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Introduction

by Marilyn Olson

Some of the articles in our Winter issue exemplify one of the pleasantest aspects of the information age: the excitement of discovering “classic” texts that have been unknown in one’s own tradition. In addition to introducing a novel that retains many charms in its English translation, Sandra Beckett’s study of L’Enfant et la rivière also discusses considerations of book production and page appearance that help to define books as children’s literature. The artifact itself is also one of the strongest interests of Sarah Robbins, who discusses the American consumer’s relation to Anna Aikin Barbauld and her Lessons for Children.

Alexander Volkov’s Oz books and Andrew Lang’s folklore collections are well-loved books that are studied here as examples of texts adapted to social beliefs and needs of very disparate societies. Both studies, by Xenia Mitrokhina and Anna Smol respectively, clarify historical situations while aiding us to uncover ideological implications in our own time. Carole Scott’s article on clothes in Grimm both suggests the importance of contemporary social concerns to the tales and provides a coherent alternative reading on points often discussed in a different context. Sanjay Sircar’s assessment of Mary Louisa Molesworth’s contribution to fantasy, and particularly to the development of our expectation that it is allied to psychological needs on the part of the protagonist, similarly leaves us to ponder both a great tradition and the needs of the child, Griselda, whose relation to the wooden cuckoo seems both like and different from the relation of Everychild to its stories—a relationship that is further discussed in our theory column.

Shining with the conscious rectitude of one who has a book with a glow-in-the-dark cover on her reading list, I have come to feel that while the contents of the Winter issue are in opposition to the aims of Peter Hunt’s column, it is not really because they concern old books. Many—most—of us, I think, are reassured in our assessment of what children’s literature is about by our connection to contemporary children and their reading. We are asked frequently for book selections and are pleased when they are successful, have daily contact with our children’s relationship to active children, have daily contact with our children’s relationship to text. I have never been involved with an English department in the United States that privileges historical texts over contemporary texts on a children’s-literature reading list (the National Endowment for the Humanities does, though), but it is surely no surprise that most of us are products of literature departments that train people to assess literature. Starting to do something interactive in children’s-literature criticism—not in teaching, where I imagine a great many more of us already do this—is a matter of attaining scholarly rigor in a different or more reader-responsive field, not necessarily work equally well with any fiction that a substantial number of children or adults cannot or do not read, even though there are those who can and do.

In the Quarterly, the Fall issue on the new historicism and this Winter issue on works outside the contemporary anglophone culture are balanced by forthcoming issues on children’s media and violence in works for children, both of which lend themselves to popular culture concerns. Indeed, last Spring’s adolescent literature issue was primarily about new works, and some were assessed in terms of adolescent response. Here again, however, the question does not appear to be one of historicity, but of papers assessing text versus papers assessing the child’s reaction to the text. I have never been involved with an English department in the United States that privileges historical texts over contemporary texts on a children’s-literature reading list (the National Endowment for the Humanities does, though), but it is surely no surprise that most of us are products of literature departments that train people to assess literature. Starting to do something interactive in children’s-literature criticism—not in teaching, where I imagine a great many more of us already do this—is a matter of attaining scholarly rigor in a different or more reader-responsive field, not a matter of switching to discussions of children’s horror rather than The Golden Key.

The “real children” for college classes, the children for whom we stand in a sharing parental role, are in their early twenties. Of course they vary greatly, but the ones we worry about most are those for whom reading for pleasure may never have existed, or the people who as bilingual students may never have reached real reading fluency, certainly not in time to have had a traditional children’s-literature background or favorite novels to remember. It is difficult not to want to give such students something that they will personally take to heart, as a kind of model of what the books they give to their “real” children have the potential to do. The glow-in-the-dark book on my list is very good, but it will probably not serve this function. A great many new and old books that would be quite unsuitable as whole-class selections for grade school use will and do. Without wishing to underestimate the gaps in the kinds of interests we bring to scholarship in our field, the audience for children’s literature, comprised as it is of ourselves and our students, as well as the youngest readers and listeners, will probably continue to be best served by tolerance of variety.
Magical Dress: Clothing and Transformation in Folk Tales

by Carole Scott

The recognition that clothing is inherently magical, its fabric woven from the stuff of dreams, is repeatedly expressed in folk literature. In its simplest form an article of clothing such as a cloak or a hat may transform the ordinary person into a powerful one; the effect of such garments is impersonal, passing from wearer to wearer without distinction. But besides these uncomplicated fantasies of empowerment are subtle, complex, and symbol-laden narratives in which clothing becomes the agent of many kinds of metamorphoses. These range from simple changes in appearance to dramatic magical transformations that revolutionize the lives of the characters involved. In some cases garments express the rules of a moral universe with appropriate rewards and punishments. But in a more magical dimension, especially in those tales that Ruth Bottighheimer identifies as "fairy tales" (9), clothes are used to break the rules of the ordered world and the boundaries of the reasonable expectations that life has taught. Not only are the social barriers shattered and the web of conventions dissolved; clothing is also used to express in outward form the psyche's deepest desires and shadowy dreams, by enchantment bringing about a fantastical transmutation into our other or into our ultimate selves.

Clothes mark the point at which the inner and outer vision meet, the point at which the physical self and the world touch. Clothing is the outer expression of an inner identity, an imaginative vision transformed into tangible form for others (and ourselves) to see. Dress enables people to identify themselves—socially, sexually, morally, aesthetically—to be recognized or to be misrecognized. The folk tales in which clothing takes on significance focus upon two kinds of transformation: the transformation of raw, shapeless material into cloth and the transformation of the wearer who puts on the finished product. The tales involve questions of self-definition and identity, image and disguise, and the implicit sense of power that these invoke. I have chosen for special attention Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm's "The Six Swans" and its variants to illustrate the lonely struggle that characterizes the creation of clothing as a symbol for self-realization and identity in a hostile world, and "Cinderella" in its diverse forms to exemplify the transformation of people by means of clothing, with emphasis on image, recognition, and misrecognition. Both lines of inquiry lead to an examination of what kind of power clothes represent, what the tales reveal about the balance of power in society, and what they challenge us to change.

In an indirect slap at the fashion industry, the story of Adam and Eve presents the first clothing as the outcome of moral transgression. As described in Genesis, eating the forbidden apple from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil leads the pair to a sense of shame at the realization of nakedness and to the need to conceal their bodies with the clothes they must fashion. They are also driven to hide themselves away from God's sight: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons... And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:7-8).

The thought that clothing was immediately involved in humanity's first moment of self-consciousness is of particular interest when one considers the story in terms of Jacques Lacan's mirror stage. This is the point at which the sudden awareness of ourselves caught in another's vision causes self-image and self-understanding to fragment; we become both the person we feel ourselves to be and the image that the mirror reflects, "what one sees and how one is seen" (McGillis 42). This dramatic event gives rise to a sense of defined perspective, of otherness, which alters the person's relationship with him or herself. As Psalm 33 tells us, "From where [God] sits enthroned he turns his gaze on all who dwell on the earth. He fashions all the hearts of them and understands all their works." Like the Lacanian gaze, that of the Almighty not only encompasses the outer vision, but perceives the inner heart as well; however, unlike a divine perception, Lacan's sense of the gaze is not omniscient, but involves an interplay of dramatis personae within a single personality, a collection of images of self, each attempting to perceive both itself and others.

The notion of the endless reflections and re-reflections offered by a hall of mirrors, each picturing a slightly different aspect of the self, is even further extended by the limited vision of the one whose image the mirrors capture. What reflections of oneself escape one's view? Twisting and turning to catch every angle simply multiplies the evanescent images. Yet each image is in itself complete, framed, as Roderick McGillis points out, like a picture. As Barbara Freedman asserts in Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis and Shakespearean Comedy, "The assumption of the mirror image in the construction of the ego is the primary misrecognition, which in turn is rehearsed in our demand that others see us as we would ourselves" (32). This oscillation between a momentary or ideal self, frozen into an instant of immobile perfection, and the vast array of fluctuating potential selves provides both an internal and an external dynamic, creating multiple images of self and other and stimulating the "fictional direction" of the developing ego (Lacan 2). Clothing dramatizes and gives visible form to these images.

It is therefore not surprising that those involved in the creation and working of cloth have often held such a valued

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place in society. They are not simply the spinners of dreams, but society's alchemists, converting common raw flax or wool (or other materials in non-Western countries) into valuable commodities: yarn, cloth, and ultimately clothing itself. In her historical reconstruction, Celestine Gillian Tindall describes in detail the intense labor that went into the harvesting of hemp and flax, extraction of the fibers, spinning, and weaving, and observes, "No wonder the eventual bolt of cloth was valuable either to use or to sell, and clothes made from it were worn for decades, passed on from one member of the family to another, patched and turned and cut down at last into frocks and pinafores for the smallest children." (52).

In preindustrial Europe, cloth itself was the primary manufactured commodity and an item of exceptional value and significance (Lurie, 134). Its possession and display were not metaphorical but real statements of economic power, as expressed for example by Renaissance portrait painters, who might set their richly dressed subjects against backgrounds of draped velvet or bolts of fabric to emphasize their wealth. Stories that picture the well-paid fabrication of imaginary clothing (Hans Christian Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes") or the spinning of straw into gold (Grimms' "Rumpelstiltskin") metaphorically suggest the economic rewards of such toil.

Tailors appear in several of Grimms' and Andersen's tales and may be significant figures possessed of special personal characteristics, such as a cunning intelligence, a cheerful assertiveness that overcomes all obstacles, excellent luck, or even a magic needle that can sew together anything in the world. But the tales that involve spinning—generally women's work—present a more ambivalent picture. As Maria Tatar explains, spinning "can take the form of both a blessing and a curse. Like manual labor in general, it goes hand in hand with industry and achievement, but it is also associated with physical oppression and enslavement" (123). While several tales dwell upon the high moral character of the industrious spinner who creates value from basic materials—the woman who made her dress from the flax discarded by her mistress is especially praised and rewarded—others feature women oppressed by their work. In Andersen's "The Wild Swans," the young woman finds herself required to spin and knit yarn that she must create from nettles, covering her hands with agonizing blisters. Besides mentioning the production-induced physical deformities that too much spinning provokes (noted in Grimms' "The Three Spinners"), more than one of Grimms' Tales also picture the plight of young women pressured into impossible situations by their own or their parents' desire for social prestige. Threatened with death if mountains of flax are not spun overnight or spun into gold, they are driven to make bargains involving, for example, their firstborn child to gain the magical help they need so desperately.

Critics who have addressed the impact of the developing flax industry note that the increasingly manipulative pressures of the capitalist system reduced the prestige and status of the spinners so that they became simply tools of production owned by parents or husbands. This disempowerment and dehumanization did not at first decrease the spinners' economic worth; rather, it lessened their control of it, which was taken over by men (Zipes, 57-61). Eventually, of course, the creation of spinning machines usurped women's task, de-maturing what had been essential skills to hobbies and altering women's role to the more dangerous tending of machines in unsafe factories. Jane Schneider suggests that the industrial model that unbalanced the economy and ransomed the future is pointedly illustrated in the stories in which the agents of production (such as Rumpelstiltskin) demand a woman's child, her own future (Weiner and Schneider, 178-79).

Despite this negative undercurrent to the tales, which is certainly to some degree the signal of changes in methods of production, cloth and clothing do not lose their magic or their value; in fact, the sacrifices demanded of the (usually female) makers who transform vegetable or animal products into valuable commodities seem to add to their power to transform people. The magical metamorphosis is not limited to changes that alter a person's worth in the eyes of the world—such as beauty, wealth, and power—but embraces more significant psychic transformations. It is clear that, unlike those stories in which clothes are briefly mentioned as a reward for good behavior, the fictions in which clothing is a dominant motif make the psychic dimension paramount. Like the multiple levels of meaning in the folk tales, clothing becomes a layered text.

Many of these psychic transformations involve a definition of humanity and the search for identity that straddles the boundary between the human and the animal world. A witch's spell may imprison a human being in animal form, such as Grimms' bear-prince in "Snow White and Rose Red" or Mme. Leprince de Beaumont's Beast in "Beauty and the Beast." More unusual are the children who are born looking like a donkey (Grimms' "The Donkey"), or who are half human, half hedgehog (Grimms' "Hans My Hedgehog"). In several of these tales the young people literally undress from the donkey skin or quills when they enter their marriage beds, casting their skins aside like old garments, together with their former identities. In such cases, someone must snatch and burn the old skins to perpetuate the newly acquired human form. Though we may find girls or young women associated with animal coverings, as in Grimms' "Thousandfurs" or Charles Perrault's "Donkey Skin," these are usually disguises chosen for safety, not magical transformations. It is boys or men who are generally bewitched, and a woman, sometimes a bride but often a sister, who is the significant agent in recovering the male's human form.

The most complex tale involving the painstaking fabrication of clothes to effect the reclamation of a young man from his animal covering is Grimms' "The Six Swans." In several different forms and playing a variety of roles, clothing and its creation lie at the very heart of this evocative and richly symbolic tale. The first manifestation comes in the shape of a ball of magic yarn that the king uses to find his children, whom he has hidden...
in the forest to protect them from their new stepmother, the
daughter of a witch. The solitary castle where the children live
is “so hard to find that he himself couldn’t have found it if a wise
woman hadn’t given him a ball of magic yarn. When he tossed
the ball before him, the yarn unwound itself and showed him
the way.” The stepmother bribes the servants to reveal the ball
of yarn, makes “little white silk shirts” into which “she sewed
a magic spell,” uses the yarn to find the children, and throws “a
shirt over each of [the boys so that] the moment the shirts
touched them they turned into swans and flew away over the
trees” (172). The girl living with her brothers is not included
in this enchantment: the stepmother has made no shirt for her
and is unaware of her existence.

The ball of yarn that shows direction is clearly an instru-
ment of power, but one that lies outside the moral spectrum
and can be used both for good and evil purposes. In real terms
it has been partially manufactured; since we are not told its
derivation, it could be flax, hemp, or wool, grown and
processed, prepared and spun, but not yet woven or knitted
into cloth. The shirts are of silk, a costly and rare foreign
material that has very different connotations from the more
familiar flax and woollen garments. Certainly it is luxurious,
soft to the touch, and comfortable to wear, even sensuous,
suggesting an element of seduction. Silk is also a cloth of
privilege, and is different from wool in that the creatures who
produce it must be killed in order that it can be harvested.
Interestingly, the swans’ feathers that the brothers wear are
also described as shirts. When they reclaim their human shape
for the allotted fifteen minutes each evening, they blow off the
feathers and “their swans’ skins [come] off like shirts” (173).

The boys do not expect that their sister can free them:
“You’d have to go without speaking or laughing for six years,
and during that time you’d have to sew six little shirts out
of starflowers. If a single word crossed your lips, all your pains
would be wasted” (173). Nonetheless, she commits herself to
the task of restoring the boys to their human shape. As in the
stories of the spinners, the exacting creation of the garments
is central, with danger and self-sacrifice emphasized, for the
sister’s task is constantly interrupted, her attention distracted
by various perils, and finally she is threatened with death. The
disempowerment she must suffer by the prohibition against
speaking is extreme; while mute she may not voice an opinion,
may not affect the actions of others, and may not defend her
innocence when accused. In this situation the danger of
misrecognition is great, and even her loving husband eventu-
ally succumbs to belief in the malicious charges brought
against her.

Her attempt to parry the initial interruption to her self-
imposed task is once again expressed through clothing. She
attempts to retreat from the world by climbing a tree, but is
discovered by a king and his huntsmen who pester her with
questions and tell her to descend. Since she cannot speak she
first “tossed down her gold necklace, thinking that would satisfy
them. When they persisted, she threw down her girdle, and
when that did no good her garters and little by little everything
she was wearing, until she had nothing but her shift” (173).
But the huntsmen take her from the tree and give her to the
king, who covers her with his cloak, takes her home, and has her
“dressed in rich garments [in which] her beauty was as radiant
as the day” (174). While several critics have interpreted this
disrobing as a metaphorical rape, it also suggests a metamor-
phosis from girl to woman as she casts off the chrysalis of
childhood and emerges in more “radiant” form to assume her
new identity. The ambivalence of marriage, like that of spin-
ning, brings significant economic and social gain, but costs
individual autonomy and personal freedom. The young woman
is also offering her necklace and her clothing as objects of value,
presenting the outer image in place of her own self. But her
attempt to free herself from these outer images and identity by
divesting herself of clothes only serves to provoke the imagi-
ation of the huntsmen and to provide an opportunity for the king
to remake her as the object of his desire.

The shirts that the sister must create to redeem her
brothers are to be made from starflowers or starwort, a
metaphoric rather than a real fabric whose name adds a
celestial aspect to the task, one very different from the luxuri-
ous shirts that have bewitched them. The mode of fabrication
is not detailed; she simply “gathered starflowers and began to
make” (173). The long, difficult, and monotonous task puts
both her and her redemptive work in peril, for she cannot
contest her mother-in-law’s murderous accusations, which
makes her pledge of silence almost impossible to keep, and one
shirt remains unfinished. Andersen’s “The Wild Swans” takes
the pain of fabrication one step further. In this version the
sister must make the shirts not from starflowers but from
nettles that burn her hands as she spins and weaves them:

Look at the nettle that I hold in my hand! Around
the cave where you are sleeping grow many of them;
only those nettles or the ones to be found in
churchyards may you use. You must pick them, even
though they blister and burn your hands; then you
must stamp on them with your bare feet until they
become like flax. And from that you must twine
thread with which to knit eleven shirts with long
sleeves. (125)

The magical effect of the shirts the sister sews for her swan-
brothers is not created by the heat of passion or the meta-
orphosis of sorcery. Rather, these clothes are the physical mani-
festation of the committed and unselfish asexual love of
woman for her brother. Unlike the groom/bride situations
mentioned above where romantic or sexual love, symbolized
by marriage, may easily restore or create human form and
social status, the brother/sister relationships are always excep-
tionally demanding of the woman. Marina Warner speaks of
Sleeping Beauty’s hundred-year isolation and Rapunzel’s im-
prisonment as necessary for “the slow incubation of selfish,
of consciousness of the Other and eventual sexual fulfilment”
The intense and lonely effort that the sister makes to bring back her brothers, the male principle, to the human sphere may be viewed as a more vigorous metaphor than these imprisonments; here, instead of passively undergoing sleep or separation from the world, the young woman must work hard and long at the creative endeavor that will lead to the metamorphosis of her brothers, recreating them in recognizable form for others' eyes. In this context, the brother/sister relationship suggests not simply the bonds between man and woman, but the deeper balance between maleness and female-ness within the psyche.

In contrast to the focus on identity and self-realization involved in the brother/sister relationship, the conflict between the stepmother and the sister expressed by the silk and the starworts shirts involves a struggle for power and position and echoes the many folk tales in which malicious women precipitate the hardships that the central female figure must endure. Often this wickedness reflects jealousy or covetousness of the young woman's position, her belongings, or the love she inspires in a father or prospective husband. The destructive emotions most often spring from familial relationships that are not biological but socially rooted, those involving stepsisters, stepmothers, and mothers-in-law, though sometimes it is the maid, or occasionally a birth sister, who turns against the female protagonist. The malicious women usually work through the male-dominated social system to bring about their evil, often through the agency of the young woman's father or husband. The blindness of the male to the machinations of the female often presents him as an unwitting figure whose political, social, and judicial power is misdirected by the perverted vision these women purvey.

This female power to subvert men and male-dominated society might be explained by the divided and ambivalent image men have long been said to hold of women, the madonna/whore dichotomy. But women's involvement in the creation and maintenance of this image needs attention, particularly since the oral tradition of folk tales is carried on by women quite as much as men, and is often identified with them, as in the case of "Mother Goose." Warner emphasizes the struggle for power, the fear of rejection and loss of support that drives the mother-in-law as she is displaced by her son's bride, a fear masked in its expression by shifting the narrative point of view to the bride. Jessica Benjamin illuminates a somewhat different perspective on the dynamics of this power struggle:

The subjugated, whose acts and integrity are granted no recognition, may, even in the very act of emancipation, remain in love with the ideal of power that has been denied to them. Though they may reject the master's right to dominion over them, they nevertheless do not reject this personification of power. They simply reverse the terms and claim his rights as theirs. (220)
worth, clothes can also be employed to steal another’s identity, or can be used as a disguise, sometimes with malevolent intent. In tales in which image is important, recognition and misrecognition become highly significant. Freedman discusses the “use of the other [in playing out] this misrecognition in narrative form” and notes Lacan’s sense of the psyche “set into play by the spatial lure of the other’s image” (32).

This dual dynamic, the relationship between self and self-as-other and the relationship between these images and another human being’s perception of them, finds complex expression in a number of tales. Alan Dundes’s rich collection of essays on “Cinderella” and its relatives (Aarne-Thompson Index type 510) plots a wide variety of stories from many cultures in which clothing is important and that share several distinct story elements: the loss or theft of identity; the humiliation of disempowerment and relegation to a degraded position; the intervention of some magical power, which usually finds expression in exquisite apparel; the magnetism of magical dress, which bestows incredible beauty and draws the love of the prince; recognition and claiming of the young woman by the prince (often by the fitting of a shoe); and the final restoration of the young woman’s identity and her elevation to the status of the prince’s bride. Perrault’s “Cendrillon” and Grimms’ “Aschenputtel” are the most widely known versions of this type; I will refer primarily to the Grimms’ version since it is the more complex.

The loss or theft of clothing deprives an individual of status in society, connection with others, and, most frightening of all, identity itself. In some stories the change of clothes and of identity may be quite deliberate: for example in Grimms’ “The Dog and the Sparrow,” the youngest brother trades clothes with a poor man to hide from his murderous brothers and return home safely; in “The Twelve Huntsmen” the rejected bride disguises herself and eleven other women as men so that she may be hired by the man she loves. But when “Thousandfurs” and “Donkey Skin” choose to disguise themselves in animal skins to hide from their fathers’ lust, their decision is neither strategic nor freely chosen, but driven by fear. And in Grimms’ “The White Bride and the Black Bride” and “The Goose Girl,” the protagonists are cheated or threatened out of their clothes and their identity, in the first case by a stepsister and in the second by the maid.

“Aschenputtel” dramatizes this hardship and degradation. The heroine’s new stepmother and step-sisters take away her “pretty clothes” and replace them with “an old grey dress and wooden shoes” (84); and they force her to sleep in the hearth among the cinders so that she is both dirty and ill-clad. Even her name is taken away and the mocking “Cinderella” given her in its place. She is set first demeaning and then impossible tasks that, even when completed successfully, are considered inadequate by the oppressive women. Finally, to her mother’s death is added her emotional abandonment by a father who ceases to recognize her worth and makes his new wife and her daughters his primary commitment. Without their clothes, the protagonists of such stories are unrecognizable and powerless, and magical intervention is required to replace or recover the garments that can restore their personal value and position in society. In most cases a bridegroom is a significant agent of recognition and restoration, but his attention must first be caught and his desire kindled by magical dresses.

A number of tales feature gorgeous dresses, usually in a series of three, as powerful agents. While some dresses are simply described as “beautiful” or “even more beautiful,” in several cases they are allied with the heavens, like the starwort shirts described earlier, and may shine like or be embroidered with golden suns, silver moons, and glittering stars (Grimms’ “The True Bride”). While Thousandfurs’s dresses are made at her incestuous father’s request by young women, more often the dresses’ provenance is magical. In several of the stories, the young women are given nutsells in which the dresses are stored: for example, the toad in Grimms’ “The Cast Iron Stove” and the mother in “The Prince and the Princess” offer nuts with a message such as “These will help you in your greatest need” (394). These dresses are high magic, often representing a mother’s final gift, and are to be unpacked only in times of duress.

The dresses are sometimes used as bribes, to dazzle the eyes of the false bride and to win a night with the stolen bridegroom, but more often are worn to catch the prince’s devotion or to clear the eyes of the bridegroom who has been stolen by a malignant rival. Their celestial design incorporates the magic of the heavens, their power is unassailable, and their packaging in the nutsells takes them completely into the realm of fantasy, together with magic wishing cloaks or mantles of invisibility. The three dresses, each more beautiful than the last, permit the ritualistic three-night magical metamorphosis from servant girl to princess that is characteristic of many of these stories, a transformation so complete that Cinderella’s stepmother and sisters do not recognize her.

But the magical transformation may also work in reverse. In Cinderella’s case, the prince does not know her without the magical dresses and must use another article of clothing, her shoe, as a kind of talisman to identify her. In some of the parallel tales this second stage of identification is not necessary because the dresses alone have sufficient power to reclaim the person’s former self, but most involve an additional step. In “Thousandfurs,” for example, the young woman is recognized by her prince because of the tokens she drops in the food she makes for him, because she does not have time to hide under the dirt that has disguised her, and because the prince has, unknown to her, slipped a ring on her finger at the dance. In “Donkey Skin” a ring alone serves as the identifier. Cinderella’s rediscovery involves a more precarious trial, for the three nights of dancing are paralleled by the three attempts to fit the shoe and involve false identification of the two step-sisters before Cinderella is found. Claiming her identity as the prince’s beloved is seriously challenged by the stepsisters’
willingness to engage in self-mutilation, one cutting off a heel and the other a toe in an attempt to make the shoe fit.

For Cinderella, the two sets of recognition rituals involve two different varieties of identification: the first transformation by clothing into an object of desire claims the love of the prince, but the shoe is used in a more personal and sensuous claiming, one depending on touch and fit rather than visual impression. From a Lacanian perspective, when Cinderella puts on her magical dress it readies her to become the "other," a fitting object for the gaze of the bridegroom, an appropriate reflective medium for his own desires and imagination. Repeatedly the magical dresses are described in terms of shimmering fabrics and reflective light. They are of gold and silver; they are like the sun, the moon, and the stars. The notion of reflection rather than of perception, of powerful desires dazzling the one who gazes so that he cannot recognize the object of his desire at the next meeting, strongly reinforces this Lacanian reading with its strong mirror imagery.

That this second stage of recognition is the more significant is reinforced by the number of times in *Grimms' Tales* that clothing is found to be deceptive rather than revelatory. In several of the tales to which I have referred, clothes are the sole signifier of identity, and if they are stolen others cannot tell that the person inside them has changed. For example, "he knew she was the princess by her garments of silver and gold" (595), or "his eyes were clouded but he could still see the golden glitter of her raiment" (463). In contrast, being the right size for the shoe that identifies the beloved does not depend on an image susceptible to misrecognition, but on a rightness, a fitness for the role that the shoe symbolizes.

But despite the happy ending, Cinderella's lack of control over her own life is a dominant feature; *Grimms' Tales* provide a recurrent contrast between the young men who, when mistreated, go out to seek their fortune and the young women who must suffer and endure until some outside force gives them the dresses that reveal their beauty and allow them to attract a rescuer. Feminist critics have complained accordingly; for instance, Colette Dowling identifies the "Cinderella complex" in women as "a network of largely repressed attitudes and fears that keep women in a kind of half-light, retreating from the full use of their minds and creativity. Like Cinderella, women today are still waiting for something external to transform their lives" (31).

Magical dresses are thus powerful but dangerous, not simply to the one who is dazzled by them, but also to the wearer for whom they may represent a false empowerment dependent on image rather than truth. Yet image may be the only means of advancement for young women who must rely on fathers or husbands for their status. Suzanne Gordon points out how recent feminists have criticized women unwilling to become expert at playing by men's rules rather than pointing out that the rules themselves need to be changed (32). The wicked female characters in folk tales, stepmothers, mothers-in-law, sisters, stepsisters, and maids, are all snatch-

ing at male-derived power; they use deception, cruelty, and murderous acts to seize and hold it, and behave in a way that is governed by neither masculine rules nor feminine ones. Their destructive acts, which attempt to annihilate other women but end up by shattering or devastating their own lives, aptly illustrate Gordon's thesis.

