time" (*Nineteenth Century* 160).

Besides mirroring the social and ideological circumstances that brought about the segregation of children into their own quarters, however, Molesworth's microcosmic depiction of the nursery world also expresses her intention to

underline how seemingly small matters within the nursery realm gain great significance from the child's point of view. By zooming into the nursery sphere, Molesworth was able to fully adjust the narrative perspective of her stories to that of the child. Not surprisingly, though, on account of the separateness and smallness of Molesworth's nursery world and her stories' preoccupation with the nursery's function to protect the child from the world outside, critics like Carpenter have complained that Molesworth depicts childhood as "a state of being set apart" (105) and that her fictional children lead an existence in their nurseries that "is placid and unruffled" (105). Against these criticisms, however, an unequivocal opposition between the naivety of the child and the worldliness of the commercial world in the style of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1838) is, in fact, rather rare in Molesworth's oeuvre. In fact, it is important to note that despite Molesworth's emphasis on the nursery's role to keep the child safe from the outer world, she expressly points out throughout most of her stories how the segregation of the nursery sphere can also turn into the very cause of the child's loneliness, helplessness and even subjection.

Thus, in stories such as *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877), *The Tapestry Room* (1879), *The Boys and I* (1883), and *Two Little Waifs* (1883), Molesworth pointed to the unstable and unreliable function of the nursery to provide the child protection, amusement and emotional comfort. As a matter of fact, one can detect in Molesworth's frequent plot formula that exposes the child either to the so-called reality of the grown-ups, or to uncharted fantastic realms not only Molesworth's awareness about the precarious nature of childhood innocence, but also her educative aim to acquaint the child character and child reader with the world outside the nursery. Indeed, as I will further discuss below,

Molesworth's two types of story-writing for children—the realistic and fantastic nursery story—although written in different modes, serve, in fact, the same purpose, namely to lead the child, outside and inside the story, from ignorant innocence to a more powerful state of experience. Significantly, I will also show how Molesworth's natural blending and indiscriminate use of the mode of realism and fantasy in her stories significantly contributed in gradually obliterating the hierarchy between fantasy and domestic realism that dominated nineteenth-century children's literature.

Within the Nursery: Heavenly and Imprisoned Innocence

Before revealing how easily the nursery's role to protect the child can be unsettled, Molesworth's stories would, however, invariably begin with the depiction of a perfect nursery. In *The Carved Lions* (1895), for example, the narrator Geraldine, when she tells about her first years of childhood, states that "our home was a very sweet and loving one, though it was only a rather small and dull house in a dull street. Our father and mother did everything they possibly could to make us happy ..." (3). Geraldine also reminisces about a particularly happy evening before—what she calls—the "shadow" (34) of changes falls over her family: "I don't think there could have been found anywhere two happier children than my brother and I that dull rainy evening as we trotted along beside our mother. There was the feeling of *her* to take care of us, of our cheerful home waiting for us, with a bright fire and the tea-table all spread" (24). In Geraldine's description the perfect home is characterized by unconditional parental love, comfort, warmth and safety. However, as much as

she emphasizes the nursery's function to provide the child emotional comfort and protection from the outside world, Molesworth is also very careful to point out to her readers how the nursery's exclusion from worldly troubles is in fact hardly viable. Indeed, in *The Carved Lions* and *The Boys and I*, the parents are forced to leave England and go to foreign countries—respectively to South America and China—to better their meagre financial circumstances which marks the beginning of the children's misery. Even in *Carrots*—contrary to Carpenter's condemnation that Carrots' world is depicted "as blissful and Arcadian"—Molesworth points to the financial difficulties of Carrots' household and how these troubles strongly affect Carrots and Floss' notion of money.

Indeed, just as Ewing blurred the boundaries between domestic and public sphere through her parody of adventure stories, Molesworth's frequent portrayals of how external circumstances like financial troubles turn the nursery into a desolate place and put the children through a chain of miseries, prove that her stories also call attention to the instability of the boundary between the nursery and the outside world. In *The Boys and I*, for instance, Audrey and her brothers are sent to live with their Uncle Geoff as their parents have to leave for China to enhance father's career prospects. Uncle Geoff turns out to be friendly but also much occupied in his job as a doctor, so that the children are mostly left to themselves in the nursery. The story shows how the nursery that used to be a realm of perfect happiness gradually changes into a daunting bleak prison. Audrey indeed declares after spending a day in complete isolation in the nursery that "[a]nything would have been better than another long dreary day up in the dull nursery" (107). It is, however, not only the dreariness and boredom of the nursery that plagues the children, for after being deprived of their own nurse

and refusing to have a new one, the children also have to face physical inconveniences:

Before the end of that afternoon, I think we had changed our minds about wishing we might have no nurse. It was very tiresome every time we wanted anything to have to fetch it ourselves, or to have to run out to the landing and stand there till Sarah happened to come in sight. There was no bell in the nursery, at least it was broken, but even if it hadn't been, we shouldn't have dared to ring it. (108-9)

As can be seen, the nursery without constant parental or adult care turns into an isolated, uncomfortable and prison-like place. As the children are not allowed and not taught to step out of their sphere and do things on their own, they are forced to completely rely on the occasional help of sympathetic adults who happen to be around. The nursery that represented in the beginning ultimate bliss transforms at Uncle Geoff's place into a hostile surrounding administered by looming adults that subdue and intimidate Audrey and her brothers to such an extent that they do not even dare to call for help and communicate their needs. Molesworth in this way points out how the function of the nursery to protect the child cannot but be precarious, as it is in fact firmly based on a hierarchical relationship between child and adult. Indeed, as Molesworth's stories show, there is always the danger that the child's segregation in the nursery that initially served to preserve his or her innocence can suddenly turn into imprisonment and oppression.

What Molesworth's stories repeatedly point out as the crucial reason for

the various tensions within the nursery is the lack, or rather, the difficulty of communication between child and adult. Although in the beginning of her stories, Molesworth portrays an exemplary relationship between parent and child—mostly represented through an ideal mother figure—throughout the story she draws attention to the potentially limiting and coercive nature of adult authority on the child. For instance, in *The Boys and I*, Audrey's and her brothers' involuntary imprisonment and isolation in the nursery are to a great extent, caused by Audrey's difficulty and also unwillingness to communicate with her uncle who acts as her new guardian. Molesworth is careful to illustrate how Uncle Geoff really means to be kind to the children, but that his gestures of kindness are constantly misinterpreted by Audrey as being disrespectful in regard to her position as surrogate mother to her little brothers. Partly because of pride and partly because she is intimidated by Uncle Geoff's imposing grown-up position, Audrey is unable to express to him her torn position between a responsible mother figure and obedient child within the nursery: "I wanted to tell him that we *had* tried to be good, hard as it was on us to be sent suddenly among strangers—I wanted to tell him that I wished to do *everything* mother had said, that I wished to please him, and to love him, but when I looked up at his face, and saw the stern expression it had, I felt it was no use, and I too turned away" (104-5).

The Flight Out of the Nursery: Mediating Fantasy and Realism

That the failure to interact with the grown-up's world is one of the main causes of the conflicts within the nursery is made clear through the fact that in most of

Molesworth's stories the children run away from the nursery with the very purpose of searching for adults to whom they hope they can communicate their difficulties. In *The Boys and I*, Audrey and her brothers step out of the house because they want to post a letter to their old nurse to inform her of the afflictions they have to endure within their new nursery. In *The Carved Lions*, Geraldine runs away from her new school to find out the address of her mother's godmother who she hopes might understand the various misunderstanding and troubles she has with her new governesses.

It is significant to note, however, that it is, in fact, not only in Molesworth's realistic stories children run away from the nursery to come into contact with the outside world and attain their share of the world of experience and thus the ability to better communicate with grown-ups. While in Molesworth's realistic stories children escape the suffocating isolation of the nursery by stepping out into the world outside the nursery, in her famous fantasy stories *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877) and *The Tapestry Room* (1879) the children seek refuge in fantasy worlds. As a matter of fact, just as in her realistic stories, most of Molesworth's fantasy stories also depict children who are confined and bored in old houses that are ruled according to adult principles and conventions. Griselda in *The Cuckoo Clock* is lonely in her new home—"a very old house" (1)—where she has to adapt herself to the old-fashioned lifestyle of her two old great-aunts, Miss Tabitha and Miss Grizzel, who act as her new guardians, while little Jeanne in *The Tapestry Room* lives in a grand but very old French mansion and feels imprisoned and bored because she cannot go out and has no companion in her nursery upstairs. In both fantasy stories, Molesworth clearly juxtaposes the ancientness of the house with the youth of the children who are living within

it. When in *The Cuckoo Clock* Griselda first enters her great-aunts' house, the narrator states that "time indeed seemed to stand still in and all about the old house, as if it and the people who inhabited it had got so old that they could not get any older" (2). In *The Tapestry Room*, the narrator describes the mansion where Jeanne lives as a "great rambling old house" (10) whose grandness furthers the distance between child and adult for "it was really quite a journey from her [Jeanne's] room to her mother's salon" (10). The fantasy worlds these children are later introduced into by fantasy creatures, the cuckoo from *The Cuckoo Clock* and the raven Dudu from *The Tapestry Room*, seem to be, therefore, at first sight, a counterbalancing retreat that endows vitality and imagination into the suppressed lives of these children. Throughout the story, however, these fantasy lands turn out to be not exactly a carefree realm of innocent childhood. For as the story goes on these fairy realms increasingly function to guide the child into the world of experience, and even into maturity.

The Cuckoo Clock, for example, is, in fact, an explicitly didactic children's story, in that Molesworth punctuates every visit of Griselda into the fantasy world with a life lesson. Notable is how the relatively simple lessons in the beginning turn into sophisticated questions about the deeper meanings of life itself. In her first journey to fantasy land, the cuckoo seeing that much of Griselda's naughtiness at her great-aunts' house has been the result of boredom takes her to the country of the nodding mandarins which consists mostly of singing and dancing and provides Griselda the necessary amusement she lacked since she moved in with her great-aunts. In her second adventure Griselda makes a journey back to the past, and learns the history of the house, discovering how beautiful the old house, her grandmother and even her two

great-aunts actually had been. Griselda, who had rejected before the allusion of the resemblance between her and her grandmother, begins to appreciate this resemblance after her glimpse into the past. This supernatural journey to the past, therefore, does not only function to divert bored Griselda, but also to initiate her into the world of experience giving Griselda the opportunity to take on the perspective of the adult which ultimately leads to a better communication between her and her great-aunts. Sircar, therefore, called *The Cuckoo Clock* a typical "Bildungsroman" in that it records Griselda's process of movement to maturity as she learns "the lessons of experience" through the little journeys she has with the cuckoo in fantasy lands ("Classic Fantasy Novel" 163).

While in *The Cuckoo Clock* the pedagogic aim of the child's journeys into the fantastic is made very clear, *The Tapestry Room* is more subtle in regard to the purpose of the child's introduction to the world of the fantastic. The child protagonists of *The Tapestry Room* are the little French girl Jeanne and her English cousin Hugh. Both children are lonely and lost in the grand French mansion in which they lead a sheltered but also isolated existence. Hugh's room in this old mansion is the tapestry room of the story's title, and it is this very tapestry that serves as the portal into the realm of the fantastic. Just as Geraldine in *The Cuckoo Clock* was introduced into fairyland by the magical bird cuckoo, Hugh and Jeanne are led into the unacquainted realms of the tapestry by a fairy bird, the raven Dudu. The children's adventures in the magical tapestry land consist mostly of listening to the stories told by various fairy creatures. Like its predecessor fantasy novel, in *The Tapestry Room* the embedded stories associated with each visit into the fairyland change from purely imaginative to more realistic narratives that meditate on the fleeting

nature of human life. For example, in their first adventure the children enter a colourful landscape inhabited by talking animals and a dying swan who sings them the story of glorious rebirth. While the first adventure celebrates in this way the invigorating power of childhood imagination, the story within the second adventure, however, already alludes to the problems and even dangers when childhood innocence is protected and enclosed too long. For during their second visit the children encounter in a white turret a white-haired lady who tells them the fairy tale "The Brown Bull of Norrowa". It tells about a kingdom which is brought into a state of chaos by a brown bull who would only leave when the king gave him his daughter in marriage. The king and queen kept this disturbing fact a secret from the princess who had spent her life till then within the palace in a state of blissful innocence. When the princess discovers the truth she sacrifices herself to the brown bull leaving behind the Edenic palace of her childhood. She develops throughout the tale into a clever, compassionate and disciplined woman and is eventually rewarded as the bull turns out to be an enchanted prince. It is noteworthy that this story has been read by Knoepflmacher and Auerbach as a feminist tale owing to the story's emphasis on the independence and autonomy of the princess rather than advocating her female passivity (*Forbidden Journeys* 17). Indeed, this fairy tale demonstrates to Hugh and Jeanne the necessity of stepping out at some point of their sheltered existence within the mansion to gain a more balanced perspective on the world. In their very last journey, the children are told by Dudu a realistic story, namely the history of their own family and the old mansion where they are living. For the first time, the story takes place outside the protected realm of childhood innocence in a harsh world of experience that tells of the many sufferings the

children's ancestors had to endure during the French Revolution. Dudu's tale of sorrow in the realm of grown-ups helps Jeanne and Hugh to have a more sympathetic and insightful perspective on the old mansion they originally regarded as incomprehensible and threatening. Just as Griselda turns into a more sensible child after she learns the past of her great-aunts and the old house, Jeanne and Hugh develop a more understanding attitude towards the world of adults after the series of stories they listen to during their trips to fairy lands.

Thus, the fairy lands in which these literary children are led, and the stories they are told by magical creatures in *The Cuckoo Clock* and *The Tapestry Room* are not merely the means to satisfy the children's innocent and playful nature, but ironically serve at the same time to initiate them into the world of experience. In other words, the fantastic journeys have the mediating function to help the children's transition from a state of ignorant and helpless innocence to a more autonomous state of experience. Gargano, also observing *The Tapestry Room's* conflicted agenda of maintaining innocence and promoting experience, argues, therefore, that Molesworth's two famous fantasy stories—*The Cuckoo Clock* and *The Tapestry Room*—“glamorize and, to a degree, fetishize childhood innocence, even as they seek to erode it by acquainting children with the struggles of daily existence and the tragic nature of history” (73). The way Molesworth employs the fairy tale to simultaneously indulge the child's innocence and induce the child's socialisation proves therefore Alan Richardson's claim about the unfeasibility of the stock binary opposition of the mode of fantasy and realism, delight and instruction, in which the former position has been favoured by children's literature criticism. In fact,

as Richardson reveals, in the history of children's literature the fairy tale has been always used for both purposes, namely to teach children the ways of the world and to preserve their innocence. Indeed, while female writers like Sinclair made use of fairy tales to illustrate the child a lesson, a Romantic like Wordsworth advocated fairy tales as the perfect "innocent food", and a "politically neutral entertainment" for rural folk and children (Richardson 45, 48).⁸⁶

To be sure, Molesworth's ideas on the fairy tale were also heavily influenced by the Romantics. In her essay on the celebrated author of fairy tales, Hans Christian Andersen, Molesworth praises the writer's "childlike *spirit*" that pervades the whole of his works and stresses how "there was nothing of the intentional teacher or educator about" Andersen's works ("Hans Christian Andersen" 138, 141). Molesworth's admiration of the childlike spirit and of the lack of explicit didacticism in Andersen's stories, clearly displays the Romantics' legacy of perceiving the fairy tale as an innocent and ideology-free medium. Different from the Romantics, however, Molesworth also drew attention to the fairy tale's function to stir the compassion of the child reader, and to introduce in this way the child into the graver aspects of life ("Hans Christian Andersen" 143). In this light, Molesworth follows in the footsteps of Ewing, who also emphasized the fairy tale's double function to divert and to teach. In the preface of her *Old-Fashioned Fairy Tales* (1882), Ewing underlines the fairy tale's significant role of cultivating the imagination of the fanciful child, but also declares that "fairy tales

⁸⁶ From a critical perspective thus Wordsworth's standpoint on the use of fairy tales can be regarded as conservative and even imposing in that he wants to imprison the child in isolated innocence and keep the lower classes in their places. See Richardson 8-9.

have positive uses in education” (vi), for they convey “knowledge of the world” (vi), teach “common sense” (vi) and treat not of the “corner of a nursery” “but of the world at large, and life in perspective” (vi). Ewing and Molesworth’s use of the fairy tale combine, therefore, the idolization of childhood’s imagination of the Romantics and the practicality of their literary foremothers, the eighteenth-century moral writers. Their emphasis on the fairy tale and fantasy’s function to widen the child’s perspective beyond the nursery, to teach the child the way of the outside world, is, therefore, in direct contrast to a male Romantic like Wordsworth who desired to keep the child in a state of ignorant innocence.

As a matter of fact, one can even discover differences between the function of fantasy in Molesworth’s nursery fantasies and in male fantasists’ works like that of Carroll and MacDonald. Surely, on the one hand, it is easy to find the impact of these male fantasists’ writings in Molesworth’s oeuvre. Not only did Molesworth embellish *Carrots*’ chapter epigraphs with citations of Carroll’s and MacDonald’s works, but her no-nonsense magical birds like Dudu and the cuckoo are undoubtedly related to the irritable Wonderland creatures of Carroll. The maternal, white-haired storyteller figures that appear in various forms in Molesworth’s fantasies, from the godmother in *The Christmas-Tree Land* (1884), Mrs Caretaker in *The Enchanted Garden* (1892) to the story-spinner lady in *The Tapestry Room*, are clearly all descendants of Princess Irene’s great-great-grandmother in MacDonald’s *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872). On the other hand, however, despite the explicit intertextual allusions to works of leading male fantastic writers, the way Molesworth makes use of the fairy realm differs from the male fantasists. Apt works to illustrate this difference are Carroll’s *Alice* books (1865, 1871) and MacDonald’s *At the Back of the*

North Wind (1871) because they are—just as Molesworth’s fantasy stories—not taking place in a self-contained fairy land like MacDonald’s *The Light Princess* (1864), but are grounded within the real world of the domestic sphere. Consequently, both books need to illustrate the children’s leap from nursery into the world of fantasy, and the repercussions of this fantastic journey. Compared to Molesworth’s literary children Griselda, Hugh and Jeanne, who, through their flights to the supernatural realm, mature and gain the ability to interact with the world of the adults, the kind of development Carroll’s Alice and MacDonald’s Diamond go through after their magical adventures are depicted by these male writers in a highly equivocal way.