While they overtly depict men's power and the rewards for good, submissive girls, such folk tales carry an implicit subversive message. In illustrating society's repression of women, they also point to the dangers of twisted action within the bounds of these rules, suggesting that it is the entire structure that needs overhauling and redoing. As we find in many subversive texts (including a number of children's classics), the hidden messages operating under cover of convention often carry explosive impact.

Ellen Jackson and Kevin O'Malley's recent *Cinder Edna* foregrounds such subversion by challenging Disney's concept of Cinderella as a passive and characterless protagonist waiting to be transformed by magical clothes into the right image, or as Jane Yolen puts it, "a coy, helpless dreamer, a 'nice' girl who awaits her rescue with patience and a song" (Dundes 297). Jackson and O'Malley's response to clothes-dominated images is the spunky Cinder Edna, who does not waste time sitting in the cinders but keeps warm by "mowing the lawn and cleaning parrot cages for the neighbors at $1.50 an hour." Because she does not believe in fairy godmothers, she has "used her cage-cleaning money to put a dress on layaway" for unexpected special occasions; she takes the bus to the ball. Her neighbor Cinder Ella relies on the traditional fairy godmother, who is "surprised that her goddaughter couldn't seem to figure anything out for herself" but provides the coach and the clothes. Cinder Ella loses her glass slipper and wins the prince; she ends up spending her days at endless ceremonies and her nights "with nothing to look at but her husband's perfect profile while he talked endlessly of troops, parade formations, and uniform buttons." Cinder Edna loses her leather loafer in her rush for the midnight bus and wins the prince's brother, whom she helps in his work (running a recycling plant and a home for orphaned kittens). At night they "laughed and joked, tried new recipes together, and played duets on the accordion and concertina." "Guess who lived happily ever after?" is the book's final challenge, and it is Cinder Edna's leather loafer, set on a blue satin pillow with gold braid and tassels, that adorns the cover of the book, not the glass slipper, which turns out to be too fragile to dance in with comfort.

*Cinder Edna* wittily punctures the homage paid to external image, the part clothes play in this ritual, and the disempowerment that "the Cinderella story" has inflicted on women. It is in fact a postmodern, metanarrative text, reframing the story as it tells it, and sending the message that a woman does not have to rely on magic to be in charge of her own destiny. If one cast Cinder Edna in "The Six Swans," one could imagine her marching into J. C. Penney's and presenting her charge card for the six shirts that her brothers need so
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+ desperately. Tales such as Cinder Edna disparage elaborate clothes in order to free women of the false images that these clothes have sometimes come to represent, but it is clear that Cinder Edna's stoic and positive attitude, while it sends a didactic message in the best American tradition, does not lend itself to the kind of psychic dimension that the earlier tales offer. Nor, in its cynicism about the role of image in self-identity, does it provide a stimulus for exploration and understanding of the potential selves involved in the self-realization of each individual. The magic and the rituals of clothing and of cloth, as Annette Weiner and Schneider explain, symbolize creativity (particularly women's creativity) and suggest the bonds of social interaction and the web of social mores (aesthetic, economic, religious) that provide the context for personal growth. The psychic dimension also involves the metaphorical linking of cloth and storytelling: when tales are told, yarns are spun, and the fabric of experience is woven with the warp and woof of time.

When fabricated with evil intent, the magical clothes depicted in folk tales may cause pain; but most often the clothing that transforms, whether instantly bestowed or painstakingly crafted, is an expression of love and of connection. At one level the bonds of love between woman and man, mother and child, sister and brother are celebrated through the garments. At another level, the inner drama of the developing human psyche becomes apparent: gender identification and images play out their roles, malice and goodness test their power, and humankind's animal instincts vie with a higher moral code. Children will find many stories in which clothing is merely ordinary, a useful covering to keep one warm in cold weather. But the extraordinary magical clothes are the ones that capture children's imaginations, for, as children clearly see and express in their own games, clothing provides a tangible shape to future roles and a promise of the dramatic transformations that life offers. For clothing speaks to us "in an older and more universal tongue" (Lurie 3). As Oscar Wilde, in one of his piercing inside-out witticisms, tells us, "It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances."

NOTES

1 While critics have often discussed the three related Grimm stories "The Seven Ravens," "The Twelve Brothers," and "The Six Swans" as variants of the same basic themes (see Bottigheimer 37-39), only "The Six Swans" focuses upon the clothing metaphor.

2 Even though Thousandfurs's dresses are not supplied by magic, she chooses to pack them into a nutshell when she leaves her father's house in disguise.

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Currently Secretary of the International Research Society for Children's literature, Carole Scott is Undergraduate Dean and a member of the English and Comparative Literature Department at San Diego State University. This is her third article on the significance of dress in children's literature.
Re-making Barbauld’s Primers:
A Case Study in the Americanization of British Literary Pedagogy
by Sarah Robbins

Using scenes based on experiences with her adopted son Charles, Anna Aikin Barbauld created Lessons for Children (1778), a primer whose conversations between a mother and her son advocated a meaningful social role for middle-class women—domestic pedagogue for young children, especially boys. Though initially published in England and written (according to the author’s own self-effacing introduction) with Charles as the chief audience, the Lessons became very much a nineteenth-century American text. Barbauld’s cultural work as a British juvenile author has received a good deal of attention recently (see, for example, Summerfield; Robbins, “Lessons”; Myers, “Mice”). But her notable influence across the Atlantic also merits analysis, since the history of the “Americanization” of her work can help us understand how cultural groups appropriate and reshape texts to serve new contexts. Through the marketing of new images, verbal revisions, and the material appearance of the books themselves, producers and readers of the American editions reshaped the Lessons to promote, reflect, and help define a potentially powerful identity for women in the postcolonial Republic.

This ideology focused on what I have called “domestic didactics” as the crucial responsibility of middle-class American women. Although early apologists such as Dr. Benjamin Rush and Susanna Rowson stressed the need for (middle-class) women in the United States to be educated differently—and more extensively—than their European counterparts for different social responsibilities, commentators also drew on their readings of English writers such as Maria Edgeworth, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Hannah More to support female learning and teaching. Barbauld, then, through the Lessons and other texts, served as one of a number of English writers influencing American women’s individual and national maternal pedagogy.

While, on one level, the sheer number of editions published in the United States illustrates Barbauld’s ongoing influence, accurately characterizing the cultural work done by her texts is made more complicated by the many different variations in the repeated issuings of works such as the Lessons throughout the nineteenth century. On the one hand, Americans did own and read English editions of the Lessons. (Like their counterparts in the United States, British publishers were participating in the market-oriented reshaping of “Barbauld” by making such changes in later editions of her work as adding illustrations in keeping with developing Anglo-American views of female middle-class domesticity.) On the other hand, however, judging by preliminary surveys of holdings in a range of United States libraries, nineteenth-century Americans were even more likely to read versions of Barbauld’s primer prepared specifically with the new country’s reading audience in mind—whether by way of a pirating and recirculating of nineteenth-century British editions, at one extreme, or by way of more extensively Americanized texts. With interventions ranging from such seemingly straightforward moves as Americanizing word choice to more extensive redesign of the physical presentation of the text, later U. S. versions of her primer series often looked quite different from the original English editions. Given the number and diversity of such textual interventions, along with the parallel enterprise of women biographers’ gradual reshapings of “Barbauld,” a sense of the nature and scope of her (works’) influence on the development of an American ethos of domestic women’s pedagogy can be retrieved, even if only indirectly. A literary excavation of this type is necessarily based on a limited record—the fragmentary remnant of a larger process. Yet even this partial recovery is a telling one, traceable through the many surviving editions in university, public, and private research libraries.

With that goal in mind, while the Lessons for Children is only one of a number of Barbauldian juvenile texts that were popular in nineteenth-century America, a historical review of its editions is the best place to begin analyzing her influence in the United States. In the Lessons Barbauld articulated several key themes that would be adopted across the Atlantic to support the ideal of Republican motherhood. In fact, even in its original late-eighteenth-century British form, Barbauld’s primer already represents the nascent stage of what would become, especially in America, strongly interconnected appeals for improved female education, for feminine control of young children’s at-home and in-school teaching, and, eventually, for an ennobling social role for women as the guardians of middle-class family values.

Set mainly in the home and its immediate environs, the Lessons’ mother-son dialogues provide a carefully sequenced introduction to words and phrases appropriate for beginning readers. On another level, they invite the child reader to participate in middle-class culture by teaching him about language, his key to social interaction in the rising middle class. One crucial element in Barbauld’s production of the Lessons was her move to claim, for both children and their teaching mothers, access to and power over the growing technology and dissemination of print. Barbauld’s assertion of control over this particular tool for teaching—the book—seems remarkable from today’s perspective. In her own day, in fact, the mother/son teaching/learning relationship Barbauld crafted in the Lessons was artfully conservative, in that it built on commonly held assumptions about feminine identity that...
made her model immediately accessible to other women. But it was also quietly revolutionary in claiming feminine authority over the education of children and thus indirectly over society. Just beneath her deferential language, post-Revolutionary American women would find the key ingredients for a highly politicized maternal role—educating the son to educate the nation—and the ammunition for their arguments for improved female education.

Thus, we can better understand nineteenth-century inter-related efforts to claim at-home teaching (and, eventually, classroom teaching) as a meaningful role for middle-class women by reexamining the transformation of Barbauld’s personal pedagogy via the Americanization of her life story and her most famous juvenile text. Toward that goal, the remainder of this essay will examine specific American refashionings of her life and explore how American editions of Barbauld’s *Lessons* marketed her primers’ teaching to serve the ideology of domestic didactics.

The social construction of Barbauld’s American identity in biographies began with a version of her life created by her niece. When Lucy Aikin published Barbauld’s literary *Legacy for Young Ladies*, the preface presented a picture of her aunt as motherly teacher in person and in texts. First of all, she called Barbauld “one of the best friends of youth” (iii), as evidenced by such earlier juvenile literature offerings as the *Lessons, Hymns in Prose* (1781), and *The Female Speaker* (1811). Noting that Barbauld had given parents “valuable advice” about their children’s education in numerous essays, her niece/editor also emphasized the direct instruction that Barbauld had provided for “many young persons of both sexes . . . during the course of her long life” (iv). Such pedagogy, Aikin asserted, could continue “even from the grave to delight and improve the rising generation” via this final anthology of “pieces . . . found among her papers” (iv).

Read today, Aikin’s introduction to Barbauld’s last juvenile publication embodies more than a clever strategy for engaging a potential book-buyer by recalling past works of the same writer and re-legitimizing her voice. Aikin’s preface also suggests, in encapsulated form, some of the means her aunt had deployed in her juvenile writings to claim authority as a literary pedagogue, uses to which she had put her textual power, and ways in which those efforts had been molded by a socially constructed subjectivity that would now, in turn, affect others. For instance, besides presenting Barbauld as teaching through both personal interaction and literary instruction, Aikin’s description suggests that, at times, there was a synthesis of the two, as in her aunt’s letters “addressed to different ladies whom she favoured with her friendship” (v).6 Aikin’s strategic characterizations indirectly depicted herself as fulfilling a similarly synthesized teacher-writer role by publicly sharing with her own reading audience her aunt’s teaching texts. Aikin, then, initiated the process for others to enact her aunt’s model of feminine domestic didactics. This biography, reprinted several times in the United States as well as in England, also began the “selling” of Barbauld as a paradigm of maternal literary pedagogy. Along those lines, Aikin emphasized that the children’s books themselves were intended for a dual purpose (“to delight and improve”) and that her aunt wrote, in part, to fulfill a responsibility that Barbauld had helped claim for privileged middle-class women—achieving a significant influence on society’s future (“the rising generation”). Aikin praised the juvenile literature not so much for its inherent literary worth, but for its beneficial effects on young readers, who might learn to accept its “moral truths” or, at least, appreciate the “ingenuity” that can “amuse the fancy” and “refine the taste” (iv).

As a whole, then, this preface epitomized several paradoxes in Barbauld’s pedagogy. Powerful yet constrained herself, she was empowering yet enforcing for her audience. Her authority, meanwhile, arose both from within herself (for example, from her own intellectual gifts, “her admirable genius”) and from the society granting her a voice to reinforce its own. Finally, in restricting the title’s legacy to “young ladies,” Aikin contradicted her own observation that “young persons of both sexes” had benefited from Barbauld’s influence during her lifetime (iv). While this gendered designation of the volume’s beneficiaries may simply have been meant to indicate a special empathetic relationship between the author and her female readers, it also supposes that genteel middle-class women will be able to treat Barbauld’s texts as their own property, adapting them to their special needs for teaching and learning.

Writing as she did with greater proximity to her subject than later critics and historians could achieve, Aikin as literary executrix began and partially controlled the cultural work they would continue: to interpret and in that very act redefine “Anna Barbauld” as feminine author/pedagogue. Aikin’s management of her aunt’s identity and texts therefore exemplifies the problematic relationship between any generation of writers and its later conservators and interpreters. On the one hand, Aikin’s selection of as-yet-unpublished texts from among her aunt’s papers may ultimately have helped solidify Barbauld’s reputation. For instance, by choosing to include pieces such as “True Magicians” and “On Female Studies,” which touted domestic teaching as a social role that middle-class women readers could take on, the supportive editor reinforced her aunt’s exemplary power as a feminine pedagogue instructing through written moral suasion. At the same time, since several of the pieces Aikin included in the *Legacy* were originally composed as letters to female friends, she underscored otherwise invisible ways in which her aunt’s private and public teaching overlapped. So, by providing apt models for other “young ladies” to imitate in their own correspondence—a literacy site that Joan Hedrick has suggested was often more
semi-public than private in antebellum American parlor culture—Aikin also helped encourage the extension of women's personal teaching through shared literacies.

Aikin's initial dissemination of her aunt's biography as an introductory frame for reading Barbauld's other works also usefully highlights the tendency of nineteenth-century women writers and readers to integrate their interpretations of literary texts with their study of women's "real" lives. Barbauld's later American biographers tended to draw heavily on Aikin's sympathetic rendering of her aunt's life in the Works. But differences between the English and the American treatments of Barbauld exemplify the complicated process of reconstructing an individual into a textual role model suitable for a later, different audience. Through their various omissions, emphases, and additions, the nineteenth-century American biographies of the English author provide another window into the ideology-building associated with the nineteenth-century feminization of education.

One of the most enthusiastic nineteenth-century American biographers, Grace Ellis, comments about how she both borrowed from and revised the impressions created by Aikin's version of her aunt's life:

Miss Aikin's Memoir...is a brief, comprehensive, and very limited sketch of her aunt's life and writings. What she wrote was couched in elegant language, and the criticism is very discriminating and impartial; but she had not the space proper for such an undertaking, and time has given us many more facts of interest connected with Mrs. Barbauld. (2)

To support her contention that Aikin's portrayal of her aunt may have been insufficiently positive, Ellis called on the niece's own biographer, who tells us of her Life of Mrs. Barbauld, and that of her father, John Aikin, M.D.: "Both may be regarded as works of filial piety, for her aunt shared with her father in the reverence and affection with which she regarded the union of virtue and talent. The cast of her own mind fitted her better for sympathizing with the strong practical sense, the liberal views, and the literary diligence of her father, than with the sensibility and poetical elegance of her aunt." (2)

All in all, though praising Aikin's biographical treatment of her aunt as having "elegant" language and "discriminating and impartial" criticism, Ellis finds the Memoir too short to do Barbauld justice. Perhaps more significantly, Ellis faults Aikin with a shortage of "sensibility," which made it impossible to depict Barbauld in adequately "warm and personal" style. Reread through the lens of nineteenth-century pedagogical theories favoring the use of sensibility in teaching (see Fitts), we can see that Ellis is, in effect, critiquing Aikin's textual teaching about Barbauld, suggesting the characteristics of a more appropriate rendering of the role model's story, and preparing to offer an alternative version of that story herself.

Ellis's 1874 American biography represents Barbauld at the height of her reputation in America. Ellis tells us that her central aim is "to place before the present generation the character and the just claims to veneration and respect which the life of Mrs. Barbauld must inspire," so that "her noble qualities of mind and heart, her high culture and poetic genius, her pure and simple course of life" might "impress themselves upon the [probably female] reader" (1, italics mine). And Ellis's enthusiasm for her subject extended throughout the biography proper, in which she emphasized Barbauld's skills as a pedagogue and literary lady as well as her potential usefulness as an inspiring feminine role model. Thus, for instance, when reporting on Samuel Johnson's acerbic criticism of Barbauld's work as a teacher and writer of children's reading texts, this protective apologist questioned the sincerity of his remarks and speculated that "some friend, perhaps Boswell, had evidently goaded Dr. Johnson to this ridiculous and foolish expression of his ignorance of the real importance" of Barbauld's teaching (73-74) and of her "very remarkable capacity as a writer for children" (6; see also Myers, "Mice").

Ellis's project seems to have arisen in part out of a fascinated appreciation of Barbauld's ability to direct what her contemporaries frequently referred to as her "masculine mind" (15, 253, 324) toward creating what had become, by Ellis's time, the dominant, idealized image for middle-class American feminine identity—the domestic pedagogue, charged with the vital role of educating her children and, through them, the nation. Closely connected to this common portrayal of Barbauld as having bridged the normally unbridgeable gap between "masculine" and "feminine" thinking is the related issue of how, though clearly a "genius," she was able to construct a social role easily accessible to the typical middle-class female reader.

Mary Hughs's 1828 reworking of Aikin's biography had placed similar emphasis on Barbauld's efficacy as a role model for middle-class American women. Printed with Selections from Barbauld's works and described as Extracts from Miss Aikin's Memoir, this short life story made choices even in its condensing to reshape "Barbauld" for her American audience. As Ellis would later, Hughs judged Barbauld to have been a "genius," yet, again like Ellis, she described her in a prefatory advertisement as especially appropriate for emulation:

It is...confidently affirmed that there is not in the whole range of English literature an author more fit not only to be read, but to be long and closely studied by them. "Though dead she yet speaketh," and many, very many it is hoped are yet to be charmed by her harmonious diction, amused by her rich vein of fancy, and improved and elevated by her correct judgment and refined feeling. (iv)
These lines suggest that Hughes was especially impressed by Barbauld's modeling of eighteenth-century feminine qualities such as "harmonious diction," "fancy," "correct judgment," and "refined feeling." But Hughes's "Memoir," though drawing more closely on Aikin's than Ellis's would later, also signaled via her choices of what to emphasize that her attitudes were already heavily imbued with the nineteenth-century American ideology of Republican motherhood, which she promoted among her readership through an astutely constructed portrayal of Barbauld. For instance, this version of Barbauld's life omits Aikin's extended account of her aunt's refusal to open an academy for young ladies, but includes every word Aikin wrote about Barbauld's successes teaching at the Palgrave school for boys.

Writing at mid-century, between Hughes and Ellis and with a clear agenda supporting maternal domestic teaching, Sarah Josepha Hale included Barbauld in her *Woman's Record* anthology of sketches of "distinguished" women (1854), and she reprinted several of Barbauld's own pedagogical essays. Hale also issued an edition of Barbauld's juvenile literature—including material from the *Lessons*—in 1840, wherein the tireless campaigner for women's rights as teachers provided another glowing account of her Palgrave academy teaching (11), but complained that the talented young girl was not allowed equal access to learning with her brother:

He was three years younger than his sister, and, when they were children, she taught and assisted him in his studies. As he grew older, his opportunities of acquiring learning became better than hers. . . . John became a pupil in his studies, while his sister was obliged to learn her lessons alone; and her father, though he heard her recitations, never encouraged her much, for he was afraid she would be too fond of her books. It is only a short time, since men have become convinced, of the importance of female education, and that is the mothers and sisters who form the minds as well as manners of their brothers and sons. Men never can be truly wise, while women are ignorant. (10)

Reshaped here, a piece of Barbauld's biography serves Hale's agenda for improving female education. In contrasting Barbauld's constrained training with her brother's full access to education, Hale may have known that she was oversimplifying, and actually somewhat misrepresenting, the differences. But the opposing views of John, a fully empowered "pupil in his [socially supported] studies," and "his sister," who Hale says was forced "to learn her lessons alone," paint just the portrait the American proselytizer needed to bolster her ongoing argument for improving women's learning. A related and equally important version of the same argument was conveyed through the juvenile texts themselves—especially the ubiquitous *Lessons*, which advocates of domestic didactics frequently appropriated in their campaign to define middle-class women as teachers of the Republic's citizens.

Along those lines, in *The Mother's Book* (1831), a popular advice manual, Lydia Maria Child included an extensive section on selecting appropriate reading materials for at-home pedagogy. At the top of the list "for children from four to five years of age" was the following entry:

**MRS. BARBAULD'S LESSONS FOR CHILDREN.**

All unite in cordially approving this lady's writings. Good sense is clothed in very attractive simplicity, and the thoughts are continually directed to God as the giver of all we enjoy. (99)

This Boston endorsement of Barbauld and her primer was only one of many she received from American women biographers, editors, and publishers. Hale, for example, indicated her faith in Barbauld in the introduction to an anthology whose title linked the English author with her American editor:

**Things by Their Right Names, and Other Stories, Fables, and Moral Pieces, in Prose and Verse, Selected and Arranged from the Writings of Mrs. Barbauld, with a Sketch of Her Life, by Mrs. S. J. Hale, author of "Sketches of American Character," "Ladies' Wreath," etc., etc.**

Hale observed in the prefatory remarks: "There is no need of commending this Volume to the attention of the reader, or the approbation of the public. The name of Mrs. Barbauld will be sufficient guarantee of the worth of the selection" (3). Further, declared Hale "with" Barbauld at the end of this preface, "We hope that "our [italics mine] young readers will study this volume, thoroughly; there is scarcely an article in it, but deserves to be repeatedly read, till the whole is fixed in the heart as well as mind" (4).

A similar faith in the ability of the English writer and her works to serve an American agenda was evident in Hughes's endorsement. Two years after Barbauld's death in 1826, the R. H. Small Company of Philadelphia had already published an anthology of her children's literature. Most of the text from the opening advertisement appears below, as signed originally by Hughes as "M.H."

Though no apology can be thought necessary for the introduction of this volume to the public; yet it may not be amiss for the editor to state her reasons for making the compilation, since the writings of Mrs. Barbauld have so recently appeared in a much more comprehensive form. High as is the reputation of this celebrated writer in various walks of literature, there is not one . . . in which she is so generally and
was still the related problem of carving out a specific cost niche and yet but a very small portion of her labours for that end have appeared before the public in such a form as to give them a promise of fulfilling the intentions of their benevolent and enlightened author. Combined with writings but little calculated to interest the mind of youth, and thus forming a set of volumes much too expensive to be put into their hands, the circulation of her juvenile pieces... must necessarily be very limited. To collect all therefore that are suited to youthful readers into a volume that shall not be too expensive for their use is the only object of this selection. (iii-iv)

This commercial commentary highlights typical decisions that American publishers made when marketing a figure such as Barbauld for the nineteenth-century middle-class book-buying public. First of all, of course, was the decision to print this author (that is, the expectation that “she” would sell well). Hughs claimed to feel fairly secure in this case, since the “celebrated” Barbauld’s reputation was “high,” especially in the juvenile genre, where it aided “the improvement and amusement of the rising generation.” Second, once the choice to reprint an already-published author had been made, there was still the related problem of carving out a specific cost niche in the market to serve with a particular edition. Because Barbauld was popular, in other words, there were many other “versions” of her circulating in competition with Small’s. If, as in this case, several expensive editions had already appeared, the publisher might make the same decision that Hughs announced here—to produce “a volume that shall not be too expensive for [readers’] use.” She makes that commitment, however, in sensitive awareness that a buyer considers quality as well as cost when selecting books. For instance, she imagines that Barbauld admirers would want both a fairly complete collection of the author’s texts and a fully accurate representation of her philosophy for serving that ever-needy “rising generation.” So far, Hughs claims, “but a very small portion of her labors” from the juvenile genre has been made available. (There has been an insufficient quantity.) Further, those texts have not been presented “in such a form as to give them a promise of fulfilling the intentions of their benevolent and enlightened author.” (The quality has been poor, unworthy of the author, her kindness, and her intelligence.) Perhaps alluding to Barbauld’s well-known advertisement for the Lessons as accessible in vocabulary and in genre, Hughs complains that her competitors’ texts have taken some juvenile pieces and “combined” them “with writings but little calculated to interest the mind of youth.” Then, reasserting the cost issue, Hughs points out that some editions of Barbauld have been so large as to be too expensive.

Carefully negotiating her way through several potentially conflicting desires that she expects exist in the minds of her readership, Hughs tries to provide a text that is quintessentially American—inexpensive enough for everyone, so as to appeal to the democratic leveling impulse, yet worthy enough to affirm a yearning for the best. The “Barbauld” personality imbedded within this advertisement, therefore, has been Americanized into wanting her books placed “into... [the] hands” of all children. And her “enlightened” thinking is simultaneously available to counter the danger that the most astute middle-class Americans had already recognized as barely contained within their all-embracing republicanism—the threat to the polity if the mass of citizens were not properly educated for their responsibilities.

If an American editor/publisher of 1828 were about to print an English text, all the decisions described above could be made without ever consulting the author (if she were still alive) or her heirs. As Cathy Davidson has pointed out, Congress’s passage of a copyright law in 1790 was a turning point in the professionalization of authorship (83), but it did not solve the problem of international pirating. Authors from England and the United States were particularly liable to be abused in each others’ countries, due to the steady traffic back and forth across the Atlantic and the lack of a language barrier, which eliminated the need for translation. Partly because of the Republic’s self-conscious concern about educating its citizenry, and partly because they exhibited characteristics closely in tune with the new nation’s image of itself, juvenile texts by Barbauld were what might today be called a hot property. In nineteenth-century America, the book had become a highly politicized commodity shaped by many more minds and hands than a single author’s.

The plethora of surviving British and American editions of Barbauld’s juvenile literature in such collections as those of the American Antiquarian Society, the Library of Congress, and the Boston Public Library attests both to her popularity and to ways that the various technologies of publication were often being collaboratively shaped by writers, readers, editors, and publishers. For one thing, multiple copies of multiple editions are extant, with publication dates generally ranging from the 1820s through the 1870s. (Judging by their inscriptions, many of these had been family copies for several generations before being donated to the libraries.) For another, publishers’ and editors’ introductions almost always refer specifically to her popularity. Besides new American editions, pirated versions of English ones can often be found for the years just after any of her texts was published, with more and more changes being imposed on the original in reissues on both sides of the Atlantic.

Closer examination of actual copies reveals, among other things, a wide range in price for Barbauld’s Lessons. In fact, efforts to control cost certainly represented one reason behind some of the many publishers’ interventions reshaping her juvenile texts. For instance, “toy” and chapbook
versions of the *Lessons* might sell for as little as one cent. At the other extreme, some editions had leather covers with gold leaf lettering on the outside and elaborate illustrations (in a few cases, as many as 100) on the inside. In the particular case of the *Lessons*, changing the size of the margin from Barbauld’s recommended extra-wide approach was a frequent money-saving move, since it required less paper to print the book. A similar decision often made was to print only part of Barbauld’s original *Lessons* text, sometimes as little as a scene or two, but to market it without identifying the abridgment as an excerpt.

Studying the advertising in the back pages of various American editions situates this selling of Barbauld within the larger context of the new country’s growing publishing industry. Thus, for example, even the “toy” books could be marketed for either a discriminating or a cost-conscious buyer. C. Shepard’s 1835 edition of *Little Charles*, embellished with coloured engravings (New York) represents one extreme. Though printed on small-sized paper for a price of twelve and a half cents, Shepard’s text was part of a series marketed as “elegant colored Toy Books, printed on cap writing paper” and was certainly more attractive than Barbauld clones selling for from one to six cents. On the other hand, an 1823 edition of the *Lessons* bound with a group of Edgcworth’s stories and sold by King and Smith in New York advertised its publisher’s prices as ranging from twelve and a half to thirty-seven and a half cents for “children’s colour’d books.”