Certainly, Alice’s trip to Wonderland can be read as a confrontation with the adult’s world of experience considering the unreliability of language, the parodies of the well-established didactic children’s literature, and the snubbing from adult-like Wonderland creatures Alice has constantly to deal with. However, although Carroll gives Alice the opportunity to face the absurdities of the world of Victorian grown-ups, he is surprisingly reticent when it comes to revealing the kind of enlightenment Alice acquires after her fall into the rabbit hole (although admittedly less so in *Through the Looking Glass*). Indeed, Knoepflmacher argues that Carroll, reluctant to let Alice enter the “world of growth” (*Ventures* 187), employs instead in the end scene Alice’s elder sister to let her imagine a future in which a grown-up Alice will reminisce about her adventures underground. Thus, the acerbically mocking narrative tone during Alice’s adventures in Wonderland is in sharp contrast with the nostalgic atmosphere of the prefatory poem and the closing scene in which the elder sister muses on the ephemeral nature of childhood.

On the contrary, MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* is very explicit concerning the spiritual development of Diamond after his trip to the mysterious land at the back of the North Wind that lies beyond the harsh reality of London. After his journey to this world between life and death little Diamond is endowed with a visionary status, becoming a seer child who is able to positively influence the people around him who are plagued by earthly sufferings like poverty and illness through his otherworldly vision. The realm of fantasy functions here, not as in Carroll's *Alice* as an irreverent mirror of the world of experience, but as a hint of the immortality that lies beyond everyday mundane reality. Indeed, Molesworth's fictional children also confront at some point this realm that goes beyond life and death—Griselda in her journey to the moon, Jeanne and Hugh in their first adventure where they listen to the song of the dying swan. While for Molesworth's children, however, this transcendental experience helps them to deal with the daily impediments in their everyday life and consolidates their familial and social bonds, for MacDonald's Diamond, this journey to the realm of eternal glory reinforces his otherworldliness, resulting in his death at the end of the novel which ultimately brings this preternatural child back to where he really seems to belong.

Taking into account how Carroll's Wonderland constantly undermines Alice's desire for amusement and autonomy, while MacDonald's land at the back of the North Wind enables Diamond after his return to act as a social worker amid the miseries of a Dickensian London, clearly these male writers—as Gubar pointed out—did not unreservedly subscribe to the Romantic notion of the fairy realm's function to preserve the child in passive innocence. However, considering Alice's almost unchanged state and Diamond's wasting away after

their return from the fairylands, these male writers are reluctant to completely release their literary children from their oblivious state of innocence. It is evident that these male authors' attitude toward childhood innocence was much more conflicted than that of Molesworth. For in Molesworth's nursery fantasies, the child characters' venture into fairylands invariably serves to initiate them into the world of experience, teaching them to better communicate with the grown-ups around them and to be more active agents in their life.

Important for the purpose of my main argument about the instability of the dualistic model of moral realism versus imaginative fantasy, is, however, how Molesworth's realistic stories do not differentiate themselves so much from her fantasy ones. Indeed, as already discussed, the children's route of nursery-adventure-nursery, and the magical creatures and storytellers who act as mediators between the world of reality and fantasy in Molesworth's fairy stories, all have their equivalent in her realistic stories. Indeed, the agenda, images and motifs between Molesworth's realistic and fantasy stories are so similar that Frank P. Riga, who analyses the function of fairy tale elements in Molesworth's realistic story *The Palace in the Garden* (1887), goes so far as to claim that "the realism of *The Palace in the Garden* in some ways serves as a mask for a literary fairy tale" (Riga 100). Although I agree with Riga that in *The Palace in the Garden* fairy tale elements help the children's understanding of reality, I do not support Riga's argument about the fairy tale's secret function of deconstructing patriarchy and—what Riga perceives as—the conventional realistic narrative of Molesworth's story. In fact, by endorsing the common assumption about the essentially subversive nature of fairy tales, Riga sustains the hierarchical relationship between fantasy and realism. My own sense is that

for Molesworth the line between the mode of fantasy and realism was from the beginning very thin. When she explicated her principle that children's literature should be "true to nature" save in "an occasional flight to fairyland", she immediately qualified her statement, questioning "is true fairyland *unreal* after all?" ("On the Art" 341). Thus, whatever mode Molesworth employed in her writing—realism or fantasy—they clearly all served the same agenda of helping the child characters' and child readers' transition from innocent ignorance to a more mature outlook on the world.

A comparison of her realistic stories with the fantasy ones will easily show how little difference there is between these two modes of her children's writing, with regard to their agenda, plot trajectory, and particularly the mediator figures that assist the child protagonists when they are out of their nurseries. As explored above, in *The Cuckoo Clock* and *The Tapestry Room*, the cuckoo and the raven Dudu are responsible for explaining to the children the meaning of their adventures, and in articulating the lessons they can derive from these journeys. Sircar has described the double role of the cuckoo in *The Cuckoo Clock* as being simultaneously the understanding friend and "tough moral teacher-in-authority" of Griselda ("Classic Fantasy Novel" 173), while Gargano has also highlighted the double status of the old raven Dudu, of being at the same time a "magical guide to fairyland" (84), and a world-wearied and ancient adult figure who "disparages the romance of fairytales" (84). Similarly, Knoepflmacher, when discussing Victorian children's writers' effort to effect a balance between the perspectives of child reader and adult author in fantasy fictions, calls these fantastical mediator figures "hybrid figures" or "childlike adults" listing figures such as the Queen of Hearts in Carroll's *Alice*, the

Egyptologist Jimmy in Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet* (1906), the King in Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River*, and—what Knoepfelmacher terms—“tiny animal guides” like Molesworth's cuckoo and raven or Nesbit's Psammead and Phoenix. (“Balancing” 501).

Significantly, these magical mediator figures can also be found in Molesworth's realistic stories. For example, when Audrey and Geraldine in *The Boys and I* and *The Carved Lions*, run away from home and lose their way in a cold and alien street, they encounter pretty female figures who magically appear in a deus-ex-machina way in front of those lost children. These fairy-like mother figures save the children from their misery and take them into her quarters that—in its exuberance of warmth, comfort and amusement—might as well be called a child's realm in its perfection. Audrey, for instance, describes how, when she met Miss Goldy-Hair—the mediator figure in the novel—during her and her brothers' venture out into the world, she immediately trusted her and confessed to her the isolation and misunderstandings she experienced within the nursery: “Indeed I couldn't have *helped* telling her everything. She had a way of making you feel she was strong and you might trust her and that she could put things right, even though she was so soft and kind and like a pretty wavy sort of tree” (185). Moreover, with her fairy-tale name and her face that resembles that of “a fairy” (198), Miss Goldy-Hair is also brought into close association with a figure in a fairy story. As can be seen, just as the cuckoo and Dudu were not only fantastical creatures that acted the part of sympathetic playmates, but were also the strict educator-adult figures, the mother figures in Molesworth's realistic stories are not only surrogate mothers burdened with the traditional responsibility to educate and socialize the child. Rather, Molesworth's mother

figures are invested with the double perspective of child and adult, possessing in this way the ability to transcend the lines between nursery and public sphere, and fantasy and reality. Thus, just as the fairy birds helped to reconcile the conflicts between the children and their adult guardians, Miss Goldy-Hair, by marrying Uncle Geoff, transforms Uncle's barren and patriarchal realm into a warm, nurturing home, restoring the harmony between child and adult within the nursery.

Alison Chapman who analysed the function of the maternal in Ewing, Jean Ingelow and Molesworth's stories, contends that their works expose "motherhood as the vehicle for a transgressive agency which crosses that artificial divide, the separate spheres of activity" (60). Chapman's idea of the maternal as "a mediatrix par excellence" (74) that brings together what Victorian patriarchy splits in order to intimate in this way "a new social structure" (74) can be thus easily applied to Molesworth's various mother figures and magical storytellers who reconcile the conflicts between fantasy and reality, nursery and the public sphere and eventually re-establish a realm that is based on a harmonious relationship between child and adult. On the other hand, however, Chapman's idea of "a mediatrix par excellence" also corresponds to the prescribed role of the children's author to straddle the position of child and adult, to amuse and instruct as Molesworth delineated above. For Molesworth's various literary strategies in her realistic as well as fantasy stories, from her search for a more balanced narrative voice, and her plot formula of nursery-world-nursery, to her free mixing of fantasy and realism, not only managed to break down the strict hierarchy between the mode of fantasy and domestic realism, but also opened up the potential for new forms of storytelling in which

the problematic relationship between adult and child would be dealt with in a more adept and refined way.

Curiously, in Molesworth's later works one can detect how Molesworth herself began to become self-conscious about her own literary strategies she employed to bring into balance the conflicting conditions of children's literature. She began to question whether her children's writings actually fulfilled their supposed function, namely, to lead the child, within and without the book, from isolated innocence to a more sophisticated state of experience. This scrutinizing self-awareness about her own literary methods and even medium can be most conspicuously observed in *Peterkin* published at the turn of the new century in 1902. Indeed, the notable aspect about *Peterkin* is how Molesworth explicitly revises and reworks her own literary devices she employed to attain the ideal balance within her stories. On the surface, the story of *Peterkin* faithfully follows Molesworth's most used plot formula and literary means. The work relates of ten-year-old Giles and his little brother eight-year-old Peterkin who try to release the little girl Margaret who—as she herself tells the boys—is held captive in the house by her guardian who is an evil witch. Naturally, the main happening of this novel consists of how Peterkin and Giles help Margaret to flee from her imprisoned state in the nursery, only to lose their way in London and be rescued by a kind lady and brought back by their mother in humiliation. As can be seen, Molesworth uses here not only her usual plot trajectory of nursery-world-nursery, but also her maternal mediator figures.