One of the most complicated aspects of this ongoing marketing of a “product” such as Barbauld was that textual changes based on both British and American publishers’ perceptions of what would sell best often wound up reinvigorating and/or reshaping the ideology the publisher/editor was trying to appeal to in the first place. A good example is the repeated use of domestic imagery in the illustrations for Barbauld’s juvenile texts. In using pictures of teaching mothers to help sell the book, the editor was also selling the images themselves and the lifestyle they depicted.

In particular, many editions of Barbauld’s *Lessons* contained illustrations that reinforced the concept of mother as nurturing teacher within the home. Some antebellum editions of the *Lessons* suggest how highly coded these representations of domestic didactics in action could become. King and Smith’s 1823 New York edition, for one, used a color engraving at the beginning of part 2 of the text with a caption taken from “Mama”’s call to her “Little boy” to “bring [his] little stool” by her for a reading lesson. Sitting with her hand outstretched toward her child, this gracefully dressed mother beckons him to join her by the fireside, which is decorated with an elaborate screen and a clock on the mantel. Charles, meanwhile, steps toward his mother with his book in his hand, eager for new literacy *Lessons*. Variations on this illustration recur in countless other editions, underscoring and promoting the ethos of maternal pedagogy. An 1861 Boston version of parts 2 and 3 of the *Lessons* issued by William Carter and Brother, for instance, includes several strategically placed illustrations of maternal reading scenes. In the frontispiece, which sets the tone for the entire volume, a mother sits by a table near her fireside, where a toddler stands beside a rocking chair. If the shut door and a laundry basket in the background reinforce a feeling of coyness in the room, they also assert the primacy of domestic labor, with enlightened child-rearing reinscribed as its most crucial element by the caring look this mother focuses on her child. Peter Hill’s 1832 New York edition had made a similar point by choosing for the frontispiece a similar depiction of mother and child. This edition’s first-page illustration portrays a seated mother figure, beckoning to Charles, who is a tiny toddler. “Come hither, Charles; Come to mamma,” the caption reads, anticipating the opening sequence of the text, when the mother-teacher first invites her son to “Sit in Mamma’s lap” and “read [his] book.” The image reinforces its message by portraying the mother as holding a waiting book, the object that will be the site of the mother’s and son’s shared learning. Besides the two human figures, other details in the picture are important signs of the way domestic didactics as an ideal maternal behavior and identity was being encoded into multiple artifacts of nineteenth-century American culture. The room itself, for instance, is enclosed, with both a shut door and a shut window visible in the background. To the left of the mother figure is the hearth, so often an element in this recurring scene.

To re-view all these images of teaching mothers in the context of the *Lessons* text, and the *Lessons* text in the context of these images, is to sense how the cultural construction of the American domestic, didactic mother was facilitated by versions of Barbauld and her textual pedagogy that circulated in the literary marketplace throughout the nineteenth century. In particular, “reading” another and another and another illustration of the stereotypical fireside reading scene eventually meant that, on one level, those images lost their power. They were no longer strikingly distinct. On the other hand, the iconic quality of the gaze exchanged between mother and son in such scenes, over time, constructed home literacy as an equalizing experience linking the maternal pedagogue and her child. Brought together by looking at the book, neither mother nor child is sole dominating subject, and neither is objectified. Becoming the object of shared desire, for delight and improvement, the book itself allows the mother/son relationship to become more reciprocally nurturing. Further, once the basic image of home-based mother and son reading together became so predictable, any slight variation(s) in the paradigm would have become notable. Thus, for instance, the open doorway in the background of an illustration in the 1825 Gilley issuing of the *Lessons* would have been a more significant symbol of expanding maternal influence for a nineteenth-century American middle-class woman reader than for most of us today.
So too, the group reading together around a table in another Lessons engraving in the same edition was striking both for its representation of familial domestic parlor reading and for its variation on the archetypal images of mother and son, teacher and learner engaged in dialogic lesson. Perhaps “Charles” grown up, well instructed by his mother, was more likely to read together with his whole family than to seek entertainment outside the home?

In a similar way, examining entire sequences of illustrations in some of the editions that placed increasing emphasis on their use shows that, even as it was continually being reasserted in women’s printed texts, domestic didactics as the American middle-class female social role was also being extended outside the literal and ideological boundaries of the home. For example, a typical antebellum American edition’s four illustrations form a progressive sequence in their portrayal of maternal pedagogy. The first scene shows “Mamma” in an enclosed room, near the fire, with a book in her lap. Charles steps toward her in response to the caption’s request for him to come. The next engraving, on the other hand, shows Mamma taking an older Charles for a walk outside. Her hand points to a loaded wagon—offering a “reading” of that text for her son, explaining what it is and how it works, perhaps.

Charles, meanwhile, sits atop the hay on the wagon. Once the third illustration is in view, we have a reworking of the first. Rather than reading to Charles now, she listens to him read, as he perches on a stool, holding his own book. She is seated again this time, as in the first illustration, in the same position in the same room—except that the door is now open, revealing a meadow, trees, and a building in the background. If the second and third illustrations portray Charles’s increasing maturity, his ability to take on more responsibility and see more of the world, he nonetheless still needs a maternal figure to guide his journeys and interpretations of them. In fact, the final engraving, where a hare is being pursued by dogs, carries undercurrents of danger associated with the non-domesticated world, or with attempts to travel through it without maternal wisdom’s support.

Another antebellum edition of the Lessons for Children, published in Philadelphia in 1818 by Benjamin Warner, advertised its own illustrations (just under 20 in the 100-page book) in a subtitle: “Improved by Cuts, Designed by S. Pike, and Engraved by Dr. Anderson.” Besides the numerous engravings (for which the publishing house had acquired a copyright in 1810), another expensive and potentially appealing feature of this particular version of the primer was its attractive poetry-like layout and wide margins for much of the text—moves that Barbauld herself, given her original advertisement, would probably have applauded. For our purposes, however, what may be more interesting is the content of the individual engravings, especially their tendency, as a group, to stress the maternal role as guide to the outside world, not simply at-home nurturer. The requisite scene of mamma with baby Charles is included, of course (6), as well as a picture of him playing peek-a-boo behind his mother’s skirts as his father looks on (8), one of mamma and the maid Betty helping him prepare for bed (21), and another fireside scene of mama comforting him but also advising that “Good boys do not cry” (18). The majority of the illustrations, however, focus on Charles’s interactions with the larger world outside the home and on his mother’s ability to serve as effective guide. For instance, several engravings portray such activities as mother and son walking along a path in Sunday attire (26), mamma and Charles meeting a young man who holds a bird’s nest (28), mother pointing to a roadside bush and teaching her son the names of leaves (33), and Charles and his mother examining a fish that has been caught and laid out by a stream (37). A few of these pictures even suggest the efficacy of a collaborative domestication of the outdoors. Thus, one image shows mamma and Charles enjoying an outdoor tea, where the printed text has her observing:

It is very pleasant. But here is no table. What must we do? Oh, here is a large round stump of a tree, it will do very well for a table. But we have no chairs. Here is a seat of turf, and a bank almost covered with violets;
we shall sit here, and you . . . may lie on the carpet.
The carpet is in the parlour. Yes, there is a carpet in the parlour, but there is a carpet here too. (58)

Similarly, in an earlier illustration, mamma gives Charles directions on how to tidy his garden and "roll" the walkway, so that, once again, the outdoors can be made more attractively parlor-like (42). By choosing to picture moments when mamma and Charles carry their domestic practices—and, by implication, related values—into the public sphere, these Lessons reiterate and support the developing American ideal of middle-class women "mothering" the larger culture, even as they continue to suggest that her main avenue to broader sociopolitical influence is through effective preparation of the son for his future work. Hence, the illustration of Charles rolling the garden walkway becomes more ideologically charged when we read the accompanying Barbauldian text:

"Work well, and perhaps I may give you a halfpenny a day. Every body works, but not little babies; they cannot work.

"If you are a good boy, you shall have a little garden of your own, and a spade to dig with, and a hoe, and a rake, and a little wheel-barrow; and pray do not let me see any weeds in your garden; pull them all up." (42)

Besides such reshaping of the Lessons through the use of illustrations, many editors changed Barbauld's language, eliminating phrases or adding to them in ways that reinforced the distinctively American ideology of domestic didactics. In some editions, for example, "Charles" becomes "Little Marrian." The marketing of American editions with a female main character could be viewed as recognition of the United States reading audience's increasing interest in female education. Perhaps this publisher wanted young ladies to be able to imagine themselves as the primer student more literally than was possible when the child in the story was a boy. In this sense, "Little Marrian" moved the argument for equal (or at least improved) female education from the seminary and other school institutional sites "down" to the earliest point of possible inequity—during at-home literacy acquisition. Of course, Barbauld is still named author in these editions, even though she herself had repeatedly insisted on the need to distinguish between the educational programs necessary for young boys and the more restricted opportunities appropriate for girls.9 Interestingly, later in this "Marrian" version of the Lessons, "Charles" suddenly reappears out of nowhere for one episode—the adventure in which he runs away from school.

Was it unimaginable for a young American girl to run away from school? And does Little Marrian, overall, represent an early effort to problematize gender roles in other social practices as well?10 Possibly. The frontispiece illustration has Marrian reading a book, a boy in a sketch beside her carefully painting a picture. What does it mean, in nineteenth-century America, to give Marrian the task and the power of reading the printed text, while giving her companion (only) a decorative artist's role? What would be the (expected) reaction of readers to the illustration appearing just after a fairly accurate reprinting of Barbauld's preface—a scene of a boy and girl outdoors, with a butterfly positioned between them? What would Barbauld herself say, if presented a copy of Little Marrian with her name attached as author?

A particular issue related to the ongoing appropriation of Barbauld by her American editors is, in fact, their various invocations of her name. At a strategic if not a transformative level, "Barbauld" is often used to aid marketing. For example, changing the title of Lessons for Children to Mrs. Barbauld's Lessons (as in the 1850 Boston edition) follows a practice also common in England and suggests primarily that publishers expected readers to be attracted by her name. On the other hand, binding the Lessons with other texts advertised as "admirably adapted to the capacities of children" but not written by Barbauld seems a nineteenth-century equivalent of today's television programming sandwiching a weak show between two proven hits: would D. Bliss's 1806 offering of "two Elegant Tales entitled the BASKETMAKER AND THE EARTHQUAKE" have been expected to sell as well if separated from the Lessons? At a further extreme, attributing a whole anthology to Barbauld as author when she wrote only some selections in the collection seems an outright appropriation of that name,11 as does assigning it to a text she possibly did not write—Theodore Carleton; or Perseverance Against Ill-Fortune.12 Along those lines, what happens to "Barbauld" when we fold her (and her texts) into a "series" like "Aunt Mary's Library for Children"? Are those texts still Barbauld's? Perhaps, though "she" herself seems to have become a celebrity endorser, without, of course, being remunerated. And what about the other titles on the list, the books supposedly written by "Aunt Mary" or "Uncle Tom"? What do those titles and purported authors gain by affiliation with Mrs. Barbauld, English mother of American domestic didactics? What would Barbauld herself say about such affiliation in the context of "Aunt Mary's" description of the series?

The object of . . . this work is to provide a series of volumes for LITTLE FOLKS, adapted to excite attention, to promote harmless amusement, and assist the Parent or Guardian in the Cultivation of the Infant mind and heart. The series is intended for all the little children in the land, and will, therefore, be entirely free from anything sectarian. (Stories 1)

While it would be difficult to imagine Barbauld's opposing "harmless amusement" or "cultivation of the Infant mind and heart," to construct her work as "free from anything sectarian" suggests that a subtle selecting out process has begun, the beginning of the erasure of her historically situated identity—
one closely bound to the English Dissenting Academy and its self-consciously religious stance.

Similarly, the intellectual underpinnings of her textual instruction program become compromised when her own careful sequencing of didactic sensory experiences for "Charles" is undone through excessive abridgments and/or additions. For instance, in the 1850 Munroe and Francis Boston edition of the Lessons, new scenes (involving a silly talking dog) and advertisements for other books are interpolated directly into what had been Barbauld's own text. The extra episode is abruptly tacked on to what had been a lyrical bedtime ending for one volume of the lessons, where the motherly voice spoke in rich images to Charles about the moon and sun. Suddenly, a chatty canine, Flora, tells the reading audience that she can talk, as can the Sun and Moon. She belongs, she says, to some children "whose parents hired a cottage for the summer near a beautiful sea-beach, where they had a view of the waters of the Atlantic Ocean." (188). Flora then names the boys and girls, as well as some animals they observed during their stay, such as raccoons and woodchucks (189). Up to this point, although the rationally ordered shared sensory experiences of the original Lessons are diminished by the jabbering dog, it might still be argued that the importation of details about the Atlantic Ocean and non-European animals represents a relatively innocuous reshaping of the English story to fit the audience's need for including some "truly American" elements in the narrative. Yet the next shift is more problematic, as "mamma"'s voice suddenly reenters the text, but with a different role than anywhere else in the Lessons—to direct Charles's future reading by advertising book choices for him to make: "Now Charles," the mother figure declares,

"I have got to the end of my little book, which I wrote for your instruction. Let me tell you of some other very pretty books, which I wish you to read, and one is called Familiar Tales, in which are as many as twenty-nine stories, just suited for you. Then there is Fables for the Nursery." (188)

Degenerating quickly into a hawking of titles ranging from Edgeworth's Frank, Harry and Lucy, and Parent's Assistant to Child's Flowers for Children, the reconfigured "mamma" voice goes on promoting other maternally infused teaching books for several pages (188-92). Here, surely, the eighteenth-century English Barbauld who wrote Lessons for her own son has been set aside, replaced by an insistently nineteenth-century American bookseller more intent on marketing than on pedagogy.

One striking suggestion of how the gradual revision of Barbauld may have contributed to the increasingly feminized but also more regularized American ideology of children's education is clear in an 1830s Lilly, Wait and Company Boston edition of the Lessons: This much-abbreviated version of what was by then Barbauld's "classic" text depicted only one brief interlude from the multivolume original. The American repackager, in this case, turned the single episode of Little Charles's school-skipping adventure into a sing-song rhyme, then printed it on large, pamphlet-size paper with a colorful picture above the accessible bits of text on each page. Inscribed as a "New Year's Gift" for Miss Clarinda Hooker in 1834, this "little" book looks suspiciously like the grandmother of basal readers—but with Barbauldian moral suasion still foregrounded to underscore the complex relationship between gender roles and teaching in nineteenth-century America. In this lesson heightened by rhyme and picture, mamma's domestic teaching saves the day for Charles and, by extension, for society, by sending him back to school for more regulated learning. While the question of whether women themselves might effectively fill paid teaching positions in common school classrooms was still not fully resolved (see Preston), this text could confidently reaffirm one crucial pedagogical role already staked out by antebellum middle-class women, and supported through refigurations of texts such as Barbauld's, namely home-based teacher of young children. At the same time, both the images of the Barbauldian mother standing on the threshold to the world outside the home and the powerful memory of her teaching voice guiding her son's actions in later scenes in which she does not directly appear presage her entry into the ranks of professional educators.

In related moves to appropriate the author and her work, over and over again "Barbauld" was subsumed within the increasingly print-dominated and institutionalized American public education system. An example of the forces absorbing versions of "Barbauld" into this system is evident in the 1840 pre-title page of the Hale-edited collection of Barbauldian stories, Things by Their Right Names—a paragraph signed by the members of the "Board of Education of the State of Massachusetts," who officially designated the book as a "sanctioned" text for "The School Library" series. Another text edited by Hale and published by the same firm (Marsh, Capen, Lyon and Webb) in the same year was also "published under the sanction of the Board of Education of the State of Massachusetts" as volume six of The School Library... Juvenile Series. In an intriguing variation on these "Barbaulds," one 1846 Lessons for Children was actually a French translation, created to teach American students a foreign language by returning them to the text which, its advertising preface suggested, they had very likely used at home to learn reading in their mother tongue. Furthermore, as Gillian Avery reports, many of the textbooks generated to support the regularization of spelling in the United States via schoolhouse use, among them Webster's blueback speller, were actually "gleanings" from the Lessons, renamed with titles such as Hartford's The Child's Spelling-Book, which both "quoted directly from Barbauld" and "added" new material "applicable to American schools" (50). For instance, an 1839 text published in Newark by Benjamin Olds looks, at first glance, exactly like a Webster's blueback speller, and the advertisement on the inside back
Americanization, but I have tried to marshal illuminating evidence. Wilkinson points out that the "remains of the past comprise what pedagogy in particular, as well as insights into the broader context of Americanized school versions of "Barbauld" and her juvenile not claim to have gathered all the remains of Barbauld's survives of everything that ever happened; evidence consists of those material consumption and social value-formation—specifically, the of nineteenth-century America in ways suggesting links between typical, however, is a scenario whereby Gilley would have pirated the version has a handwritten date of 1830 on its flyleaf, so the illustrations complicated and necessarily tentative. For example, the illustration social construction of "Barbauld" for/with middle-class readers is continuing tendency on the part of a nineteenth-century American and other authors (Edgeworth, for example) may represent a and other cultural arbiters—to stand in for the then-United States and its associated territories. For helpful discussions of Edgeworth's and Wollstonecraft's textual the gender-switch of the title, one of them (the 1845 edition from typical in English female academies in the eighteenth century—the the atmosphere of repulsion, but if you have you are quite mistaken, for she always has been & is still notwithstanding her ill health very lively & agreeable. It is somewhat remarkable that she & her four sisters have lived together for fifty years without separation by either death or marriage; in single blessedness; take notice I do not mention this part of the story as an example for you & your sisters" (Scott 74-75). Along those lines, Susanna Rowson's A Present for Young Ladies includes several performance pieces and pedagogical essays from her New England female academy that portray a close link between girls' seeking behavior models in their novel-reading and the need for schools to use biographies of appropriate women as part of the curriculum. See also Baym, especially chapter 10. Gillian Avery, who observes that Barbauld's juvenile literature was "very popular in America" (45), also discusses the profound influence Barbauld's oeuvre had on Child's writing for children. In Avery's view, Child was "too much dominated by her model," even though Avery does acknowledge that, in the Evenings in New England (1844), inspired by Evenings at Home, Child tried to give her anthology distinctively "American scenes and American characters" so as to create a "delightful locality" for her tales (47). In her often-quoted letter to bluestocking contemporaries who proposed that she start a school for girls and offered to help with the venture, Barbauld declined. For a helpful discussion of shortcomings typical in English female academies in the eighteenth century—the kinds of difficulties that might have discouraged Barbauld from wishing to open one—see Kamm. I found three copies of Little Marrian, put out by two different publishers, at the American Antiquarian Society. Intriguingly, given the gender-switch of the title, one of them (the 1845 edition from Phillips and Sampson in Boston) is inscribed as follows: "a present from Aunt Hunting to Ezra Herrick Sovill, Millbury, January 1st, 1847." An example of the difficulty we encounter when trying to sort out such authorship/appropriation tangles is seen in Stories of the Months (published in Boston by Edward Livermore in 1853), in which a title page identifying Barbauld as author competed with another title on the outside cover: Uncle Tom's Stories for Good Children: Stories of the Months. Some of the tales appear to be lifted from the Lessons and from Hymns in Prose; the origin of others is unclear to me.
I have not been able to identify Theodore Carleton as one of Barbauld's works. Its contents do not match any of those by Barbauld that I know well. But it was not uncommon for a publisher to change a title's name, so the title alone does not make misattribution certain.

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Sarah Robbins is an assistant professor in the English Department at Kennesaw State University. She has written on women's educational discourse and practices for such journals as Signs, American Quarterly, The Lion and the Unicorn, and Michigan Feminist Studies. She is at work on a book manuscript tentatively titled *Domestic Didactics in Nineteenth-Century American Culture.*
Locating a Classic: The Cuckoo Clock in Its Literary Context
by Sanjay Sircar

The Cuckoo Clock, published in 1877, is Mary Louisa Molesworth’s first and best-remembered fantasy novel for children. A little girl, Griscilda, has come to live with two aged great-aunts in a mysterious old house. Her loneliness and boredom are relieved by a cuckoo from a clock made by her Swiss great-grandfather for her maternal grandmother, Sybilla. The cuckoo takes her on a series of four fantasy adventures that ends when she finds new friends in young Phil and his understanding mother. Apart from its literary merits, the novel is of historical importance for two reasons. First, the cuckoo is the first major appearance in the Victorian “Golden Age” of a figure with the “usual magic animal attributes—conceit, near-perfect knowledge of worldly affairs, long memory, good education and kindly concern for . . . his special friend” (Blount 114) and thus is an antecedent of a multitude of subsequent creatures in fantasy fiction. Second, the novel is almost certainly the first major full-length English juvenile fantasy that makes an explicit connection between the psychological needs of the protagonist and the compensatory and perhaps imaginary (“phantasy”) nature of the fantasy adventure (Sircar, Victorian 63, 86; Rosenthal, “Writing,” “Molesworth”). Although it is difficult to posit any direct sources, we know enough of Molesworth’s reading to point to the affinities of The Cuckoo Clock with various texts that she certainly or very probably knew.1 In the course of her response to such texts, Molesworth reconstructs the figure of the child, fantasy creatures, fantasy journeys, and the psychological context, creating an influential work significantly different from its predecessors.

One of the most significant of the traditions within which Molesworth works is that of the deprived child. The pathetic child who lacks loving parents, friends, and physical necessities (or all three) is a stock Victorian figure. Charles Dickens’s version is the classic portrayal: middle- or lower-class children who are defenseless, orphaned or virtually parentless, neglected, unloved, insecure, and without companionship or recreation. Characters such as Esther Summerson, Louisa and Tom Gradgrind, Paul and Florence Dombey, Arthur Clennam, Little Nell, and David Copperfield respond to their circumstances by dying, going to the bad, finding a protector, or managing to survive until they grow up (see Covceny 92-94).

Another type of deprived child appears in what were called “street Arab tales,” usually produced by Evangelical writers. Molesworth was active in charity work for such children and wrote articles stressing the need for efforts on their behalf. “Once Kissed” is her attempt at this type of tale, in the vein of Mrs. O. F. Walton (Froggy’s Little Brother, c. 1880) and Hesba Stretton (Little Meg’s Children, 1868). Religious children’s literature also includes family novels about deprived upper- and middle-class children and adolescents, and Molesworth enjoyed both Evangelical and High Church variants as a child. She remembered enthusiastically The Wide Wide World (1850), by Susan Warner (“Elizabeth Wetherell”), and the “delight of Miss Yonge’s books” (“Story-Reading” 773), including, no doubt, Yonge’s popular chronicles of the May family. These writers’ motherless (or virtually motherless) children, who also often lack sympathetic fathers, take refuge in faith and good works.

The Cuckoo Clock is not, however, a tale of Dickensian pathos, melodramatic illness and death, or suffering consoled by pious good works. Molesworth disapproved of children reading works that made them self-conscious or self-pitying and did not care for the depiction of neglectful or cruel adults (“Story-Reading” 774, “On the Art” 342-43). There are only three child deaths in her whole corpus and no parental deaths within the compass of a story (Green, “Age” 9). So, in comparison with the deprived child tales, The Cuckoo Clock is an emotionally restrained, secular, middle-class novel in which the heroine suffers no physical hardship and is cared for by loving adults throughout.

Nevertheless, Griselda is a psychologically deprived child. She is motherless and functionally orphaned because she is separated from her father and a “troop of noisy, merry brothers” overseas, a separation that has no foreseeable ending and that the narrator does not explain. An aura of bereavement pervades the novel from its inception, when Griselda enters the house in grey half-mourning; she soon learns that her father and grandmother Sybilla were likewise orphaned and also lived with her great-aunts. In addition, the cuckoo provides visions of Sybilla’s father the clockmaker, who refers to his impending death, and of Sybilla’s funeral; her husband, Griselda’s grandfather, died of a broken heart soon after. Griselda is still suffering from the death of her own mother; when her new friend Phil, who is temporarily separated from his seriously ill mother, declares that he “won’t never leave off having a mother, anyway,” Griselda “sadly” tells him of her own bereavement (136), and her eyes fill with tears when she listens “to the cooings and caressings” of mother and son (193).

Although Molesworth draws on the Victorian cult of the mother as a primary source of love and moral restraint, she depends more upon the literary convention of the mother whose absence leaves the way clear for the growth of an independent character, in this case in response to loneliness and boredom. Griselda is cooped up indoors without recreation during the winter for the first two-thirds of the novel; “obliged to restrain herself and move demurely” (24); hedged about with restrictions by her great-aunts, who have “got out
of children's ways" (36). In a key passage, when the old servant Dorcas calls her indoors from her play, Griselda indignantly exclaims, "Play! Do you call walking up and down the terrace 'play,' Dorcas? I mustn't loiter even to pick a flower, if there were any, for fear of catching cold, and I mustn't run for fear of overheating myself. I declare, Dorcas, if I don't have some play soon, or something to amuse me, I think I'll run away" (41-42). When Griselda finally meets Phil at the end of the novel, it is "months since she had spoken to a child, almost since she had seen one" (136). Phil, who has no playmates but flowers, is equally anxious to have Griselda as companion.

It is the cuckoo who helps these lonely, deprived children find one another, as he has helped grandmother Sybilla in the past; his is the role of deus ex machina. There were cuckoo clocks in Molesworth's experience from which the idea for the cuckoo may have sprung, but as a fictional creation, her sussoring cuckoo combines and moves beyond his antecedents. Her cuckoo is variously a cranky schoolmaster, a benevolently stern protector, an actual bird, and a mechanical object. It is in the fusion of all these aspects that Molesworth's "magic animal" claims its important place in the tradition.

The fantasy creatures of the Alice books are no doubt a conscious source for many of the features of the cuckoo. Molesworth quoted twice from Through the Looking-Glass (1872) in epigraphs to Carrots (1876), and a quotation from Alice in Wonderland (1865) appears in her adult novel Hashecourt Restory, published a year after The Cuckoo Clock. Unlike the magic animals and animated objects in folk tales, Carroll's hectoring, self-transmuting fantasy creatures (such as the Cheshire Cat) have strong individual personalities: they are unhelpful to Alice, rarely give her directions, ask her questions that she cannot answer, query her very identity, and call her names. Whether they are talking animals, fabulous beasts, or animated cards and chess pieces, they resemble both cantankerous adults and spoilt children. The marked hortatory personality of Griselda's size-changing wooden cuckoo owes much to them. Like Carroll's creatures, he is conceited and opinionated ("You have a great deal to learn" is his constant refrain), irritatingly pedantic, and patronizingly rude. Moreover, the cuckoo deliberately misunderstands Griselda in order to make her think and express herself dearly, dampens her emotional excesses, and discourages her affectionate gush.

But unlike Carroll's creatures, the cuckoo is also a kindly mentor who takes Griselda into new wonders through which he guides her and in which he never deserts her. Griselda does not speak to him of her bereavement, only of her lack of play. But he is clearly a surrogate for her lost mother in his role of comforter, suggester of games and adventures, provider of warmth and clothing, and moral instructor. As playmate and "friend" he replaces her absent brothers, even on her first night in the house when she hears the clock strike with "a pleasant feeling of companionship" (7). On the other hand, as an irritating adult teacher, the cuckoo reflects Griselda's perception of her moralizing great-aunt Miss Grizzel (whose words he echoes) and her old tutor, Mr. Kneebreeches. Thus Molesworth conceives the cuckoo as echoing actual influences on Griselda and as helping to supply what she lacks for happiness.

In one sense, then, the bird functions as a fairy godmother, counting in his literary ancestry the helpful bird of the Grimms' Cinderella, "Ashpullet," with which Molesworth was probably acquainted (she mentions both the Grimms and Hans Christian Andersen in "Best Books for Children"). More importantly, his benevolent cantankerousness is certainly a transmutation of the sternly kind anthropomorphic fairy godmothers in Victorian juvenile Kunstmärchen and fantasy novels. Some of these fairy godmothers appear good but are actually evil, most fearlessly Fairy Malice in Mark Lemon's The Enchanted Doll (1849) and the unnamed girl in the livre composé of Lucy Lane Clifford's Anyhow Stories: Moral and Otherwise (1882). On the other hand, some Kunstmärchen godmothers give apparently negative "gifts" but wish only good to their mortal protegées, as in F. E. Paget's The Hope of the Katzeckof (1844) and W. M. Thackeray's The Rose and the Ring (1855). Thus Molesworth's cuckoo falls within an established tradition; indeed, she may have borrowed more than a little for his personality from Dinah Mulock Craik's The Little Lame Prince (1875), which she recommended in "The Best Books." In Craik's work, the godmother is benevolent as a human figure but shrewish, conceited, and sharp-tongued when she takes the form of a bird.

Before Craik wrote her story, ambivalent-seeming godmothers had already appeared in such juvenile fantasy novels as Charles Kingsley's The Water Babies (1863) and George MacDonald's At the Back of the North Wind (1871), followed by The Princess and the Goblin (1872)—another of Molesworth's "Best Books"—and The Princess and Curdie (1882; see MacNeice 76-101). MacDonald's godmothers seem to have been the most potent influence. "Baby," Diamond's poem in As the Back of the North Wind, furnishes the epigraph for Molesworth's first novel for children, Carrots (1876); Diamond himself, "God's baby," is in part the literary model for Carrots, for Phil in The Cuckoo Clock, and for all of Molesworth's Carrots-like little boys. Just as the huge and tiny, tender and commanding, solemn but playful North Wind guides Diamond, and the old and young, awesome and approachable Grandmother looks after Princess Irene in the Princess books, the huge and tiny, commanding and tender, old and playful cuckoo looks after Griselda. In later fantasy novels, Molesworth would more directly echo MacDonald's North Wind, although her anthropomorphic fairy godmothers are less powerfully realized as literary figures.2

Molesworth's cuckoo is not only a supernatural godmother figure, but also by turns a real bird and a mechanical wooden one. Although anthropomorphic animals and animate objects can be traced back at least as far as the eighteenth century, there is no evidence that Molesworth was influenced
by the works of the past. Much closer to Molesworth's day is Margaret Gatty's *Parables from Nature* (1855), which is filled with anthropomorphized natural objects. Molesworth admired Gatty, who, she wrote in 1886 in "Juliana Horatia Ewing," invests "the very commonest things" "with a vitality that might make better than a fairy tale out" of them (Salway 504).

Even closer to her heart, however, were the works of Andersen and E.T.A. Hoffmann. As a child, Molesworth tells us, she found Hoffmann's *Nussknacker und Mausekoenig* (possibly *The Nutcracker of Nuremberg* in the 1853 St. Simon translation) "unspeakably fascinating" ("Story-Reading" 773). Hoffmann's tale also features an innocent little girl who goes on night-journeys through various wonderlands and contains automata that confuse onlookers by seeming to be alive. Very similar is Griselda's initial confusion about the cuckoo, which she thinks at first must be a tame cuckoo in a cage. Hoffmann's figures, however, are far more threatening than Molesworth's. Two of Molesworth's best KunSTMärchen, "The Magic Rose" (in *An Enchanted Garden*, 1892) and "The Unselfish Mermaid" (in *The Magic Nuts*, 1898), strongly recall Andersen's "The Little Mermaid," which she termed a pathetic and "exquisite Undine-like tale" ("Andersen" 141). But Andersen's anthropomorphism seems to have been the aspect of his work that most impressed the Victorians, and Molesworth also singled out this quality: "Truly to children [Andersen] may be said to have changed the face of the world, gilding the commonest objects with the brightness of his loving and delicate and humorous fancy, so that, as many could personally testify, a few shells or pebbles, a broken jug, or a fragment of china, become material enough to create stories" ("Andersen" 140). Nevertheless, Andersen's stories about such figures as the tin soldier reflect a pessimism about the cruel experiences that life inflicts on animate and inanimate alike that is foreign to Molesworth.

Like all good storytellers, then, Molesworth transmuted the raw material that fed her imagination into new forms into which she breathed a life of her own. Arguably, indeed, something similar happens to the cuckoo, who like Andersen's animated figures retains some of the qualities of his original material in coming alive. Throughout the book, however, there is a gradual progression away from his mechanical nature. At first, he interrupts a conversation to call out the hours (47, 56), and he eats nothing at the Wonderland feasts (70), but by the time of her last journey, Griselda can put her arm around his "nice, comfortable, feathery neck," "so soft" (159). Yet at the very end of the book, at the point of a farewell touched with pathos at the mutability of life (cf. Andersen's "The Snowman") his material nature is re-emphasized in the phrase "only a cuckoo in a clock" (196).

As we have seen, Griselda's deprivations are psychological rather than physical, and the story of her interactions with the cuckoo focuses not on the deprivations themselves but on the provision of psychological compensations for her loneliness. Molesworth establishes a situation that psychologically readies Griselda to have particular fantasy adventures with particular objects, building up a mystique about the clock and the mandarin figurines that derives from age, careful manufacture, associations with past owners, and loving maintenance, again bringing Andersen to mind. But when she suggests that the cuckoo lives only in the minds of its child observers, she moves beyond Andersen's playful literary animism. Much of "The Constant Tin Soldier," for example, depends on the reader noticing that the movements of the ornaments are a result not of their independent "life" but of external forces acting upon them; Andersen never indicates that his objects are animate only in the perceptions of his human characters. Molesworth's comment on Andersen suggests that Andersen had led the way for children to make stories out of things by and for themselves, but Griselda is a child who makes more than a "story"; she makes a complex character.

Griselda's creation of a complex character for the cuckoo is reasonable within the context of the story. Culturally, "the Lares Domestici [pagan household gods] became cuckoo clocks and mantel statuettes" (Finney 45-47). Thus her aunts' household reverses the clock and the mandarins. Great-aunt Grizzel implies to Griselda that the cuckoo and mandarins are alive and have feelings (9, 12), and the superstitious old servant Dorcas tells her that "the good people" love the old house and that the clock is a "fairy clock" that was "like a part of" its first owner, Sybilla (4-5, 28, 43, 83). These remarks help to animate the inanimate for the imaginative child, who in any case believes in the supernatural and the objective reality of fairies and fairy-tale worlds: when Griselda wakes up on her first night in the house and hears the call of the mechanical bird, she wonders whether she is in fairyland. On her first conversation with the cuckoo, she tells him that Dorcas and her "own common sense" told her he was a fairy, and the cuckoo suggests that he is a "fairyfied cuckoo" (37). Phil, Griselda's double, also has "real" dreams about the cuckoo. He goes looking for him, tells Griselda that he believes that the cuckoo is a fairy, and wants to find the way to fairyland. Griselda's belief in the supernatural is associated with conscious phantasizing—she daydreams. After the cuckoo shows her pictures of her dead grandmother Sybilla, she sits "contentedly enough . . . trying to make more 'pictures' for herself in the fire" (87). In the garden "she used to sit there and fancy," consciously turning the sounds around her into the sounds of various fairy creatures (132), as Carroll's Alice does unconsciously.

But the final impetus for Griselda's fantasy adventures is guilt. One day, in a fit of temper with her lessons, Griselda throws her book at the clock, and her guilt about this action is detailed and heightened over a period of time because she cannot immediately see whether she has damaged the clock (23-29). In the evening, as she stands before it, she seems to hear a faint call. That night she has troubled dreams—"only
fancy" (26)—of the cuckoo. The next day the clock is out of order, Miss Grizel is decomposed, Miss Tabitha cries, and Dorcas talks gloomily about great trouble. Given Griselda's initial guilt, and the subsequent household furore, the impetus toward intense phantasy—dreaming—is psychologically in order. That very night Griselda begins to talk with the cuckoo.

At the time it was written, The Cuckoo Clock stood out for the care with which it assembled the credible psychological antecedents of its leap into fantasy proper. Only MacDonald in At the Back of the North Wind prepares for the leap in a roughly comparable way, and then with far less thoroughness than Molesworth displays. If we distinguish between fantasy as a literary work depicting impossible magical adventures and phantasy as a mental activity, we can clarify the relationship between Griselda's psychological needs and the fantasy adventures that reflect and fulfill them. Indeed, one of Molesworth's earliest short stories, "The Reel Fairies," a less accomplished and probably autobiographical sketch for The Cuckoo Clock, spells out the children's needs and fantasy/phantasy compensations and demonstrates that Molesworth was fully aware of what she was doing (see Sircar, "Fantasy"). Its heroine, Louisa, a lonely child, weaves stories around the reels in her mother's workbox. A little girl who comes to visit Louisa has pretty dolls and a beautiful "princess" dress and affects to pity Louisa for her paucity of toys. That night the reels come alive and take Louisa off to be their queen (cf. MacDonald's "The Shadows"). Louisa shrinks in size, the reels turn on her, she screams and wakes (cf. Alice). The next day she tells her mother about what, unlike Griselda, she realizes is a dream, her psychological needs, and their phantasy compensations. The next day she tells her mother about what, unlike Griselda, she realizes is a dream, her psychological needs, and their phantasy compensations. Nevertheless these pathetic figures are not central to the novels or described in detail, and their physical situation is far from Griselda's. Dickens's interest in conscious compensatory phantasy is most clearly evinced in his Holiday Romance (1868), where the children write stories for each other that demonstrate what they want psychologically and how they provide those wants through story-telling. On the other hand, these children are not deprived and do not dream.

Hoffmann in Nutcracker and MacDonald in North Wind, among others, also motivate dream-framed adventures with festive excitement or illness or both. But their work does not invoke long-standing emotional deprivation and stress as the motivation for dream-fantasy adventures, nor does it fully conceptualize these adventures as compensatory phantasy. Molesworth thus develops compensatory phantasy more fully and more explicitly than either her predecessors or her immediate successors and engenders an ambiguity about the status of Griselda's adventures as dream-phantasy—an ambiguity absent in Carroll (Sircar, "Art"), but one that exists in other fantasy fictions. Hoffmann's Nutcracker, for example, presents its heroine's adventures as possible dream-phantasies, and at the end of the tale, there is a phantasmagorical blurring of the diurnal, nocturnal, and fantasy worlds, when the heroine enters Prince Nutcracker's kingdom forever (dies?). Somewhat similarly, Andersen presents the Little Match Girl's fantasy experiences in a way that suggests but does not state
the phantasy delirium prior to death, a convention also employed in the final episodes of *At the Back of the North Wind*. In *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), Nurse Lootie and Curdie refuse to accept the existence of Irene's grandmother (whom she herself sees only at night) until forced to do so. Thus for a time, the private mystery of this motherless child's experience of fantasy events in another old, mysterious building is maintained, as is the question of whether her nighttime journeys and comforting grandmother exist only in her sleeping mind. Molesworth's deliberate ambiguity as to the status of Griselda's experiences, then, is part of a tradition.

Up to this point I have largely stressed Molesworth's debt to Dickens and to a tradition of fantasy fiction. Nevertheless, a contemporary American reviewer of *The Cuckoo Clock*, who was reminded of Alice by Griselda's size-changing journeys to the Country of Nodding Mandarinis, to Butterfly Land, and to the moon, judged Griselda's story to have "real originality" (Review). Given that so many of its elements are inherited, in what does Molesworth's originality consist?

More explicitly than in most comparable fantasy fictions, there is a pervasive sense of pleasure in *The Cuckoo Clock*. The cuckoo provides "food, fun and fresh air" and more (see Molesworth, "Food"). Griselda has longed for a magic carpet (41), and the cuckoo carries her to strange new places, "floating, darting, gliding, sailing" in a feather cloak to wonderlands that provide a vent for her pent-up energy in dances, songs, feasts, and colorful clothes. Marghanita Laski calls the passage in which the butterflies dress Griselda perhaps "the most dearly remembered passage in any children's book" (66). In contrast, Alice rarely, if ever, has a good time in Wonderland.

Molesworth also anticipates the more protective aspects of some of this century's writing for children in her rule that a "quicksand to be avoided is the introduction . . . of any frightening element" ("Story-Reading" 774). For example, she disapproved of Andersen's "The Travelling Companion" on the ground that "the wholesale cutting off of heads . . . reminds one of Alice in Wonderland!" and argued in favor of bowdlerizing Andersen's work, perhaps because of its frightening elements ("Andersen" 148, 138, 141). So *The Cuckoo Clock* has a feeling of security about it, emphasizing several times that Griselda is a courageous child and feels no fear on her nocturnal adventures and omitting the anxiety and impending violence of the *Alice* books. Griselda reaches the Butterfly Garden without any trouble by trusting the cuckoo, to find a realm of order and fruitful industry, while Alice's solitary journeys is full of disappointments and hazards. While Alice's changes of size are a source of constant anxiety to her, Griselda, who cannot decide whether she has shrunk or other things have grown on her journeys, is not disturbed, only puzzled, and learns an important lesson about the relativity of size. Alice screams in fear at the onset of the angry cards, while Griselda screams at the onset of a swarm of butterflies, but they are rushing down to kiss her as the cuckoo protectively throws his cloak around her (127).

Moreover, although Griselda is often bored by her lessons and must learn to obey her tutor's orders in order to profit from them, Molesworth does not engage in the satirical critique of academic learning found in Andersen and Carroll. Rather she substitutes for Carroll's spoofs of geography, science, and history the wonder and mystery of Griselda's moon-journey. The description of the waveless, mysterious moon-sea, much admired in our own century by Eleanor Farjeon (19), reflects the contemporary interest in science fiction. Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon and a Trip Round It* had been translated into English four years previously, and the cuckoo informs Griselda about the moon's diameter and circumference and the possibility of life there. Most moon-journeys within the *Alice* tradition, such as J. G. Austin's *Moonfolk* (1874), S. Ashton's *The Green Cat* (c. 1901), and G. E. Parrow's *The Wallypug in the Moon* (1905), are mere excuses for whimsical transportation to Wonderland, and only the lyrical moon-journey in *At the Back of the North Wind* can compare with that in *The Cuckoo Clock*. Here again, it seems likely that Molesworth's combination of gratification with lyricism, as well as her positive view of science, has been her most influential legacy to twentieth-century fantasy fiction. Likewise, perhaps the most original of her journeys is the one in which Griselda sees rather than experiences, making a journey in time as well as space (Robertson correspondence 1979). It provides a revelation of origins—a vision of her grandmother Sybilla, whom Griselda resembles, during the making of the cuckoo clock. This brief episode is unlike anything in MacDonald, and in its explicit family content becomes an influence on twentieth-century time-travel stories, especially where it is the protagonist's forebears who are visited.

Most interestingly, *The Cuckoo Clock* inverts child-adult power relations, a motif already used for comic purposes in Dickens's *Holiday Romance* and in W. B. Rands's book of poems *Liliput Leves* (1863). The porcelain mandarins and butterflies, of an inferior order of creation, make Griselda the center of importance. They make up for her powerless position as youngest member of her diurnal household, where even the servant, Dorcas, has a certain power over her. Griselda must learn obedience, but as a transitional figure, while the cuckoo has ultimate authority, he also allows Griselda great choice in the direction of their journeys. Moreover, when they arrive at their fantasy worlds, royalty, "the gravest and grandest personage[s] she had ever seen" (57), entertain Griselda and dance with her. While Alice violently struggles for control over cards and chess pieces and does not get it, Griselda is vouchsafed complete control over—and respect from—the creatures of her new wonderlands. Once Griselda has learned self-control and obedience, she finds a younger child, Phil, who will obey her, and the cuckoo can say farewell.
Molesworth reconfigures the dream journeys of her predecessors, particularly Andersen, Carroll, and MacDonald, into the depiction of the experience of a well-to-do female child in conformity with the reality of her adult expectations. Unlike poor Diamond who dies of goodness, she must learn to be reasonably good in the real world. And unlike Andersen’s match girl and Dickens’s deprived children, she exists in a world of reasonable physical comfort. To operate effectively in that world she must recognize, unlike Alice, the necessity of education and of obedience to those with greater power than her own until she reaches a position in which servants and children must obey her. Thus whereas Carroll eschews both preachiness and explicit psychological motivation, Griselda’s dream-journeys teach her industry, obedience, and patience while simultaneously providing both refreshment and psychological growth.

In spite of Molesworth’s departures from her predecessors, it took a long time for the original features of The Cuckoo Clock to gain full recognition. For example, Edward Salmon commented in 1887 that her “fairy stories do not give Mrs. Molesworth an opportunity for the display of her particular genius, and she runs into grooves more or less well-worn” (59-60). Recognition by imitators was also relatively slow in coming. The one work almost indubitably influenced by The Cuckoo Clock relatively close to its own time is Ashton’s Cuckoo (c. 1901), in which many important elements seem to be derived directly from Molesworth: little May’s wooden cuckoo in a clock, lessons about the propagation of flowers on wonderland journeys, a feather cloak, and crude attempts to suggest dream/reality ambiguity. But there is no connection made between May’s psychological needs and her fantasy adventures, and Ashton’s novel demonstrates only what poor stuff a lesser hand comes up with using similar elements.

Whether Molesworth influenced E. Nesbit’s fantasy creatures is a matter of debate, and Molesworth is more likely to have been an unconscious influence on such contemporary writers of psychological fantasy fiction as Catherine Storr and Joan Robinson, who have joyfully admitted to reading Molesworth as children (Storr, Robinson correspondence). But Molesworth did make a general and lasting contribution to the English juvenile fantasy tradition, initiating a particular type of fantasy fiction that Penelope Farmer calls “introvert fantasy,” fiction that explores the way in which a supernatural, magical, or impossible action “can go on in people’s heads” (23-37). It might be added that Farmer’s own contributions to “introvert fantasy” writing seem to owe more than a little to the Molesworth model, most obviously perhaps in the early The Magic Stone (1964). In fact, Molesworth’s insistence on preserving the reader’s uncertainty as to the precise reality of the magic adventure in tandem with a correlation between psychological needs and fantasy/phantasy adventures makes her work an important forerunner of a group of important texts, including Nesbit’s The Wonderful Garden (1911), John Masefield’s The Midnight Folk (1927), Philippa Pearce’s Tom’s Midnight Garden (1958), Maurice Sendak’s Where the Wild Things Are (1963), and William Mayne’s A Game of Dark (1971). And her substantial modification of Victorian didactic conventions in favor of unashamed sensuous delight and psychologically gratifying fantasy experiences forms part of the context for the most widely read of all twentieth-century juvenile fantasies: the early works of Enid Blyton.

NOTES

1Molesworth’s essays that discuss what she read as a child do not stress literary influence as a factor in her writing, but they point us to the context of The Cuckoo Clock. Of the writing that she mentions, only those works by Grimm, Andersen, and the Evangelical and High Church writers could have come from her own childhood. The other works I discuss belong to the 1860s and 1870s. The late Ruth Robertson’s biographical material, now being assembled and augmented by Jane Cooper, may clarify whether Molesworth’s reading of these books to her children when she was in her twenties was a conscious impetus for her own writing.

2The fairy of Molesworth’s “Too Bad” (in the 1875 volume Tell Me a Story) turns up again, owing something to MacDonald’s “The Light Princess,” in a Curdie-like apphany in The Baby Ring (1894); in her second appearance she is both young and old, like MacDonald’s Grandmother, who appeared in the interim. Molesworth also splits up North Wind into four beings in Four Winds Farm (1887) and uses similar figures in The Magic Nuts (1898) and the fairy godmother of The Children of the Castle (1890), whose bright eyes are perhaps influenced by Kingsley’s anima figure in The Water Babies.

3For example, in Clara Bradford’s Ethel’s Adventures in the Doll Country (1886), Florry asks, “Have you read Hans Andersen’s Fairy Tales?” and continues, “We have. They are charming. He gives everything a proper human being life during the night; toys, furniture, chimney, needles and all, and some with tales make you feel as if you must cry. I never tire of the book” (164).

4The cuckoo’s ambiguous nature may cause readers to wonder about the extent to which Griselda has created the sentient cuckoo out of her own need as psychological compensation for her loneliness; Marghanita Laski, indeed, seems to assimilate Griselda with her author (66, 68). Molesworth’s child psychology has been much praised, usually in regard to her non-fantasy novels (see, for example, Whalley, Cooper; see also Sirca, “Fantasy” 189-90). Roger Lancelyn Green was the first to praise this aspect of her fantasy fiction (“Molesworth” 374; Molesworth 53, 61, 67), arguably pointing to a more important aspect of her work than more recent characterizations such as “Victorian Visionary” (Moss) or “Powerful Lever for Good” (Cashdan). More recently, Lynne Rosenthal has explored the “psychotherapeutic” dimension of the cuckoo’s relationship with Griselda (“Writing”).

5There seems to be only one other contemporary fantasy fiction, published in the same year as Molesworth’s, that draws upon the life-giving powers of craft, love, tradition, and imaginative play: Charles Leland’s Johnnykin and the Goblin, an Alice imitation.

6Some Alice imitators do the same: in Maggie Browne’s Wanted—a Ring (1890), for example, Merle, who is feverish, goes to sleep watching a screen painted with nursery-rhyme characters and then dreams of interacting with them. In Charles E. Carryl’s Davey and the Goblin (1884) Davy dreams of transmutations of familiar things at a time of festive excitement. Most often in Victorian juvenile fantasy fiction, however, the dream-frame is a superficial convention to “explain away” a formless sequence of fantasy adventures.
Another work of Rand's, *Lilliput Revels: Inocence Island* (c. 1871), incorrectly cited as *A Lilliput Revel*, provides a chapter epigraph for *The Cuckoo Clock*.

Robertson has pointed out that Nesbit was born in 1858 and would have been seventeen when *The Cuckoo Clock* was published, so that it could not have been part of her childhood reading. While Nesbit peppers her books with literary references and pays graceful compliments to such writers as Juliana Ewing and F. Anstey, she never mentions Molesworth (correspondence). Doris Langley Moore, on the other hand, claimed that Nesbit was influenced by Molesworth, but added that her proofs for this observation were in shorthand notes in the attic, to which she had no intention of going back to provide verification (Moore 175 and correspondence). The same claim of influence is made by Baker, and Anita Moss asserts that Molesworth "contributed significantly to the molding and making of the traditions of British children's literature, influencing subsequent writers from E. Nesbit to C. S. Lewis" (105): disembodied traditions can be more likely to affect writers than are individual works. In our own day, Storr and Robinson have declared themselves "much impressed" and "fascinated" by the possibility that they were influenced by *The Cuckoo Clock*, and even more by other Molesworth tales, such as "The Reel Fairies," *Four Winds Farm*, *The Children of the Castle*, and *The Tapestry Room*, which have many of the same features (Sircar, "Fantasy Fiction").

An argument for *Christmas Tree Land* as the prototype for the *Faraway Tree* series is forthcoming from Hugh Crago, to whom I am indebted for assistance with this article.

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Sanjay Sircar is an independent scholar and the author of numerous publications on children's literature and Victorian and Edwardian fantasy fiction. He works in the Australian Commonwealth Public Service.
The "Savage" and the "Civilized": Andrew Lang's Representation of the Child and the Translation of Folklore
by Anna Smol

Critics often identify Andrew Lang's The Blue Fairy Book (1889) as a turning point in Victorian children's literature, because the book seems to have returned readers' preferences from children's realistic stories to traditional folktales. This renewed appetite for folktales was fed by Lang's numerous Colour Fairy Books, which appeared until 1910 and are reprinted to this day. As significant and impressive as this achievement in children's literature is, however, it represents only a part of Lang's lifetime work. Anthropologist, classical scholar, folklorist, poet, essayist, reviewer, literary critic, French translator, historian, even sportswriter—Lang took on all of these roles and published prodigiously in most of them. While it is difficult to grasp the whole range of Lang's interests, it is possible to identify certain predominant concerns that led him to most of the subjects he examined. His contributions to children's literature are intricately woven in this fabric of ideas. The larger patterns of Lang's thinking, revolving around representations of the "savage" and the "civilized," reveal how he constructs the child as a primitive creature analogous to the primitive peoples he studied. Lang's notions of "savage" stories, storytellers, and audiences strengthened already existing associations of the folklore with the child, determined the way in which he undertook his work as editor and translator, and continue to influence our ideas on children and their literature.

Lang's education and working life coincided with the peak of the nineteenth-century philological enterprise, as the techniques and assumptions of the comparative, historical study of languages gave rise to theories of, for example, mythology, religion, literature, politics, history, and race. His examination of folklore and myth connects him to a tradition of philological study for traces or survivals of primitive beliefs, rituals, stories in the lives of "civilized" races, according to Lang. In his Lilac Fairy Book he points out that fairy tales "are older than reading and writing, and arose like wild flowers before men had any education to quarrel over" them (vii).

Lang's tendency to speak of traditional literature as a natural and wild growth in an early age is part of his larger view of the evolution of literature from a wild, primitive, or uncivilized state toward a refined, sophisticated, and civilized condition. Lang's belief in progress, not degeneration, is evident in his description of the process as a journey:

The student of this lore can look back and see the long trodden way behind him, the winding tracks through marsh and forest and over burning sands. He sees the caves, the camps, the towns where the race has tarried, for shorter times or longer, strange places many of them, and strangely haunted, desolate dwellings and inhospitable. But the scarce visible tracks converge at last on the beaten ways, the ways to that city whither mankind is wandering. ("Adventures" 36)

The two poles of that journey—or as Lang repeatedly put it, the "savage" and the "civilized"—define not only his primitivist notions but also his belief in progress. Like many philologists, Lang sees storytellers in the past as primitive, natural, simple—and childlike. He explains in the Green Fairy Book that men were much like children in their minds long ago, long, long ago, and so before they took to writing newspapers, and sermons, and novels, and long poems, they told each other stories, such as you read in the fairy books. They believed that witches could turn people into beasts, that beasts could speak, that magic rings could make their owners invisible, and all the other wonders in the stories. (ix)

But for Lang it is not just storytellers in the distant past who were childlike: essential to his comparative method of folklore study is the belief that certain people exist in the same primitive state in the modern day. "Country people" and "savages" the world over provide a living context or explanation for traces or survivals of primitive beliefs, rituals, stories in the lives of "civilized" races, according to Lang (Yellow x). In adopting the theory of survivals, Lang follows the anthropologist Edward B. Tylor, whose 1871 publication Primitive Culture made a strong impact on folklorists. Tylor's theory of survivals required a progressionist belief in cultural evolution,
although at the same time the survivals of the past, “honoured relics” as Richard Dorson calls them (Folklorists 194), were reminders of the connections between the “civilized” and the “savage,” the present and the past, and even the adult and the child, a relationship that Daniel Bivona describes as “simultaneously one of filiation and opposition” (xi).

Lang provides an explanation of his procedures in looking for survivals in “The Method of Folklore”:

Our method throughout will be to place the usage, or myth, which is unintelligible when found among a civilized race, beside the similar myth which is intelligible enough when it is found among savages. A mean term will be found in the folklore preserved by the non-progressive classes in a progressive people. This folklore represents, in the midst of a civilized race, the savage ideas out of which civilisation has been evolved. The conclusion will usually be that the fact which puzzles us by its presence in civilisation is a relic surviving from the time when the ancestors of a civilized race were in the state of savagery. (25)

Lang, however, does not find it necessary to trace survivals only through linguistic or racial ancestors; he is interested in universal conditions of analogous states of savagery and civilization. As he states in his History of English Literature: “Till elementary instruction in reading and writing become universal, the untaught rural classes retain, in their songs, the literary methods of the quite uncivilized races of Australia, North America, Africa, and so on” (147).