The story, however, veers from Molesworth's typical story formula in that Molesworth uses the elder brother Giles as the story's narrator instead of

Peterkin, who is the representative innocent child of the story. In stories such as *The Boys and I* or *The Girls and I* Molesworth employed child narrators because conveying the story through a child's voice enabled her to narrow the gap between adult author and child reader. This narrative technique of using a little child as the teller of the story was, however, not without its side-effects and limitation. After all, the child's voice could also be coloured with the adult author's sentimental and nostalgic view of the figure of the child. Another problem was that a too young child narrator was naturally not able to reflect on his or her own innocence from a meta-perspective. By telling the story from Giles's perspective, however, who in *Peterkin* is situated between childhood and adolescence, it became possible for Molesworth to eliminate the adult-author's nostalgic view on childhood innocence and display simultaneously Peterkin's innocence in a comical way. Indeed, Giles's transitional and marginal position within the story enables him to present a more subtle and conflicted stance with regard to the innocence of his brother whose "head was so stuffed and crammed with fairy stories" (69). For, on the one hand, Giles is often intrigued by Peterkin's fancies, confessing he mostly had "a contradictory sort of interest and almost eagerness to hear what he [Peterkin] had to say" (71). On the other hand, however, Giles is also wary not to believe too much in Peterkin's wonder tales, being aware that as the elder brother he should be more sensible and realize that Peterkin's "fancies were only fancies really" (71).

Thus, through Giles's position as an observer-narrator who is situated in the liminal realm between childhood innocence and adult experience, Molesworth was able to portray Peterkin's innocence in a nuanced way without having to sacrifice either the perspective of child or adult. Molesworth, however,

also employs Giles as a narrator to scrutinize her own stories' mediating function to help the child from innocence to experience. Usually highlighting the drawbacks of innocence through the nursery-adventure-nursery plot structure that disclosed how isolated innocence can turn from bliss into imprisonment, in *Peterkin*, Molesworth dramatizes this issue of the precarious nature of childhood innocence by hinting at the possibility that her stories might also turn into the very means that arrest the child in his or her development. As explored in the former chapter, Ewing also warned child readers of the negative consequences of uncritical consumption of adventure tales through the figure of Charlie in "A Great Emergency". In *Peterkin*, Molesworth as well points out the potential danger of mindless consumption of stories through Giles's ambiguous and partly critical stance with regard to Peterkin's obsession with fairy tales.

Molesworth expresses this possible unreliability of her stories' function to reconcile the tension between innocence and experience through the titular figure Peterkin's infatuation with fairy tales and his relationship with a supposedly fairy parrot. For Molesworth introduces in *Peterkin*, in addition to the maternal figures who are assigned the typical mediator roles, another mediator figure, as it were, a magical parrot. At first sight, this creature seems to have the same guidance role of the fairy birds in *The Tapestry Room* or *The Cuckoo Clock*, for Peterkin firmly believes that the parrot is "a sort of messenger from the good fairies" (92). Molesworth, however, inverts her usual literary device of the magical animal guides by equivocating about the veracity of the parrot's fairy origin, and thus its role within the story to mediate innocence and experience, the nursery and the grown-up world. This ambivalent attitude towards the parrot is presented through Giles's perspective who is fascinated by

the bird, but nevertheless not sure at all whether the bird is really a fairy. In fact, Giles, rather than regarding the parrot as a guide as Peterkin does, compares this bird to a child due to its querulousness, naughtiness, and significantly its habit of copying other people's talk without understanding the meaning. As Giles observes in regard to parrots: "They are very like children in some ways. They are so "contrairy" (52).

As a matter of fact, the story explicitly draws a parallel between the parrot and Peterkin, from their childish traits of so-called "contrariness" to their imperfect language ability. Clearly, Molesworth intended the parrot to be a mirror image of Peterkin. Indeed, Peterkin's almost compulsive habit of rattling off fairy tale formulas and his constant use of difficult words without wholly understanding their definitions corresponds to the parrot's vacuous echoing of people's talk without knowing their meaning. In juxtaposing in this way Peterkin's obsession with fairy stories with the parrot's mindless imitation of people's words, Molesworth expresses her anxiety that her own stories—that tell about children who believe in and are guided by fairy birds—rather than leading children to a more balanced view on the world, could, on the contrary, make them into thoughtless parrots.

Peterkin attests therefore to Molesworth's growing awareness of the unstable function of children's literature to solve the tension between adult author and child reader. She was an author too keenly aware of the hierarchical relationship between child reader and adult author to overlook the fact that her own stories, despite their endeavours to guide her child characters and child readers from ignorant innocence to a more autonomous state of experience

could nevertheless also become the means to control and mould the child according to the adult's desires. In *Peterkin*, Molesworth attempted to obviate this danger by letting Giles constantly weigh on his own to what extent the parrot as a mediator figure is merely Peterkin's innocent fancy and to what extent this bird really helps to expand his and Peterkin's view on the world. Indeed, while in former stories, Molesworth made sure that the autonomy of her magical mediator birds was unchallenged, in *Peterkin* she encourages her readers to interrogate with Giles, not only the parrot's, but even her own story's credibility. Thus, by inviting her readers to constantly call into question the reliability of the parrot and through this her own story, Molesworth warns her young audience to be more discerning readers, instead of credulous, innocent ones, who indiscriminately absorb texts like an unwitting parrot.

In studying Nesbit's stories, Gubar observes how her hyper-literate fictional children display the great ability to edit and rewrite adult authors' works according to their own needs. Gubar argues that Nesbit's illustration of clever, sharp-witted children who do not slavishly believe but recycle and change stories into what they want them to be, points to Nesbit's hope that "children can tweak, transform, and renew the scripts they are given," rather than "simply reenact them" (*Artful* 148, 132). Although Molesworth's literary children in *Peterkin* did not yet display this ability to such an extent, the work's critical self-reflectiveness about its own act of writing for and shaping children clearly prefigures Nesbit's works that encourage their child audience to be irreverent readers who do not blindly follow but revise the stories they are given. Molesworth's dawning self-consciousness regarding the role of her own medium would, however, not be the only impact she would have on succeeding

children's writers. While she was certainly not as concerned as Ewing in pushing the boundaries of the female domestic genre beyond conventional gender and genre binaries, through her nursery fantasies she succeeded in popularizing a form of storytelling in which the hierarchy between fantasy and domestic realism did not matter anymore. The great influence that Molesworth's method of introducing fantasy into nursery settings had on Nesbit's Psammead series, with its magical guides, from the Psammead to the Phoenix who are obvious successors of Molesworth's Dudu and Cuckoo, can hardly be overlooked.⁸⁷ Indeed, this method of bringing the realm of fantasy into the mundane reality of the child, not to escape into an Edenic childhood garden, but to initiate the child into a more autonomous, self-reflective phase, would become in the twentieth century one of the most common devices in children's fiction, occurring in numerous popular works like Mary Norton's *The Borrowers* (1952) or Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958).

⁸⁷ See Green, "Introduction" 15.

Conclusion: Out into the World

E. Nesbit's first children's book *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*, published in 1899, tells of the various attempts of the Bastable children to earn money to restore the fallen fortunes of their family. In the chapter "Good Hunting"—a phrase taken from Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894)—the children come up with the idea to sell the poetry of Noël, the little poet of the family, to the newspaper. In the train, on their way to London to find a newspaper who might buy the poems, Oswald and his little brother Noël become acquainted with a lady writer through an accidental discovery of their shared love of Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. The children inform the lady that they are trying to sell their poetry in London to recover their family fortune, whereupon Noël and the lady writer review each other's poems. At the end of their trip, the lady offers the children two new shillings to help them "to smooth the path to Fame" (60). Oswald refuses them on the ground that they are not supposed "to take anything from strangers" (60), whereon the lady tries to persuade him: "But don't you think as Noël and I are both poets I might be considered a sort of relation? You've heard of brother poets, haven't you? Don't you think Noël and I are aunt and nephew poets, or some relationship of that kind?" (61)

The very way the lady writer is introduced here by Nesbit compels one to compare her with the other fictional lady writers in the works of the authors I have explored in this thesis. There was first Bessie Merrifield who made her first appearance as a little dainty girl in Charlotte Yonge's *The Stokesley Secret* (1861) and reappears in *The Two Sides of the Shield* (1885) as a demure children's author who with her story about an orphan treated badly by a cruel

aunt involuntarily aggravates Dolores' relationship with her aunt Lady Merrifield. And there was of course also the figure of auntie, the children's writer in Mary Louisa Molesworth's *Carrots* (1876) who diverts Carrots and Floss with the story of "The Two Funny Little Trots." Yonge made Bessie a thirty-four-year-old single woman who leads a dull, uneventful home life, burdened with the family responsibility to care for her old grandmother, and who tries to brighten her life by surreptitiously writing children's stories in the few hours she can spare for herself. The situation of Molesworth's auntie character is certainly better as she is open about her occupation of writing stories for children and cheerily tests her tales on her niece and nephew. But still, there is a great difference between Molesworth's auntie who exudes a homely aura of the maternal storyteller, and Nesbit's lady writer who talks with the boys "like a jolly sort of grown-up boy in a dress and hat" (*Story* 60). Indeed, the first striking aspect of Nesbit's portrayal of the woman writer and her encounter with the children is that they are not carefully positioned within the home and the nursery as they were in the case of Yonge and Molesworth. Instead, their meeting takes place in a train where the lady author is preoccupied with marking her manuscript for her upcoming book, and the children are busy in pondering about their future plans of recovering their family fortune. Unlike Yonge's and Molesworth's stories in which train journeys without parental protection were depicted as a state of exception or emergency, in Nesbit's story both parties are comfortable and at ease with their present places outside the home.

More conspicuous though is that the author and the children do not begin their relationship as teller and listener, reader and author, as it was the case in the works of the two former authors. These two parties first bond as fellow

readers and lovers of *The Jungle Book*, and later as equal artists as Noël and the lady writer exchange their opinions on each of their poems. The hierarchy between them cannot be entirely broken, as the lady writer is an adult, and an established famous poet, and Noël is a novice, a young poet still in the making.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, Nesbit carefully illustrates how the lady writer desires not only to bridge this gap of age and status between her and the children, but also to encourage Noël to make his own voice heard. Most importantly, what Nesbit underlines in this story is the comparatively greater amount of influence and power the female author has at her disposal than her literary foremothers in assisting the children to attain a degree of autonomy in the world outside. Unlike Yonge's Bessie, and Molesworth's auntie figure, the influence of Nesbit's female author is not restricted to telling stories to the children for the sake of their emotional comfort and moral development. Not only does Nesbit's lady poet give the Bastable children a financial boost, but through her enhanced position and authority she helps the children to gain access to places they would normally not be allowed to enter. Indeed, Oswald and Noël are able to gain admittance to the office of the newspaper's editor by introducing themselves as friends of the famous lady poet. Nesbit expressly demonstrates thus through her first full-length novel that the female author should be not any more just an invisible being whose authorship is cloaked under pseudonyms, whose presence is contained within drawing rooms and nurseries, and whose influence is quiet and unassuming. On the contrary, by illustrating the long-winded

⁸⁸ Clearly, the figure of the highly respected lady poet is a self-portrait and wish fulfilment of Nesbit as she herself "dreamed of becoming a great poet," and although her poems were admired they were never as successful as her children's stories (Briggs, *Woman of Passion* 36).

consequences that the encounter between the Bastable children and the lady writer has on the children's hunt for fortune, from their gaining access to the editor's office, to their success in selling Noël's poems, to seeing them actually in print, Nesbit clearly shows how female writers' project to expand their literary sphere, and to push the boundaries of their influence had to a certain extent the outcomes they had desired.

I began this thesis with the intention to look behind the bias that rates male-authored genres like fantasy and adventure stories higher than female-authored realistic fiction, to interrogate the dominance of the male Romantic model of childhood in the Victorian era and, most importantly, to find a female notion of the figure of the child that differentiates itself from the male one in female children's literature. I quickly came to realize, however, that not only male notions of the child varied from author to author, that indeed Golden Age authors were, in fact, inconsistent in their adherence to the Romantic notion of the child, but also that each female writer I looked into had her own ideas of childhood. In fact, even within the oeuvre of one woman writer, the way the child was used and illustrated could differ according to each story. Rather than finding a distinct female notion of the child that united female writers, I made the significant discovery instead that many nineteenth-century female authors of domestic fiction, despite their differing ideas of the child, had one thing in common. Indeed, these women writers were all keen to encourage their young readers through their domestic stories to look beyond their designated sphere of the nursery and homely sphere, to step out of their appointed role of the passive, credulous listener and reader, to question the boundaries that separate home from the public realm, author from the reader, women from men, and most

significantly, to imagine a future society wherein these dividing lines would be mitigated and even be extinguished.

Certainly, the directness and the intensity in which this purpose was expressed varied among the female writers. In the case of Yonge, the most conservative writer I have examined, it almost seems from today's viewpoint that she reinforces the status quo with her domestic novels. When placing her in the mid-nineteenth century juvenile literary scene, however, one perceives how new and effective her narrative techniques for evoking sympathy for child characters were in eliciting favourable reader responses, how this technique not only built a more intimate relationship between adult author and young reader, but also initiated—wittingly or not—the gradual unsettling of the very assumptions on which the hierarchies between old and young, author and reader, and men and women were based. Compared to Yonge, Juliana Ewing's partly experimental stories naturally appear highly outspoken in their keen awareness about the constructedness of the notions of gender and genre. Ewing's struggle throughout her literary career to find a form of children's fiction that goes beyond the boundaries between the genders, genres, adult and child, can be observed in her development of the child narrator, and blending of male-dominated genres like fantasy and adventure stories with domestic stories. It is in the hands of Mary Louisa Molesworth, however, that Ewing's literary experiments came to be fully realized and integrated as natural elements and conventions in children's fictions. Molesworth's intricate and natural interweaving of quotidian nursery and fairy tale elements in her stories not only managed to ultimately break down the hierarchy between the genre of male fantasy and female realistic story, but made this blending of two modes a genre

in its own right within the field of children's literature.

Thus, the aim of my thesis has been to prove that the undeservedly neglected literary endeavours of these female writers substantially contributed to the development of Golden Age children's literature. To do this, the thesis has explored the various literary strategies female writers of domestic stories developed during the second half of the nineteenth century when new forms and ways of writing for children flourished in the literary scene, beginning with Yonge's influential family story *Daisy Chain* (1856) and ending with Molesworth's *Peterkin* (1902), which began to show the signs of self-reflectiveness that would be so pronounced in Nesbit's stories. These female writers' efforts to exhaust the potential of their literary legacy, the domestic story, and their strong motivation to provide their child readers through their stories with a sense of power and agency so that they might learn to form and voice their own views were integral in the appearance of new forms of children's fiction in the nineteenth century, and in energizing successive women writers to probe new genres. As I showed in the beginning of this chapter, the actual impact and influence of the literary endeavours of these women writers can be already traced in Nesbit's figure of the jolly lady writer whose power to help the children is not illustrated as spiritual and self-effacing but substantial, professional and visible.

At the turn of the twentieth century, indeed, the realm of influence of female writers' works actually began to extend beyond the domestic sphere. In 1886, Frances Hodgson Burnett, with her little Lord Fauntleroy and his black velvet suit, conquered the literary market and set a fashion trend for little boys

on both sides of the Atlantic, while her feisty Sara Crewe and ill-tempered Mary Lennox of *A Little Princess* (1905) and *The Secret Garden* (1911) return from India to expand the stuffy realm of the English school and home with their indefatigable imagination and curiosity. With the appearance of the so-called “New Girl,” the younger equivalent of the “New Woman,” who challenged Victorian gender norms and the gradually changing conditions of girls’ education, women also began to write school stories, a genre that was for a long time the prerogative of male writers.⁸⁹ L. T. Meade who wrote nursery stories like *The Autocrat of the Nursery* (1886) in the vein of Molesworth, began to expand her repertoire by pioneering the girl’s school story with *A World of Girls: The Story of a School* (1886). Subsequently, Angela Brazil beginning with *The Fortunes of Philippa* (1906) popularized and established the conventions of the girls’ school story. Even in the male-dominated realm of adventure stories, popular female writers appeared like Bessie Marchant, who has been called “the girls’ Henty” (Carrington), and wrote over 150 adventure stories that were usually set in the distant Empire, such as *The Half Moon Girl; or, The Rajah's Daughter* (1898). Also, in the popular formula of the robinsonade, one can discover female-authored titles like L. T. Meade’s *Four on an Island* (1892) or Mrs George Corbett’s *Little Miss Robinson Crusoe* (1898).⁹⁰

Nevertheless, despite the wider range of genre in which female writers

⁸⁹ For an insight into the emergence and cultural significance of the “new girl” at the end of the nineteenth century, see Sally Mitchell’s *The New Girl: Girls’ Culture in England, 1880-1915* (1995).

⁹⁰ For a detailed discussion on the appearance of female authored robinsonades, see chapter 6 in Michelle J. Smith’s *Empire in British Girls’ Literature and Culture* (2011).

could prove their adeptness at the turn of the twentieth century, Nesbit published her approximately 40 children's books under her initial "E." Nesbit, rather than her full name to hide from her readership—probably mainly boys who shunned female-authored stories—her true gender. As a matter of fact, even today, the highly successful J. K. Rowling, when publishing the first book *The Philosopher's Stone* (1997) of the *Harry Potter* series, was asked by the publisher to use her initials and surname so that the book might appeal to boys as well as girls.⁹¹ Just as in the nineteenth century, a female-authored children's (or even adult) book still seems to be exposed to the derogatory attitude of male readership. Interestingly, this is not where the parallel ends between Rowling and her nineteenth-century literary foremothers. Just as Ewing's and Molesworth's stories often mingle elements of adventure and fairy stories in their domestic realism, it has been noted how freely the *Harry Potter* series has blended a variety of genres, from the bildungsroman, the school story, to fantasy.⁹² Not surprisingly E. Nesbit is an acknowledged favorite of Rowling, and accordingly, Rowling's use of fantasy follows, rather than that of the high fantasy in the style of C. S. Lewis or J. R. R. Tolkien, the tradition of the domestic fantasies of Molesworth and Nesbit.⁹³

Certainly, just as Rowling's nineteenth-century counterparts had to defend their domestic story, the *Harry Potter* books had to deal with their fair share of

⁹¹ See Westman 93.

⁹² On how Rowling transgresses generic forms and boundaries in the *Harry Potter* books, see Karin E. Westman's essay "Blending Genres and Crossing Audiences: *Harry Potter* and the Future of Literary Fiction" (2011).