Such statements about the “uncivilized,” the “untaught rural classes,” always, of course, imply their opposite: the civilized and sophisticated, the more highly evolved state. Like other philologists, Lang applies a human analogy when professing this belief in progress: “the world became grown-up” (Green ix). Traditional literature, then, belongs to the early childlike state of a nation or race, or to those in the present who still exist in that state—if not “savages,” then children. In the Introduction to The Blue Fairy Book, Lang writes of fairy tales: “The children to whom and for whom they are told represent the young age of man. They are true to his early loves, they have his unblunted edge of belief, and his fresh appetite for marvels” (349). But Lang’s evolutionary paradigm distinguishes between the uncivilized tellers and listeners of folktales and those civilized beings, such as himself, who study them:

When the nobles and other people became rich and educated, they forgot the old stories, but the country people did not, and handed them down, from generation to generation. Then learned men collected and printed the country people’s stories, and these we have translated, to amuse children. (Violet viii)

Like other philologists, Lang sees himself as one of these “learned men” placed high on an evolutionary scale looking back on a more primitive literature and culture through the “microscope of science and the spectacles of literature” (Introduction, Blue 351).6

From this vantage point, Lang, like other philologists, pursues a course of study that invokes racial theories. Philosophical interest in tracing the development of Indo-European languages led to often-repeated classifications of races, and Lang joins in this discourse. For example, in his Homeric Hymns, and in keeping with his privileging of Classical antiquity, he calls the Greeks “the most divinely gifted race of mankind” (10); in his History of English Literature, as elsewhere, he informs his reader that the “peoples lowest in civilization” are “Australian blacks and the American Red Indians” (147). But he differs from the more traditional philological line in that he does not confine himself to the study or idealization of one national literature. Lang believes that “similar conditions of mind produce similar practices” (“Method” 21-22); and as the Colour Fairy Books attest, Lang is familiar with and includes for comparison stories from all over the world.

Lang also differs from a more traditional philological line of inquiry in his critique of Max Müller’s theory of mythology, which was based on etymological studies. Lang rejects “the conjectures of philologists” as a guide to mythology (Introduction, Grimm’s Household Tales 306). While Müller placed mythology at the origins of a people’s traditional literature and claimed that folklore represented a later, more degenerate form, Lang provides a different genealogy, arguing for a development of traditional literature that places folklore at a point of primitive origins and mythology as a later refinement. In Lang’s Introduction to Marian Cox’s Folklore Society publication on Cinderella, he outlines “an apparent process of refinement and elaboration” (xiii) and provides a diagram of the evolution of a traditional story. He places at the top of a genealogical tree the “Original Tale, probably of Savage Origin,” which descends to “Popular Tale of Peasants” and then further descends to two equal branches: on the one hand, “Ancient Literary Heroic Myth” (such as Homer, the Perseus myth, and the Nibelungenlied), and on the other hand, the “Modern Literary Version,” with Charles Perrault as the cited example (xiii). This kind of genealogy reinforces the association of folklore with the earliest “young age of man.”

This repeated association of the childlike with the primitive goes beyond the metaphorical. Just as Lang posits that seemingly inexplicable aspects of the beliefs and folklore of “civilized” peoples represent certain survivals of primitive customs and beliefs, which may be evident in primitive societies in the present, so too, I think, he sees adulthood as bearing the traces or survivals of childhood, which are evident in children in the present day. In this way, the child and the “savage” become interchangeable as they stand in opposition to the adult and the civilized. Take as an example Lang’s essay “The Boy,” originally published in the Cornhill Magazine in 1883 and reprinted in Adventures Among Books. Presenting himself in his professional guise as someone who studies
primitive races, Lang begins: "As a humble student of savage life, I have found it necessary to make researches into the manners and customs of boys" (297). Like the nineteenth-century American commentators mentioned in Kenneth Kidd's recent Quarterly article on "boyology," Lang equates boys as a category with "primitives," even though he suggests at first that boys are capable of evolving out of primitivism to approach adult civility:

If you meet them in the holidays, you find them affable and full of kindness and good qualities. They will condescend to your weakness at lawn-tennis, they will aid you in your selection of fly-hooks, and, to be brief, will behave with much more than the civility of tame Zulus or Red Men on a missionary settlement. (297)

Lang's thesis, however, stresses the uncivilized otherness of boys, who, "left to the wild justice and traditional laws which many generations of boys have evolved, are entirely different beings" (297). He compares them to a "Polynesian prince" he had heard of who occasionally rejected all the "civilized" trappings of his life for a "good bout of savagery" (297). Lang's joke works only from the superior perspective of the European adult—not only are boys the objects of humor, but so are the various non-European races (such as "tame Zulus" and "Red Men") that he mentions as examples. Children are primitives; primitives are children: the discourse cuts both ways.

Lang's scholarly methods involve taking literally this analogy between children and primitive races. For example, there is nothing figurative about Lang's comparison of the beliefs of a child and the beliefs of a people in this passage from "Magic and Religion":

I once knew a man who, as a child, suffered from toothache. He prayed for relief: it did not come. He at once, about the age of eight, abandoned religion. What a child may do, in the way of despair of religion, a childlike race may do. Therefore, if we find a race with magic but without religion, we cannot scientifically say that the race has never possessed a religion. (47-48)

The work of folklorists such as Tylor, who studied, among other things, children's games, songs, and toys, encouraged this association of the primitive and the child.

Lang's nostalgia for childhood survivals in the adult world is evident in many of his Fairy Book prefaces. He writes in The Green Fairy Book that the fairy tales "amuse grown-up people who have not forgotten how they once were children" (x). In other words, grown-up people who recognize survivals in themselves of an earlier, primitive, childlike age can enjoy the literature created by primitive and childlike peoples. As Lang writes in the Introduction to The Blue Fairy Book: "He who would enter into the Kingdom of Faery should have the heart of a little child" (350).

Lang's evolutionary model of traditional literature, his perception of himself as a "learned man" who studies primitive literatures from a scientific and professional perspective, and his association of the primitive with the childlike all play a part in determining his translation practices. In his translations for adults, such as those of the Iliad and the Odyssey, Lang does not intrude into the narrative to make his presence felt. He seems to identify fully with Homer, reproducing his words as if Lang himself were in the place of the poet: "Tell me now, ye Muses that inhabit mansions in Olympus, who was he that first encountered Agamemnon, whether of the Trojans themselves, or of their allies renowned?" (Iliad 209). Lang's attitude is not surprising since, in his evolutionary literary model, Homer is a representative of "Ancient Literary Heroic Myth," one of the more refined, "grown-up" stages of literary development. As a learned, refined adult, Lang finds an association with Homer a desirable one, given his high praise for the "national genius" at work in ancient Greek stories ("Method" 26).

Lang also translated for children stories of Perseus and Theseus and selections from the Iliad and the Odyssey in his Tales of Troy and Greece, but that is quite a different performance. The presence of the translator is felt throughout in a way that it is not in his adult translation:

People used to say that Ithaca "lay like a shield upon the sea," which sounds as if it were a flat country. But in those times shields were very large and rose at the middle into two peaks with a hollow between them, so that Ithaca, seen far off in the sea, with her two chief mountain peaks and a cloven valley between them, looked exactly like a shield. (Tales 1)

Lang adds explications of Greek customs, history, and artifacts throughout the story, while simplifying the descriptions and events and eliminating or cutting back the epic similes.

Compare, for example, his adult and child versions of the story of Patroclus from the Iliad. The death of Patroclus in battle is told at some length in the adult version (Iliad XVI):

And he fell with a crash, and sorely grieved the host of Achaians. And as when a lion hath overcome in battle an untiring boar, they twain fighting with high heart on the crests of a hill, about a little well, and both are desirous to drink, and the lion hath by force overcome the boar that draweth difficult breath; so after that he had slain many did Hector son of Priam take the life away from the strong son of Menoitois. (339-40)

The names of all the characters are included, the epic simile is drawn out at length, and the speeches are given full play. Lang is opposed to any attempts to render this literature into colloquial English; he prefers "poetical" words and an archaic style to convey the dignity and refinement of this literature from the past (Homer's Hymns 10-11). Patroclus ends his
death speech in this way in the adult version: "But another thing will I tell thee, and do thou lay it up in thy heart; verily thou thyself art not long to live, but already doth Death stand hard by thee, and strong Fate, that thou art to be subdued by the hands of noble Achilles, of the seed of Aiakos" (Iliad 340). In contrast, the children's version concentrates on action:

But the helmet of Achilles was loosened in the fight, and fell from the head of Patroclus, and he was wounded from behind, and Hector, in front, drove his spear clean through his body. With his last breath Patroclus prophesied: "Death stands near thee, Hector, at the hands of noble Achilles." (Tales 60)

Although Lang retains a few archaisms such as "thee" and "ye," he simplifies the story for children, consistently adhering to his theory that myth speaks to a more highly evolved state than childhood. His adoption of the narrative pose of a genial teacher, a learned man speaking to those with little knowledge, further reinforces this impression.

But not all of Lang's translations for children feature this archaic style and intrusive narrator. In the Colour Fairy Books, translations of tales from all over the world intended for child readers, the language is simple but not archaic, and the action is directly related, leaving the role of the translator invisible. In keeping with his theory that the folk tale represents a childlike level of literary evolution, Lang allows his reader, presumably a child, the illusion of gaining immediate access to the simple words of an original storyteller with no intermediary: "Once upon a time there was a king whose only child was a girl. Now the King had been very anxious to have a son, or at least a grandson, to come after him, but he was told by a prophet whom he consulted that his own daughter's son should kill him" (Blue 182). These lines open Lang's "The Terrible Head," his fairy-tale version of the myth of Perseus. With his belief in literary evolution and knowledge of analogous tales, Lang can work backward from the more highly evolved level of myth to reconstruct what approaches the origins of the savage tale in the earlier form of folk tale, suitable for children. In his Introduction to The Blue Fairy Book, Lang explains the paring-down process that was required "to reconstruct the original nursery tale, chiefly by dropping the local and personal names. . . . The action of the gods, too, was probably an addition" (353).

When presenting to children the mythic version of the story, however, Lang retains references to the gods as well as local and personal names. Compare the opening of the folk tale cited above with one of the opening paragraphs of the myth: "Acrisius had one daughter, Danae, who became the most beautiful woman in Greece, but he had no son. This made him very unhappy, for he thought that, when he grew old, the sons of his brother Proetus would attack him" (Tales 267). In this retelling of Perseus as myth for children, Lang appears as the adult narrator who comments on the action and offers historical instruction: "His best plan would have been to find some brave young prince, like Theseus, and give Danae to him for his wife. . . . But Acrisius preferred to go to the prophetic maiden of the temple of Apollo at Delphi (or Pytho, as it was then called)" (Tales 267).

Although Lang provided a translation of the Perseus story for The Blue Fairy Book, he translated very few of the folk tales in the Colour Fairy Books himself. As he insists in preface after preface to the Fairy Books, he played the role of editor. He repeatedly acknowledges the names of the actual translators of the folk tales: Mrs. Lang, Miss Minnie Wright, Miss May Sellar, Miss Sylvia Hunt, Mrs. Alfred Hunt, Miss Violet Hunt, Miss May Kendall, Miss Bruce, Miss Farquharson, Miss Blackley, Miss Alma Alleyne, Miss Eleanor Sellar, Miss Cheape, Miss Thyra Alleyne, Mrs. Dent, Miss Lang, Mrs. Beveridge, Mr. Skovgaard-Pedersen, Miss Harding, Miss Christie. In this collated list of Lang's assistants, Mr. Craigie and Major Campbell are the only men who are listed as translators and collectors who worked directly for Lang, while Mr. Fairbridge and Mr. Cripps are mentioned only once, in The Orange Fairy Book.

In The Lilac Fairy Book Lang makes a fascinating revelation of his vision of his work in terms of a gendered hierarchy. Lang first acknowledges the labors of his wife: "The fairy books have been almost wholly the work of Mrs. Lang, who has translated and adapted them from the French, German, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Catalan, and other languages" (vi-vii). He then goes on to explain how he is placed in relation to this abundant talent and activity: "My part has been that of Adam, according to Mark Twain, in the Garden of Eden. Eve worked, Adam superintended. I also superintend. I find out where the stories are, and advise, and, in short, superintend" (vii). Lang's humorous attempt to define himself here as the primeval male, the master of all he surveys, is, nevertheless, in keeping with his view of himself as a "learned man" who looks on folklore from a more highly evolved, civilized state.

Typically, Lang takes care to bolster his professional identity by excluding women from understanding his scholarship. Although Lang does state in The Yellow Fairy Book that members of the Folklore Society are "the most clever, learned, and beautiful men and women of the country" (v), those women who are among his general readers are more than once identified with a child's level of understanding: "nothing will prevent children from thinking that I invented the stories, or some ladies from being of the same opinion" (Violet vii). In The Crimson Fairy Book Lang explains his part as editor, adding,

But children remain unaware of the facts, and so do their dear mothers; whence the Editor infers that they do not read his prefaces, and are not members of the Folk-Lore Society, or students of Herr Kohler and M. Cosquin, and M. Henri Guidoz and Professor Child, and Mr. Max Muller. (vi)

Why, then, was the actual translation of these folk tales left to so many women? Of course, if folk tales represent the primitive and childlike and so are deemed suitable for children, then it would also seem appropriate, in Lang's day especially, for women to write for children, who were considered women's
business. But Lang provides a further rationale in his repeated depictions of the storytellers of these folk tales, whom he frequently envisions as female. In *The Crimson Fairy Book* Lang informs us, “The Editor’s business is to hunt for collections of these stories told by peasant or savage grandmothers in many climes” (v). He continues his insistence on the female line of these tellers at the primitive stage of the tale’s evolution: “It is only plain that, perhaps a hundred thousand years ago, some savage grandmother told a tale to a savage granddaughter; that the granddaughter told it in her turn” (v-vi). Lang has in mind, I believe, the image of “old wives’ tales” (Introduction, *Blue 350*) as a description for folk tales; even Perrault in his literary folk tales, he claims, “clung most closely to tradition, giving often the very words of his boy’s nurse, though he added a quip or a gentle piece of satire or a veiled gaullsierie, here and there” (Introduction, *Blue 356*). The representation of the folk tale acquires a sort of maternal coziness. In the introduction to *The Blue Fairy Book*, Lang speaks of folk tales as “old and friendly narratives” and even as “our old nurse” comparing a love of folk tales with “the love of any other thing that is old and plain, and dallies with the simplicity of love” (351).

In the Colour Fairy Books, then, the women who translated the stories take on the role of the traditional storytellers, the old wives or the “naked savage women” that Lang identifies as the original tellers (Violet vii). It is therefore no wonder that he dislikes being identified constantly as the writer of these folk tales. In *The Orange Fairy Book* he states: “These Fairy Books, however, are not written by the Editor, as he has often explained, ‘out of his own head’” (v). In *The Lilac Fairy Book* he claims even more strongly that his reputation as the writer of the tales “weighs upon and is killing me” (vii).

Of course, Lang is right to object that he did not invent the folk tales and is not the translator of most of them. But although the names of the actual translators are listed in the prefaces (which Lang repeatedly complains that few people seem to read), they are not attached to the stories in the text. One result of this editorial procedure is to make some readers believe that Lang is the writer of all the tales; another is the creation of an illusion that the tales come directly from anonymous storytellers. The invisibility of Mrs. Lang and her cohorts to most general readers reproduces the invisibility of translators in literary culture generally. Lawrence Venuti writes of translation strategies that often result in an effect of transparency that “conceals the manifold conditions under which a translation is produced and consumed—starting with the translator and the fact of translation” (4). In the Colour Fairy Books, the general reader is not led to the impression that the words of the “peasant or savage grandmothers” are mediated by the nineteenth- and twentieth-century translators who actually shaped and worded these tales. It is only the prefaces, read perhaps more by the scholarly than by the general reader, that acknowledge the interventions of the editor and translators.

Lang’s frequent assertions in those prefaces that interventions have been made, that the folk tales “have been altered in many ways to make them suitable for children” (*Orange vi*), should give one pause, however, to question just what the childlike quality of these stories is if they require so much editorial vigilance and adaptation. Jacqueline Rose has recognized that the nineteenth-century interest in fairy tales as children’s reading arises from the equation of childhood with cultural infancy, an equation that Lang certainly promotes. What perhaps may be surprising is that the equation is still current in the late twentieth century. In 1990, for example, Alison Lurie wrote of children in words that could have come directly from Lang:

> There exists in our world an unusual, partly savage tribe, ancient and widely distributed, yet until recently little studied by anthropologists or historians. All of us were at one time members of this tribe: we knew its customs, manners, and rituals, its folklore and sacred texts. I refer, of course, to children. (ix)

Other texts continue to expound the connection between the child, the folk, and traditional literature; the following passage from Zena Sutherland and May Hill Arbuthnot’s *Children and Books* outlines an evolution from the primitive to the sophisticated that allows the child to be situated as the “natural” reader of folk tales:

> In early times, before universal education brought a widespread reading population, folk literature was meant for people of all ages; in today’s more primitive societies where few people can read, this is still true, and the dependence on the oral tradition is still strong. What has changed, in more sophisticated societies, is the primary audience for the folk tale. Today most folk literature is read by children, or read or told to them, even though it was not created for them alone, for the most part. It is natural that children should be the primary audience for folk tales, since the dualities that are universally found in the tales are those to which children respond in any story. (182)

These assumptions about the universal features of folk tales and their “childlike” and “primitive” qualities still contribute to our notions of what children “naturally” will like to read. Although the work of scholars such as Jack Zipes has increased our awareness of how children’s fairy-tale collections are historically mediated, the idea still seems to linger that folk tales speak directly to children, and that translators and editors play at best a secondary, barely acknowledged role in their production. The resulting illusion of the stories’ primitiveness suits a construction of the child—audience as primitive. It would seem, then, that Lang’s basic paradigm of the “savage” and the “civilized,” which certainly determined his own editorial and translation practices, still shapes some current ways of thinking about the child and children’s literature.
NOTES
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1After writing in 1889 that the realistic story for children had eclipsed the fairy tale, Mrs. E. M. Field revised that opinion later to state that "the tide of popularity would seem to have set strongly in the direction of the old fairy stories" (242). Both Roger Lancelyn Green and Glenn S. Burne attribute Field's altered opinion to the impact of The Blue Fairy Book.

2The critical biographies by Green and by Eleanor Langstaff give an overview of the development and range of Lang's work. Earlier assessments of some of his interests, including Scottish and French history, Greek literature, poetry, and the literature of sport, are contained in Concerning Andrew Lang. A more recent attempt to discuss Lang's achievements in the context of his time occurs in Harold Orel's chapter on Lang in Victorian Literary Critic.

3Allen Frantzen is one of a number of recent critics to study the influence of nineteenth-century philology on the representation of traditional literature. R. Howard Bloch also outlines certain assumptions made by nineteenth-century philologists who represent the medieval past as a time of innocence, simplicity, naturalness, "a world of childhood" (45).

4Richard Dorson provides a detailed discussion of the theories and influence of Tylor, Lang, Max Müller, and other folklorists in The British Folklorists: A History, reprinting selections from their work in the two volumes of Peasant Customs and Savage Myths. Eric L. Montenyohl also assesses Lang's position as one of the leaders of this "Great Team" of folklorists, as Dorson calls them.

5Quotations from The Blue Fairy Book Introduction are taken from the limited edition, large paper version of the book published in 1889. This Introduction is reprinted as Appendix I in Brian Alderson's edition.

6Bivona similarly describes the role of the ethnographer studying survival "from the privileged position of detached rational outsider" and comments that the survival "represents the evolutionary past which he who studies it has, necessarily, surmounted" (83).

7J.R.R. Tolkien, of course, argued against the association of folk tales with children, using Lang as his particular example. In his 1938 essay "On Fairy Stories," Tolkien maintains that the connection between the child and the folk tale is accidental, not essential.

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The Land of Oz in the Land of the Soviets
by Xenia Mitrokhina

From the first years of the USSR's existence, its authorities aimed to subordinate culture to ideology. Literature and the arts, indeed, were always seen as one of the battlegrounds upon which the revolution would take place—in 1921 the Bolshevik Party established a Publishing Committee responsible for conducting "struggle on the cultural front." When the Soviet regime abolished its New Economic Policy in 1927, the USSR intensified the literary censorship begun in 1921, nationalized publishing houses, and, in short, asserted full control over literature, which came to be judged in large part according to its social function.

Children's literature was fully involved in this process. The attention the authorities paid to this apparently marginalized part of culture was surprisingly serious. Shortly after the Bolshevik victory, one of the first party congresses to be convened under the new regime was designed "to start creating children's literature under the accurate control and leadership of the party," since the leadership assumed that "the old literature was able 'only to harm a Soviet child.'" In addition, the 1920s saw intense discussion of the role of fairy tale and fantasy; some critics rejected these forms as dangerously bourgeois, while others believed that they might be salvaged. The doyenne of Soviet culture, Lenin's wife Nina Krupskaya, recommended that writers "study the forms of the old fairy tale" and "fill them with new communist contents." By the late 1930s, fantasy writing had been rehabilitated to some extent, as long as it had been adjusted to fit Soviet standards for the "education of a new citizen" (see Chukovsky's chapter on the "struggle for fairy tales"). Even so, the authorities continued to mount campaigns against what were styled the "elements of unhealthy adventurism."

Often what was "unhealthy" was simply what was foreign. For more than seventy years, official Soviet culture depicted itself as self-sufficient. Hence one characteristic of the official ideology was its xenophobic desire to replace alien cultural phenomena with homegrown products, thereby isolating the USSR from the rest of the world and establishing what Maria Nikolajeva refers to as a "socially pure" culture for the working class (105). But Western achievements were not invariably rejected outright; in some cases this "debris of the old world" (as it was contemptuously termed) served as raw material for the transmission of Soviet ideology. Retailored to suit the censors, certain Western children's classics were published in the USSR in the 1920s and 30s, while the original versions were suppressed. In a move typical of the governing party's desire to "protect" the citizenry by permitting only the indirect perception of information from the outside world, generations of Soviet children grew to maturity without knowing that some favorite titles had initially been penned in different form by non-Russian authors—that Alexey Tolstoy's Adventures of Buratino, or The Golden Key (1936) was a distorted version of Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio (1883), or that Kornei Chukovsky's Dr. Aybolit (1925, revised 1937) had begun life as Hugh Lofting's Doctor Dolittle (1920).1

Purged of their "unhealthy" Western associations, such texts enjoyed a vigorous life in the USSR, not only via generous print runs in a variety of the languages of the Republics but also via cartoons, movies, and stage and radio plays. Especially popular was Alexander M. Volkov's The Wizard of the Emerald City (1939, revised 1959), based on L. Frank Baum's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900).2 While both tales focus on a little girl who is brought to a magical land by a tornado and must try to get back home, Volkov has made a number of cuts and insertions that have changed the meaning of the story in important ways; as he wrote in an afterword in the 1960s, "I reduced the book considerably, squeezed all the water out, exterminated the narrow-minded morals typical of Anglo-Saxon literature, wrote new chapters, and introduced new heroes" (my translation; the American edition of Volkov renders this passage innocuously as "I changed a good many things in it, and I added some new chapters" [146]). In the essay that follows, I will examine some of the discrepancies between the two versions in order to suggest what kind of ideological messages the Soviet system sought to promote within children's literature. The Wizard of the Emerald City is interesting not only as an illustration of the ways in which one Soviet writer proved his willingness to conform to official policy, but also as a window into the larger Soviet mentality and its views on appropriate role models for children.
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From the first years of the USSR’s existence, its authorities aimed to subordinate culture to ideology. Literature and the arts, indeed, were always seen as one of the battlegrounds upon which the revolution would take place—in 1921 the Bolshevik Party established a Publishing Committee responsible for conducting “struggle on the cultural front.” When the Soviet regime abolished its New Economic Policy in 1927, the USSR intensified the literary censorship begun in 1921, nationalized publishing houses, and, in short, asserted full control over literature, which came to be judged in large part according to its social function.

Children’s literature was fully involved in this process. The attention the authorities paid to this apparently marginalized part of culture was surprisingly serious. Shortly after the Bolshevik victory, one of the first party congresses to be convened under the new regime was designed “to start creating children’s literature under the accurate control and leadership of the party,” since the leadership assumed that “the old literature” was able “only to harm a Soviet child.” In addition, the 1920s saw intense discussion of the role of fairy tale and fantasy; some critics rejected these forms as dangerously bourgeois, while others believed that they might be salvaged. The doyenne of Soviet culture, Lenin’s wife Nina Krupskaya, recommended that writers “study the forms of the old fairy tale” and “fill them with new communist contents.” By the late 1930s, fantasy writing had been rehabilitated to some extent, as long as it had been adjusted to fit Soviet standards for the “education of a new citizen” (see Chukovsky’s chapter on the “struggle for fairy tales”). Even so, the authorities continued to mount campaigns against what were styled the “elements of unhealthy adventurism.”

Often what was “unhealthy” was simply what was foreign. For more than seventy years, official Soviet culture depicted itself as self-sufficient. Hence one characteristic of the official ideology was its xenophobic desire to replace alien cultural phenomena with homegrown products, thereby isolating the USSR from the rest of the world and establishing what Maria Nikolajeva refers to as a “socially pure” culture for the working class (105). But Western achievements were not invariably rejected outright; in some cases this “debris of the old world” (as it was contemptuously termed) served as raw material for the transmission of Soviet ideology. Retaliated to suit the censors, certain Western children’s classics were published in the USSR in the 1920s and ’30s, while the original versions were suppressed. In a move typical of the governing party’s desire to “protect” the citizenry by permitting only the indirect perception of information from the outside world, generations of Soviet children grew to maturity without knowing that some favorite titles had initially been penned in different form by non-Russian authors—that Alexey Tolstoy’s Adventures of Buratino, or The Golden Key (1936) was a distorted version of Carlo Collodi’s Pinocchio (1883), or that Kornei Chukovsky’s Dr. Aybolit (1925, revised 1937) had begun life as Hugh Lofting’s Doctor Dolittle (1920). Purged of their “unhealthy” Western associations, such texts enjoyed a vigorous life in the USSR, not only via generous print runs in a variety of the languages of the Republics but also via cartoons, movies, and stage and radio plays. Especially popular was Alexander M. Volkov’s The Wizard of the Emerald City (1939, revised 1959), based on L. Frank Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900). While both tales focus on a little girl who is brought to a magical land by a tornado and must try to get back home, Volkov has made a number of cuts and insertions that have changed the meaning of the story in important ways; as he wrote in an afterword in the 1960s, “I reduced the book considerably, squeezed all the water out, exterminated the narrow-minded morals typical of Anglo-Saxon literature, wrote new chapters, and introduced new heroes” (my translation; the American edition of Volkov renders this passage innocuously as “I changed a good many things in it, and I added some new chapters” [146]). In the essay that follows, I will examine some of the discrepancies between the two versions in order to suggest what kind of ideological messages the Soviet system sought to promote within children’s literature. The Wizard of the Emerald City is interesting not only as an illustration of the ways in which one Soviet writer proved his willingness to conform to official policy, but also as a window into the larger Soviet mentality and its views on appropriate role models for children.
The mood of Baum's original is positive, triumphant, and optimistic, stressing the power of the individual. Transported by chance to an unknown world, the little protagonist acts by herself, and as a result she gains friends and achieves her goal. She succeeds in part because she is protected by the kiss of the Witch of the North, but also because she is free, active, and spontaneous. Moreover, her journey to benefit herself also benefits the deserving inhabitants of Oz, so that her activity is shown as positive for the larger society as well.