⁹³ See Westman 100.

criticism. On the one hand, the series were criticized for lacking literary value, as it were, for being a patchwork of various conventional children's genres. On the other hand, they were attacked for crossing the boundaries between child and adult readership, and thus infantilizing adult readers.⁹⁴ It seems, just as the nineteenth-century domestic stories strived to unsettle the hierarchy between the domestic genre and male-authored fantasy and adventure story, the *Harry Potter* books destabilized the line between children's and adult literature drawn throughout the twentieth century by literary criticism that relegated children's books to the lower rungs of the literary ladder.⁹⁵ Perhaps the *Harry Potter* series contributed to a certain extent in alleviating this hierarchy between children's and adult literature. A *Guardian* article published this year drew attention to the increasing sales of children's literature in 2014 in the UK, illustrating the last few years as the "Golden Age of children's literature" (Rankin). The article observes how the 2014 bestseller list was dominated by children's books, with seven out of ten titles aimed at the young, and how cult series such as the *Twilight* (2005-08) and *Hunger Games* (2008-10), "attract huge numbers of adult readers. Industry experts estimate that around 62% of young adult fiction is bought for over-18s" (Rankin). It is notable that the two series the *Guardian* brings forward as examples are written by women, and that they encompass a comprehensive range of genres, from dystopia, adventure story and fantasy to romance, featuring young characters who unflinchingly

⁹⁴ See A. S. Byatt's "Harry Potter and the Childish Adult" (2003) and Philip Hensher's "Harry Potter and the Art of Making Money" (2003).

⁹⁵ More on the issue of children's literature and academic hegemony, see Peter Hunt's essay "Poetics and Practicality: Children's Literature and Theory in Britain" (1995).

demonstrate their autonomy and explore their desires in uncharted, foreign spheres. Maybe, the various literary efforts of the nineteenth century female writers I explored in the thesis, did their part in expanding the readership, in widening the literary sphere, influence and power of female writers' children's stories considering how female-authored series are perceived as the primary factor of today's supposedly Golden Age of children's literature.

Works Cited

- Ainger, Alfred. "The Children's Books of a Hundred Years Ago." Lecture, March 1, 1895, Royal Institution. Reprinted in Salway 62–76. Print.
- Alderson, Brian. "Tracts, Reward and Fairies: The Victorian Contribution to Children's Literature". *Essays in the History of Publishing*. Ed. Asa Briggs. London: Longman, 1974. 346-82. Print.
- Anderson, Michael, ed. *British Population History from the Black Death to the Present Day*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.
- Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. Print.
- Auerbach, Nina, U.C. Knoepfelmacher. *Forbidden Journeys: Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Women Writers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Print.
- Avery, Gillian. *Childhood's Pattern: A Study of the Heroes and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950*. Leicester: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975. Print.
- . *Mrs. Ewing*. New York: H. Z. Walck, 1964. Print.
- . *Nineteenth Century Children: Heroes and Heroines in English Children's Stories, 1780-1900* (written with the assistance of Angela Bull). London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965. Print.
- Ballantyne, Robert Michael. *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean*. 1857. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1884. Print.

- Battiscombe, Georgina. *Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life*. London: Constable, 1943. Print.
- Battiscombe, Georgina. Marghanita Laski. Ed. *A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge*. London: Cresset Press, 1965. Print.
- Beetham, Margaret. *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- Bilston, Sarah. *The Awkward Age in Women's Popular Fiction, 1850-1900*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Print.
- Blom, Margaret and Thomas E. Blom, eds. *Canada Home: Juliana Horatio Ewing's Fredericton Letters, 1867—1869*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. Print.
- Boardman, Kay, Shirley Jones, eds. *Popular Victorian Women Writers*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004. Print.
- Boas, George. *The Cult of Childhood*. London: Warburg Institute, 1966. Print.
- "The Book Market." *The Academy* 54.1365 (1898): 20. *ProQuest*. Web. 9 Jan. 2015.
- "Book Review." *The Academy* 345 (1878): 558. *ProQuest*. Web. 22 Apr. 2014.
- Booth, Wayne. C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1961. 70-77. Print.
- Bratton, J. S. *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction*. 1981. Print.
- Briggs, Julia. *A Woman of Passion. The Life of E. Nesbit 1858-1924*. London: Hutchinson, 1987. Print.

---. "Woman Writers and Writing for Children: From Sarah Fielding to E. Nesbit."

Children and Their Books: A Celebration of the Work of Iona and Peter Opie. Ed. Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. 221—51. Print.

Brown, Penny. *The Captured World. The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993. Print.

Brownell, David. "The Two Worlds of Charlotte Yonge." *The Worlds of Victorian Fiction*. Ed. Jerome H. Buckley. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975. 165-78. Print.

Budge, Gavin. *Charlotte M. Yonge. Religion, Feminism and Realism in the Victorian Novel*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007. Print.

Byatt, A. S. "Harry Potter and the Childish Adult." *New York Times* N. p., 7 Jul. 2003. Web. 09 Jun. 2015.

Carpenter, Humphrey. *Secret Gardens: A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985. Print.

Carrington, Bridget. "Marchant, Bessie." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*. Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxford Reference*. 2006. Web. 01 Jun. 2015.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994. Print.

“Carrots’: Just a Little Boy.” *Examiner* 3605 (1877): 276. *ProQuest*. Web. 4 Mar. 2014.

Chapman, Alison. “Phantasies of Matriarchy in Victorian Children’s Literature”. In *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*. Ed. Nicola Diane Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 60-79. Print.

Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1978. Print.

Clark, Beverly Lyon. *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children’s Literature in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. Print.

Clark, Beverly Lyon, and Margaret R. Higonnet, eds. *Girls, Boys, Books, Toys: Gender in Children’s Literature and Culture*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. Print.

Coleridge, Christabel, ed. *Charlotte Mary Yonge: Her Life and Letters*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1903. Print.

Collins, Wilkie, and Charles Dickens. “Doctor Dulcamara MP.” *Charles Dickens’ Uncollected Writings from Household Words 1850-59*. Ed. Harry Stone. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1968. 619-26. Print.

Colon, Susan. “Realism and Reserve: Charlotte Yonge and Tractarian Aesthetics”. *Women’s Writing*, (17.2), 2010 Aug: 221-35. Print.

Courtney, Julia. “The Barnacle: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s.” In *The Girl’s Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl 1830–1915*. Ed.

- Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone. Arkansas and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994, 71-97. Print.
- Cooper, Jane. *Mrs Molesworth: A Biography*. Crowborough: Pratts Folly Press, 2002. Print.
- Cunningham, Hugh. *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*. Harlow, England: Longman/Pearson, 1995. Print.
- Cutt, Nancy. *Ministering Angels: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Writing for Children*. Wormely: Five Owls Press, 1979. Print.
- Darton, F. J. Harvey. *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*. Third Ed. Rev. by Brian Alderson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Print.
- Davidoff, Leonore, and Catherine Hall. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*. London: Hutchinson Education, 1987. Print.
- Davidoff, Leonore, and Ruth Hawthorn. *A Day in the Life of a Victorian Domestic Servant*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976. Print.
- Dennis, Barbara. *Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901): Novelist of the Oxford Movement: A Literature of Victorian Culture and Society*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1992. Print.
- . "The Two Voices of Charlotte Yonge". *Durham University Journal* NS 34. 1973: 181-188. Print.

“Domestic Fiction.” *The Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature*. Eds. Jack Zipes, Lissa Paul, Lynne Vallone et al. New York: Norton, 2005. 2067-79. Print.

Drotner, Kirsten. *English Children and Their Magazines, 1715–1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. Print.

Dusinberre, Juliet. *Alice to the Lighthouse. Children’s Books and Radical Experiment in Art*. London: Macmillan, 1999. Print.

Dyhouse, Carol. *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. London: Routledge, 1981. Print.

Eden (Gatty), Horatia K. F. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*. New York: E. & J. B. Young & Co., 1885. Print.

Ewing, Juliana. “A Great Emergency.” *A Great Emergency and Other Tales*. 1877. London: George Bell and Sons, 1911. Print.

---. “In Memoriam, Margaret Gatty.” *Aunt Judy’s Magazine*, 12 (1874): 3–7. Reprinted in Salway (1976), 479-83. Print.

---. “Margaret Gatty.” In *Parables From Nature. With a Memoir by her Daughter, Juliana Horatia Ewing*. Vol. 1. By Margaret Gatty. London: George Bell and Sons, 1885. ix-xxi. Print.

---. *Melchior’s Dream, and Other Tales*. 1862. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895. Print.

---. *Old-Fashioned Fairy Tales*. 1882. London: Society for Promoting Christian

Knowledge, 1894. Print.

---. *The Peace Egg, and Other Tales*. 1884. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1896. Print.

---. *Six to Sixteen. A Story for Girls*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1875. Print.

---. "A Very Ill-tempered Family." *A Great Emergency and Other Tales*. 1877. London: George Bell and Sons, 1911. Print.

Ferrall, Charles, Anna Jackson. *Juvenile Literature and British Society, 1850-1950. The Age of Adolescence*. New York and London: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Fielding, Sarah. "Advertisement to the Reader." *The Adventures of David Simple*. London: A. Millar 1744. Print.

Flanders, Judith. *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed*. London: Harper Perennial, 2003. Print.

Foster, Shirley and Judy Simons. *What Katy Read: Feminist Re-Readings of "Classic" Stories for Girls*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995. Print.

Frost, Ginger. S. *Victorian Childhoods*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009. Print.

Gargano, Elizabeth. "The Innocent Child in the House of History: Storytelling and the Sensibility of Loss in Molesworth's *The Tapestry Room*." In *Time of Beauty, Time of Fear: The Romantic Legacy in the Literature of Childhood*.