The Soviet version undercuts the importance of the protagonist, whose name changes from Dorothy to Ellie, by emphasizing that her journey is merely a consequence of the struggle of much more powerful agencies. Here the tornado is no natural phenomenon, but a force conjured up by the wicked witch Gingema in order to do away with humankind—a touch that recalls the paranoia of the Soviet system, which consistently mounted an active search for the "enemy" presumed to be at the root of every misfortune. Similarly, Ellie's home ("a small house-trailer whose wheels had been removed") (1) is being used as a weapon by the Kind Fairy, Vdlina, who has learned of the tornado from her Magic Book and bends it to her own purposes by causing the storm to bring down the trailer on Gingema's head. While Volkov wrote in his afterword that he had striven to remove the bourgeois morals from the narration and introduce individual will as an important factor, in fact this element is weakened rather than intensified: from the very beginning, the protagonist is seen in the context of the interaction of much more powerful figures, upon whom she depends. This worldview is natural for the USSR, in which personality was rigorously subordinated to the regime.

Unlike Dorothy, Ellie exists in relation to a known future; her actions are determined by the predictions of the Magic Book, which informs the Fairy that the Wonderful Wizard Goodwin will send the girl back home if she helps three beings to fulfill their fondest wishes. It is after receiving these directions that Ellie finds the Silver Shoes and follows the Yellow Brick Road. The same powers that transferred her to very beginning, the protagonist is seen in the context of the inevitable, but rather dependent upon the will of more powerful figures, upon whom she depends. This worldview is natural for the USSR, in which personality was rigorously subordinated to the regime.

Psychically, Dorothy performs the protective role of an adult, while her Soviet counterpart is very much the dependent child. While one might argue that Ellie's state of mind is more realistic given the age of the two girls, this difference between Ellie and Dorothy also suggests the difference between the ideal Soviet citizen and the ideal American citizen.

The power structure of Baum's Oz, in short, is much more horizontal and less hierarchical than that of Volkov's Magic Land. Baum's good witch bestows her protective kiss upon Dorothy merely because she likes her; the decision to help in this way is entirely up to her, and her kiss appears to be a response to the girl's innate virtues. In Volkov's text, Vdlina gives Ellie instructions because she is obligated to take care of the girl, who got into the Magic Land through the Fairy's fault. It is not the heroine's virtues that win protection for her, but rather her position, a matter that lies outside her control. From the child's point of view, then, adult help appears arbitrary, an element that puts Ellie in the uncertain position of supplicant and stresses the vertical relationship of child and parent figure. If Dorothy cries in secret over her fate as the Witch's prisoner before eventually taking that fate into her own hands and dousing the Witch with a bucket of water, Ellie "burst[s] into tears and beg[s] . . . for mercy" from one adult antagonist before being rescued by Strasheela the scarecrow and the Iron Woodman (34).
The dependency and tenuousness of Ellie's position are heightened by the form that the protective magic takes for her. Dorothy is safeguarded by the kiss of the Witch of the North, which has left an ineradicable "round, shining mark" on her forehead (27), but Ellie is safeguarded only by the Silver Shoes formerly belonging to Gingema. These shoes symbolize not the power of good but the power of strength, which arouses respect and fear in others. Unlike the mark denoting goodness, the symbol of strength may be lost or taken away, a consideration that introduces into the narrative the possibility of aggression and envy (an emotion considered by some Sovietologists a hallmark of the Soviet citizen) and emphasizes the protagonist's vulnerability in the ongoing power struggle.

Heightening this vulnerability, and perhaps compensating for the diminishing of suspense that may go along with the protagonist's diminished freedom of choice, is the dramatic increase in the number and type of external dangers that Ellie must encounter. Baum's Oz contains wicked witches, ferocious Kalidahs, mischievous winged monkeys, and various inconvenient natural forces such as active trees and broad, fast-flowing rivers—but Volkov's Magic Land contains vastly greater obstacles, from terrible floods to man-eating ogres. Indeed, it is saturated with mighty forces that determine Ellie's role and dominate her. For Baum's characters, victory over adversity requires little more than the brave resolution to face down difficulties; for Volkov's, the situation is more complex. Whereas Baum noted in the introduction to his story that the day of "horrible and blood-curdling incident" in children's fantasy was past, and that he sought to retain "wonderment and joy" while omitting "heart-aches and nightmares" (n.p.), Volkov reintroduces these nightmares, thereby increasing the odds against Ellie's success and heightening our sense of her powerlessness.

One chapter that Volkov inserts into the narrative and that has no parallel in The Wonderful Wizard of Oz involves Ellie's capture by an ogre who ties her up, lays her on his kitchen table, and begins to sharpen an enormous knife preparatory to slaughtering her. This chapter suggests the extent to which the protagonist's vulnerability in the ongoing power struggle.

It is no surprise that the ogre's sign turns out to be a fraud. After all, he is presented as an evil individual who takes sadistic pleasure in gloating to Ellie, "Do you think I'm really going to make your wishes come true? To think I even could! I did it for the express purpose of fooling simpletons like you!" (34). The reader may well feel astonished, however, that the Magic Book, with its knowledge of the future, is similarly untrustworthy. Goodwin does not send Ellie back home, as the Book foretold; he flies away in a balloon, leaving her behind. For Dorothy, this turn of events is sad, of course, but it is not inconsistent with her understanding of the Wizard's personality. For Ellie, Goodwin's flight represents the entire destruction of the system on which all her behavior throughout the novel has been predicated. The authority upon which she has unquestioningly relied has proven to be a terrible fraud, a broken promise for which no one will take responsibility. The subordinate, passive, and conformist personality has obeyed instructions—and the instructions have directed it, firmly and cunningly, to a false end. It is difficult here to refrain from seeing a parallel to the history of the Soviet Union itself.

Despite the fraud, Ellie returns home by using the Silver Shoes, a means of escape not envisioned within the original directions, just as Dorothy too discovers only at the end of the story that the shoes have the power to give her her heart's desire. But when Ellie says that she might have gone home at the very beginning, the line has a different resonance than it has from Dorothy's lips. Ellie's comment is an implied reproach to the mighty forces that tried to detain her in their power by a fraud and were incompetent even in that. It turns out that one needs to play a double game: to submit, but to keep some means of retreat in reserve.

While authority must never be overtly questioned, then, it also must never be entirely trusted. Here, perhaps, we may ask what is specifically Soviet, as opposed to traditionally Russian, about Volkov's adaptation of Baum. While it is by no means easy to make this differentiation since, like it or not, Soviet history and culture is intertwined with Russian history and culture, one might legitimately argue that the image of authority in the Russian folk tale is ambivalent. More often than not, the figure of the ruler is treated satirically, and the theme of the achievement of power by imposters is common. Soviet literature supported and strengthened this attitude of skepticism, but only, of course, with reference to non-Soviet authorities. Given this background, Goodwin must be interpreted differently in a Russian context than Baum's Wizard is in America.

Directing the narrative's suspicion of authority into politically legitimate channels, Volkov introduces into his Magic Land the theme of class antagonism. The humbug Wizard strives to frighten his subjects and prefers the title of "Awful." While the Munchkins respect him, they also fear and dislike him, feelings that they transfer to Strasheela once the latter assumes power in Goodwin's stead. Indeed, having ascended
the throne, Strasheela becomes presumptuous and arrogant. In contrast, in Baum’s Oz, once the Wizard has departed “the people remembered him lovingly, and said to one another, ‘Oz was always our friend. When he was here he built for us this beautiful Emerald City, and now he is gone he has left the Wise Scarecrow to rule over us’” (208). Similarly, the Scarecrow indicates that one of his main claims to authority as the new ruler is that “the people like me” (255). Oz is a feudal society, but a society in which everyone is happy; the Magic Land is a classic totalitarian state, whose citizens exhibit a characteristic ambivalence toward authority. The absolute possession of present, past, and future (the Magic Book) is inherently flawed, for human beings cannot feel comfortable in the presence of absolute values. Possibly, then, the Book’s strange absent-mindedness, the quarrels and incompetence of magicians and rulers, represent a healthy reaction on Volkov’s part against authoritarianism even while they also express the typical Soviet disapproval of aristocracies.

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The American historian Henry M. Littlefield has contended that The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is itself a political allegory reflecting the economic disputes of Baum’s day—that the Yellow Brick Road, for instance, is a sardonic reference to the quarell over the gold standard. While many subsequent critics have found this argument less than convincing, the political overtones present in Volkov’s The Wizard of the Emerald City are harder to deny. If, as Littlefield suggests, the Silver Shoes of Baum’s Oz are associated with the struggle for free coinage, Volkov’s Silver Shoes seem unambiguously to function as a permit, a pass—that symbol of officialdom so respected within the Soviet system. If Baum’s Tin Woodman may be intended to remind us of the destructive power of automatic production, Volkov’s Iron Woodman embodies what Soviet ideology considered a positive metaphor, namely the idea that human beings exist primarily as the appendages of a well-tended mechanism.

At the same time, however, while Baum could use Kansas to connect his tale to the prosaic, Volkov diminishes the presence of the familiar in his story. Baum establishes a contrast between reality and fantasy in which fantasy seems much the more attractive option; Volkov rejects Baum’s philosophy to construct a moral more supportive of Soviet thought. While in one sense the two worlds in which Ellie lives are both fantasies—Volkov’s Kansas, an abstract district in a far-distant country, is essentially another fairyland—Volkov seems ultimately to be on the side of the drudgery that Baum critiques in his opening chapter, as hard-working routine carries a positive coloring within Soviet ideology. Like Dorothy, Ellie wants to get home, but more precisely she wishes to return to what the narrator refers to as “her motherland.” The great parental figure of that Motherland was one of the major symbols to be used in the construction of a “new Soviet citizen.” That ideology decreed that one should feel the emotions of a guilty child toward the USSR, a bond that one could never relinquish in search of a better lot in another location, for such relinquishment was betrayal. Dreaming of magicians at the start of the story, and imagining how her humdrum life might be improved by access to more consumer goods, Ellie has broken a taboo. The ensuing story is about her punishment.

As a land in which the power of male rulers is entirely illusory, Oz too is arguably a motherland, or at any rate a matriarchy. But in this respect it differs materially from the Magic Land. Oz is stereotypically feminine in its excessive sweetness and secrecy. Its problems are solved by magic within this private sphere, without the help of the outer world. There are no global conflicts, and any attempts at violence are quickly and safely repressed. Oz’s environment appears inimical to evil, and Oz is a desirable place to which to move. As a play world, this fairyland seems tailor-made for the little girl of Baum’s day, a creature to be sheltered and nurtured. Volkov’s Soviet motherland, on the other hand, dictates a far harsher environment for young Ellie. Good becomes more earthbound and Evil more active—and the Land itself seems a place within which evil can flourish. As Volkov notes in his afterword, The Wizard of the Emerald City is a story about “escap[ing] danger” (146). Accordingly, each story within Volkov’s Magic Land cycle is the tale of a global conflict, an attempt to occupy and sack the Land or (as in The Wizard of the Emerald City) the outside world. Each new story is more militarized than its predecessor. Instead of a model of creative world-building, we are given a model of war. Volkov’s implied child reader, like the ideal Soviet “little citizen,” seems masculinized and militarized, preferring plots based on opposition.

With the decline of playfulness and imagination, the role of magic within the Magic Land has decreased, while that of the “common people” has increased. But the common people, “the motive power of history” according to one Soviet slogan, prove to be dependent, unable to protect themselves without the help of their hierarchical superiors. They are ineffectual and slow witted. Thus the Magic Land is only too likely to be subordinated to a Big World. Nor is the latter name accidental: the Land shares qualities with the Soviet protectorates of Cold War times. Not a single character, not even Goodwin, moves here forever, for indeed this land is dangerous and uninviting.

To be sure, for all its inferiority to Oz, Volkov’s Magic Land held out considerable magic for Soviet children, used as they were to being bludgeoned with slogans about class struggle. But the logic of the Magic Land seems calculated to instill powerlessness in the child reader. Both the protagonist and the country in which her adventures take place are depressed, hedged about by an obtrusive guardianship, and liable to self-destruction. As we move from novel to novel in Volkov’s cycle, the complexity of the problems facing the protagonists increases, as does the characters’ vulnerability,
until in the final installment the inhabitants of the Magic Land must battle a technologically superior civilization made up of space aliens, eventually helping to liberate the enslaved alien workers, who return to their native planet to establish a more just social order. In this sense, Volkov’s alterations seem to reflect the structure of Soviet reality and the individual’s position within it. Nor does the ultimate hopelessness of the Magic Land appear to be merely a product of one writer’s psyche, since arguably it extends to officially approved Soviet fairy tales as a class. They are destructive, depressing, and passive-aggressive; even so, they continue to survive.

* * * * *

The original creator of Oz was a nonperson within the cultural territory of the USSR. Before the 1990s, not a single Russian translation of any of Baum’s books existed, and when several of the Oz books were published in Russia, children’s literature critics evinced little or no response. The Soviet Literary Encyclopedia does not contain his name, although a few primers on foreign children’s literature mention him as having some sort of vague connection to Volkov. Moreover, Baum’s texts are clearly unfamiliar to the authors of such publications; his plots are attributed to Volkov and vice versa, while the biographical data provided on him are confused, even as regards facts as straightforward as the dates of his birth and death.

Even so, we may discern certain odd similarities between Baum’s history and that of his Soviet interpreter/plagiarist, as if the Iron Curtain were acting as a kind of distorting mirror. Just as official American literary criticism did not acknowledge Baum until comparatively recently, Volkov too received little notice from critics for much of his life, so that in one diary entry he referred to himself as “an invisible writer” (qtd. in Petrovski). Only shortly before his death at age 86 in 1977 did he begin to attract critical attention, and then for a reason not directly connected to his works: he had acquired the sobriquet “the eldest writer in the USSR.” In 1961 the anniversary articles—formal, lacking in any real content, telling only what Volkov himself told of his life—started to appear in the press. But Volkov revealed little of himself; during his long life, which spanned several different political epochs, he escaped being noticed for any human quality save punctuality. He gave no speeches, published no opinions, and made none of his friends known to the public. Possibly he managed to survive in a period of severe repression precisely because he was neither praised nor scolded by those in power. He does not exist as a personality in Russian culture—and yet his books do. Indeed, so popular were the Magic Land tales that when, at the behest of his young fans, Volkov published the first of his four sequels to The Wizard of the Emerald City in 1963, children made handwritten duplicates of it because the libraries had not obtained enough copies to satisfy the demand.

But the similarities between Baum and Volkov go beyond their official invisibility. Baum’s preface declares that in writing The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, he intends to liberate fairy tale from didacticism and the chains of the past; Volkov, the transmitter (or servant) of Soviet ideology, likewise lays claim to innovation and to the “renunciation of the old world.” Like Baum in the United States, Volkov scored a tremendous popular success with his version of Oz and then left his Magic Land for other genres: in Volkov’s case, everything from historical novels to articles on fishing. And like Baum’s non-Oz works, those of Volkov’s writings that do not involve the Magic Land are rarities now.

Finally, like Oz, the Magic Land found its way into a variety of other media. Although Victor Fleming’s 1939 film was not known to the Russian public until 1995, when the first pirated copy (somewhat ineptly translated) appeared on the market, The Wizard of the Emerald City and its 1963 sequel, Urfin Jus and His Wooden Soldiers, have frequently been staged. A vinyl recording appeared in 1967, a radio version in 1974, and a ten-part cartoon that included The Wizard, Urfin, and The Seven Underground Kings in 1973. Interestingly, the confusion between Baum and Volkov continues; in the last several years two new taped versions of the tale have been released, one conventionally entitled The Wizard of the Emerald City, the other called, in hybrid fashion, Ellie in the Land of Oz.

It is difficult to predict the future literary fate of Baum’s and Volkov’s fantasies in Russia. Today’s adults prefer the Soviet version, since for them it evokes memories of their own childhood. Nevertheless, the publishing boom of the last two years has made space for both books. Today’s children will grow up reading both authors (assuming that their schedules permit them to read at all), so that the peaceful coexistence of two versions of Oz and two sets of sequels may become a matter to be taken for granted, intriguing only to historians of literature.

NOTES

1 Among the Western titles rewritten to become Soviet classics in the early years of the regime were Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver’s Travels, and F. Anstey’s The Brass Bottle, all aimed at adults in their English incarnations but designated as children’s books in their Soviet forms (see Nikolajeva 106 for comment on reception). Only with the liberalization of literature in the last years of the Soviet regime did the mass reader become aware of the provenance of these favorite tales, as translations (as opposed to retellings) of the original works began to be published. The existence of these parallel texts—plagiarisms, really—has been one of the numerous skeletons in the cupboard of Soviet literature; for example, the only serious study of this phenomenon, Miron S. Petrovski’s interesting book Книга нашего детства, is too diplomatic toward the main figures of this literature to provide adequate information and analysis.

2 Like Baum’s original, Volkov’s tale—which was itself translated into thirteen languages—gave rise to many sequels: Urfin Jus and His Wooden Soldiers (1963), The Seven Underground Kings (1967), The Fiery God of the Marranks (1971), The Yellow Fog (1974), and The Mystery of the Deserted Castle (published posthumously in 1982).
Volkov, however, never mentioned the existence of other books in Baum's cycle, although he borrowed a number of motifs from these books in producing his own narratives; while he acknowledged his debt to The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, and saw Robert Louis Stevenson and Frederick Marryat as influences on his own work, he claimed in a 1968 article that "the plots of [his] later fairy tales were original" (22).

"Arguably, the desire to establish guilt is as much Russian as Soviet. One of the best-known Russian essays of the nineteenth century is entitled, "Who Is Culpable?"

"Just as Glinda's Magic Book differs from Villina's in its inability to predict the future, the magic guiding Dorothy to the Emerald City is much less specific than that guiding Ellie, and the Witch of the North appears to have no more control over it than the child herself does. After Dorothy bursts into tears when the Witch tells her that she will have to become a permanent resident of Oz, the Witch "took off her cap and balanced the point on the end of her nose, while she counted 'one, two, three' in a solemn voice. At once the cap changed to a slate, on which was written in big, white chalk marks: 'LET DOROTHY GO TO THE CITY OF EMERALDS'" (26).

In contrast, Dorothy's quest to find the Wizard is always predicated on the belief that he may help her, as the Witch of the North takes pains to point out that she has no personal knowledge of her colleague ("Whether he is a man or not I cannot tell, for I have never seen him" [27]) and thus cannot be sure of his future actions. It is true that Oz later promises to send Dorothy back to Kansas if she kills the Witch of the West, but this promise is never corroborated by an impersonal and putatively reliable source such as the Magic Book.

The cartoon reinforces the features that distinguish Volkov's version from Baum's. Magic's inferiority to the work of the common people is stressed, as the workers pump out magic water while singing a song that declares, "Anyone can be a magician." The opposition between good and evil characters is further heightened, and danger is highlighted. And again the environment is made more active while the protagonist is made passive: in the cartoon the wicked fairy Bastinda overturns the bucket of water herself, while Ellie merely looks on in horror.

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Xenia Mitrokhina teaches Italian in the Department of Theology at Moscow State University. Her articles and conference papers focus on Russian mass culture, including children's literature; her other research interests include the children's literature of Italy, France, and the United States.
Crosswriting Child and Adult:
Henri Bosco’s L’Enfant et la rivière
by Sandra Beckett

The French author Henri Bosco (1888-1976) has been largely neglected or marginalized by literary critics, who have often dismissed him as a “regionalist” writer. Although Le Mas Théostime (Farm in Provence) won the prestigious Prix Théophile Renaudot in 1945, Bosco’s novels for adults, unlike those of his Provencal contemporary Jean Giono, never became part of the French twentieth-century canon. But another book published the same year, L’Enfant et la rivière (The Boy and the River), quickly entered the canon of French children’s literature and is familiar to almost all French readers. Translated into English and published in 1956 in both London and New York, The Boy and the River is nevertheless not well known in the English-speaking world, a fate that unfortunately befalls many of France’s best-selling children’s books. Bosco’s novel certainly deserves to have a wider international readership, as more than fifty years after its publication, L’Enfant et la rivière ranks fourth on the bestseller list for children established by Gallimard (France’s most important publishing house), with sales of approximately 3,000,000 copies. It is surpassed only by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s Le Petit Prince, Michel Tournier’s Vendredi ou la vie sauvage, and Marcel Aymé’s Les Contes du chat perché (Histoire 73).

Like Le Petit Prince, L’Enfant et la rivière ignores the borders between children’s literature and adult literature, appealing to a dual readership. Over the years, Bosco’s novel has appeared in most of Gallimard’s major series of children’s fiction, generally as one of the first books to be republished when a new series is launched, while at the same time continuing to be republished for an adult audience. L’Enfant et la rivière is reprinted regularly in both of Gallimard’s highly successful paperback series, Folio for adults and Folio Junior for children. It would seem, however, that the audience for L’Enfant et la rivière has been determined to a great extent by the peritext. The first edition of this classic of French children’s literature, published by Charlot in Algiers in 1945, did not seek a young audience. Furthermore, until very recently it seemed highly unlikely that Bosco had considered the novel a children’s text at the time of its publication; nowhere in the correspondence and documents known to critics did the author refer to it as such. But a comment discovered recently in an unedited letter that Bosco wrote to Armand Guibert on 11 July 1945, shortly after the launching of L’Enfant et la rivière, has shed new light on the question of intended audience, indicating that the author felt that it addressed “children, adolescents, and poets” (Letter). It would seem, therefore, that L’Enfant et la rivière was a deliberate attempt to write for a dual audience—in other words, to “crosswrite child and adult.” The purpose of this essay is to show just how successful Bosco was at “crosswriting,” and to explore what the publishing history of L’Enfant et la rivière reveals about the relationship between children’s literature and adult literature in France.

Bosco’s novel is an enchanting story about a young boy, Pascalet, who lives on a farm in the Provencal countryside near a powerful river, the Durance. There he leads a solitary existence; his parents are often absent, and his father’s great-aunt, Martine, adores Pascalet but nonetheless leaves him to his own devices so that she can pursue her mysterious pastimes in the attic. Deprived of playmates, Pascalet spends much of his time dreaming, and the source of all of his dreams, day and night, is the forbidden river. As is often the case with children, Pascalet becomes obsessed by the river precisely because his father has ordered him never to go there, an order that his mother has reinforced with warnings guaranteed to add to the river’s fascination: “There are dangerous holes in the river where one can drown, there are snakes among the reeds, and gipsies on the banks” (5).

One spring day Pascalet yields to the irresistible temptation to visit the mysterious river. Daydreaming in an old fishing-boat tied up at the shore, Pascalet suddenly finds himself adrift, taking in water, and heading straight for a rocky shoal. Narrowly escaping the shoal, the boy lands on an island (the sequel reveals that it is called the Île-du-Renard), where he discovers a young gypsy boy, Gatzo, who has been kidnapped by four gypsies and is now being held prisoner in their camp, guarded by an “ancient crone” who squats in front of the fire stirring an “infernal brew” in an old cauldron (30). The timid Pascalet somehow finds the courage to rescue Gatzo, in spite of the bear who also guards the camp, and the two boys escape in the gypsies’ boat to the still waters of the river’s hidden channels, where they spend ten idyllic days living in harmony with nature, their very souls in tune with the cosmos.

It was to be almost half a century before Bosco’s most widely read book would solicit a serious critical essay. As Andrée David points out in that article, early Bosco critics tended to dismiss L’Enfant et la rivière summarily—if, I would add, they deigned to mention it at all. As she has noted, on the surface it may seem to be a naive and transparent story, “one of the simplest” of Bosco’s books, but a close analysis reveals that it is, in fact, a seminal work that offers a “microcosm” of the novelist’s entire oeuvre (223). But this perceived complexity apparently prevents David from approaching L’Enfant et la rivière as a children’s text. Espousing the hypothesis, once expressed by Claude Girault, that the image of Bosco as a storyteller for children is based on “a fragile fiction” (qtd. David 223), David’s arguments explain, rather, the text's...
appeal to an adult audience, for whom the simple tale provides in a distilled form the essence of, and a point of entry into, an oeuvre that many readers find perplexing and enigmatic.

And indeed, _L’Enfant et la rivière_ offers, in its most simplified form, the initiatory quest that underlies all of Bosco’s fiction (see Beckett, *Quête*). Archetypal motifs of initiation structure the simple story: separation from family, the crossing of a threshold separating the known from the unknown and the profane from the sacred (the river), ordeals (the confrontation with the gypsies, the witch, and the bear), revelation of the sacred (the elements).² Pascalet is ten years old, precisely the age at which boys are often initiated in traditional societies. A silent, solitary, introspective child, Pascalet resembles Bosco’s adult protagonists, whose natural traits make them ideal neophytes. In Bosco’s fiction, the initiation involves the revelation of the secrets of nature and the elements. As in most rites of passage, an elderly initiate or mystagogue guides the neophyte, often in conjunction with a young boy. In _L’Enfant et la rivière_ the elderly mystagogue is Bargabot, the poacher to whom Bosco will dedicate an entire book later in the cycle; Barbagot indirectly encourages Pascalet to disobey parental rules and visit the river, approvingly watching over the runaway from a distance and then bringing him safely back to Aunt Martine well before his parents return home. Bargabot’s role as catalyst and guide is important in the first book of the cycle, but it is Gatzo who is Pascalet’s true initiator. Throughout their adventure, Pascalet is filled with admiration for the skill and knowledge of his new friend, and when Gatzo leaves him, shattering “the most lovely friendship” he had ever known, the narrator explains that he suffered cruelly because he would never again find “another companion like him: a companion who was stronger, braver, cleverer than me” (82-83).

For the adult reader, then, _L’Enfant et la rivière_ lends itself to a number of different critical readings.³ Bosco’s fiction has generally been considered difficult, even esoteric, written for a privileged elite rather than for a wide audience, even though several of his works are simultaneously popular as children’s literature. The perception of difficulty is due not only to the author’s Mediterranean culture, the spiritual quest that underlies all of his oeuvre, the somewhat obscure themes, and the disconcerting blend of dream and reality, but is also the result of the innovative structure of his narrative, characterized, as early as the 1930s, by intertextuality, self-reflexivity, _mises-en-abyme_, embedded texts (stories, journal extracts, notebooks, wills, and the like), multiple narrative voices, and refusal of closure. Narratology therefore provides a particularly rich approach for Bosco’s fiction.⁴

In almost all of Bosco’s novels, the first-person narrator tells the story of a remarkable adventure in which he had been involved, generally as the principal actor, many years earlier. In _L’Enfant et la rivière_ and other books beloved by children, but also in several adult novels, an elderly narrator nostalgically recalls events from his childhood, and this voice seems to merge with that of the child protagonist. Probably only the adult readers of _L’Enfant et la rivière_ will hear the voice of the adult narrator, and even then perhaps not until almost halfway through the story, when a short paragraph suddenly reveals clearly the temporal distance that separates the young protagonist Pascalet from the elderly narrator, who writes: “All this happened a very long time ago, and I am now almost an old man. But no matter how long my life may last, I shall never forget those days of my boyhood which I spent on the river” (40). Like so many of Bosco’s narrators, Pascalet relives vividly, through the act of narration, the bygone days of his childhood:

>I can still live them over again. Their freshness is in no way dimmed. What I saw then I can see again today. I have only to give rein to my thoughts to become once more the lad whose waking eyes were enchanted by the world of waters which he had just discovered. (40)

Albeit to a much lesser degree than Bosco’s adult novels, and even his other children’s books, _L’Enfant et la rivière_ nonetheless presents a fragmented, incomplete narrative that seems to demand a sequel. The narrator himself hints at the possibility of a sequel in the book’s last line: “As to [Gatzo’s] story, well, perhaps one day I’ll tell it” (119). Many readers, however, are not aware that the bestselling _L’Enfant et la rivière_ is the first of five stories that constitute what the novelist himself called the Pascalet series, and what critics often call the Pascalet cycle, including _Le Renard dans l’île_ (1956), _Barboche_ (1957), _Bargabot_ (1958), and _Pascalet_ (1958).⁵ Although a charming tale that is sufficient unto itself (a note at the beginning of _Le Renard dans l’île_ makes the same claim with regard to the second book), _L’Enfant et la rivière_ takes on much more meaning when seen in the context of the Pascalet series. In fact, it is part of a much more elaborate structure, as the cycle it inaugurates is linked to another series, introduced by _L’Âne Culotte_ in 1937 and generally known as the Hyacinthe trilogy.

The elusive, bewitching, and bewitched child Hyacinthe, who appears for the first time in _L’Âne Culotte_ but figures as well in nine other works (some for children, some for adults), haunted the imagination of the author throughout most of his career, becoming what Charles Mauron calls a “personal myth” (9; see Beckett, “Construction”). _L’Âne Culotte_, like _L’Enfant et la rivière_, was not originally published in a children’s edition. Ever since the 1956 edition by the Club des Jeunes Amis du Livre, however, it has been regularly republished for young readers, and Bosco himself would refer to it from the 1950s onward as his first “children’s book.” Its status as a children’s text creates an interesting reception problem, as _L’Âne Culotte_ is the first volume of a trilogy in which the other two books, _Hyacinthe_ and _Le Jardin d’Hyacinthe_, are clearly addressed exclusively to an adult audience. Whereas the dual
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readership text L’Âne Culotte is the beginning of the Hyacinthe trilogy for adult readers, children, unaware of the trilogy’s existence, will see it as an integral part of the Pascalet cycle. For young readers, L’Enfant et larivière will actually seem to be a sequel to L’Âne Culotte.

L’Enfant et la rivière thus plays a pivotal role in the elaborate myth constructed by Bosco over several decades. Originating in the novelist’s first “children’s book,” the myth turns once again, after two complex adult novels, to this simpler narrative for children. L’Enfant et la rivière is the first of the texts involving the Hyacinthe myth to be narrated by Pascalet, who is the author’s double. Whereas Bosco felt it necessary to have three different autodiegetic narrators tell the story of the enigmatic Hyacinthe in the trilogy, Pascalet will narrate all of the remaining books, including the two adult novels published toward the end of the author’s life. Hyacinthe is an orphan child, deprived of both memory and soul by a magician who attempts to mould her into a “child of paradise.” Although she does not appear until late in the boys’ adventure in L’Enfant et la rivière, her presence seems to haunt the story almost from the beginning in the form of a dark double, the little girl in rags with black eyes and swarthy skin who tends the gypsies’ fire for the old witch. Not only does the impassivity of the young girl prefigure that of the bewitched Hyacinthe, but more importantly, she is in the company of a doll, reminding us of Hyacinthe and her donkey, Culotte. The little girl, apparently a gypsy, seems to be a curious reflection of Hyacinthe, foreshadowing the orphan’s nomadic life with gypsies after her abduction.

Bosco thus weaves together diverse texts containing elements of the Hyacinthe myth in fascinating and innovative ways reminiscent of the nouveau roman and postmodern texts. Multiple narrative voices, usually several first-person voices cleverly superimposed in the same text, tell us fragments of the strange story of the enigmatic young girl whose origins remain forever a mystery. Rather than serving to shed more light on the affair, the bits and pieces of narrative contributed by the multitude of voices only seem to increase the gaps, rendering Hyacinthe all the more elusive and her story even more obscure. The result is a fragmented, haunting narrative made up largely of conjectures, hushed secrets, echoes, and silences. That Hyacinthe’s story is pieced together in texts aimed sometimes at children and sometimes at adults, so that very few readers ever read all of them, fragments the story even further for the vast majority of readers. Even for the privileged few who are familiar with all ten books, the various fragments never fit together to form a complete picture. Pieces can only be loosely linked, if at all, as some do not seem to belong and others seem to displace previous ones. New narrative voices sometimes raise more questions than they answer.

Open endings characterize all of the books involving the Hyacinthe myth; there is no more “sense of an ending” at the close of the last book of the Hyacinthe trilogy or the Pascalet cycle or even the final book to be narrated by Pascalet, Tante Martine, than in any of the others. In response to a reader who wanted to know more about the fate of Hyacinthe, Bosco said, “For me . . . nothing ends. I detest the word end.” He warns his readers not to expect closure in his fiction: “I never finish.”

Also contributing to the unusual narrative style of the works, the later books often refer back to earlier novels, in particular to L’Enfant et la rivière and, of course, L’Âne Culotte, where the myth had its origins, in a way that suggests multiple connections between them. One of Bosco’s major novels, Un Rameau de la nuit (The Dark Bough, 1950), quite unrelated to the Hyacinthe story, nonetheless contains a mise-en-abyme of L’Âne Culotte: it is the little book that accompanies the narrator when he travels and whose story enchants both the young Marcellin and his Aunt Rose. The French edition of L’Enfant et la rivière has a footnote that recommends L’Âne Culotte to the reader who would like to become more acquainted with Hyacinthe, thus encouraging the perception that the first book of the cycle is actually a sequel to L’Âne Culotte. Entire passages from the early novels are sometimes embedded in later ones, either as a long epigraph (as in Le Jardin d’Hyacinthe) or as interpolated stories, thus giving readers the strange impression that the author has presented them with a palimpsest to decipher. Bosco’s fictional world often seems to be composed largely of mirrors.

Like Mircea Eliade in Aspects du mythe (97), Bosco assimilates a mythical, archetypal childhood with paradise. The quest that structures each of Bosco’s novels is ultimately a nostalgic search for this lost paradise, and L’Enfant et la rivière is no exception. What distinguishes L’Enfant et la rivière from most of the author’s other books, and particularly from his adult novels in which any “paradise” discovered by the hero is false, if not infernal, is that, at least during his ten days on the river with Gazzu, Pascalet actually seems to find paradise on earth. The village in which his adventure comes to an end does not seem to be “of this world,” and Pascalet himself concludes that he was “in some home of the fairies, of innocent fairies, created for the joy of children dreaming, a fantastic spot upon the very frontier-line of Paradise” (85).

The fantastical village chapter of L’Enfant et la rivière titled “Le Montreur d’âmes” (“The Showman of Souls”) uses another of Bosco’s characteristic literary devices as it revolves around a complex mise-en-abyme of the personal myth that Bosco had initiated in the Hyacinthe trilogy. In an enchanting, magical scene, an entire village—from the mayor and other dignitaries down to the smallest child and the last dog—sits spellbound in front of a modest, itinerant puppet theatre, where Grandpa Savinien, after fifty years of traveling through the countryside with his marionettes, gives his final performance. Not only does the play itself serve as a simple mirroring of the plot of the frame story, but it can also be seen as a self-reflexive meditation on the function and reception of narrative. The narrator’s defence of the genre of the conte, with its “deeper
meaning” and its simplified, natural “wisdom” that may seem to us to be “brief and bare” but is actually “the quintessence of the hoarded experience of many centuries,” could be seen as a justification of Bosco’s own stories for children. Pascalet could very well be speaking of L’Enfant et la rivière when he writes: “It calls up and inspires imaginative fancies. When that happens as in the story just unfolded, it is a form of relaxation, and what it teaches is so beautiful that we are enchanted by the wisdom it enshrines” (93). The reception of Grandpa Savinien’s story by the villagers can be seen as a mise-en-abyme of the reception of the frame story, as L’Enfant et la rivière would also enchant both adults and children.

The subject of the play chosen by the old puppeteer for his farewell performance in the village of Pierroure, from which Cyprien and his gypsy accomplices will later abduct Hyacinthe, is the kidnapping of a child by gypsies. The play takes the form of a parable in which a gardener, whose haughty pride presages that which will bring about the downfall of Cyprien and the destruction of his paradise, which in turn reflects the fall in the Garden of Eden, is punished for his lack of charity toward an old beggar, Saint Théotime in disguise. The old witch who abducts the gardener’s child reminds us of the old Caraque on the island at the beginning of Pascalet’s adventure, and her use of a piece of poisoned fruit reminds us of “Snow White.” The play in the novel thus constitutes a multifaceted mise-en-abyme on the diegetic level. Even the abduction that it mirrors is double, if not triple, as it anticipates Hyacinthe’s future kidnapping, while at the same time reflecting Gatzo’s earlier abduction by gypsies and, further back still, the young Caraque that Grandpa Savinien had taken to be his wife (this fact is revealed in Le Renard dans l’île). Furthermore, two of the kidnapping victims are present at the puppet show, and thus participate, as spectators, in a symbolic representation of their own tragic drama. All of the village children fall under the hypnotic spell of the artist, the “showman of souls,” whose magic seems to transform the young spectators into actors. The narrator tells us that one child nonetheless stood out among the others; Pascalet recognizes Hyacinthe by the look of enchantment and terror that had frozen her face: “For none of the other children was quite so absorbed by the story which was being enacted on the stage. Every scrap of her heart and soul seemed to be concentrated upon it” (95). Recalling this episode years later, the narrator no doubt interprets it in the light of subsequent events, during which the young girl would actually lose her soul. In any case, it would seem that Hyacinthe somehow senses that her own personal destiny is being played out on the stage. The significance of the puppet show embedded within the frame story, at least insofar as it concerns Gatzo, is revealed at the end of the performance, when the old puppeteer informs the audience in a quavering voice: “As in the story, I had a grandson once, but the gipsies stole him away” (95). That child was Gatzo, who, sobbing high above their heads in the elm tree, seems to have descended from Heaven to be reunited with his Grandpa Savinien. The entire village forms a procession behind the boy and his grandfather to march off and celebrate the joyous occasion, leaving Pascalet all alone, unnoticed, unhappy, and very much the outsider in this episode.

Gatzo and Pascalet are reunited, however, at the end of L’Enfant et la rivière. When Gatzo turns up on their doorstep after the death of his grandfather, Pascalet’s parents agree to adopt the half-gypsy, thanks to the interventions of Aunt Martine. Under the gruff exterior of the ancient woman who rules the Mas du Gage with an iron hand is “the very heart and soul of home,” realizes the narrator years later as he remembers the night of his own return. He had found Aunt Martine seated before the supper she had lovingly prepared, awaiting the “prodigal’s return,” as she had no doubt done on every evening since his disappearance (Boy 108). Aunt Martine reappears in Bosco’s later books for children and plays a particularly important role in Barboche, before inspiring the adult novel that bears her name, the last book published while the author was still alive. Pascalet does not know what Aunt Martine said to his father about Gatzo, “but, whatever it was, he raised no objections. God did the rest” (119). The sentimental ending of L’Enfant et la rivière may offer a moral lesson in charity that reflects that of Grandpa Savinien’s fable about Saint Théotime.

Although the ending of L’Enfant et la rivière would seem to be a happy one, as the lonely Pascalet gains a brother, it is, as we have seen, an open ending. Adult readers may sense that this happy ending will be shortlived, and that it is perhaps not so “happy” after all. There is a wild side to the half-gypsy Gatzo, who, in many ways, is the exact opposite of Pascalet. All of Bosco’s adult protagonists are haunted by a mysterious, disturbing double, who sometimes takes the form of another, but always represents the darker side of their own being. This dual personality takes its simplest form in L’Enfant et la rivière, where the dark and light sides are personified by two different characters. Pascalet represents the child that Bosco was, but Gatzo, admitted the author, is the child that he would like to have been. The conflict between Pascalet and Gatzo remains quite latent in the first book of the cycle, and even seems to be resolved at the end, as David points out, but in the sequel Le Renard dans l’île, the story of Cain and Abel is mentioned with regard to the two boys (David 228). The nomadic blood of Pascalet’s adoptive brother will not allow him to remain too long with the Boucaruts at the Mas du Gage. At the end of Le Renard dans l’île, Gatzo disappears from the Mas du Gage to pursue his unending quest for Hyacinthe’s soul, which he believes has been hidden in a tree by Cyprien and the Caraques.

Although the work was first published in 1945, the children’s edition of L’Enfant et la rivière was not published
until 1953, and then under conditions that help to explain how this work initially acquired its dual audience. It was one of three books chosen to launch the new series La Bibliothèque blanche, created by Gallimard in recognition of the fact that “a great number of writers, and some of the most renowned, have often had the spontaneous urge to write for young readers” (“Bibliothèque” 16). A few years later, in an article devoted to the genesis of his own books for children, Bosco says that almost everyone nourishes the desire to write at least one children’s book (“Enfants” 4). This urge has given us such well-known French children’s favorites as Saint-Exupéry’s Le Petit Prince, Aymé’s Les Contes du chat perché, and Jacques Prévert’s Contes pour enfants pas sages. Gallimard’s reasons for launching La Bibliothèque blanche series provide an indication of the status of both the author of children’s books and the child reader in 1950s France, and may very well explain why L’Enfant et la rivière was not originally published for children, even though we now know that Bosco felt that it was written especially for them.

The creation of the series reflects the new interest that French publishing houses in general were taking in children’s literature and its market after the Second World War. But when they began seeking authors for their series, Gallimard deliberately chose not to turn to “specialists of children’s literature,” preferring to call upon “writers for grown-ups,” “authors of serious books” (Lemarchand 13b-14a; italics mine). In deciding which authors to approach, Gallimard seems to have preferred those who, like Bosco, had received prestigious literary prizes for their adult fiction. The intention was to help children build a library of texts of “indisputable literary value” that would parallel their parents’ (“Bibliothèque” 16). Not all of the authors Gallimard called upon were able to manage the crossover from adult fiction to children’s books, and Bosco is one of the series’ few authors who continues to be widely read today. Furthermore, having easily made the transition to children’s literature in mid-career, Bosco, unlike many other authors, was not content to leave a single volume on children’s bookshelves but would continue to write for a young audience, publishing a total of five books in La Bibliothèque blanche series, more than any other author.

Gallimard identified one essential quality that distinguished the authors chosen for La Bibliothèque blanche series from their counterparts writing for adults: their fiction revealed that “the spirit of childhood and youth had not abandoned them.” Bosco is cited as one of the authors whose novels attest to the constant presence within them “of the child that they were and that they are unable to forget” (Lemarchand 13b-14a). In an unedited page of his journal, Bosco confides that he writes his children’s stories for himself, for his own pleasure, “or more precisely, for the pleasure of the child who lives on in [him]” (Diaire). Certainly the child and childhood are fundamental themes in all of Bosco’s works, not only in his fiction for both children and adults, but even in his memoirs, which stop suddenly at the end of his childhood. Much of his adult life would be spent attempting to relive his childhood through his writing.

The title of the first volume of those memoirs, Un Oubli moins profond (1961), suggests that the childhood memories septuagenarian Bosco set about to record did not really seem very distant. One chapter, titled “Un Romancier . . .” (A Novelist . . .), is of particular interest to this study as it recalls the genesis of L’Enfant et la rivière, which Bosco claims to have written in 1895, exactly fifty years before the novel’s publication. During a 1956 interview, the author had already pointed out that his first novel for children was in fact written for himself at the age of seven (Aubarde 4). Bosco thus exemplifies the authors sought out by Gallimard to write for La Bibliothèque blanche “the same stories that they would like to have been told—that they told themselves perhaps,—when they were the same age as the young readers for whom they write” (Lemarchand 14a). Unfortunately, the school exercise book in which the budding novelist claims to have written and illustrated the first version of the story was apparently lost. The author asserts that he retold the story, some forty years later, in the form of dictations to his 5e class in Rabat, Morocco during the school year 1944-45 (Luccioni 165). But in his memoirs, Bosco admits that the story published in 1945 bore little resemblance to the one written fifty years earlier by a child whose sole interest was adventure and who described the unending fights of the two boys with cannibal-like gypsies. Forgotten for half a century, “the mystery of this childhood adventure” inspired by the Durance would suddenly emerge from those “depths of ourselves that resemble sleeping waters” (Oubli 301-2).

With the publication of L’Enfant et la rivière in Gallimard’s La Bibliothèque blanche series in 1953, Bosco’s novel was adopted as a children’s book. In fact, it is only in the years following that first children’s edition that Bosco himself began to speak of his “children’s books” and his status as a “children’s author,” or to show any real interest in the genre. Six years later, in 1959, Bosco was awarded the Grand Prix de la Littérature pour les Jeunes, thus firmly establishing his reputation as a children’s author.

As Gallimard saw the books of La Bibliothèque blanche series (intended for readers aged nine to fifteen years) as transition books between picture books and “the ‘serious’ books” of their parents’ library, these “books for children” offered very few concessions to the young reader (Lemarchand 13b). All that distinguishes the children’s edition of L’Enfant et la rivière from Bosco’s novels published in the prestigious Collection blanche for adults is the small vignette on the cover (the only illustration), a somewhat larger typography and makeup, and a slight finish to the paper cover. (See Fig. 1.)
In seeking to justify the presentation of a series that resembled so closely its adult counterpart, by claiming that its purpose was to instill in the child the habit of the effort required of the “true reader,” that of “imagining for himself what he is reading,” Jacques Lemarchand further illustrates the lack of status attributed to the child reader in the 1950s (14a; italics mine). Children would not have to wait long, however, for an illustrated edition of L’Enfant et la rivière.

Gallimard’s first illustrated edition of Bosco’s book appeared in 1960 in a large hardcover format. Madeleine Parry’s illustrations, typical of those that adorned the pages of children’s books in the 1960s, tend to be conventional and somewhat insipid. The children are stereotypical, and the Provençal Hyacinthe looks suspiciously like Heidi. Full two-page illustrations in black and white or in lackluster colors depict unenticing, lifeless landscapes that do little to continue the reverie induced by the text. Furthermore, from this edition onward, there is a concerted effort to turn the poetic novel into a nature study. Not content to nourish only the dreams and imagination of young readers, the publisher seems determined to give Bosco’s poetic text more pedagogical appeal. A new element was added to the peritext in the form of an illustrated “Vocabulary” containing the names of Provençal flora and fauna. We now know that Bosco himself wrote the addendum, probably commissioned by Gallimard specifically for the illustrated edition of 1960. In a letter dated 29 May 1960, the author tells friends that he had just sent Gallimard “a text titled Vocabulary,” in which he describes “the animals and plants [he made grow] in this story.”13 With sections devoted to species of “Fish,” “Birds,” “Mammals,” “Trees and Shrubs,” and “Plants and Flowers”—and one would be hard put to locate them all in Bosco’s text—the vocabulary resembles pages taken from a children’s encyclopedia. The nature-study approach to the text was taken to its height in 1987, when Claude Nova, a biology and physics teacher, published a book titled Le Rhône vu à travers “L’Enfant et la rivière” d’Henri Bosco (The Rhône seen through L’Enfant et la rivière by Henri Bosco), presented much like a botanical guide in which the different species of flora are introduced by one or more quotations from Bosco’s book. Taken out of context, the botanical terms may seem too numerous and too difficult for a children’s book. A quotation taken from Pascalet’s description of their refuge introduces three plants (Viburnum opulus, Ulex, and Phragmites) in Nova’s book (89): “Closer to us were bushes of guelder-rose, patches of gorse, and vast expanses of protective reeds” (Boy 42). In the context of the story, however, young readers do not even seem to notice the many unfamiliar terms that proliferate in the chapter “The Sleeping Waters”; no doubt they merely add an element of exoticism to the boys’ adventure.

The author of the short preamble to the vocabulary, undoubtedly Bosco himself, suggests that the inclusion of the Latin names of the different flora and fauna proves the “serious” nature of the new peritext (Enfant 1960, 147). But this serious function seems to be contested somewhat by the descriptive text that follows. The text of the vocabulary is not in the least pedantic, nor even necessarily scientific. The entry devoted to the fox (“Vulpes Vulpes”) evokes the imaginary fox of the fabulists rather than the real fox of zoologists. It is certainly not without significance that only a few years earlier, Bosco himself had embedded in Le Renard dans l’île, itself the story of a mythical white fox, a fable about a fox. In fact, the fox is present in much of Bosco’s fiction, playing a particularly important role in his first children’s book, L’Âne Culotte. Furthermore, the “serious” vocabulary concludes in the world of fantasy with a long “Note concerning the ‘Racal,’” the imaginary beast invented by Pascalet and Gatzo to induce the “make-believe terror” that children find “wholly delightful” (Boy 62). Bosco may have been a teacher for many years,
but he remained first and foremost a poet. In his eyes, the teaching profession was one of the most enriching for an author, not because it taught him how to write didactic works for children, but rather because it allowed him to retain the contact with his own childhood that he felt was essential for the poet and storyteller (Aubarède, "Écrire" 4). Always the storyteller himself, Bosco relates an amusing anecdote about a conscientious, learned Englishman, who, at a loss to render “Racal” in English after having vainly consulted dictionaries, zoological museums, and the Academy of Natural Sciences, had turned to the author for clarification. Bosco admits that he did a poor job of enlightening the Englishman, as he himself knows only what Pascalet and Gatzo tell us about the animal, and the few details they give are not enough to allow him to “see” the creature, but only to “think” it. This avowed inability to describe the imaginary beast seems to encourage the young reader to use his own imagination to give it substance, yet the author paradoxically includes a reference, at the beginning of the entry on the Racal, to Parry’s black-and-white illustration of a creature that seems to be a cross between a dragon and a wolf. It is certainly not surprising that the story’s various illustrators have offered very different interpretations of the imaginary animal. In the Folio Junior edition, Georges Lemoine wisely chooses not to illustrate it at all. Gatzo’s Racal is perhaps the last one, and it is therefore imperative, writes the author tongue-in-cheek, to give it a name “in Latin, in beautiful, zoological Latin.” Without “a serious name” to “classify” it, how can we reply to those who might deny the existence of the Racal? asks Bosco, thus concluding the vocabulary on a humorous note that undermines and pokes fun at the pedagogical enterprise of which it is part (Enfant 1960, 157).

In 1966, L’Enfant et la rivière was republished in the newly dressed Bibliothèque blanche series, which had been given a more modern presentation, including a glossy hard cover, and very simple, somewhat childlike, black-and-white drawings by Jean Palayer. (See Fig. 2.) Between 1966 and 1969, the year in which it ceased to exist, the entire Pascalet cycle, as well as L’Âne Culotte, appeared in the new series, addressed now to a younger readership (eight to twelve years of age). Although the children’s series had ceased to exist its adult counterpart and had begun to address more closely the needs and tastes of young readers, suggesting an awakening acknowledgment of the specificity of children’s literature and the individual status of the child reader, Gallimard still believed the goal of the series should be to offer young readers “texts written by real writers” so that they “acquire from the outset a taste for good literature” (“Bibliothèque” [1966]; italics mine). This attitude is echoed by journalists and critics writing as late as the early 1970s. A journalist interviewing Michel Tournier in 1971 suggests that with very few exceptions—he names only Henri Bosco—the authors who write for young readers are not so much writers as manufacturers of a functional, sterilized, and vaguely pedagogical literature.” He concludes that if children’s literature exists, it is made up of the texts that a few rare authors such as Bosco and Tournier dedicate to children (Josselin 56).

It was not until 1972, just four years before Bosco’s death, that Gallimard officially created a children’s department, in recognition of the fact that “the rules of children’s literature are totally different from those of general literature” (Histoire 69). At the end of 1972, Gallimard Jeunesse launched the 1000 Soleils series, once again choosing L’Enfant et la rivière as one of their first publications. Once again, a new peritextual component fosters the nature study approach to Bosco’s story. Appended to the text is what is supposed to be “Pascalet’s Notebook,” containing drawings of the boys’ fire and tools, plants and animals, even a cross-section of a pond showing the species of plants that grow at each level. Bosco’s niece, Colette de Floesser, told me in July 1994 that she thought her uncle would be astounded to learn of the fortune of his “children’s books,” in particular L’Enfant et la rivière. In 1977, one year after the author’s death, it appeared in Gallimard’s Grands Textes Illustrés series, which offered lengthy, unabridged
novels, in a large, illustrated format, intended for "the pleasure of lovers of fine books" (Histoire 70). The illustrations by Lemoine, a well-known French illustrator, are bold, vivid, and contemporary, at long last successfully rendering the poetic atmosphere and the fascinating combination of dream and reality that are the essence of all of Bosco's fiction. Gone are the pedagogical peritexts, the scientific Latin names, the endless illustrations of flora and fauna reminiscent of botany and zoology textbooks: in short, the nature-study approach. The charming illustration of the enchanted donkey, Culotte, will be familiar to adult readers, as it is virtually identical to the one that graces the cover of L'Ane Culotte in the Folio series. (See Fig. 3.)

Figure 3.

Lemoine's illustrations thus cleverly reflect the intertextuality at work in Bosco's texts.

In 1979, L'Enfant et la rivière was published in the affordable and highly successful Folio Junior series, where it continues to be reprinted regularly in runs of 20,000 or 30,000. The illustrations are once again by Lemoine, but in a very different style. Decidedly more didactic than the large, illustrated book published only two years earlier, the paperback, intended for a broad public and not merely an elite of booklovers, contains economical black-and-white illustrations of trees with a detail of their leaves (fig tree, holm oak, elm); animals with a detail of their pawprints (brown bear, badger); birds with a detail of their feather, egg, or young; the Provençal mas or farmhouse; the constellations; and so on. Everything in the illustrations is named, even something as recognizable as "the village" (Enfant 1979, 121), and the explanatory text often seems excessive, even obtrusive, and likely to restrict the reader's imagination. (See front cover.) But the illustrations themselves are sometimes quite poetic, as, for example, the brown bear who towers like a giant over the countryside at night. Through his transparent body we see stars, suggesting that this bear is somehow the Great Bear of the constellation of the same name (51). In 1987, L'Enfant et la rivière appeared in the Folio Junior Édition Spécial series, with the characteristic supplement that adds a pedagogical as well as a playful dimension to reading by providing activities such as comprehension tests, questions (for instance on gypsies), word games, and excerpts from texts about water by other important authors (such as a passage from Selma Lagerlöf's The Wonderful Adventures of Nils). It is not surprising that this edition has often been used in the 5e and 6e classes in France, where L'Enfant et la rivière has been on the program for years.

When book tapes became popular in the 1980s, L'Enfant et la rivière appeared as Un livre à écouter (1983) with two accompanying cassettes, for which original music was composed. It has also been the basis for a film, and according to Bosco's niece, there are plans for a new one (1994 Conversation). The history of Bosco's L'Enfant et la rivière, in short, reflects quite closely the evolution of children's literature in France since 1945.

* * * * *

Although fifty years of peritextual changes have turned L'Enfant et la rivière into a children's classic in France, it nonetheless remains what Bosco originally intended it to be: a text for a dual readership of adults and children. Shortly after its publication in 1945, the author Gabriel Germain sensed at once that Bosco had offered readers what he calls "a pure tale" that would enchant grown-ups and children alike ("Oeuvre" 39). Like Grandpa Savinien's charming little story and all of the world's timeless tales, the simple narrative of Bosco's L'Enfant et la rivière conceals beneath its limpid surface obscure and profound depths. Therein would seem to lie the secret of "crosswriting child and adult," a secret that Bosco himself cleverly encodes within the narrative of L'Enfant et la rivière.
would have followed him to the ends of the earth and would never prescribe what he called "Boscotherapy" for his patients.

In the sequel, Gatzo explains to Aunt Martine that he abandoned

and L'Âne Culotte, in which the soul seeks harmony with the universe, led one of Bosco's friends, Dr. Ludo Van Bogaert, to

The relaxing, therapeutic value of texts such as L'Enfant et la rivière and L'Âne Culotte, in which the soul seeks harmony with the universe, led one of Bosco's friends, Dr. Ludo Van Bogaert, to

It is not until the third volume of the cycle that the author reveals, almost as an afterthought, that Pascalet Boucarut is the cousin of Maisie, the narrator of the final volume of the trilogy. The sequels to L'Enfant et la rivière fall chronologically between L'Âne Culotte and Le Jardin d'Hyacinthe.

The phenomenon of anti-closure in all of Bosco's novels results from his belief that nothing ever comes to an end because "behind every mystery there is always another mystery" (qtd. in Cavin 235, 244, 243).