- Ed. James Holt McGavran Jr. Iowa City, IA: U of Iowa P, 2012. 72-88. Print.
- Garlitz, Barbara. "The Immortality Ode: Its Cultural Progeny." *Studies in English Literature* 6 (1966): 639-649. Print.
- Gatty, Margaret. Dedication. *The Fairy Godmothers and Other Tales*. By Gatty. London: George Bell, 1851. Print.
- . "The Fairy Godmothers." *The Fairy Godmothers and Other Tales*. London: George Bell, 1851. Print.
- . *Parables from Nature. With a Memoir by her Daughter, Juliana Horatia Ewing*. Vol. 1. London: George Bell and Sons, 1885. ix-xxi. Print.
- Gilmour, Robin. *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature 1830-1890*. London and New York: Longman, 1993. Print.
- Godley, Eveline C. "A Century of Children's Books." *The National Review*, XLVII, May 1906. Reprinted in Salway 92-105. Print.
- Green, Roger Lancelyn. "The Golden Age of Children's Books". *Only Connect: Readings on Children's Literature (3rd Edition)*, 1962. Print.
- . "Introduction: E. Nesbit and the World of Enchantment." *Five Children and It*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978. Print.
- Gubar, Marah. *Artful Dodgers. Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.

- Hall, Donald E. "“We and the World”: Juliana Horatia Ewing and Victorian Colonialism for Children." *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 16.2 (Summer 1991): 51–55. Print.
- Hall, G. Stanley. *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*. Volume I&II. New York, London: Appleton, 1904. Print.
- Hayter, Alethea. *Charlotte Yonge*. Plymouth, England: Northcote House, with British Council, 1996. Print.
- Helsing, Elizabeth K., Robin Lauterbach Sheets, and William Veeder. *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837-1883*. Vol. 3, *Literary Issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. Print.
- Hensher, Philip. "Harry Potter and the Art of Making Money." *The Independent N.* p., 19 Jun. 2003. Web. 09 Jun. 2015.
- Higonnet, Anne. *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998. Print.
- Hill, Georgina O’Brien. Charlotte Yonge’s “Goosedom.” *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*. 8.1 (Spring 2012): n. pag. Web. 4 March 2015.
- Horne, Jackie C. *History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children’s Literature*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. Print.
- . "Empire, hysteria, and the healthy girl: The deployment of the body in Juliana Horatia Ewing’s *Six to Sixteen*." *Women’s Studies*, 33(3): 249-277. Print.

- Hudson, Pat. "Women and Industrialization." *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945: An Introduction*. Ed. June Pervis. London: UCL Press, 1995. Print.
- Hunt, Peter. "Poetics and Practicality: Children's Literature and Theory in Britain." *Lion and the Unicorn* 19 (1995): 41-49. Print.
- Juckett, Elizabeth C. "Cross-Gendering the Underwoods: Christian Subjection in Charlotte Yonge's *the Pillars of the House*". *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel: Rereading Nineteenth-Century Women Writers*. Ed. Tamara S Wagner. Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2009. 117-136. Print.
- "Juvenile." *Oxford Dictionary of English*. Ed. Stevenson, Angus. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. *Oxford Reference*. 2010. Web. Date Accessed 1 May. 2015.
- Kincaid, James. *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Knoepfmacher, U. C. "The Balancing of Child and Adult: An Approach to Victorian Fantasies for Children." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Mar., 1983): 497-530. Print.
- . *Ventures into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales and Femininity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Print.
- Kuznets, Lois R. "Henry James and the Storyteller: The Development of a Central Consciousness in Realistic Fiction for Children." *The Voice of the Narrator in Children's Literature*. Ed. Charlotte F. Otten and Gary D. Schmidt. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989. 187-98. Print.

- Langland, Elizabeth. *Nobody's Angels. Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1995. Print.
- Laski, Marghanita. *Mrs. Ewing, Mrs. Molesworth and Mrs. Hodgson Burnett*. London: Arthur Barker, 1950. Print.
- Lister, Jennifer H. "‘One Wing Clipped’: The Imaginative Flights of Juliana Horatia Ewing." *Popular Victorian Women Writers*. Edited by Kay Boardman, Shirley Jones. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004. 135-65. Print.
- Lovegrove, Elizabeth. "‘Dangerous display’: Charlotte Yonge, Christabel Coleridge, and Pseudonyms in the *Monthly Packet*." *Women's History Magazine* (Summer 2013): 12-18. Print.
- Mare, Margaret, and Alicia C. Percival. *Victorian Best-Seller: The World of Charlotte M. Yonge*. London: Harrap, 1947. Print.
- Marsh, Jan. "Of Sesame and Lilies. Education in a Humane Society." In *Sesame And Lilies*. John Ruskin and Deborah Epstein Nord. n.p.: Yale University Press, 2002. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*. Web. 2 Oct. 2012. 142-164.
- Maxwell, Christabel. *Mrs. Gatty and Mrs. Ewing*. London: Constable, 1949. Print.
- McGavran, James Holt. Ed. *Literature and the Child: Romantic Continuations, Postmodern Contestations*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999. Print.
- . *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991. Print.

---. *Time of Beauty, Time of Fear: The Romantic Legacy in the Literature of Childhood*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012. Print.

Mills, Claudia. "Choosing a Way of Life: *Eight Cousins* and *Six to Sixteen*." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 14.2 (Summer 1989): 71-5. Print.

Mitchell, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996. Print.

---. *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England, 1880-1915*. New York: Columbia UP, 1995. Print.

Molesworth, Mary Louisa. "The Best Books for Children II". *Pall Mall Gazette*. 29. 10. 1887. *Nineteenth-Century British Newspapers*. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.

---. *The Boys and I: A Child's Story for Children*. London: W&R Chambers, 1899. Print.

---. *Carrots: Just a Little Boy*. London: Macmillan, 1876. Print.

---. *The Carved Lions*. London: Macmillan, 1895. Print.

---. "Hans Christian Andersen". *Studies and Stories*. A.D. Innes, 1893. Reprinted in Salway 137-45. Print.

---. "How I Write My Children's Stories." *Little Folks* 1894: 16. *19th Century UK Periodicals*. Web. 4 Mar. 2014.

- . "How to Write for Children." *The Review of Reviews* 35.210 (1907): 631. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
- . "Juliana Horatia Ewing." *The Contemporary Review, 1866-1900*, 49 (1886): 675-86. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
- . *Little Miss Peggy: Only a Nursery Story*. London: Macmillan, 1887. Print.
- . "On the Art of Writing Fiction for Children". *Atalanta* VI. May 1893. Print.
- . "On the Use and Abuse of Fiction." *Girl's Own Paper* 16 Apr. 1892: n.p. *19th Century UK Periodicals*. Web. 4 Mar. 2014.
- . *Peterkin*. London: Macmillan, 1902. Print.
- . "Story-Reading and Story-Writing." *Chambers's Journal* 1.49 (1898): 772-5. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
- . "Story-Writing." *The Monthly Packet*. No. 522. Vol. 88. Aug. 1894. 158-165. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
- . *Tell Me a Story*. London: Macmillan, 1875. Print.
- . *This and That. A Tale of Two Tinies*. London: Macmillan, 1899. Print.
- Moore, D. L. *E. Nesbit: A Biography*. London: Ernest Benn, 1933. Print.
- "Moral tales". *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. Ed. Humphrey Carpenter. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984. 358-60. Print.

- Moruzi, Kristine. *Constructing Girlhood through the Periodical Press, 1850—1915*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. Print.
- Mozley, Harriet. *Fairy Bower, or The History of a Month*. London: James Burns, Henry Mozley and Sons, 1841. Print.
- Muir, Percy. *English Children's Books, 1600-1900*. London: Batsford, 1954. Print.
- Myers, Mitzi. "Impeccable Governesses, Rational Dames, and Moral Mothers: Mary Wollstonecraft and the Female Tradition in Georgian Children's Books". *Children's Literature* 14 (1986): 31-59. Print.
- . "Little Girls Lost: Rewriting Romantic Childhood, Righting Gender and Genre." *Teaching Children's Literature: Issues, Pedagogy, Resources*. Ed. Glenn Edward Sadler. New York: MLA, 1992. Print.
- . "Reading Children and Homeopathic Romanticism: Paradigm Lost, Revisionary Gleam, or 'Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est la Même Chose'?" In McGavran, *Literature* 44—84. Print.
- . "Romancing the Moral Tale: Maria Edgeworth and the Problematics of Pedagogy." *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. Ed. James Holt McGavran. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991. 96-128. Print.
- Nelson, Claudia. *Boys Will Be Girls: The Feminine Ethic and British Children's Fiction, 1857-1917*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers UP, 1991. Print.
- . "Domestic." *Keywords for Children's Literature*. Eds. Lissa Paul and Philip Nel. London, New York: New York UP, 2011. 67-70. Print.

Nelson, Claudia, Lynne Vallone, eds. *The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830-1915*. Athens, London: University of Georgia Press, 1994. Print.

Nesbit, E. *The Story of the Treasure Seekers. Being the Adventures of the Bastable Children in Search of a Fortune*. London: T. Unwin, 1899. Print.

---. *The Wouldbegoods*. New York, London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1901. Print.

Pinchbeck, Ivy, Margaret Hewitt. *Children in English Society. Vol.2, From the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act 1948*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973. Print.

Plotz, Judith. *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Print.

---. "A Victorian Comfort Book: Juliana Ewing's 'The Story of a Short Life'". *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. Ed. James Holt McGavran Jr. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1991. 168-89. Print.

Poovey, Mary. *Uneven Developments*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989. Print.

Rankin, Jennifer. " 'Golden Age' of UK Children's Books Bucks Falling Sales and Print Runs." *The Guardian* N. p., 08 May 2015. Web. 09 Jun. 2015.

Reid-Walsh, Jacqueline. "Girls' Books and Fiction." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*. Ed. Jack Zipes. 2006. Web.

"Reviews". *John Bull* (London, England), Saturday, October 28, 1876;713; Issue 2,916. *New Readerships*. Print.