The relaxing, therapeutic value of texts such as L'Enfant et la rivière and L'Âne Culotte, in which the soul seeks harmony with the universe, led one of Bosco's friends, Dr. Ludo Van Bogaert, to prescribe what he called "Boscotherapy" for his patients.

In the sequel, Gatzo explains to Aunt Martine that he abandoned Pascalet because he did not want him to meet his grandfather: "He would have followed him to the ends of the earth and would never have returned to you, Aunt Martine." (Reward 49)

It is perhaps significant that Bosco was a cousin of Don Bosco, who devoted his life to socially marginalized children not unlike Gatzo. In 1959, Bosco published a biography of his father's cousin, Saints Jean Bosco, which was followed in 1961 by a children's version titled Le Vie extraordinaire de Saint Jean Bosco, written in collaboration with his wife, Madeleine. But critics have pointed out that the attitude toward the Other in Bosco's fiction is ambiguous. The role the author attributes to gypsies, particularly in his children's books—that of thieving, murderous kidnappers and old witches—has led Perrot, for example, to cite L'Enfant et la rivière in a paper he gave recently on xenophobia in children's literature.

For a more detailed study of the theme of the double in Bosco's fiction, see Beckett, Les Reflets. David's essay analyzes the doubles in L'Enfant et la rivière.

David Galef cites Roald Dahl, Saint-Exupéry, and Ian Fleming as examples of authors who have effectively managed the transition, but points to the countless others who have failed, those "casualties" strewn throughout annual lists of children's books (29).

In 1995, Monique Baréa, curator of the Fonds de documentation Henri Bosco at the Université de Nice, discovered the letter addressed to Dr. and Mrs. Guibert, and generously sent me an excerpt. She told me that she recalls seeing notes that the author had made on several plants, no doubt also for this vocabulary.

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____. Letter to Armand Guibert, 11 July 1945, unedited.
____. Letter to Dr. and Mrs. Guiberteau, 29 May 1960, unedited.


Sandra Beckett is Professor of French at Brock University, where she teaches twentieth-century French literature, including women’s writing and children’s literature. She is the author of three books on Henri Bosco and a forthcoming book on French children’s literature, titled Les grands romanciers écrivent pour les enfants 1945-1995. She has also edited several volumes, including Reflections of Change: Children’s Literature Since 1945 (Westport: Greenwood, 1997), and published numerous articles on French and French-Canadian children’s literature. Her current project is a book on intertextuality in children’s literature.
Peter Hunt's "Passing on the Past" is a polemic; indeed, he points out that what he has to say is "gloriously arguable." At the center of this argument is a notion of literature that is profoundly ahistorical. For Hunt the only books that truly deserve the name "children's literature" are those books that children currently read, and the vast majority of such books are contemporary with their readers. A similar, but distinct, argument informs Maria Nikolajeva's recent book, *Children's Literature Comes of Age* (1996). Nikolajeva argues that literature develops just as humans do, from a time of immaturity to a maturity in which the richness and complexity of literature somehow make it "better" than its previous growing pains would allow for. Literature improves as time goes by. Accordingly, both Hunt and Nikolajeva privilege contemporary children's literature over older children's literature. Books in the past, Hunt says, "were different phenomena in a different cultural context." To illustrate this, he points to the eighteenth-century chapbook, which children today, he says, would find "crude to the point of imbecility." My conditional belies Hunt's assertiveness (he writes, "to the current child ... they are crude to the point of imbecility"), but it will serve to indicate my hesitation to accept his argument.

What I wish to emphasize here, however, is not my difference from Hunt; I am interested not in what children might think about a certain work of literature—old or new— but in what children might be capable of reading. In other words, I think that just because a text first appeared one or two hundred years ago, this does not mean it is necessarily inaccessible to today's reader. No text is inaccessible to a reader equipped with the skills to read that text. It may be true that we no longer equip young readers to read older works of literature, but this does not mean that they are incapable of reading such works or that such works are not worth their reading. The debate ought to be over whether we should equip young readers to read older texts, not whether these texts "address modern childhood." Or am I fudging here? Does this notion of a book "addressing" a reader demand that we articulate just what it is we think we read for? I suspect that both Hunt and Nikolajeva would answer: "of little use and less interest."

What troubles me is a curious privileging of some texts over others. Just why Hunt should choose chapbooks as his example of works today's children will find strange remains unclear to me. The chapbook is a type of cultural production somewhat akin to the comic book today, and in using it as his example of the inaccessible text from the past, at the very least Hunt begs the question as to whether other "mainstream" children's literature from the past is inaccessible to children today, or whether we are to include the modern comic book in our discussions of children's literature. Lurking in here is an issue having to do with just what we take to be literature, and I suspect that any exploration of this issue will take us into questions of elitism.

Elitism aside, another reason the issue interests me is that it has pedagogic implications. Most of the students who take the children's literature course I teach are education majors, prospective teachers of five- to eleven-year-olds, and most express surprise that the course should concern itself with books written prior to, say, 1960. These students are adamant that few, if any, of the stories we look at that appeared earlier than the 1960s are worth presenting to elementary school children. I say "few" because certain books do remain accessible: *Peter Rabbit, Winnie-the-Pooh, Charlotte's Web,* and perhaps some updated and streamlined picture-book versions of such works as *The Wind in the Willows,* "Little Daylight," "The King of the Golden River," or "The Last Dragon." What might be worth asking is why these books remain in published versions clearly intended for young readers, whereas others such as *The Governess, Granny's Wonderful Chair, At the Back of the North Wind, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, The Tapestry Room, Mopsa the Fairy,* and a host of others are not; modern reprints of such texts almost always look for a currency whereas others do not. I think it is clear by now that the cultural transmission of "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Snow White" continues to serve a certain powerful interest group in our society. These stories do not remain in print simply because children like them and choose them over others. We construct a reading environment for our children, and it is within this environment that they learn to read and to privilege a certain kind of reading over other possible kinds, and certain kinds of book over other kinds.

Of course, some books have come to look retrograde in
these enlightened times. Few today would champion Little Black Sambo or Rafiy Tufty or the Doctor Dolittle books or "The Inky Boys." Some even warn against such characters as Curious George and Babar. Obviously, no one person, young or old, can read everything; as educators, we select materials for the children and young people we teach. Given the historical moment we live in, we might make a strong argument, as Hunt does, for presenting our young with current books, which manifest what he calls "live issues." However, just what these live issues that Hunt has in mind are remains unclear to me. I agree that it is important to introduce children to contemporary works that take seriously the multicultural world we inhabit, but I also think a look at and a discussion of a work such as Little Black Sambo (especially in conjunction with a consideration of recent and more positive retellings of this story) can do much to teach tolerance. Reading Rudyard Kipling or Frances Hodgson Burnett or Lewis Carroll or others through the lens of feminist and postcolonial theories can only serve to enhance our understanding of our past and the development of our own cultural moment. Children deserve to know this past, whether it is laudable or deplorable. We do them no service to assume that they might find texts from the past difficult and therefore "inaccessible."

I offer these introductory remarks as incentive. My hope is that the "gloriously arguable" points Peter Hunt makes about books old and books young, and about the division in our ranks between what we might think of as traditional scholars and less dusty critics who deal with live issues, will generate response. Does the study of children's literature divide between the "adultists" and the "childists?"

Passing on the Past: The Problem of Books That Are for Children and That Were for Children

by Peter Hunt

It doesn't do to be disrespectful about the past. In Criticism, Theory and Children's Literature, I made what I thought was a necessary distinction:

There are "live" books and "dead" books, books which no longer concern their primary audience (and [which] concern no-one else except historians).

... Concepts of childhood change so rapidly that there is a sense in which books no longer applicable to childhood must fall into a limbo in which they are the preserve of the bibliographer, since they are of no interest to the current... child... The history of the children's book may be interesting to the adult, but not for the child, and it is this dichotomy which is central [to defining children's books]. (61-62)

In An Introduction to Children's Literature, I elaborated this view:

Reading a text "for children" from the eighteenth century is roughly equivalent to reading Middle English poetry in the original: it may be rewarding for the specialist, but unless it is translated and modernized, it has little to offer the general reader. All children, I would submit, are in the position of being "general readers." The division between books that were for children and which are for children is, as I have suggested, a very useful one. (28)

Not necessarily.

Perry Nodelman, in a highly professional review of the first book, took me to task. My approach, he observed, not only generalizes wildly about the historical interests of children but also, presumably in the interests of practicality, closes off the sort of analysis of alternate versions of childhood that [Hunt] might have been able to explore, and that therefore might well have enriched his understanding of how books children do currently read work to construct highly specific forms of childhood subjectivity. (39)

Well, it might, and that's a view worth discussing—rather more than a scurrilous and unprofessional review of the second book, which accused me of being "out of sympathy" with the past and therefore, by implication, consigned me to the Yahoo camp (Avery iv).

But I would like to make, or re-make, the case that within the ambit of the subject of "Children's Literature" there are two quite different studies operating, with different assumptions and different methodologies and ideologies: the study of books that are for children, and the study of books that were for children. This is not always acknowledged—indeed, it is resisted—because literary and historical studies have generally had the higher academic status, and "Children's Literature" has generally found it necessary to attach itself to the "respectable" in order to survive. Equally, it is assumed that there is a flow, a stream of history, that connects all books written for children, and that we in the present can learn from the past about books and children.

Both those views seem to me to be worth challenging.

To challenge the second is perhaps the more contentious. I must hasten to say that I am not out of sympathy with the
these enlightened times. Few today would champion *Little Black Sambo* or *Rufy Tufty* or the *Doctor Dolittle* books or "The Inky Boys." Some even warn against such characters as Curious George and Babar. Obviously, no one person, young or old, can read everything; as educators, we select materials for the children and young people we teach. Given the historical moment we live in, we might make a strong argument, as Hunt does, for presenting our young with current books, which manifest what he calls "live issues." However, just what these live issues that Hunt has in mind are remains unclear to me. I agree that it is important to introduce children to contemporary works that take seriously the multicultural world we inhabit, but I also think a look at and a discussion of a work such as *Little Black Sambo* (especially in conjunction with a consideration of recent and more positive retellings of this story) can do much to teach tolerance. Reading Rudyard Kipling or Frances Hodgson Burnett or Lewis Carroll or others through the lens of feminist and postcolonial theories can only serve to enhance our understanding of our past and the development of our own cultural moment. Children deserve to know this past, whether it is laudable or deplorable. We do them no service to assume that they might find texts from the past difficult and therefore "inaccessible."

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Both those views seem to me to be worth challenging. To challenge the second is perhaps the more contentious. I must hasten to say that I am not out of sympathy with the
past: I am out of sympathy with a view that venerates it, and holds its books to be more valuable than those of the present. (We might view the sorting process that is “literature” as simply an admission of our failure to cope with the vast variety of texts.) But I think that we should recognize that the idea of a continuum of literature, in which subject matter or mode shifts along with childhood—and which is therefore related to, and useful for, the modern study/child/academic—is suspect. The idea of a literary continuum assumes some continuity of readership and some continuity of medium: in the case of children and books, these continua only appear to exist. Nodelman is obviously right that books at various times past did very different things, but whether what they did (supposing that it were knowable) can actually inform our present practice is another thing. History is marked by fractures, chasms, which readers cannot in the natural way of things cross, and this is particularly true of the history of children’s literature and reading.

Childhood is the most elusive of concepts: it differs virtually from house to house and from day to day; our grasp of historical childhoods is—for obvious socio-historical reasons—very flimsy indeed. So much so, in fact, that we tend to deduce the characteristics of childhood from the literature written for it—which is a very questionable process, given the adult-child power-relationship. We can be fairly sure, though, that there have been huge changes in “childhood” between 1590, 1690, 1790, 1890, and 1990.

And, of course, books have changed too, and I do not mean simply in terms of form. Let’s take an example: the dichotomy between the study of books that were for children and that are for children is perhaps best represented by the chapbooks. They are the subject of fascinated and (to some) fascinating academic study; their bibliographic, historical, and socio-cultural potential has hardly been touched. But to the current child (and here I am constructing a generalization with some confidence) they are inaccessible—that is, they are crude to the point of imbecility, in both form and content. That much is obvious, but what is not so obvious is that much the same applies well into the nineteenth century—and perhaps later: for all that the books seem to look like the books of today, and have stories that seem not too far from those of today, they were different phenomena in a different cultural context.

And this is where the discontinuities of literary and social history meet. It is difficult to imagine the impact of a chapbook on a child four hundred years ago; was it the equivalent of the impact of a virtual-reality CD hologram on the child of today? Similarly, the novel of the eighteen or nineteenth century addresses not only a concept of childhood that is very different from ours, but also a concept of reading/interacting/of the book/of the medium that is very different from ours. Now, that circumstance may be interesting historically, just as, say, the typefaces of the chapbooks are interesting for the history of typefaces. But that complex and challenging study has much less to tell the practitioners of today than is commonly assumed.

In short, while books of the more recent past may seem superficially to address modern childhood, they do not actually do so. One only has to glance at the wholesale reinterpretations by film producers of The Secret Garden or A Little Princess, or at virtually anything by Walt Disney, to see that this is so. Similarly, literary traditions manifested in the generic characteristics and expectations that so condition the reading of books by experienced adult readers are virtually inoperable for less experienced readers. Consequently, if we could regard books that were for and are for children as distinct, we might see that there are two quite different value-systems at work, and two quite different critical and theoretical methodologies appropriate to them.

You may say that there are many borderline cases, neither dead nor alive, enjoyed by some children and sustained by adults: Uncle Remus, the Alice books, The Wind in the Willows, The Water Babies, and folk tales in general. These are perhaps the most interesting, but they make my point in that they are now being directed at childhood, rather than being of childhood. (Fairy tales, the majority of which have to be severely bowdlerized, make the same point.) Can, say, the excellent Oxford edition of The Princess and the Goblin be said to have anything to do with a contemporary child?

At this point, I feel that I should defend myself against the accusation of “presentism.” Presentism—the devaluing of history—implies that we lose our culture, and we repeat the mistakes of the past; if the teaching of history is virtually nonexistent, for example, it is possible for people to deny that the Holocaust actually happened—with horrific implications. Not only would I deplore the idea of ignoring history, but I would say that I am a fervent traditionalist—I would argue that the best children’s book of the century may well be The Some Book Quartet, in which Alan Garner celebrates the presence of the past. But, equally, I believe in the preservation of all cultures, rather than the “culture”; after all, books are generally burned by people whose own cultures have been degraded.

Consequently, I do not take a romantic view of the past (which is, of course, a rampant and endemic feature of those children’s books which adults are inclined to valorize). My mother and father were, respectively, on the edge of the urban and rural working class, and my own memory of rural life in the 1940s (which had scarcely changed in two hundred years) was that it was oppressive and oppressing, hard, damp, cold, and smelly; those who survived were tough in a way it is hard to imagine now. All the men I knew could do almost anything, but the fact that they could do so was a matter of survival rather than of love, and the favorite verb (this is south Leicestershire) was “to mackle up,” which is a little better than “boich,” and implies a good deal of expediency and ingenuity, and not a lot of craft or pride.
Similarly, I do not take a romantic or reverential view of books from the past. Certainly the books, the objects, should be preserved (even, perhaps, treasured), but to accord them some superior status simply because of their age or supposed historical significance seems to me to be a serious error. Equally, to regard bibliographers and historians as the custodians of the foundations of the subject, and as “real” rather than “speculative” researchers, obscures our understanding of books, childhood and the meanings generated between them (see Hunt, “Researching”; “Scholars”).

I would argue, then, that the study of past books requires and implies different skills from the study of books currently read by live children. Of course, it might at first sight seem that this division is already manifest: books that are for children are studied in education schools, books that were for children are studied in literature departments. (Or, to put it another way, children’s children’s books are studied in education, and adults’ children’s books in literature departments). But this is precisely the problem: the philosophy and methodology of the higher status literature departments have dominated, even though they are often more concerned with the book than the interaction; are wedded to concepts of canon and to certain value systems (male, white, adult); and are essentially adultist and universalist.

Those who work with books and children find themselves always in the shadow of “the classic” or “the great”—terms implying values that, like the concept of “literature” itself, are inappropriate to the subject (see Hunt, “Criticism”).

In order to survive academically, “Children’s Literature”—with its conferences and journals and papers and theory—has played the adult game, valuing history above the new challenges of literary interaction. It has, consequently, equipped us with some sterile and inappropriate attitudes. We should think seriously of turning the present situation around—to say that the study of books that are for children is the primary, interdisciplinary, intercultural, intellectually challenging, innovative, and unselfconscious center of our study. We may draw on that historical and historico-socio-critical matrix that is the study of past children’s books, but that study, far from being the root or the foundation of our work, is in fact a subdivision of historical and literary studies, and has little connection with our study of today.

History = literature = respectable (precisely because it does not relate to that very childish thing, childhood—that is, a real, individual childhood); literature is an adult province, of libraries, rare and expensive untouched books; it is the province of the academic and the collector interested in the sociology of childhood, or the development of printing techniques, or the development of literary trends; it is, essentially, abstract and inward looking; it looks to the minutiae of books, and universals of culture, and although historicists may disagree, that history has, at least, happened.

Contemporary, child-oriented literary studies are quite different; here we are talking about childhood, about use, about books being touched, eaten, rejected, banned, pulped—in short, about live issues. For example, that John Newbery produced trash of the worst commercial order is historically scarcely mentioned, because it is part of a historical process, because the books are rare, and because they show us the development of printing through the reuse of woodcuts, or of different printers and so on. In contrast, that the Ninja Turtles or the Power Rangers or Sonic the Hedgehog or “Point Horror” galvanize our children is not a matter of abstract curiosity; it is a matter that has to be understood and confronted.

Children’s books do different things at different times, and it is at least questionable to assume that they can constitute, diachronically, a cohesive subject. All of this, of course, is gloriously arguable. What is not so arguable is one of the implications. Too often we do not acknowledge that “children’s literature” is a big subject; we cannot be experts in “children’s literature” any more than anyone would be an expert in the whole of “literature.” If we do not acknowledge that theory and history and the application of texts may inform each other but are not the same, then we are doomng the whole subject.

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Silver Anniversary Party
by A. Waller Hastings


When John Locke argued for entertaining children's books in the eighteenth century, and Charles Dickens inveighed against George Cruikshank for his frauds on the fairies, they were writing criticism of children's literature. The Horn Book Magazine, which began publication in 1924, has always included some criticism. Harvey Darton mapped out a literary history of children's books in 1932. In fact, the criticism of children's literature has a fairly long history (see Adams). Despite this observation, we tend to conceive of this discipline as a recent phenomenon, stemming from the explosion of literary critical activity in the 1960s and '70s.

Academic criticism approaches children's books as objects of study in and for themselves—not just as an aid to library classification or pedagogy, but as literary and artistic products, subject to the same kinds of interrogation as works written for adults. Most of the major forces in that criticism date from the early 1970s, including the Children's Literature Association itself (1973) and its journals, Children's Literature (1972) and the Quarterly (1976). The British began somewhat earlier, with the journal Signal (January 1970) and with a series of scholarly conferences at Exeter University, from which emerged in March of 1970 Children's Literature in Education. Despite its name, which seems to mark it as a journal of pedagogy, Children's Literature in Education was an early harbinger of critical activity and is justly celebrated in this collection of essays spanning the first twenty-five years of its publication.

I remember my first encounter with this journal, as a graduate student writing a dissertation on Victorian uses of fairy tales. I had then, I confess, a quite unjustified intellectual snobbery about what I was consulting. It was housed in the library school library, not the more prestigious graduate library, and its name did not sound like the sort of thing that I was used to reading. It looked different, too. Most of the journals I knew were octavo volumes, roughly the size and shape of a book, and fitting comfortably on bookshelves or in magazine boxes. A few were 8 1/2 by 11 inch folios like the Quarterly, easily filed in larger magazine boxes. But Children's Literature in Education had (and has) odd dimensions: 7 inches by 10 inches, intermediate between the other two formats and difficult to place in files or shelves constructed to house these formats. Articles are printed with wide left margins, yielding a total text space no larger than that in the octavo journals. In the wide left margin, brief references that other journals would relegate to footnotes or parenthetical notation appear opposite the text that cites the reference. How could this unusually named, peculiarly formatted publication provide academically rigorous criticism?

But it did, and does. It seems to me that, more than any other journal, Children's Literature in Education achieves a balance among various constituencies, which range from mavens of high theory who approach children's books with an extensive intellectual apparatus, to literate readers who want deeper perspectives about what they read, to the teachers and librarians who were the first audience for children's literature criticism. One frequent complaint about modern literary critical theory is that it is too often densely written and all but incomprehensible to the average reader. This obscurity does not occur in Children's Literature in Education, which, while retaining an intellectual and critical rigor that is not always found in the older, library-based periodicals, invites a broader readership through its design, its generally accessible writing, and the opening of its pages to writers for children and K-12 teachers as well as academic critics.

Geoff Fox notes in his introduction to Celebrating Children's Literature in Education that many of the journal's most useful articles stem from recent critical theory, but that "the editors occasionally reject submissions because they are embedded in language which would be impenetrable to a diverse international readership" (viii). With rare exceptions, then, the writers represented in this volume wear their scholarship lightly. But they do wear it; the intellectual content, the theoretically informed arguments, are always interesting and frequently provocative, and reflect considerable knowledge both of children's books and of literary theory. As Perry Nodelman has noted in a recent communication to me, "This is a journal that understands that one wonderful peculiarity of children's literature as a field of literary study is the enormous potential practical aspect of any and all theoretical research and criticism, and [it] sticks to its guns in making the connection between theory and practice." Fox's selections fully document this strength.

The articles collected in Celebrating Children's Literature in Education range in time from Ted Hughes's "Myth and Education," published in the first issue in the spring of 1970, to Margaret Meek's "The Critical Challenge of the World in
Books for Children," from the ninety-sixth issue in 1995. Fox has culled this volume’s nineteen complete articles from about 600 and offers brief excerpts from another twenty-five pieces, as if to demonstrate that the quality of the full contributions is no accident. The articles encompass the development of whole new schools of criticism that have brought intellectual rigor to the field of children’s literature, but even the earliest selections are interesting and thought-provoking.

Although Children’s Literature in Education prides itself on a theoretical eclecticism, most of the selections here (and in the journal itself) are related for a concern for the specific audience of children’s books. That is, whatever theoretical construct is used to interrogate the text or texts under consideration, that theory is consistently connected to the child reader. For a category of literature that is uniquely defined by its readership, rather than by a formal genre or the characteristics of its authors, this attention to audience would seem obvious, but it is not always at the heart of children’s literature criticism appearing elsewhere.

Ann Trousdale and Judith Armstrong, for example, ground their discussions in observations of actual child readers. Trousdale’s “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” (1989) could serve as a model for the Children’s Literature in Education method: an important study of the child reader’s response to fairy tales, it is informed by psychoanalytic models of criticism but never overwhelmed by them. It is both scholarly and highly accessible to the serious non-specialist reader. In “In Defense of Adventure Stories” (1982), Armstrong argues on the basis of her observations of child readers for the value of adventure stories in developing critical skills, an appreciation of narrative, and moral concepts.

Armstrong and Trousdale address a subject that often arises both in the journal and the book: the act of reading itself. Just what does it mean to “read”? Margaret Mackey addresses this question in “Many Spaces: Some Limitations of Single Readings” (1993), her account of reading and rereading Margaret Mahy’s 1991 novel, Dangerous Spaces. Each of her three readings brings certain kinds of observations to the surface while overlooking other elements because of the focus of her attention at the time. Mackey specifically warns against seeing any reading as definitive. By showing that children’s novels, like the best adult literature, bear multiple returns, Mackey demonstrates that children’s literature deserves serious critical attention.

A similar point is made by Perry Nodelman in his 1977 article on the Grimms’ fairy tale “The Golden Bird,” the first publication on children’s literature by one of the giants in the field. He notes, “Fairy tales as we know them are literature, no longer part of the oral tradition that engendered them, but stories in books. They deserve the respect and the close attention we accord other works of literature” (21). Substitute “children’s books” for “fairy tales” as the subject of the first sentence, and this dictum could be the credo of the Children’s Literature Association, still in its infancy when Nodelman wrote those words.

Another special feature of Children’s Literature in Education, the inclusion of critical articles by children’s authors, is represented by Geoffrey Trease’s “The Historical Novelist at Work” (1972). His practical, balanced account of his own method makes important critical points about psychological authenticity in historical fiction and about what compromises (for instance, as regards gender roles or linguistic practice) one can make without destroying either historicity or fiction. As historical fiction seems to be enjoying a contemporary resurgence, Trease’s comments appear particularly relevant. Other practicing children’s writers represented by full articles include Vernon Scannell, Rosemary Sutcliff, and Philippa Pearce, with excerpts from works by Alan Garner, Peter Dickinson, Ursula Le Guin, Nina Bawden, Madeleine L’Engle, Jack Prelutsky, Virginia Hamilton, and Natalie Babbitt.

There are also, inevitably, articles directly relevant to the “Education” in the journal’s title. For example, a 1988 interview with the British poet Charles Causley touches on the relationship between poetry and teaching, while Jon C. Stott in “Will the Real Dragon Please Stand Up?: Convention and Parody in Children’s Stories” (1990) offers specific, practical lesson plans for grades 4 and 5 (on dragons and wolves, respectively) that are carefully informed by contemporary literary theory—in this case, linguistic structuralism.

But enough. Celebrating Children’s Literature in Education is a collection that will reward, delight, and illuminate. It offers a fitting tribute to the journal from which it has been drawn.

WORK CITED

A. Waller Hastings teaches children’s literature and other subjects at Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota, where he is an associate professor and coordinator of the English Department.
Information must reach the editors at least six months before listed deadlines.

Announcements

PAPER CALL

Modern Language Association, Children's Literature Division Session, December 1998, San Francisco. After Alice: Lewis Carroll and Children's Literature. Deadline: 1 March 1998. 1998 marks the 100th anniversary of Carroll's death; this seems an appropriate point in time to evaluate or re-examine his place in the history of children's literature. Harvey Darton has argued that Carroll "changed the whole cast of children's literature." Is this assertion true, and if so, in what ways do the Alice books continue to influence children's reading? How have these two texts changed the verbal and visual landscape, and why have they remained "classics of children's literature" while Carroll's other works addressed to children have become historical? How have biographical and critical studies of Carroll changed the meaning of the Alice books? Can Alice still be read as children's literature? Send 8-10 page paper or 2-page abstract addressing these questions, or otherwise exploring Carroll's children's texts and their influence on children's literature, to Jan Susina English Department 4240 Illinois State University Normal, IL 61790-4240

PAPER CALL

Modern Language Association, Children's Literature Division Session, December 1998, San Francisco. Imaginative Geographies: Colonialism and Travel in Children's Literature. Deadline: 1 March 1998. The journey away from and return home is a familiar pattern in children's literature. This session re-examines the journey with a sensitivity to the politics of travel. How do writers for children imagine and represent "other" cultures and topographies? What economic, intellectual, political, or moral interests and investments do these texts reveal? How does travel establish hegemonic cultural ideals, and to what extent does didacticism inform canons of taste? Essays on empire and imperialism, colonialism, theories of travel, imaginative journeys, or boys' and girls' adventure and frontier stories welcome. Abstracts or 8-10 page papers to Katharine Capshaw Smith English Department U-25 University of Connecticut Storrs, CT 06269

PAPER CALL REMINDER


24th Annual International Children's Literature Association Conference

Omaha, Nebraska
June 19-22, 1997

Featured speakers include:
Robert Cormier, Olga Loya, Margaret Read MacDonald, Gary Soto

The CHILD and the CITY

Dr. Susan Naramore Maher
Department of English
University of Nebraska at Omaha
60th and Dodge Streets
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0175