Review of *Countess Kate* by Charlotte Yonge. *The Athenaeum*; Mar 21, 1863: 394. *British Periodicals*. Web. 02. April. 2013.

Review of *Countess Kate* by Charlotte Yonge. *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 25. Apr. 1863: 543-4. *British Periodicals*. Web. 02. Apr. 2013.

Reynolds, Kimberley. *Girls Only? Gender and Popular Children's Fiction in Britain 1880-1910*. Harvester Wheatsheaf: Hemel Hempstead, 1990. Print.

Richardson, Alan. "Wordsworth, Fairy Tales, and the Politics of Children's Reading". Ed. James Holt McGavran. *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991. 34-53. Print.

Riga, Frank P. "(De)constructing the Patriarchal Family: Mary Louisa Molesworth and the Late Nineteenth-Century Children's Novel." In *Family Matters in the British and American Novel*. Ed. Andrea O'Reilly Herrera, Elizabeth Mahn Nollen and Sheila Reitzel Foor. Bowling Green, OH: Popular, 1997. 97-114. Print.

Romanes, Ethel. *Charlotte Mary Yonge: An Appreciation*. London: A. R. Mowbray, 1908. Print.

Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan: or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. 1984. Rev. ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992. Print.

Rossetti, William Michael, ed. *Family Letters of Christina Rossetti*. New York: Scribners, 1908. Print.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Emile: or, On Education*. Trans. Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979. Print.

Rowbotham, Judith. *Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989. Print.

Ruskin, John. *Sesame And Lilies*. n.p.: Yale University Press, 2002. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost). Web. 2 Oct. 2012.

Salmon, Edward. *Juvenile Literature As It Is*. London: Henry J. Drane, 1888. Print.

---. "Literature for the Little Ones." *Nineteenth Century* 128 (Oct. 1887): 563-80. Print.

---. "Should Children Have a Special Literature?" *Parent's Review* 1890. Reprinted in Salway, 332—39. Print.

---. "What Girls Read." *The Nineteenth Century* (October, 1886): 515-29. Print.

Salway, Lance, ed. *A Peculiar Gift: Nineteenth-Century Writings on Books for Children*. Harmondsworth, UK: Kestrel Books, 1976. Print.

Sandbach-Dahlström, Catherine. *Be Good Sweet Maid. Charlotte Yonge's Domestic Fiction: A Study in Dogmatic Purpose and Fictional Form*.

Stockholm: Almqvist&Wiskell, 1984. Print.

Sanders, Valerie. *The Brother-Sister Culture in Nineteenth-Century Literature*.

Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002. Print.

Schaffer, Talia. "The Mysterious Magnum Bonum: Fighting to Read Charlotte Yonge." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 55 (2000): 244-75. Print.

---. "Taming the Tropics: Charlotte Yonge Takes on Melanesia." *Victorian Studies* 47.2 (2005): 204-14. Print.

Schaub, Melissa. "Worthy Ambition': Religion and Domesticity in *The Daisy Chain*". *Studies in the Novel*, (39:1), 2007. Spring: 65-83. Print.

Sebag-Montefiore, Mary. *Women Writers of Children's Classics*. Tavistock: Northcote, 2008. Print.

Sherwood, Mary Martha. *The History of the Fairchild Family*. Part 1. 1818. London: T. Hatchard, 1854. Print.

Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. Print.

Sigler, Carolyn, ed. *Alternative Alices: Visions and Revisions of Lewis Carroll's "Alice" Books*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. Print.

---. "Authorizing Alice: Professional Authority, the Literary Marketplace, and Victorian Women's Re-Visions of the Alice Books." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 22.3 (September 1998): 351-363. Print.

- Sircar, Sanjay. "Classic Fantasy Novel as Didactic Victorian Bildungsroman: *The Cuckoo Clock*." *Lion and the Unicorn*, (21:2), 1997, 163-92. Print.
- . "The Victorian Auntly Narrative Voice and Mrs. Molesworth's *Cuckoo Clock*." *Children's Literature* 17 (1989). 1-24. Print.
- Smith, Michelle. J. *Empire in British Girl' Literature and Culture. Imperial Girls, 1880-1915*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- "Some Christmas Books." *Punch*, Saturday, January 06, 1877; 297. Print.
- Springhall, John. *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860-1960*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986. Print.
- Sturrock, June. "*Heaven and Home*": *Charlotte M. Yonge's Domestic Fiction and the Victorian Debate over Women*. Victoria, BC: Univ. of Victoria, 1995. Print.
- Swinburne, A. C. "Charles Reade." *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, Mar.1877-Dec.1900 16.92 (1884): 550-67. ProQuest. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.
- Thomson, Patricia. *The Victorian Heroine. A Changing Ideal. 1837-1873*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1956. Print.
- Thwaite, M. F. *From Primer to Pleasure: An Introduction to the History of Children's Books in England, from the Invention of Printing to 1914*. London: Library Association, 1963. Print.
- Townsend, John Rowe. *Written for Children: An Outline of English-Language Children's Literature*. 3rd ed. London: Penguin, 1987. Print.

Vanden Bossche, Chris R. "Moving Out: Adolescence". Ed. Herbert F Tucker. *A Companion to Victorian Literature & Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. 82-96. Print.

Wagner, Tamara S, ed. *Charlotte Yonge: Rereading Domestic Religious Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. Print.

---. "Introduction." *Women's Writing* 17.2 (2010): 213-220. Print.

Wall, Barbara. *The Narrator's Voice: The Dilemma of Children's Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 1991. Print.

Walton, Susan. "Charlotte Yonge: Marketing the Missionary Story". *Women's Writing* 17.2 (2010): 236-254. Print.

"Well-Known Women." *The London Journal, and Weekly Record of Literature, Science, and Art, Mar. 1845-Apr. 1906* 30.784 (1898): 556. ProQuest. Web. 11 Mar. 2014.

Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860". *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Part 1 (Summer, 1966): 151-174. Print.

Westman, Karin E. "Blending Genres and Crossing Audiences: *Harry Potter* and the Future of Literary Fiction." *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature*. Ed. Julia L. Mickenberg, Lynne Vallone. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. 93-112. Print.

Wilson, Anita C. "Charlotte M. Yonge's *The Daisy Chain*: Victorian Artifact or Classic?" *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* (Spring 1981): 98-105. Print.

Woolf, Bella Sidney. "Children's Classics." *Quiver*.220 (1906): 672-9. *ProQuest*. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Original Stories from Real Life; with Conversations, Calculated to Regulate the Affections and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness*. 1788. London: Henry Frowde, 1906. Print.

Wordsworth, William. "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood". *The Golden Treasury of the best songs and lyrical poems in the English Language*. London: Macmillan and Co.,1992: 341-44. *English Poetry, Second Edition (ProQuest)*. Web. 7 Nov. 2012.

"The Worship of Children." *Spectator* 6 Nov. 1869: 1298–1300.

Wullschläger, Jackie. *Inventing Wonderland. The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J. M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame and A. A. Milne*. London: Methuen, 1995. Print.

Yonge, Charlotte. "Autobiography". *Charlotte Mary Yonge: Her Life and Letters*. Ed. Christabel Coleridge. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1903. Print.

---. "Authorship" *A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge*. Ed. Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski. London : Cresset Press, 1965. Print.

---. "Children's Literature of the Last Century. Part 1." *Macmillan's Magazine* 20.117 (1869): 229-37. *British Periodicals*. Web. 17 Feb. 2013.

---. "Children's Literature of the Last Century. Part 2." *Macmillan's Magazine* 20.118 (1869): 302-10. *British Periodicals*. Web. 17 Feb. 2013.

---. "Children's Literature of the Last Century. Part 3." *Macmillan's Magazine*

- 20.119 (1869): 448-56. *British Periodicals*. Web. 17 Feb. 2013.
- . *Countess Kate and The Stokesley Secret*. 1862. London: A. D. Innes & Co., 1896. Print.
- . *The Daisy Chain, or, Aspirations*. 1856. London: Macmillan, 1881. Print.
- . *Modern Broods, or, Developments Unlooked For*. London: Macmillan, 1901. Print.
- . "Introductory Letter." *The Monthly Packet* 1 (1851): i-iv. Print.
- . "Lifelong Friends". *The Monthly Packet* 526 (1894): 694. *19th Century UK Periodicals*. Web. 01 March. 2013.
- . *The Long Vacation*. London: Macmillan, 1895. Print.
- . *The Pillars of the House*. Volume I&II. 1876. London: Macmillan, 1889. Print.
- . "Preface." *The Daisy Chain, or, Aspirations*. 1856. London: Macmillan, 1890. Print.
- . *Scenes and Characters*. 1847. London: Macmillan, 1886. Print.
- . *The Stokesley Secret*. 1861. London: J. & C. Mozley, 1874. Print.
- . *A Storehouse of Stories*. London: Macmillan, 1872. Print.
- . *The Two Guardians or, Home in this World*. 1852. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855. Print.
- . *The Two Sides of the Shield*. Volume I&II. London: Macmillan, 1885. Print.
- . *What Books to Lend and What to Give*. London: National Society's Depository, 1887. Print.
- . *Womankind*. 1877. N.p.: Forgotten Books, 2012. Print.

Zakreski, Patricia. "Piece Work: Mosaic, Feminine Influence, and Charlotte Yonge's *Beechcroft at Rockstone*." *Studies in the Literary Imagination*. (43:1) 2010, 69-93. Print.

Zeiman, Anthea. *Presumptuous Girls: Women and Their World in the Serious Woman's Novel*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977. Print.

Zelizer, Viviana A. *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. New York: Basic Books, 1985. Print.